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# the People

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AB CAP for The People

## Kaiser 'Discovers' Effects of Caps On Prescriptions

By Donna Bills

Kaiser Permanente, a "not for profit" health care organization, required a study to learn what many working people already knew—that if sick people can't afford their prescriptions, their health will suffer.

According to the *San Jose Mercury News* (June 1), Kaiser's study, which investigated the impact of spending caps for prescription drugs, focused on 200,000 Northern California members enrolled in its Medicare+Choice coverage in 2003. Four-fifths of those enrolled in the plan had spending caps of \$1,000 for prescription drugs. In other words, when drug costs exceeded that amount the individual members would have to pay for their drugs in full and out of pocket. Not surprisingly, many sick, retired workers were compelled to skip their medications after their drug costs topped the limit.

Those older workers suffering from serious chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and heart conditions, fared the worse. Their worsened health forced them to visit emergency rooms more often, become hospitalized or even to die. Commenting on the patients' worsened blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, Dr. John Hsu, one of the Kaiser researchers, remarked: "It was surprising!"

What was it precisely that caused Dr. Hsu's surprise? The *Mercury News* report on his study did not say. Was it that medications meant to control or prevent illness do not work when not taken? Surely, that could not be it. Was it that by pushing the cost of such medications out of the reach of those who need them Kaiser made it impossible for those in need to get them? That seems too silly even to consider.

Although the *Mercury News* did not explain Dr. Hsu's surprise, the source of it is clear. Prescription drug spending caps are intended to steer "spend happy" sick work-

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## Profit Motive Behind 'Incentives' for Iran?

President Bush flew to Europe in June where, among other things, he was to consult with representatives of five other nations on a deal designed to induce Iran to abandon its nuclear research program. Apart from the United States, the nations involved are Russia, Great Britain, France, China and Germany. All but Germany are members of the United Nations' Security Council, and all stand to reap lucrative material advantages if Iran accepts the package.

Iran claims that its nuclear research aims at the eventual production of nuclear power for industrial and other civilian uses, but the Bush administration has alleged that the real purpose is to develop a nuclear arsenal. Although no concrete evidence has surfaced to verify the claims of either the U.S. or Iran, the mere possibility of Iran developing such weapons clearly resonated with the countries offering the "incentives" deal to Iran.

Nonetheless, the Bush administration has made a fuss about Iran's supposed aim of developing nuclear weapons, and has repeatedly claimed that its theocratic regime finances and supports terrorist activities throughout the Middle East. However, its decision to join in to offer certain "incentives" to induce Iran to abandon its nuclear ambitions may mean that it is willing to set all that aside in exchange for certain economic and strategic benefits to itself. Indeed, the administration's decision to participate in the overtures came as a surprise to some observers who fear that, despite the U.S. being bogged down in Iraq, it might take military action against Iran.

President Bush has threatened some sort of

retaliation against Iran if it refuses to accept the "incentives" package first proposed on June 6, and warned that he expected the Iranian government to give its response within weeks and not months.

Mr. Bush issued another warning to Iran in a speech on June 19 as he prepared to leave for Europe, but it was not of a bellicose nature. "Iran's leaders have a clear choice," he said, then added:

"If Iran's leaders reject our offer, it will result in action before the [U.N.] Security Council, further isolation from the world and progressively stronger political and economic sanctions."

The U.S. has prohibited all trade with Iran for years, but Iran can hardly be described as "isolated from the world." According to the *Hindustan Times* of May 24, for example, "Iran is the world's fourth biggest oil exporter..."

"Iran exports about 2.7 million barrels of oil a day," it added, "with most of that crude going to Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan and Europe."

Three years ago, Iran announced the discovery of three new oil fields near the Persian Gulf port of Bushehr (of all places), which also happens to be the location of its principal nuclear research projects. The three new fields have been estimated to hold enough to increase Iran's proven reserves from 90 billion to 133.3 billion barrels and to elevate it from fifth to third position on the list of oil-rich countries behind Saudi Arabia and Canada.

Despite its being the world's fourth largest exporter of oil and natural gas, however, Iran is

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## Halliburton Selected to Build 'Detention Camps'

By Ken Boettcher

An interesting item that escaped our scrutiny earlier this year turned up in our research for other articles in this issue.

In January the Bush administration's Homeland Security Department awarded an open-ended contract worth at least \$385 million to a division of Halliburton, the company Vice President Dick Cheney formerly ran. It is a repeat of a similar contract awarded to the company for 2000-2005.

In a Jan. 24 press release, Halliburton announced that "The contract, which is effective immediately, provides for establishing temporary detention and processing capabilities to augment existing Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detention and Removal Operations Program facilities in the event of an emergency influx of immigrants into the United States, or to support the rapid development of new programs" (empha-

sis added).

A U.S. Immigration and Customs official told the *San Bernardino Sun*: "If, for example, there were some sort of upheaval in another country that would cause mass migration, that's the type of situation that this contract would address."

It would also address a "need" seen by then Attorney General John Ashcroft in a plan he announced in 2002. The plan went nowhere at the time, but may now be back in different clothing to haunt us. That plan would have allowed Ashcroft or a "high-level committee," according to an article in the *Los Angeles Times*, "to order the indefinite incarceration of U.S. citizens and summarily strip them of their constitutional rights and access to the courts by declaring them enemy combatants."

Whether or not they are based on Ashcroft's nightmarish vision or some "kinder, gentler"

(Continued on page 2)

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# 'An Inconvenient Truth'

By Bruce Cozzini

As one scientific study after another demonstrates, the reality of the phenomenon of global warming is established without any doubt. Yet U.S. capitalism, as currently represented by the Bush administration with their tagalong Democrats, still resists taking any action to reverse or even mitigate warming and its predicted catastrophic effects on world climates. Indeed, it pretends that global warming does not exist or is unproven. Their Orwellian newspeak term for it, "climate change," implies only that perhaps it should be studied.

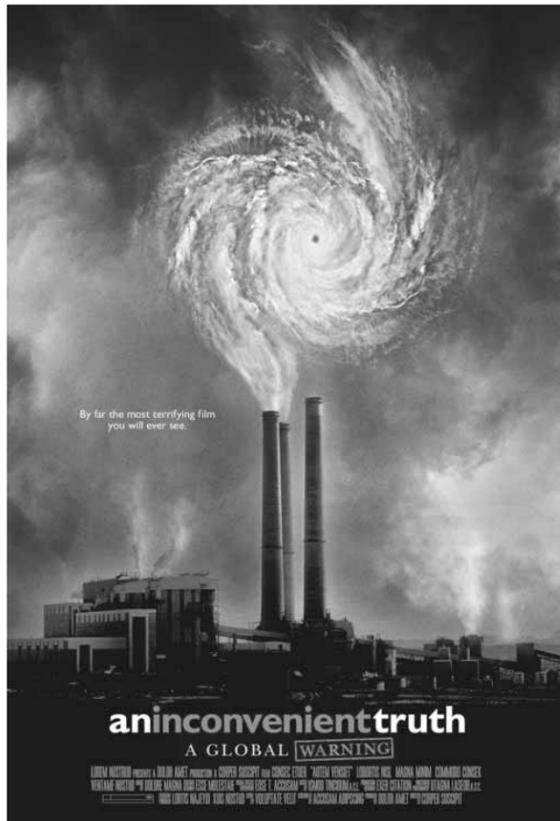
"An Inconvenient Truth" is a film version of a slide show that Al Gore has been presenting at colleges and other venues for the last several years. It is his attempt first to establish the reality of global warming and its implications for civilization, and second to mobilize action to deal with it. It succeeds at the former but, succumbing to capitalist realities, drastically misses the mark in providing solutions.

The film is thorough in demonstrating the existence of global warming and demonstrating its devastating consequences for life on this planet if it goes unchecked. With charts and graphs, a rather professorial Al Gore demonstrates the correlation between increased levels of carbon dioxide produced by burning fossil fuels and the increases in average temperatures over recent decades. He shows in graphic and photographic detail the dramatic effects of global warming in the Arctic and Antarctic regions, the accelerated loss of the polar ice in recent years and the mechanisms through which the ice caps are shrinking. Spectacular photos show the virtual disappearance of glaciers throughout the world. Likewise, diagrams show how melting of the ice caps decreases reflection of sunlight and accelerates the warming effect as more of the sun's energy is absorbed.

Predictions of effects include: increases in number and intensity of tropical storms as water temperatures rise; drastic climatic effects in Europe as oceanic currents are changed; spreading of deserts in Africa; increasing of oceanic water levels (Gore chooses the maximum of 20 feet), submerging vast areas, including Bangladesh and

much of Florida and New York City; destruction of rain forests, etc. The timetable needed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to avert disaster is estimated at less than 10 years.

However, for all of his sense of urgency sur-



Participant Productions/Paramount

rounding global warming, Gore has little to propose in the way of solutions. He speaks of the Kyoto Accords as a positive step, but business interests kept the United States, the greatest producer of greenhouse gases, from participating, and no restrictions are placed on emissions from India and China, the industrializing nations whose emissions are increasing most rapidly.

In this film Gore seems to deal with global warming on a moral and personal level rather than as a political issue. The personal analogy he presents is his sister's death from lung cancer and the family farm dropping tobacco as a crop: you see that you are doing something harmful and you stop it. At the end of the film there are nice little suggestions to people to become more involved with the issue, conserve energy, etc. But this is an issue that is already highly politicized and promises to be in the center of a political whirlwind. And it is no coincidence that the film release is a couple of years before the 2008 presidential campaign.

The petroleum, coal, electric power, auto industry and other major capitalist interests that have been blocking any action dealing with global warming are clearly determined to protect their profits. Far from considering conservation or less polluting technologies, energy companies are attempting to roll back current antipollution rules with the Bush "Clear Skies" agenda (newspeak again). And rather than selling cars that burn less gas and are less polluting, GM is offering discounts on fuel (to \$1.99/gallon)

as an incentive for purchasers of their largest gas guzzlers.

It is their profits that are at stake. To move to more advanced technologies that reduce carbon dioxide or to develop renewable energy sources such as solar or wind energy will require major capital investments. These would be at the expense of the easy profits they now gather from their control over natural resources and conventional energy sources. And they have Democrats as well as Republicans in their pockets and protecting their interests. The chance that the problem will be solved within Mr. Gore's 10-year window is highly unlikely.

On the other hand, a socialist society, with production based on use rather than profit, could respond to the threat of global warming immediately and effectively. Without competing economic interests, and with industry run democratically, decisions could be made to shift resources where they are needed in a timely and economic manner.

As this film shows, global warming is accelerating and there is no time to waste. The half measures proposed in this film will have little or no effect in the time we have. The film documents the physical damage global warming will wreak on the planet. It does not attempt to deal with the vast social upheavals that will follow. The unstable and destructive capitalist system must be replaced with socialism soon if we are to avert worldwide physical and social crisis and collapse.

## Do You Belong?

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

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

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

## Help Them Out!

Dear Socialist Labor Party:

I am a prisoner within the Texas prison industrial complex and also a new Socialist, still learning the philosophy. I am interested in receiving a gratis subscription—if available—to *The People*, and also any publication you may have that would clarify for me the various "factions" of socialism in the United States.

Thank you in advance for considering my request.

Sincerely,  
ARBRY CLIFTON  
Snyder, Texas

*Thanks to the generosity of our subscribers, we had the funds to enter a subscription for Mr. Clifton and to send him the other information he requested. Similar requests from indigent prisoners are received regularly. You can help them out by sending a \$5 contribution to our Prisoner Subscription Fund. Send to The People, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218.*

## ... 'Camps'

(Continued from page 1)

vision of mass incarceration, the facilities would essentially make up a network of cheap prison camps across the country.

According to author and radio commentator Jim Hightower, "Up to 5,000 people could be 'detained' and held in each of these centers, which are then to be run by homeland security authorities and possibly located on unused military bases." The money will reportedly not be spent nor construction started until an appropriate "emergency" arises.



The words of Daniel De Leon, writing in the *Daily People* of 1911, come to mind:

"There is a nation closer at hand that the powers that be are getting ready to fight in the hope of putting it down—and keeping it henceforth under the heel of military despotism.

"That nation is not all white of skin, nor all black, nor all yellow. That nation is cosmopolitan. It is the working class of the land....

"The nation that the land's plutocracy is foe to, and is arming against, is our own nation's vitals—its working class."

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# New Orleans Reconstruction Insures Future Devastation

By B.B.

The reconstruction of hurricane-devastated New Orleans is proceeding favorably to the interests of the capitalist class, while workers who have or may yet return to the city face a hazardous future.

Capitalist interests, fearing delays and massive costs that would accompany proper reconstruction, have opted for absurd redevelopment rules, questionable levee construction and flood control standards, hazardous temporary housing and dangerous waste disposal practices. Many displaced workers, desperate to rebuild their lives in what was and almost certainly will remain an impoverished city, are emotionally vulnerable and susceptible to the possibility of reestablishing themselves on familiar ground, regardless of the potential dangers.

Slipshod building guidelines, granted to former and current residents, make reconstructed dwellings once again vulnerable to gulf storm surges and flooding. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has set required floor levels at a minimum of three feet off the ground and utilizes previously set 100-year flood level data—levels that, according to *The New York Times*, “have a one percent chance of occurring in any given year.” (April 13) However, that reckoning does not take into account the occasional extraordinarily destructive storm, such as Katrina, and apparently ignores predictions for an increasing frequency of more powerful Katrina-like hurricanes as a byproduct of global warming. Nonetheless, Greg Meffert, executive assistant to Mayor C. Ray Nagin, declared that “new flood maps released by FEMA...truly do represent some good news for the city and its rebuilding process.”

This means that numerous dwellings that already meet that standard, including those that were flooded up to the second story level, only need to be restored to something approximating their pre-Katrina condition to be approved for occupation again. Wording within the guidelines defines the threshold at which homes and other structures can stay or must be demolished as damage exceeding 50 percent of the structure, a nebulous and ill-defined measure at best. Thus, many desperate workers can qualify for lower, more affordable insurance replacement costs and avoid more expensive reconstruction that otherwise could have required that dwellings be built on stilted supports as high as 10 feet off the ground. Voila! The housing question thereby is “solved” and capitalists may resume business as usual: the processes of exploiting wage labor.

J. Robert Hunter, a past director of the federal flood insurance program, was unconvinced.

Upon hearing about the FEMA guidelines he derisively exclaimed:

“Three feet—where did that come from? Why are we building up three feet when the water was up over the roof? What’s that three feet going to do? Instead of coming up with real science, they’re making it up, which means people are going to be at risk, they’re going to die again and taxpayers are subsidizing unwise construction with very cheap insurance.”



B.B. for *The People*

Working-class safety has always been a low priority, especially with regard to the New Orleans labor market, and since, in the final analysis, capitalists pay the taxes, why not do it as cheaply as possible?

“Making up science” is pervasive under capitalism, and apparently a popular pastime for Louisiana politicians and bureaucrats. The pressure exerted upon FEMA by those anxious to get something done is evident from the connection some wealthy New Orleans gentry have with the White House. One resident was jubilant over FEMA’s decision, stating, “FEMA has agreed Katrina was only a one-time event, and flood insurance won’t be based on catastrophic events but on common sense,” which we all know nature takes into account now and then. The drive to rebuild “on the cheap” impelled by capitalist motivations is in turn linked to what might be termed the “voodoo” engineering of the levees and flood controls.

This fact emerged by way of an admission by the Army Corps of Engineers “that much of New Orleans’ levee system had long been flawed” (*New York Times*, April 13) and not overcome by natural forces that were beyond the design capacity of construction. Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, the Corps’ chief engineer, noted, “We must assume because the foundations of these levees are pretty much the same through the system” the problem is endemic. So the Corp is patching things up, not to withstand another Katrina but only to resist “catastrophic flooding” as a result of a breach in the flood control elements. This is small comfort for residents who are undertaking reconstruction.

Experts such as the American Society of Civil Engineers and Robert G. Bea and Jean-Louis Briaud, professors from the University of California, Berkeley and Texas A&M University, engineering and soil experts, respectively, have been very critical of the Corps’ reconstruction efforts. Prof. Bea has stated the soil being used to reconstruct levees “is no better than it was before,” and that during his visit to the levees no clay was being added to the sandy soil. Prof. Briaud found the erodability of the soil being used was at level 1 on a scale of 1 to 5.

Speaking of which, what kind of temporary housing are people living in while they either

rebuild or reside in this hurricane-prone area? FEMA to the front of the class! Yes, good old reliable FEMA has solved temporary housing with “nearly 90,000 lightweight trailers in an area prone to flooding, tornadoes and, of course, hurricanes.” (*New York Times*, March 16)

The fact is the temporary units, which number 87,100, are aluminum boxes on wheels and are set atop concrete blocks and anchored with steel straps staked to the ground. They were engineered to be marginally better than a tent or emergency shelters but not as strong as mobile homes. FEMA set a threshold of winds not exceeding 75 mph. Beyond that limit calls for evacuation.

Such structures clearly are a hazard in high winds and rising waters. The metal components can break apart and become missiles during intense windstorms. One Gulf Coast resident abandoned his trailer for his pickup truck after he “saw sheet metal, trash, wood planks and even the carport from a nearby house flying during a recent storm.” “I ain’t taking no chances,” he declared. “I don’t feel safe in it.” (*New York Times*, March 16)

New Orleans police reported at least one FEMA trailer was ripped from its anchorage when a tornado came through, and in Pensacola, Fla., trailers were damaged or overturned in 2004 after Hurricane Dennis assailed the coast. “The trailers are just not safe to stay in, in the event of severe weather,” said Ashley Roth of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

Nor is it safe to live next to what is becoming a series of monumental moldering landfills that are the receptacles for millions of tons of debris wrought by Katrina. A new one is Chef Menteur across from Bayou Sauvage, which is slated to receive 2.6 million tons of fill out of an estimated remaining 7.2 million tons. Adjoining it is, irony aside, “Versailles,” a community of 1,000 Vietnamese-American families and “the largest urban wildlife refuge in the country, with 23,000 acres of marshland, canals and lagoons.” (*New York Times*, May 8)

Typically, clay liners are required for landfills but officials say not to worry, this landfill is cleaner than others and, besides, rubbish will not have to be hauled that far! Joel Waltzer, the attorney for the community and environmental landfill opponents, has noted the rubbish consists of “the guts of your house, all your personal possessions.... Electronics, personal-care products, cleaning solutions, pesticides, fertilizers, bleach,” in other words, a witches’ brew of toxic ingredients. However, the state and the Corp, the two entities that are handling the cleanup, insist the existing landfills would not be able to handle the debris fast enough and are too remote from existing buildings.

Clearly, the lax FEMA regulations, the suspected vulnerable levee reconstruction, potentially hazardous temporary housing and dangerous landfills orbit around one central theme: promoting the well-being of capitalist profits to the detriment of the working class. The “solutions” to the Katrina disaster are a patchwork of inadequate measures that will engender future storm damage and endanger lives. Capitalists, through their political representatives, are always seeking to reduce the costs of government in the short term with little consideration for the long-term effects.

This insane, fumbling, incompetent system, incapable of protecting the lives of the exploited and dispossessed, should steel the determination of the American working class to abolish it and establish the democratic Socialist Industrial Commonwealth of Labor that will brook no barrier to insure the health and safety of all of its members.

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# the People

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## 'Constitution Kerfuffle'

It has been called a "Constitution Kerfuffle." The first-ever execution of a search warrant in Congress ruffled the feathers of some representatives, but the cackling subsided almost as fast as it erupted when Justice Department agents conducted an 18-hour midnight raid on the legislative offices of Rep. William Jefferson (D-La.), who is suspected of taking bribes.

Initial demands by some in Congress that seized documents be returned produced speculation in the media that the legislative body was finally standing up for the Constitution's separation of powers. But the disturbance died down quickly after President Bush ordered the seized documents locked up for a 45-day "cooling off" period.

Was the first response of Congress merely an election-year pretense by incumbents that they are not the lapdogs of the unpopular Bush presidency they have definitively proven themselves to be on every substantive issue over the last six years? Clearly, speculation that a separation-of-powers feud was erupting placed too much faith in an institution that has already freely abandoned much of its constitutional authority.

Where was a vigilant Congress when the administration presented its falsified list of reasons why working-class youths should be sent to wage war against Iraq? Where was Congress when the administration decided merely to ignore international laws in waging that war?

When the administration ignored the Geneva Conventions and international and domestic laws regarding torture and the treatment of detainees in the war on Iraq and the so-called war on terror, where was our brave Congress?

When the administration informed some in Congress that it had ordered the National Security Agency to engage in patently illegal secret wiretaps and other surveillance of U.S. citizens, why did our brave Congress not at least demand full disclosure of the extent and nature of the program? When Congress as a whole discovered the program through a leak to *The New York Times*, why didn't it order a halt to it and start immediate impeachment proceedings against President Bush for his treasonous acts?

In fact, the "kerfuffle" over the executive intrusion into the halls of Congress is really just one more milestone in the long march rightward of the U.S. political state toward despotism.

Every one of the Bush administration's arrogations of congressional power, like those of previous administrations over the last century with only slightly less repugnant penchants for assaulting the Constitution, should be met with the organized resistance of workers in this country.

The lack of any effective response suggests too many trust that the president's increasingly dictatorial powers will be used only against terrorists. But why did our revolutionary forebears write a Constitution that attempts to protect us from government if they saw no threat from it? Why even have elections if any government can be trusted?

It is time for workers to wake up. If despotism is to be prevented, it is imperative that American workers be made more aware of this trend and equally imperative that they come to understand its cause.

From the capitalist point of view, the times demand a political state that can respond quickly and firmly to the many rebellions and competing powers that challenge U.S. imperialism throughout the world. Likewise, the capitalist class requires quick and decisive action to stifle unrest, or challenges to the social order or capitalist economic interests at home. Lacking any effective working-class resistance, the reactionary elements of the capitalist class now holding power are laying the steppingstones to dictatorship.

The trend toward autocratic rule will continue as long as the system of economic despotism called capitalism lasts. At any time a decisive point may be reached where martial law or outright dictatorship will be declared to maintain capitalist "order."

To note this danger may strike some as fantastic or overly alarmist. Workers in this country have often been told by the system's propagandists that "it can't happen here." But history is replete with examples where capitalist "democracy" has given way to open dictatorship shortly after workers were "reassured" that no such threat existed.

Workers cannot rely on Congress to prevent despotism. In the final analysis they cannot rely on the Constitution either, although they must protect it as an advance hard won by the blood of their revolutionary forebears. Congress has been complicit in the transfer of power to the executive branch. These representatives of the capitalist class, in keeping with the needs of that class, have willingly ceded much of their political power. And the Constitution is only so much yellowed paper if it is not enforced.

Nor can workers place any hope in simply replacing the Bush administration. Since Bush's audacious encroachments are but a reflection of capitalist needs, the trend toward autocracy will continue, in a more or less accelerated fashion, whether he remains in office or not.

The only social force that can prevent the working class from falling under the iron heel of dictatorship is the working class itself. Simply stated, workers must organize a classconscious, revolutionary labor movement, on both the political and industrial fields, to overthrow a capitalist system that increasingly favors dictatorship. Otherwise, the imposition of dictatorship in the United States may only be a matter of time.

—K.B.

### A De Leon Editorial

## The War Hypocrites



No matter how politicians and pundits try to dress it up with rhetoric about "honor" and "glory," they cannot conceal the fact that war is one thing and one thing only—murder!

### Let the Ulcer Be Exposed!

(Daily People, April 17, 1902)

The *Independent* recently published an article in which it "deplored the horrors of war," and commended the Red Cross and similar associations that are "striving to minimize the horrors"—a genuine bit of barbarous capitalist hypocrisy; the starting of ulcers, the profiting by them and the covering them up with silk handkerchiefs of pietism.

We differ with the idea and assert that war should be made as barbarous in appearance, should be made as repulsive in all its details, as it is in reality. War is murder, and there should be no sentimentality to murder. The Red Cross is a sham and a piece of puerile nonsense that should be abolished. Kick the life out of your prostrate enemy, give him the "water cure," crush in the head of your fallen fellow soldier, "let none over 10 live," in a word apply "business methods" to war and have no more of this pukey nonsense.

Our capitalist government applies the water cure to the Filipinos. It is equal to the worst torture of the Inquisition. Our newly found brothers of England shoot down and torture the Boers. That is war, real war, without the nonsense and the glamour. Why add these? They are surely not necessary to those who can knock the life out of an unarmed savage in a hot or a cold climate. Then why talk about the "humane side" of war? There is no humane side. It is all murder, and the only good kind of murder is that which is so obvious that it summons, instead of fooling away, the avenger. Oh, ye capitalist Philistines! kill your prisoners, knock the wounded on the head, disembowel them, and you have arrived at the highest point to which war can aspire—and will have quickened to action all the quicker the human sentiment ye have so long been outraging.

But that, of course, is not what the capitalist class is after.

## what is socialism?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Torture Still Promoted By Bush Administration

By Ken Boettcher

The Bush administration is still trying to build the public perception that it no longer tortures or abuses those it captures and holds without trial or representation in its so-called “war on terror.” But the facts show it to be an enemy of human rights.

That is hardly surprising from an administration that, as one recent report put it, “created its own detainee dilemma by deciding after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that when it came to suspected al Qaeda and Taliban militants, America no longer had to abide by its own constitutional guarantees of a public trial or by international treaties on human rights and the laws of war.”

There were photos of abuses and torture at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. There were leaked memos that revealed an ongoing attempt by administration officials—including now Attorney General Alberto Gonzales—to redefine torture and to assert that President Bush had constitutional authority to ignore the Geneva Conventions and other international treaties on torture and human rights.

There were revelations about abuses at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. Last year there were more revelations, this time about the existence of many secret prisons operated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in nations around the world that lacked prohibitions against torture or where such atrocities could be easily covered up.

A report released in May by the U.N.’s Committee Against Torture attests to ongoing abuses by the administration. It demands the immediate closure of the notorious prison complex at Guantanamo Bay because of its record of torture and human rights abuses. Detainees there should be released “without further delay” or tried, the

report says. It also urges disclosure of the details of the CIA’s secret prison facilities, including who is interred and under what conditions they are being held and interrogated.

The report calls for “immediate measures” to eradicate torture and ill-treatment of detainees, a prohibition against sending inmates to facilities in countries where they face a risk of torture, an end to interrogation techniques that constitute torture—like the use of vicious dogs or sexual humiliation exposed at Abu Ghraib—and a federal statute against torture.

The Bush administration’s initial response to the report was to call it “a discredit to the U.N.” It dismissed most of the allegations as “largely without merit.” The administration charges that the investigators who wrote the U.N. report never actually visited Guantanamo Bay. But that is a disingenuous charge, since the U.N. investigators were refused access to prisoners by administration officials, and so evaluated damning leaked materials and interviews with released detainees.

The U.N. recommendations are not binding, of course, and the administration is still marching to a tune of its own liking on the subject of torture. In June the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the Pentagon has developed plans over the last year to modify the Army Field Manual’s rules on interrogation and treatment of prisoners.

As a recent editorial in *The New York Times* put it, “At issue is Directive 2310...an annex to the Field Manual” that “has long contained a reference to Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, which covers all prisoners, whether they meet the common definition of prisoners of war or are the sort of prisoners the administration classifies as ‘unlawful enemy combatants,’ like suspected members of the Taliban or al Qaeda.”

“Article 3 prohibits the use of torture and other overt acts of violence” and “outrages on personal dignity, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment.” The Bush administration’s new version of the Field Manual removes Article 3.

President Bush claims that, while he doesn’t condone torture, he has the authority to decide for himself whether and when to follow the ban on torture enacted by Congress last year. The planned new Field Manual reflects that viewpoint.

History shows that U.S. military forces have repeatedly violated the provisions of Article 3—in Korea, in Vietnam, in virtually all U.S. interventions in Central and South America, and most notoriously through the teaching of torture techniques at the infamous School of the Americas, now the Western Hemisphere Institute of Security Cooperation, where military forces for almost every dictator of the past 50 years have trained.

If torture has long been a part of U.S. government policy, what is there about the Bush administration’s official “cozying up” to torture that should be of concern to workers? Acceptance of such brutality is a reminder of what ruling classes are capable of when they are not constrained by the organized resistance of the working-class majority. It provides warning that there are still elements of every ruling class whose solutions to humanity’s social and economic problems are kin to the ovens of the Holocaust.

Finally, it is a sign that workers must work quickly to build a movement to abolish the strife- and war-breeding capitalist system and replace it with a socialist society collectively owned by all the people and democratically operated by the workers themselves. Without a socialist society the working-class majority will never be free of the violence and brutality constantly threatened by capitalist-class rule.

## Nanotech Workers Endangered By Emerging Technology

By B.B.

Something new and unsavory is in the air, and workers are breathing it.

Consider precision-engineered carbon “buckyballs,” products configured in napkin-thin wafers that can pack the power of a car battery but are infinitesimally small, say one-ten-thousandth the size of a pinhead. Consider the health of workers who have been ingesting a mist of this imperceptible material while engaged in building an industry that promises its owners, financiers and stockholders trillions of dollars by 2014.

The infant nanotech industry, devoted to the construction of microscopic components for new products, currently employs an estimated 210,000 workers. Not all are engaged in actual production, of course, but the industry is growing at a rapid pace. Lux Research, according to *The Washington Post*, estimates that eight years from now “the value of goods made with nanotechnologies will be \$2.6 trillion—200 times as much as in 2004.” (April 8) Lux, according to its website, “provides market intelligence and strategic advice on nanotechnology and the physical sciences. We help our clients make better decisions to profit from cutting-edge technologies...”

Lux is not the nanotechnology industry’s only enthusiast. The U.S. Commerce Department has gleefully trumpeted its emergence as the foundation for “the next industrial revolution.” However, the growth of this rapidly developing industry has some onerous implications for the increased number of workers expected to be employed in making the initial products. They

will be “exposed to the free-floating notes directly, before they are integrated into the finished products,” the *Post* reported.

Indeed, no government studies have been made regarding the risks of nanomaterials although, according to the *Post*, “many laboratory and animal studies have shown that nano-sized particles—those on the order of a millionth of a millimeter—spur peculiar biological reactions and can be far more toxic than larger granules of the same chemicals.” However, Dr. John Balbus, health program director for Environmental Defense and author of *Life Support: The Environment and Human Health*, believes that three weeks’ of workplace exposure to “engineered nanospecks would be equivalent to the exposure that caused animals to choke to death in 2004.”

Capitalist government, being the obsequious handmaid to private industry, is loath to require such experiments to protect workers, for profits come first. This is attested by the fact that a mere two-tenths of one percent of the federal government’s 2007 nanotech initiative of \$1.2 billion “is earmarked to study workplace safety issues.” The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is not agonizing over the issue either. This politically manipulated bureaucracy, established to protect capitalists from lawsuits and minimize court dockets, does have a “nuisance standard” that is of little relevance when confronting airborne nanomaterials, according to Dr. Balbus.

Charles Geraci, health branch chief of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), also expressed concern for work-

ers’ health while touring Altair Nanotechnologies Inc. recently. “We don’t want to be sitting around 20 years from now saying, ‘Gee, I wish we had looked into this.’” His remarks were in reference to some outstanding examples of past capitalist negligence when it comes to workers’ safety, such as in the notorious case of asbestos or paint overspray or innumerable other industrial hazards that have afflicted workers on the industrial battlefield.

In a “cover thy rear end” feign, CEO Alan Gotcher of Altair invited scientists from NIOSH to test his premises for nanoparticles. His actions represented a minimal outlay reduction from the surplus value he otherwise extracts from workers. Such expenses are good insurance against potential court costs brought by health-affected workers, so why not test?

Nanotechnology is another of those emerging mind-boggling developments ironically produced entirely by the talent and ingenuity of the working class that under the present system of private ownership in the means of production and distribution brings forth compounding threats to them regardless of what socially beneficial virtues it may promise. The rise of this technology provides yet another demonstration of how capitalists, impelled by the profit motive and the fear that competitors will trump them, recklessly barrel down a well-worn “primrose path” to confront society with unknown hazards. Indeed, contemporary society is immersed in monumental environmental hazards resulting from a long, long bill of such particulars.

The rational society of socialism, based upon democracy in industry and production for use, will function in an entirely different way. Gone will be the compulsion to develop new technologies at all costs. Enthroned with production for use will be its corollary that nothing will be manufactured that endangers society itself. Only when exhaustive tests have been made and safeguards established will production proceed. Workers will make those decisions.

# ... Iran

(Continued from page 1)

in no position to develop its new-found oil fields on its own. American trade sanctions against Iran have opened the door to China and Japan, both of which have negotiated agreements with Tehran to develop the Bushehr area.

It may be that the U.S. and the five other nations offering Iran "incentives" to abandon its independent nuclear program see an opportunity for doing business with Iran more than they perceive any military threat, at least in the near future. According to reports on the text of the proposal, Germany and the five countries from the UN's Security Council would "reaffirm Iran's inalienable right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination" and would "cooperate with Iran in the development by Iran of a civil nuclear power program." The countries involved also would "actively support the building of new light water power reactors in Iran through international joint projects," and build in safeguards against earthquakes.

Certain safeguards against the production of nuclear weapons would be built into the arrangement. In exchange, Iran would receive "access to the international economy, markets and capital, through practical support for full integration into international structures, including the WTO (World Trade Organization), and...the framework for increased direct investment in Iran and trade with Iran (including a Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement with EU)."

In addition, and among other things, Iran would receive "civil aviation cooperation, including the possible removal of restrictions on U.S. and European manufacturers, from exporting civil aircraft to Iran, thereby widening the prospect of Iran renewing its fleet of civil airliners"; "a long-term energy partnership between Iran and the EU, and other willing partners"; "support for the modernization of Iran's telecommunications infrastructure and advanced Internet provision, including by possible removal of relevant U.S. and other export restrictions"; and "support for agricultural development in Iran, including possible access to U.S. and European agricultural products, technology and farm equipment."

As can be seen, the "incentive" package has been presented as providing certain opportunities to Iran, but the reverse side of the coin is that the same package offers considerable opportunities to U.S. and, presumably, European capitalist interests. If Iran were to accept the proposal, or if the U.S. and the European countries involved were to accept the "amendments" that Iran is expected to propose, Iran would have the "opportunity" to buy such things as spare parts for its aging fleet of U.S. and European manufactured aircraft. The reverse of the coin, of course, is that U.S. and European aircraft manufacturers and other capitalists would gain the opportunity to expand their markets and profit by the sales.

It is too soon to know how Iran will respond to the overtures made to it. Furthermore, it is virtually impossible for the working classes of the United States and the world to ascertain the facts in this or any other instance that holds the potential for international conflicts and war. They have no voice in such decisions and never will as long as they tolerate the capitalist system, with its intrigues and manipulation to gain control over markets, sources of raw materials and strategic advantages. What workers should know by now, however, is that politicians serve the interests of the ruling classes they represent and not those of the working-class majority. As Daniel De Leon once observed:

"Commercialism deals in war as it deals in potatoes, rum, bibles, etc. It matters not that the effect of owning a navy [or a nuclear arsenal] is to render a nation readier for war; what of it? War feeds commerce, commerce feeds war, and the end of the song is larger wealth for those to luxuriate in who neither bleed on the battlefields nor swelter on the industrial fields of toil."

## letters to the People

### Immigration (1)

Like many other readers of *The People* I'm sure, I've been bombarded recently with mailings "pro" and "con" on the various bills pending in Congress concerning our immigration laws. So I really appreciated the insights provided by the article appearing in the May-June edition of *The People* on this topic. The capitalist press goes to great lengths to obscure the obvious; the collective labor of Hispanics *should*—under a sane system—make life *easier* for *all*! I have to admit that this fact was more obvious to me after I read your article than before. Thanks, *The People*!

William Kuhn  
St. Petersburg, Fla.

### Immigration (2)

President Bush plans to spend billions of our dollars to turn the Mexican border into a war zone, using paramilitary troops and high-tech equipment. It's a horrible idea that Congress should quash immediately. Immigration is a result of social and economic forces that the United States has a major part in creating, such as poverty and joblessness in South America. The great wealth that undocumented workers create in the United States is unacknowledged, while the government illegally declares war on border communities in the United States and Mexico. Who can doubt that Chicanos and Mexicans, and other brown-skinned people, will be abused and killed by trigger-happy, privatized soldiers whose bosses care only for the money they make. The dismal record of privatized prisons shows what poor and working-class people of color can expect.

Millions of immigrants and their supporters in the streets on May Day displayed a powerful force for change that can also help U.S. citizens who are feeling

the contempt of our government for their jobs, wages, pensions and freedom of speech. It's time that unions, women, the elderly and all people of color join undocumented workers and stop the destruction of their rights and ours.

Adrienne Weller  
Seattle, Wash.

### Marx and Religion

I have to express some surprise at the article "Marx and Religion" that was taken from the *Socialist Worker* in your May-June issue.

Although there might not seem to be too much to take offense at in the article, it would be worth bearing in mind that the motivation for the article is undoubtedly the "Trotskyite" Socialist Workers Party's electoral alliance with the Muslim Association of Britain in the coalition party Respect and that the purpose of the article is to put a Marxist garb on the SWP's political opportunism.

I wonder if many of the American readership of *The People* would be aware of this.

Hasten the day!

Alan Johnstone  
Edinburgh, Scotland

[REPLY—The article was reprinted on its merits alone, without reference to or knowledge of any ulterior motive the original publisher may have had in printing it. For all we know our reader may be absolutely correct about there having been some such purpose in the publisher's mind, and it is well to keep such things in mind. However, we found nothing in the article itself to betray any such motivation and our reader cites nothing from the text to suggest that it was anything more than it appeared to be to us.]

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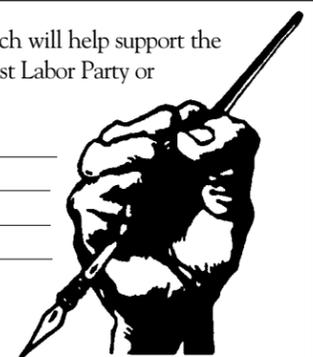
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# Peace for Sale

By Michael James

New Age pacifists apparently believe that peace can be had by simply adopting the right consumer choices. For example, a recent issue of *Utne* magazine carries an ad for "Peace Cereal." The makers hope to inspire people to embrace peace. The ad lists 10 ways to "cultivate" peace, with suggestions such as "laugh a lot."

New Age snake oil salesman Deepak Chopra, never one to miss out on a whacky idea, has founded a group called "Alliance for a New Humanity" to make peace a "consumer trend." He and former Coca-Cola president Jeff Dunn plan to "turn the peace sign upside down" so that "it kind of looks like a tree." The goal is to inspire consumers to purchase products that somehow promote peace.

Such mindless schemes merit no attention or comment except to reveal just how far gone into

ideological la-la land people can go without the insight and clarity provided by Marxism. The striking feature of such doomed efforts is their avoidance. In other words, persons who create and promote "Peace Cereal" or the "Alliance for a New Humanity" seem determined to avoid reality.

For example, they avoid the need to address the illegitimacy and criminal nature of capitalism. They fail to denounce the antisocial, capitalist economic system that is inherently aggressive, exploitative, militarist and expansionist. They call for peace without first acknowledging that war is simply a tool of capitalism, a method of conducting business and maximizing profit. And they avoid the reality of class conflict and the necessity of class struggle.

They want peace without seeing that a nation divided by conflicting class interests, a nation with a huge gap between rich and poor, a nation that routinely denies education, housing, employment, health care and other forms of social wealth to large numbers of its citizens can never know peace. An old African proverb reveals the truth about the inequality and unrest that will always plague capitalist society: "The dry grass will set fire to the damp grass."

Finally, Deepak, pacifists and New Agers want peace without accepting the need to remove the means of production from the control of the bourgeois, appropriating, exploiting class. They choose to pretend that capitalism can one day provide peace, justice or equality. As former slave Frederick Douglass said, such people want "crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters."

And so we are asked to believe that peace is

at hand if only we buy the right breakfast cereal. Peace will come when we buy products stamped with Deepak's inverted peace sign. We can consume our way to peace. Who needs class-consciousness? Who needs *The People*? Who needs class struggle? Even the capitalist masters of war will surely embrace peace when they see the new consumer trends, right?

Peace proponents seem to assume that war and violence are a result of some deficiency in human nature or that war and violence can be attributed to human misunderstandings or miscommunications or some improper attitude or outlook. They want to mass market enlightenment in a cereal box. But there is a material reality to war and violence: capitalism.

Pacifists, utopians and other daydreamers must wake up to the fact that capitalism is a violent economic system designed to assault and exploit the working class, the earth, animals and other nations to maximize profit. Marx knew that "Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life." In other words, there is a material context to war and violence.

The inherent, systemic violence of capitalism, as revealed in the drive for corporate profit, provides the context for all violence, ranging from war on other nations to violence in the street, violence in the home, violence against the earth in the form of pollution and violence against animals in the form of factory farming.

If human nature is perverted, capitalism and the profit motive must be blamed. Marxism is the only antidote to childish, pacifist foolishness. Marxists do not avoid truth. Marxism liberates and empowers by revealing the truth about capitalism and the revolutionary work that must be done to ever achieve peace. Marxism rescues from utopianism and reformism. Marxism demystifies. Marxism reveals that only a socialist society can achieve peace.

## ACTIVITIES

### CALIFORNIA

**San Francisco: Discussion Meeting**—For information call 408-280-7266 or email slpsfba@net-scape.net.

### OHIO

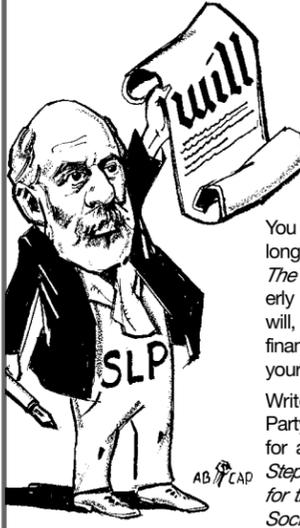
**Cleveland: Literature Booth**—Section Cleveland will staff a literature booth at this year's Slavic Village Harvest Festival, Aug. 26-27, southeast Cleveland on Fleet Ave. (exit 159B off I-77). Free and low-priced literature on hand. For more information call 440-237-7933.

**Columbus: Discussion Meetings**—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, July 23 (conference room 1) and on Sunday, Aug. 20 (conference room 3), 1-3 p.m., Carnegie Library, Grant and Oak streets. For more information call 440-237-7933.

**Independence: Discussion Meetings**—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, July 9, and on Sunday, Aug. 6, 1-3 p.m., Days Inn, 5555 Brecksville Rd. (just south of R17-Granger Rd.). For more information call 440-237-7933.

### OREGON

**Portland: Discussion Meetings**—Section Portland will hold the following discussion meetings from 10 a.m.-12 noon at the Portland Main Library, SW Yamhill & 10th: Saturday, July 8, topic: "Global Warming: Can We Live With It?"; and Saturday, Aug. 12, topic: "The U.S. and Trillions of IOU Dollars." For more information call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit the section's website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>.



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# Clothing Industry Migrating to Middle East Sweatshops

By B.G.

Never underestimate the ingenuity of the capitalist class in cheating workers out of the proceeds of their labor or its ability to sidestep and undermine labor laws meant to limit hours, regulate working conditions and protect the wages of the laboring class. Private ownership of the means of production, coupled with the wage-labor system, makes this exploitation possible.

In the early years of the 20th century, clothing production in America had a strong presence in the Northeast of the United States. Trade unions soon emerged among the clothing industry workers in the attempt to counter rampant capitalist exploitation.

By the 1950s and 1960s, however, apparel company capitalists had discovered a clever way of undermining whatever advantage in wages and hours their workers had gained by beginning a steady migration of their factories to the South, where local governments sided with the newly located capitalists and made it difficult or impossible to unionize the new southern factories.

Later, the clothing capitalists began a further move southward, which eventually spread to the Caribbean Islands and to Central America where their freedom to exploit workers was virtually unhindered.

Subsequently, these clothing company capitalists discovered Asia, especially China, where only government-sanctioned "unions" are allowed and workers are cruelly exploited and overworked in a supposedly "communist" society.

Still another area for exploitation of workers has now opened up in the Middle East. A free trade agreement between the United States and Jordan signed in 2001 has given impetus to a rapidly mushrooming and unbelievably brutal exploitation of workers in Jordanian clothing factories.

Human trafficking in obtaining foreign workers for Jordanian factories has become common with some of the unconscionable factory owners in Jordan. Most of these foreign workers come from Bangladesh and China—lured by extravagant promises of good jobs, good pay and good working conditions in Jordan.

Some of these workers claim to have paid \$1,000 to \$3,000 to traffickers to be transported to Jordan. According to a *New York Times* (May

3) investigative report on these workers, usually when they enter Jordan "their passports were confiscated, restricting their ability to leave and tying them to jobs that often pay far less than promised and far less than the country's minimum wage." The *Times* estimates that "tens of thousands of guest workers" are employed in Jordanian garment factories. The reasoning of these garment capitalists is obvious. The foreigners are easier to exploit and control than native Jor-

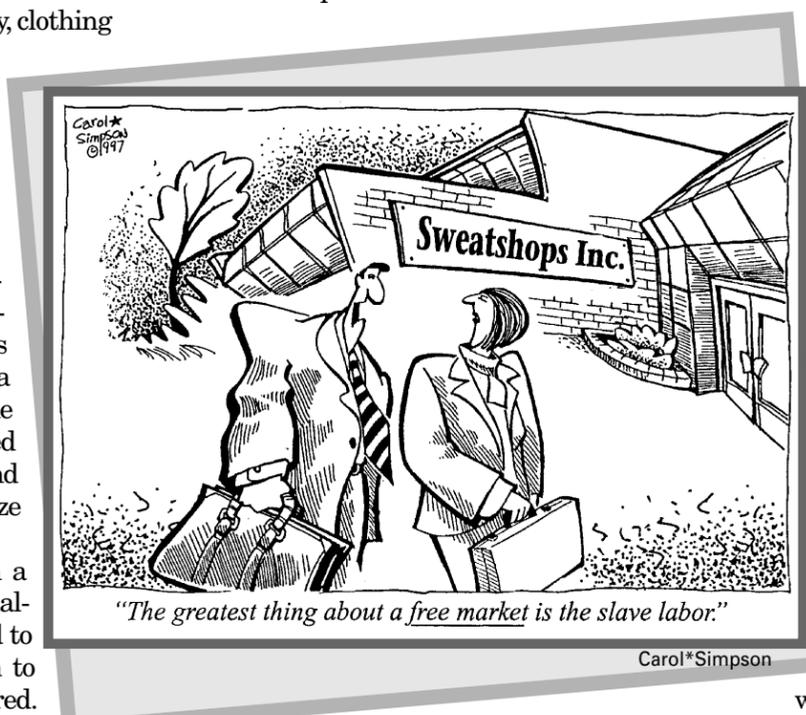
their machines."

This exploitation is extremely profitable to the capitalists in Jordan, for in the year 2005 their industry exported \$1.2 billion in goods to the United States alone. American companies that do business with these Jordanian factories include Wal-Mart, J.C. Penney, Gap, Sears and Target, among others.

How do these factory owners get away with blatant violation of Jordanian laws and brutal exploitation of their employees? Various former employees have reported that factory personnel hide abuses and force employees to lie when the Jordanian inspectors come around, threatening loss of jobs and deportation. The workers are kept like slaves, for without their confiscated passports and without ID cards, they are in danger at any time of being stopped on the street, arrested as illegal aliens, and either thrown into prison or deported.

The Koran teaches that a good Muslim must help the poor and the needy. It is obvious that these rogue Jordanian capitalists have put this particular Islamic teaching on the shelf and have adopted the grasping and greedy religion of capitalism, which tramples all in front of it to achieve more and more and ever more wealth. It is the same with Western capitalists who have also shelved inconvenient biblical teachings concerning mercy, justice and compassion for the unfortunate ones in society. These latter capitalists have also long ago adopted the new religion of capitalist greed.

Early on, many American workers thought they could depend on trade unions and labor laws to protect them. They were wrong. Capitalists took command of the "unions" by such means as the National Civic Federation and with the aid of what its president, Mark Hanna, called his "labor lieutenants," meaning the bosses of the unions. Jordanian workers do not have such "independent" labor unions. The Jordanian monarchy permits only government-sanctioned unions and so-called labor laws are regularly circumvented and ineffective, which is the same as saying that they are merely a ruse and not worth the paper they are written on. Foreign workers in Jordan cannot belong to any union, sanctioned or otherwise, and are deprived even of the pretense of "labor law" protections.



danians, who cannot be deported when they complain of working conditions.

One Bangladeshi woman told the *Times*, "When we were in Bangladesh they promised us we would receive \$120 a month, but in the five months I was there I only got one month's salary—and that was just \$50." She further described the working conditions: "We used to start at 8 in the morning, and we'd work until midnight, 1 or 2 a.m., seven days a week."

Mohammed Saiful Islam, a Bangladeshi who was a former production manager at a Jordanian garment factory, is now in the United States to publicize the desperate condition of workers in Jordan. He told the *Times* that a number of times the workers at the factory where he worked were forced to work until 4 a.m. and then had to sleep on the factory floor until 8 a.m. when they had to resume work again. "The workers became so exhausted they became sick," he said. "They could hardly stay awake at

## ...Effects of Caps on Prescriptions

(Continued from page 1)

ers away from name brand drugs and toward cheaper generic drugs. Caps also are intended make sick workers more prudent in their use of life-saving drugs, as if working people swallow drugs for the heck of it. All this "nonprofit" Kaiser Permanente imposed on working people with the goal of containing costs and saving money, but, while causing much unnecessary suffering, they failed of their purpose.

Today, Kaiser Permanente's Medicare Advantage program (formerly Medicare+Choice) does not have spending caps. Kaiser suspended them—but not for altruistic reasons and not before sick workers suffered the consequences. The same study found that though spending caps reduced the cost of drugs, Kaiser experienced higher costs in emergency room visits and

hospitalizations—and thus failed to realize its goal of saving money. In short, the effect drug caps had on Kaiser Permanente's "nonprofit" version of the "bottom line" explains Dr. Hsu's "surprise."

Unfortunately, prescription spending caps aren't limited to Kaiser Permanente. Other health care providers, both public and private, incorporate them into their plans. And the Bush administration's new Medicare program (Part D) has a "doughnut hole" prescription gap with similar effects as spending caps.

One of the more inhumane aspects of our profit-driven system (and there are many) is the denial of life-sustaining medications—to dangle them in front of sick workers, just out of reach because they can't afford to buy them, even after a lifetime of productive work. It is mental torture to be seriously sick, perhaps in pain, and forced to

further agonize over how or if one is to buy the medications that will ease one's suffering and maintain life. But that's capitalism—"the best of all possible systems."

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