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Workers Must Bring End to Bush's Secret Spying Program

By Ken Boettcher

The Bush administration's secret and warrantless surveillance of the email and phone communications of thousands of American citizens since Sept. 11, 2001, its apparent disregard for laws prohibiting such surveillance, and its refusal to inform Congress about the extent and nature of its use of such surveillance may provide Congress additional grounds for starting impeachment proceedings against President George W. Bush.

Senate Judiciary Committee hearings into the matter began in January, but the committee has already made it plain that its aim is compromise and "face saving" for the already discredited U.S. presidency and Congress itself rather than protecting the civil rights and liberties of American citizens.

Indeed, the chairman of the committee, Sen. Arlen Specter, announced that his intention is to "assert Congress' authority while allowing the antiterrorism program to continue," as *USA Today* put it on Feb. 9. Democrats made it clear, too, that their bark is worse than their bite in this matter when they allowed the hearings to proceed even though Specter refused to swear in the first witness, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. Some suspect Gonzales of concealing the administration's illegal spy operation during his confirmation hearing in January 2005. Without being sworn in before his recent testimony, Gonzales cannot easily be charged with perjury if he were confronted with past lies in these hearings.

The politicians whom capitalist donors have helped elect to the U.S. Congress are afraid to confront the Bush administration's usurpations of power and to enforce a halt to the abridgement of American civil rights and liberties the administration has carried out under the misnamed Patriot Act and other legislation enacted in response to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

It is time for all of us to remind ourselves that our freedoms and liberties are not mere privileges that we enjoy by the grace of our ruling class or government bureaucrats. They are, in the words of America's foremost Socialist, Daniel De Leon, "conquests of civilization" wrested from tyrants by our forebears at the price of "rivers of blood."

The revelations of Bush's secret spying program and Congress' milquetoast response to them to date serve as reminders that the danger of the total subversion of our freedoms and liberties under capitalism is ever present. Further encroachments can be expected as long as the working-class majority fails to take the necessary steps to provide new safeguards for freedoms and liberty—safeguards that are only possible in the industrial democracy of socialism.

More Former Aides Emerge To Rebut Bush War Claims

As the third anniversary of the war on Iraq approached, new revelations on how the Bush administration manipulated information to justify the invasion launched in March 2003 surfaced, and efforts to launch a congressional investigation that could lead to the impeachment of President Bush and Vice President Cheney gained some momentum.

The revelations that surfaced in February came from Lewis Libby, a former aide to Vice President Richard B. Cheney, and Paul R. Pillar, a former official of the CIA.

Libby, who has been indicted for perjury, implicated his former boss in a decision to "leak" certain classified information to the press in 2003 in an attempt to discredit James Wilson, the U.S.'s former ambassador to Niger. Wilson had debunked "intelligence" reports that the impoverished African country had sold nuclear materials to Iraq before the war. By then, the administration knew that to be false, but the story was useful in bolstering claims that Iraq was developing nuclear and stockpiling other weapons of mass destruction to justify the decision to start the war. Libby now claims that Cheney "authorized" him to leak what was known to be false information concerning the fictitious sale as if it were true to discredit Wilson, but primarily to salvage one justification for the invasion of Iraq.



Vice President Cheney.

AB CAP for The People

The disclosure of such classified information is a crime. Libby's testimony to a grand jury prompted Rep. John Conyers of New York to write a letter to President Bush and Vice President Cheney asking if a report on Libby's testimony is true and, if so, what "legal basis" there was "for authorizing such declassifications

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General Electric and the Pollution of the Hudson River

By B.G.

For nearly 30 years, General Electric (GE) had vigorously resisted cleaning up the polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) that it had dumped into New York State's Hudson River from its factories along the river. Before the discovery of their toxic nature and the government ban on their use in 1976, PCBs were used extensively in the production of electric transformers.

General Electric executives, and especially former CEO Jack Welch, carried on a counteroffensive against public outrage at contaminating the river and against government directives to clean it up, insisting that at the time of dumping the toxins into the river, "It was legal!" The company also insisted that dredging the chemicals up would just stir them up and do more harm than good, and therefore it would be better just to leave the poisons in place (no doubt to contaminate more fish and make them an ongoing danger for human consumption!).

In October 2005, GE reached a binding agreement with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Justice to dredge up 43 miles of the Hudson River bottom from Hudson Falls, at the river's source, south-

ward to Troy, just north of Albany. It would be a \$700 million project to be completed in two phases over a six-year period.

The first phase of the cleanup project comprises a very compact 80-acre area where cleanup is to start in 2007. This plan has given some pause to some critics who believe that GE will complete this phase and never get to the second, more extensive phase. Lisa Rosman, a coastal resources expert with the government's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), has sent a confidential memo to the EPA, noting that GE actually intends to leave enormous amounts of contaminants in the river by simply capping them over rather than removing them.

The EPA has responded to GE's submitted cleanup plan by noting its overreliance on capping rather than dredging all, or nearly all, the muddy bottom contaminates. However, the EPA has not responded to the NOAA's fear that GE may never get to the second phase of the cleanup project. If this second phase is ignored, the whole project will fail.

Some of those concerned with conservation and environmental protection believe that the

(Continued on page 2)

A Medical Scandal

By B.G.

If you should need a joint replacement, a bone graft, or a tissue or organ transplant, would you feel safe at having the procedure done in the hospital of your choice, especially a highly regarded hospital? Don't be too sure. Recent revelations into where many hospitals are getting their supplies of body parts are frightening. Take one notable example that has become an ongoing scandal.

Alistair Cooke, noted British journalist and longtime host of television's "Masterpiece Theater," who made his home in New York City, died in 2004 at age 95, suffering from lung cancer that had metastasized to his bones. His family wished to have him cremated but discovered that parts of his body had been harvested without their permission for sale to a medical tissue service company. In order to sweeten the sale, the seller also fraudulently reduced Cooke's age at death to 85 and made no mention to the purchaser of the disease that had wracked Cooke's body.

Nor is this just an isolated incident of fraud in the sale of body parts. There is a thriving business by unethical funeral parlors, embalmers and medical companies of trafficking in stolen human tissues and body parts. Some of the most ghoulish charges in this regard have been leveled against English Brothers Funeral Home in Brooklyn, N.Y. They have been charged with exhuming corpses from graveyards without permission of the families to harvest body parts, which were then sold to Biomedical Tissue Services of Fort Lee, N.J. Biomedical then sold the body parts to other tissue banks in New Jersey, Georgia, Texas and Florida, which then in turn resold these body items to hospitals across the country. (*Newsday*, Jan. 5)

Harmless business practices? Hardly. A Long Island woman from Franklin Square, N.Y., who was suffering from a lower back pain as a result of a car accident, had a bone graft in January 2005 at a nearby hospital. Now she is suffering from syphilis. The tissue used in her bone graft came from one of the Florida tissue banks that had dealt with Biomedical Tissue Services in New Jersey.

Now everyone along the line of direct supply is pleading innocence. The director of corporate communications at the Florida tissue bank that sold the bone used in the Long Island woman's surgery claims that the company carefully and fully tests and sterilizes all tissue before selling it. The doctor who is chief of infectious diseases at the hospital where the woman had her operation denies that she got her disease as a result of the operation because viruses cannot survive on bones, for bones are much too dry. Really? The good doctor seems to be implying that this

woman got her syphilis infection the old-fashioned way.

The only problem with these excuses is that the woman had a test for sexually transmitted diseases just before her operation and the test proved negative.

The district attorneys of Brooklyn and Newark, as well as the federal Food and Drug Administration, are now investigating the practices of Biomedical Tissue Services. Both the Brooklyn district attorney and the New York City Police Department's major case squad are also presently investigating the weird business practices of some members of the death industry, and especially English Brothers Funeral Home. So far, they have dug up three bodies from Brooklyn graveyards and are seriously considering 30 more to be of interest. The cases of about 1,000 bodies altogether are under review. The three bodies already exhumed indicate that plastic tubing was used as replacement for legs and joints now missing from the corpses.



Various hospitals that had secured tissues originating from Biomedical Tissue Service have sent letters to all patients who received that tissue during medical procedures to have themselves checked for HIV, hepatitis and syphilis.

According to *Newsday* (Jan. 6), "Biomedical has been accused by two New York families of purchasing stolen body parts dug up from graveyards in Brooklyn, forging documentation indicating that it was properly donated and then selling it to tissue banks that supply hospitals across the country."

As of this writing, no criminal charges have yet been brought because the investigations are not complete, although it is expected that there will soon be sufficient evidence for prosecution.

The so-called captains of industry have always known how to skin their workers while they were alive. Now they have derived new techniques to steal from them when they are dead.

...Hudson

(Continued from page 1)

EPA is being too forgiving and gentle with GE, considering the company's past foot dragging and refusal to accept responsibility for its poisoning of the river. The environmental director of Clearwater, an organization particularly concerned about the Hudson River, commented pessimistically, "The project is designed to fail." Time will tell. But GE's past history of denying its responsibility for polluting the environment and refusing for years to right its wrongs does not give one confidence that this capitalist enterprise is interested in the welfare of the human race.

Help Them Out!

Revolutionary Greetings!

I trust that this kite has found the party somewhere in time and in the best of health and spirits. I come to you from within the confines of the Belly-o-da'-Beast, and I am writing to request that you please send me a copy of the current issue of your organ, *The People*, and that you please place me on your mailing list so that I may continue receiving future issues. In addition, I would ask that you bless me with any other info that you can which will enlighten me concerning the activities and objectives of the SLP.



LNS

Your attention to these matters as soon as possible is greatly appreciated, and I thank you very much in advance. For a world without oppression or exploitation,

In solidarity,
MARLAND HENRY GIBSON
Carlisle, Ind.

Thanks to the generosity of our subscribers, we had the funds to enter a subscription for Mr. Gibson and to send him information about the Socialist Labor Party. 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.

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By Robert Bills

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Facing New Assault, UAW Still Miseducating Workers

By Bruce Cozzini

As auto industry layoffs and possible bankruptcies loom, workers find themselves in desperate circumstances, and union responses miss the mark, as shown by UAW President Ron Gettelfinger's column in the January-February issue of *Solidarity*, the UAW's bimonthly magazine.

Gettelfinger's column concerned the effect on workers of the "restructuring" of Delphi, an auto parts manufacturer spun off by GM in 1999. Delphi went into Chapter 11 bankruptcy in October of 2005.

While portraying the economic abuse of Delphi's workers, Gettelfinger offers a disingenuously utopian view of how capitalism works, and completely distorts class relationships. His solution to the entire problem amounts to the collective bargaining version of "can't we just kiss and make up." To make this seem more reasonable, he places blame for the abuse on new chief executive Steve Miller.

Miller and his band of bankruptcy lawyers and restructuring consultants have, in typical capitalist style, dumped the burden of keeping Delphi alive on the back of the workers, attempting to slash pay and benefits by more than 60 percent. Miller's first contract proposal to the UAW would have cut wages of production workers to \$9.50 an hour, which works out on an annual basis to be less than \$600 above the official U.S. poverty level of \$19,197 for a family of four.

Likewise in typical capitalist fashion, Miller and his executive cohorts are rewarded generously: \$3 million signing bonus for Miller and \$750,000 for the last six months of last year, "incentive bonuses" of \$43 million for key executives during the two years of Chapter 11, an additional \$88 million "to Delphi's top 500 executives when the company emerges from bankruptcy" or is dismantled and sold off, \$9.85 million to their law firm, 10 percent of stock in the restructured company to 600 "key employees" and a \$15 million completion fee to their investment banker at completion of the reorganization plan.

That is how bankruptcy works. The company

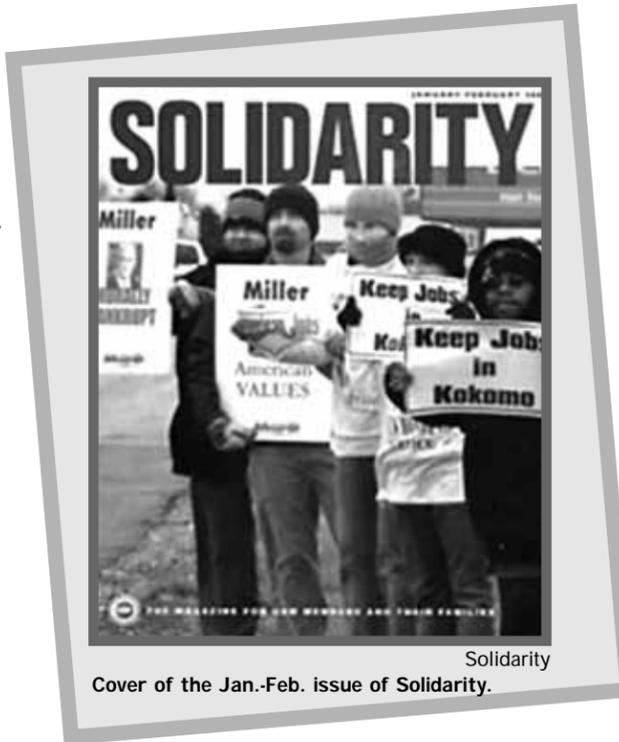
is protected from creditors until a plan can be put into place to eventually make it profitable again. Often executives are brought in who specialize in rapacious moves companies view as necessary. Workers called one such executive

fully underpaid." Gettelfinger claims that "Miller is intent on kicking Delphi's hourly workers out of the middle class [...]...while lavishly rewarding the people at the top" for their mismanagement. He goes so far as to say, in a boldface heading, that "Miller's vision dooms America." He further describes the vision as "an America sharply divided between a super-rich elite and the working poor, with no middle class as we know it today."

For a picture of Gettelfinger's vision, he opens his column as follows: "Suppose your employer was in serious financial trouble. Would you be willing to make sacrifices to keep the company going? If you were confident the sacrifices would be shared equitably...you probably would." And after attributing all of the company's abuses against the workers to Miller, he concludes, "Make no mistake: The UAW is willing to work with Delphi to craft a fair and equitable plan to get the company back on track, just as we've worked with Chrysler, Navistar, Ford, General Motors and other companies to solve tough problems."

In declaring the Delphi workers as "middle class," Gettelfinger is attempting to blur class relationships and the class struggle itself. The exploitation of labor is the basis for capitalist profit, and the class struggle is the fight between capitalists seeking to maximize profit and workers trying to earn a decent living. It's not a matter of choice: capitalists don't have the option of being benevolent; they are in competition with other capitalists. For the president of a major union, which has prided itself on militancy in the past, to pretend otherwise is a sign of either ignorance or dishonesty.

Workers have to know where they stand. In the American automobile industry workers are in jeopardy. Both Ford and GM have announced major layoffs and plant closings. Workers can expect to be out of work or forced to accept much lower wages. It's not about villains like Miller; it's capitalism. And the choice, not something the procapitalist UAW would recommend, is Socialist Industrial Unionism, working towards socialism. It is more than a choice; it is a necessity.



Cover of the Jan.-Feb. issue of *Solidarity*.

of decades past "Chainsaw Al" for his ruthlessness in reorganizing several companies. Workers are laid off, wages and benefits cut, pensions canceled. (Note: United Air Lines just emerged from bankruptcy. "In the past three years," according to the *Chicago Tribune* of Feb. 2, "UAL has cut 24,000 jobs and reduced labor costs by \$4 billion." So who pays for UAL's "recovery?")

Mr. Gettelfinger, however, treats Miller as an aberration, rather than someone simply brought in by the corporation to (willingly) perform their dirty work for them. He cites interviews given by Miller to the media "in which he declared the company's biggest problem is that workers like you [the Delphi workers] are grossly overpaid while top executives are woe-

Democrats Say the Funniest Things

By Michael James

Need a laugh? Who doesn't? The Feb. 6 issue of *The Nation* magazine is a real laugh-out-loud side-splitter. Several prominent Democrats have written about their ideas for saving America. So, what's the joke? Well, get ready, this will kill you. They want corporations to be good citizens.

For example, Jan Schakowsky, a congressional representative from Illinois, calls for "patriot corporations" which will be as committed to American workers as they are to selling goods." Rep. Schakowsky, who apparently has never acknowledged the reality of the class struggle in

capitalist society, has a truly utopian and delusional vision of "a new patriotic ethic in America—one that unites workers and their employers." Has she heard of NAFTA? Does she not know that U.S. corporations, having abandoned petty patriotic sentiments, are now pursuing profit by exploiting foreign workers?

Congressman Hinchey of New York is concerned about how deregulation has allowed "fewer than 10 huge media conglomerates" to control our news and entertainment so that "Stories that matter deeply to the country's well-being have been replaced by sensationalized murders and celebrity gossip." He correctly blames the U.S. corporate culture for "the dumbing down of America," but his answer is to call for Congress to take regulatory action.

Sheila Jackson Lee represents Texas. She says we need "accountable corporations" because business practices such as "downsizing and outsourcing, excessive executive pay, the unjust dumping of pensions, accounting fraud, [and] price gouging" are "fundamental threats to our democracy." She correctly understands that corporations are enemies of democracy but her only solution is that "Congress must increase its oversight."

Congressman Raul Grijalva of Arizona is concerned about nature and the environment because "The interests of corporate contributors always trump the public's well-being." Congressman Owens of New York wrote about America's contempt for public education. He wants to increase the federal share of public education financing from eight percent to 25 percent because

"The United States spends a far smaller percentage of its national budget on education than other developed—and developing—nations." He fears the ignorant masses: "...We are accumulating masses of dysfunctional citizens who imperil our society." He also fears unrest or revolution because, as the country abandons its urban poor, "we can also expect continuous rebellions."

And so these elected officials would have government save us from the corporations. There are two problems with this idea. The first is that corporations are inherently flawed. They are money machines, predatory, violent, singular in purpose, ruthless and totally unencumbered by a social consciousness. A graduate text in psychology admits that persons with the mental illness known as antisocial personality disorder tend to thrive in the corporate world. The point is that corporations are antisocial entities that must be abolished rather than reformed.

The second problem regarding governmental regulation of corporations is that capitalist government in America serves the corporate, ruling class. Marx said it best: "Law, morality, religion are...so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests." In other words, the working class has no government.

Democrats are funny. They want corporations to be "patriotic" or "accountable." They would have corporations abandon their pursuit of profit and class interests and instead embrace ecology or social justice. Funny how some people cling to the false hope of reformism.

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When Will the Mines Be Safe?

The deaths of 21 miners in the first 32 days of this year, the public outcry that followed and the response of industry spokespersons, politicians and reformers suggest that another round of mine safety reform may be in the air. That can do little to improve safety and health in the nation's mines, however.

It is no surprise that one of the worst offenders, facing likely legal responses to an "accident" at one of its mines, has promised better behavior in the future. Ben Hatfield, president of the International Coal Group Inc. (ICG), which owns the Sago Mine where 12 West Virginia miners were killed on Jan. 2, "reaffirmed the company's commitment to safety," according to United Press International. "We intend to be a leader in the effort to identify and develop safety technologies that will help to prevent future tragedies," Hatfield promised a U.S. Senate subcommittee.

ICG has no "commitment to safety" beyond that needed to keep its mines open and their product flowing to the market, and neither state nor federal safety regulations pose any serious obstacle in its path. The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), for example, handed the Sago Mine 205 safety citations in 2005, including 18 in the last quarter alone for "serious and substantial" breaches that could cause fatalities or major injuries at the mine. Many of those citations involved ventilation rules intended to avert explosions like the one at Sago.

Safety citations bother coal-mining capitalists and their managerial officials about as much as an occasional bit of gravel in their shoes. Their real commitment is to profits. ICG-Sago chose to risk MSHA's low-cost citations rather than comply from the start with rules it knew could boost safety. It made this choice in the knowledge that racking up MSHA's fines was a whole lot cheaper than compliance with the regulations. The fines for Sago's 205 violations in 2005 totaled about \$25,000. The largest fine for a serious repeat violation was \$878. The last reported quarterly earnings figure for ICG was \$158 million.

MSHA responded to the fatal disasters that opened the year by ordering a meaningless one-hour "Stand Down for Safety" on Monday, Feb. 6. In this hour, miners and company officials were to "go over the hazards involved with mining and the vital safeguards that need to be taken." Miners know intimately the "hazards involved with mining," but they have at present no control over the "vital safeguards" that need to be taken.

MSHA's response to the carnage was worse than adding insult to injury. Its one-hour national "stand down" was merely a tepid extension of West Virginia's response to the deaths of 14 miners there by Feb. 1. On that day, Gov. Joe Manchin issued a plea to the industry for a "stand down" for complete safety checks before any West Virginia mine resumed operation. MSHA also announced—effectively in violation of its own oft-violated rule against advance notice of inspections—that it would immediately send more inspectors to West Virginia! Further, on Feb. 7 MSHA announced a temporary emergency rule that would, rather than boost safety, merely standardize evacuation procedures when existing hazards create an emergency!

Seeing the writing on the wall, the National Mine Association (NMA) has praised MSHA's weak-kneed response. In a Feb. 1 statement, NMA President Kraig R. Naasz commended MSHA for its "stand down" and said the NMA would "assist the entire coal mining community in redoubling its commitment to safety."

The NMA contends that a trend toward fewer mining deaths and injuries over the past few decades, a period during which output increased, is evidence of the industry's "commitment to safety." A more believable explanation exists. As SafetyMine.com puts it in a "Mine Safety Fact," "Many occupational safety and mining scholars attribute mine safety progress in the United States to technological advances in mining equipment. Mining technology improves safety by reducing exposures through increased productivity (e.g., longwalls), by replacing man hours with machine hours (e.g., continuous miners)..." In short, mining companies, in their unceasing search for ways to toss more human labor power out of the process of production and thereby to beat their competitors in the marketplace, have indeed contributed to safety in the mines—by tossing miners out of their jobs! That is the kind of "job safety" only a capitalist can appreciate.

Reformers contend that it is time to put teeth into MSHA's fines and even pass new laws that would hold company officials criminally responsible for deaths and injuries. But nothing exists today to prevent MSHA from boosting its fines, and laws already exist that could be used to hold corporate officials criminally responsible for deaths and injuries. Witness the criminal prosecutions of Enron executives for what their capitalist investors regard as the far more heinous crime of cheating fellow capitalists!

Part of the problem is that the capitalist political state is left to choose when and how to do the enforcing, and what is at stake in the mines is "merely" the lives and health of miners—who can be easily replaced from the ranks of the unemployed. The state can emasculate or enforce as it sees fit, according to the interests of whatever particular element of the capitalist class holds sway at the time.

However, the heart of the problem is that workplaces are not democratic. They are in effect dictatorships ruled by capitalists or their representatives. Lacking the kind of industrywide, classconscious organization needed to defend and advance their interests on the job, miners cannot effectively put health and safety above the profit interests of the owners.

Miners' lives and health can never be made secure by reforms that purport to address mine hazards while leaving ownership and control of the mines in the hands of capitalists, whose primary concern is the lining of their own pockets. Miners cannot look to coal capitalists, or politicians and bureaucrats in the pay of the capitalist political state, or even to procapitalist union bureaucrats or other reformers, to guarantee mining safety and health.

Only when miners have direct control of the mines will they be able to make them as safe as modern technology, experience and intelligence make possible. And that will come about when they take over the mines as part of a transformation of society as a whole—to a new society, a socialist society based on collective ownership of the economy, a democratically administered economy operated for the benefit of all.

—K.B.

A De Leon Editorial

Taxes and the Working Class



The cost of maintaining the political state, and the method of financing it, are irrelevant to the condition of the working class.

Cost of Government

(Daily People, Feb. 10, 1901)

It is a feature of capitalism that government necessarily becomes more and more costly to its owners—that is, the capitalist class—as the years and the decades roll on.

In 1861, with a population of 31 million, the total expenditure of our national government, including the interest on a public debt of \$90 million, was less than \$67 million.

In 1881, the population was 50 million, and the expenditure, including the interest on a debt of over \$2 billion, was \$260 million.

This year the population is close upon 80 million, the interest-bearing debt has been reduced to about \$1 billion, but the expenditure already in sight, according to the appropriation bills passed or to be passed by Congress in its present session, is to be about \$800 million.

In other words, if we should use the vicious and bamboozling per capita mode of comparison which is in vogue among capitalist statisticians, we would find that the national expenditure, per head of population, was about \$2 in 1861, \$5 in 1881 and \$10 in 1901. Moreover, in multiplying these figures by five, we would find the so-called "average cost" of our national government "per family" as follows: \$10 in 1861, \$25 in 1881 and \$50 in 1901.

During the same periods the cost of state and municipal governments has also vastly increased. The budget of Greater New York this year is very nearly \$100 million; a figure which, treated in accordance with the same confusing per capita mode of averaging, would make it appear that each family residing in the American metropolis is now contributing \$140 to the municipal and state budgets, besides \$50 to the national expenditure, or \$190 in the aggregate, out of its own earnings or income.

It falls under the sense that such a statement, as regards the wageworkers, is absurd. Its object is to befool them into a belief that their condition would be better if the cost of capitalist government were less, and that they must consequently take sides in the dispute constantly raging between their exploiters concerning the extent and the mode of taxation; whereas their condition, under any fiscal system that we may conceive, can only be affected by the competition between them, supplemented or superinduced by the competition of the machine with human labor.

Of course, every cent that is spent in any way by any person, association or government, represents a value produced by labor. So is, for instance, a "grand party" given by the Bradley Martins. But it does not follow that the workers whose labor has produced the wealth of all such gentry would get one cent more in payment for their exertions if there were no such displays among "the 400." The "savings" of the latter would simply be increased to

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what is socialism?

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

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

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

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

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

Socialism does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a state bureaucracy as in the former Soviet Union or China, with the working class oppressed by a new bureaucratic class. It does not mean a closed party-run system without democratic rights. It does not mean "nationalization," or "labor-management boards," or state capitalism of any kind. It means a complete end to all capitalist social relations.

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

You are needed in the ranks of Socialists fighting for a better world. Find out more about the program and work of the Socialist Labor Party and join us to help make the promise of socialism a reality.

135TH ANNIVERSARY

The Commune of 1871

A Landmark in Working-Class History

To many workers, the Paris Commune may seem like nothing more than a vague and distant event in the history of another country. It would be a mistake to think that the ruling class thinks of it the same way. Their memory of the Commune still burns because it shattered a myth that lays at the very foundation of capitalist society: the myth that capitalists are indispensable to production, and that production would cease and anarchy would reign without them. The Commune of 1871 exposed the myth, not by design, but by the force of circumstances that compelled the workers of the city to take matters into their own hands.

During its brief life, the Commune so organized and ran Paris as to prove beyond doubt that the working class is capable of establishing and operating a government "of, for and by the people" in the most meaningful sense of those words. Most officials and functionaries in the public services deserted Paris at a signal from their superiors at Versailles, where the bourgeois government had established itself. They carried off seals, cash, records, committed vandalism and otherwise attempted to disrupt and destroy public services. Similarly, the owners and managers of hundreds of private enterprises and factories locked their doors and headed for Versailles. With the "brains" of the enterprises absent, the Versailles believed the workers would be stymied and that production would remain interrupted until the masters returned.

How the workers reorganized the services and reopened vital factories, and how they drew upon their own numbers for "directive ability," forms a heroic chapter of the heroic story of the Commune. They had no plan for industrial union administration, or, indeed, any conception of the administrative organ and social form developed by the SLP and Daniel De Leon more than a quarter of a century later. The insurrection itself burst upon them like a storm and literally thrust responsibility and a host of urgent and gigantic problems in their hands. Yet the manner in which they accepted these responsibilities and grappled with the problems was the *common sense* manner implicit in the Socialist Industrial Union program.

The telegraph workers reorganized the telegraphs; the public markets were closed only a few hours; from their own ranks the workers who kept the streets lighted drew their supervisors; even the cemeteries, which French president Adolph Thiers and his agents had tried to disorganize, were soon "functioning" under the direction of employees. An example of the actual procedure of these workingmen, suddenly thrown upon their own, could be found in the postal services.

Before the postal officials fled to Versailles, they hid or carried off stamps, seals, equipment, carts, etc., and posted placards instructing employees to proceed to Versailles on pain of dismissal. Many did. Others might have followed but for the fact that they were not forewarned. When they came to organize the mail service, Lissagaray relates in his *History of the Commune of 1871*, they were addressed by Theisz, "a chaser," who was appointed to direct the post office by the Central Committee. "Little by little they gave way," writes Lissagaray. "Some functionaries who were Socialists also lent their help, and the direction of the various services was intrusted to head-clerks. The divisionary bureaus were opened, and in forty-eight hours the collection and distribution of letters for Paris reorganized....A superior council was instituted, which raised the wages of postmen, sorters, porters, caretakers of the bureaus, shortened the time of service as supernumeraries, and decided that the ability of employees should be tested for the future by means of tests and examinations."

No similar problem of "persuasion" arose in the case of privately owned enterprises. However,

here the Parisian workmen's failures to prepare to "take over," plus the handicap arising from lack of time and the necessity to defend against military attack, prevented a full-scale assumption of industrial administration and operation. For the most part, only factories turning out urgently needed items were opened.

Overshadowing these failures was the action of the Commune itself in its decrees on the disposition of deserted workshops. These decrees, issued less than a month after the insurrection of March 18, called for an inventory of abandoned factories, and ordered trade councils "to present a report on the practical means of exploiting again at once these deserted shops, not by the renegades who have left them, but by a cooperative

tions of modern industry, require the prerevolutionary economic organization of the workers, and their appreciation of the economic organization's postrevolutionary role as the organ of industrial administration. To the Socialist Industrial Union, power, responsibility and the problems of production and distribution will not come as an unexpected storm. They will come, rather, as the fruit of conscious struggle. What the Communards extemporized with such efficiency as to enrage their "natural superiors," the SIU will accomplish in a planned, organized assumption of control and power.

How the Workers Took Paris

On March 18, workers the world over have cause to commemorate the Paris Commune of 1871. The first workers' government the world had known, the Commune governed Paris for just two brief months before it was savagely suppressed by the bourgeoisie. Yet that short period marked a turning point in the history of labor's struggle to free itself from the shackles of class rule.

Karl Marx called the Commune the most tremendous event in the history of European civil wars. After the June 1848 uprising in France, Marx had noted that henceforth "every revolution in France would bring up the question of 'overturning bourgeois society,' while before February, 1848, it could be a question only of overturning the form of government."

In June of 1848, the proletariat was "still incapable of carrying through its own revolution." But in the next 18 years economic and political conditions in France developed considerably, as did the consciousness of the French proletariat. With the Paris Commune of 1871, the overthrow of capitalist class rule was placed on the social agenda as a real possibility and socialism was posited as a practical alternative.

Imperialist War

As with so many uprisings since, imperialist war set the stage for revolution. In 1870, the adventurer Louis Bonaparte (Emperor Napoleon III) declared war against Prussia, a strategy he thought would help him keep his throne and solve France's domestic problems. Instead, the Prussians soundly defeated the French troops and laid siege to Paris. Louis Bonaparte abdicated.

With the collapse of the Second French Empire, a bourgeois republic was proclaimed on Sept. 4, 1870. Under the leadership of Louis Adolphe Thiers, a "Government of National Defense" was formed to guard Paris against the invaders. But the army, riddled with corruption and treachery, was less than fully committed to the city's defense.

The military leaders had to keep one eye on the invaders and the other on the restless Parisian workers, whom they rightly regarded as the paramount enemy. On Oct. 31, workers stormed City Hall, but withdrew, leaving Thiers and Co. to rule for another four months.

During this period, Paris remained under a state of siege, surrounded by Prussian soldiers. The French armies suffered defeats at Metz and Sedan and many were taken prisoner by the Prussians. Consequently, the defense of Paris fell more and more to citizen-soldiers enrolled in the National Guard. The majority of these guardsmen were workers who demanded the fight against the invaders be continued.

After a 131-day siege, the Republic capitulated to the Prussians on Jan. 28, 1871. The Prussian army entered the city, but finding themselves surrounded by armed workers, they limited their occupation of Paris to one small symbolic area. Forts were surrendered and federal army troops were disarmed, but the Prussians made no attempt to confiscate the cannon and arms of the national guardsmen.

(Continued on page 6)



Walter Crane

association of the workers once employed therein." There was also to be a "final cession" of the proprietors in question "to the workers' societies," but only when "the amount of the indemnity the societies shall pay the employers" was determined by arbitration boards! The proposal to indemnify the employers betrays a lack of clarity. However, the wonder is not that the Communards betrayed ignorance of the full implications of the upheaval, but that they comprehended them as fully as they did.

In his *Civil War in France*, Karl Marx summarized the capitalists' reaction to the workers' demonstration of administrative ability. "When the Paris Commune took the management of the revolution in its own hands," he wrote, "when plain workingmen for the first time dared to infringe upon the governmental privilege of their 'natural superiors,' and, under circumstances of unexampled difficulty, performed their work modestly, conscientiously, and efficiently—performed it at salaries the highest of which barely amounted to one-fifth of what, according to high scientific authority, is the minimum required for a secretary to a certain metropolitan school board—the old world writhed in convulsions of rage at the sight of the Red Flag, the symbol of the Republic of Labor, floating over the Hotel de Ville."

The Commune overcame the most menacing problems of the administration of services and production with common sense and energy. However, the revolution of the 21st century will require more than common sense and energy if vital services and other economic processes are not to be disrupted. The nature of the revolution, and the magnitude, complexity and ramifica-

The Revolt Begins

(Continued from page 5)

The Revolt Begins

The continued existence of an armed proletariat in the city was regarded as a menace by Thiers. In the early morning hours of March 18 he launched a clandestine military operation to steal the National Guard's cannon at Montmartre. But before the cannon could be dragged off, the federal troops were met by an aroused citizenry, who rushed to the defense of the guns which had been bought with money raised during the siege by public subscription.

Men, women and children crowded around and fraternized with the soldiers. Three times the generals leading the expedition ordered their troops to fire on the crowd. Three times they refused. Finally they turned their guns on the real enemy, shooting down the commander who had given the orders to fire.

The defense of the cannon marked the initial stage in the revolt. The federal forces promptly withdrew to Versailles, along with the government and other reactionary elements.

The Communards' failure to press their advantage by attacking the retreating army, and thus disarming the class of plunderers tagging behind it, proved to be a fatal error. In a letter to Dr. L. Kugelmann, dated April 12, Marx observed that the workers of Paris "should have marched at once on Versailles, after first Vincy and then the reactionary section of the Paris National Guard had themselves retreated. The right moment was missed because of conscientious scruples. They did not want to start the civil war...."

Workers' Government Elected

On March 19, Paris awakened a free city, to the joy of its inhabitants. The sole power in Paris lay with the Central Committee of the National Guard, which hastened to divest itself of the authority that had fallen to it. After one brief postponement, elections to a Communal Council were held on March 26. Of the 101 members elected, 21 were declared Socialists, members of the International Workingman's Association, while the remainder were "advanced radical and Jacobin type." On the 28th of March, the Commune was proclaimed and workers celebrated throughout the city.

The Commune immediately began to adopt measures for the social welfare of the workers, at the expense of the propertied class. Describing the forces steering the Commune in a socialist direction, Lenin wrote, "...In modern society the proletariat, enslaved economically by capital, cannot dominate politically unless it breaks the chains which fetter it to capital. This is why the movement of the Commune inevitably had to take on a socialist coloring, i.e., to begin striving for the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie, the power of capital, to destroy the very foundations of the present social order."

What were the acts that so enraged the bourgeoisie? The first decree of the Commune was to abolish the standing army and substitute for it the "armed people." Conscription was ended. The sale of objects pledged in pawnshops was suspended; landlords were forbidden to evict tenants until further notice; overdue bills were extended for a month; rents due from October 1870 to April 1871 were wiped out; bakers were freed from night work; the separation of church and state was declared; the guillotine was publicly burned; government salaries were set at the level of average workers' wages; workshops and factories that had either been abandoned or shut down were ordered reopened under the control of workers' associations and "judges were to be elective, responsible, and revocable."

Military Defeats, Social Advances

Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie was preparing for vengeance against the Parisians. Suppressing national differences, Thiers and the Prussian Bismarck, whose forces were still outside Paris' gates, conspired to crush this spark of communism. French prisoners of war were released by the Prussians and consigned to the Versailles army.

On April 2, the Commune did make a belated sortie against Versailles. But one of the two columns, consisting of 40,000 workers in all, was betrayed by treacherous leaders and defeated at Chattalion. In what was only the harbinger of the future slaughter, two workers' leaders were shot on the spot, as were members of the federal army found fighting on the side of the Communards. The prisoners taken were marched to Versailles, where they were subjected to vile abuse and imprisoned under inhuman conditions.

But the Parisians were not demoralized by the defeat. It merely strengthened their determination to carry on a defensive war.

Meanwhile, life in the city continued to take on new character and meaning. In his work on the Paris Commune, Marx described the changes brought about by the workers in control of Paris: "No longer was Paris the rendezvous of British landlords, Irish absentees, American ex-slaveholders and shoddy men, Russian ex-serf-owners, and Wallachian boyards. No more corpses at the

Especially in the early stages, precious time was wasted in parliamentary debate. The Commune sought to legalize its existence, despite the fact that it was actually engaged in a war against bourgeois legality.

Instead of seizing the Bank of France, the Parisian workers left it untouched. Describing this as a "portentous political error," Frederick Engels said, "The Bank in the hands of the Commune—that was worth more than ten thousand hostages. It would have meant the pressure of the entire French bourgeoisie upon the Versailles government in the interest of peace with the Commune."

Workers retained hope that they could defeat Thiers' army in street fighting. But preparations were not made and an air of unreality permeated the city. After being turned back in fighting on May 20, the Versailles army entered Paris through the gate of St. Cloud on Sunday, May 21, while in another part of the city a concert was being held to raise money for widows and orphans of the Commune.

Bourgeoisie's Revenge

The alarm was sounded, national guardsmen were dispersed to fight individually in their own districts and barricades were hurriedly thrown up. But by Tuesday, Montmartre had fallen and the butchery had begun. By Sunday the 28th, it was all over except for the vengeance of the Versailles legions, urged on by the bourgeois press. Men, women and children were summarily shot, others were imprisoned, some were shot after trials and others were deported.

The revenge visited on the Communards by the resurgent bourgeoisie was barbaric. As compiled by the historian Lissagaray, the casualties included: "Twenty-five thousand men, women and children killed during

the battle or after; three thousand at least dead in the prisons, the pontoons, the forts, or in consequence of maladies contracted during their captivity; thirteen thousand seven hundred condemned, most of them for life; seventy thousand women, children and old men deprived of their natural supporters or thrown out of France; one hundred and eleven thousand victims at least. That is the balance sheet of the bourgeois vengeance for the solitary insurrection of the 18th March."

After the bourgeoisie had taken its brutal revenge, Thiers declared, "Now we have finished with socialism for a long time." But such optimism was premature. A decade later a new generation of Socialists had arisen in France and their agitation forced the bourgeoisie to release the Communards still imprisoned or exiled.

Lessons of the Commune

Six months before the Paris Commune, Karl Marx warned that the time was not ripe for the French working class to attempt the overthrow of the new Republican government. Yet once the movement of French workers began in March 1871, Marx hailed it enthusiastically, supporting the Communards against all the distortions and attacks of the bourgeoisie and its press.

In a letter to Dr. L. Kugelmann (April 12), Marx praised the Communards in glowing terms: "What elasticity, what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians! After six months of hunger and ruin, caused rather by internal treachery than by the external enemy, they rise, beneath the Prussian bayonets, as if there had never been a war between France and Germany and the enemy were not at the gates of Paris. History has no like example of a like greatness. If they are defeated, only their 'good nature' will be to blame."

All too soon the Commune was defeated. But as noted before, it was the kind of defeat that "makes success possible." Alongside a legacy of heroism, the Commune left an historic, practical example from which Socialists, beginning with Marx, have drawn many lessons in their efforts to continue what the Paris Commune began.



Defenders of the Commune.

morgue, no nocturnal burglaries, scarcely any robberies; in fact, for the first time since the days of February, 1848, the streets of Paris were safe, and that without any police of any kind. 'We,' said a member of the Commune, 'hear no longer of assassination, theft, and personal assault; it seems, indeed, as if the police had dragged along with it to Versailles all its conservative friends.'

But the entire owning class, the factory owners, the landlords, the small shopkeepers, the bankers and large capitalists, allied with the Prussians and reactionaries from rural France, were prepared to crush the Commune with all the hatred and viciousness characteristic of the bourgeoisie when its interests are threatened. The Commune's petty bourgeois allies deserted it. Revolts in the provinces also failed and workers in Paris were left to fight alone.

By now defeat was unavoidable. Although the Versailles army consisted largely of beaten and demoralized men, the Communards were even less equipped or prepared to wage a civil war. The poorly disciplined worker-soldiers had no cavalry, few horses and few skilled artillerymen. Most of all, they lacked experienced soldiers capable of organizing them to defend the city.

Strategic and Political Errors

Despite the bravery with which they fought, the Communards made strategic errors that insured their eventual defeat. Their military leadership was so incompetent that it failed to occupy the fortress on Mont Valerien overlooking the valley of the Seine after it was abandoned by the retreating Versailles army on March 18. Though Thiers also failed to see the strategic importance of Mont Valerien, his generals prevailed and the army soon reoccupied it.

But most devastating to their cause was the Communards' failure, in all too many cases, to recognize that they were engaged in a life-and-death struggle with a class enemy that would marshal every resource at its disposal to annihilate them. As historians of the Commune have noted, the Parisian workers "would not believe the enemy was irrevocably the enemy."

...Lessons of the Commune

Discerning the essence of the Commune, what was new and lasting about it and what fundamental lessons it held, proved to be nearly as important as the Commune itself. Today we know that to emancipate itself, the working class must make its future history with a firm knowledge of past experience lest it repeat past defeats.

Characteristically, Marx cut to the core of the question in his classic work, *The Civil War in France*.

In his chapter on "The Historic Significance of the Commune," Marx begins with perhaps its most important lesson: "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." This realization—that the workers were seizing social power, yet couldn't do so merely by assuming control of the existing government apparatus—became the key to understanding the entire Commune and its implications.

"Its true secret was this," Marx wrote. "It was essentially a working-class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labor."

The first important point in this capsule summation is that the Commune, and, by extension, all working-class governments, are necessarily products of class struggle. The proletariat has "no ready-made utopias to introduce," Marx explains. Instead it seeks "to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant."

Herein lie the germs of the idea of "dual power." In the course of its efforts to overturn existing society, the proletariat creates new forms of revolutionary organization which are at once weapons in the class struggle and the basis for society's future organization. For a brief time, the new organs may exist side by side with the old, but soon one or the other must win out.

The second point Marx makes, that the Commune was the "political form" under which labor would work out its "economic emancipa-

tion," is often less readily understood.

A workers' government is not identical with socialism, nor was the Commune a socialist society. Socialism implies the complete emancipation of the producers; the abolition of wage slavery; the elimination of all class divisions; the destruction of a repressive state apparatus; the cooperative, democratic organization of production and the elimination of all social and individual alienation.

It is quite possible for a working class to come to power in social conditions that do not permit the immediate establishment of these socialist relations. The Commune was just such a case.

Its first task (which it failed to carry out sufficiently) was to consolidate its rule over society and defeat its class enemies. It was with these functions in mind that Engels termed the Commune a practical example of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

The Commune's deeper task, however, was "to serve as a lever for uprooting the economic foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class rule." In other words, to create the conditions for a socialist society, which means not only expanding the productive forces but also "transforming circumstances and men." Unless it had evolved in this socialist direction, Marx said, the Commune "would have been an impossibility and a delusion."

It is necessary to emphasize this latter function of the Commune because the 20th century saw many such "impossibilities and delusions." All the Communist Party states declared socialism to be their goal and described the rule of a bureaucracy as the dictatorship of the proletariat.

By contrast, the Commune took definite steps to assure that the exercise of power would remain with the workers themselves throughout any transition period. It demanded the elimination of the standing army and the police, universal election and immediate recall of all officials, abolition of bureaucratic privileges and workmen's wages for all officials.

These measures are not luxuries to be handed to the proletariat after state power has been secured by an elite and democracy can be "tol-

erated." The self-rule of the proletariat is the only way a workers' government can survive. Only certain organizational forms and procedures can serve the emancipation of the proletariat and even those must be chosen by the working class, not for it. In the last analysis, this is why Marx said, "The great social measure of the Commune was its own working existence."

Those familiar with the SLP program and Daniel De Leon's theories of Socialist Industrial Unionism will readily recognize many of the lessons drawn from the Commune. The essential features of a workers' government are clearly reflected in the SIU concept. That program calls for revolutionary organizations to serve as instruments of class struggle and the cells of socialist society. It rests on the democratic organization of the workers themselves. It aims to dismantle the existing state apparatus and have all power pass to the workers' organizations.

Social conditions, of course, have advanced since the Commune. Decades of capitalist development and the accumulated revolutionary experience of the proletariat have narrowed the gap between the political and economic possibilities of a workers' government. In advanced industrial societies, the material foundations for socialist production are largely in existence. A revolutionary transition period in these nations would consist mainly of consolidating the operations of a new workers' government, isolating and defeating any remaining class enemies, and advancing toward fully developed socialist society as rapidly as the consciousness of the producers—already transformed in the course of the revolutionary struggle—allows. No long transition era, no decades of "compromise" forced upon us by underdevelopment, are necessary or justifiable.

To be sure, the exact path of the coming social revolution cannot be set down in advance. But the time that's passed since 1871 gives every reason for affirming that labor's emancipation will be found by continuing on the road opened up by the Paris Commune.

De Leon's Commune Address

Soon after Daniel De Leon joined the Socialist Labor Party, in September 1890, the Party's National Executive Committee sent him on a national speaking tour that took him as far west as Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. One of the many stops along his route was Chicago, where he arrived in time to speak at the 20th anniversary celebration of the Paris Commune on March 18, 1891. What follows is a brief account—most likely an excerpt—of De Leon's address on that occasion from the WORKMEN'S ADVOCATE of March 28, 1891. The WORKMEN'S ADVOCATE was the predecessor of THE PEOPLE, which was launched on April 5, 1891, during De Leon's tour.

At the Twelfth Street Turner Hall

The colors of a half dozen nations fluttered about West Twelfth Street Turner Hall. The Stars and Stripes were intertwined with all of them. The great hall was crowded. The Socialists had charge of the demonstration. Husbands, wives, and children all were present. The hall and galleries were crowded. G.A. Hoehn of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* called the assembly to order and spoke briefly on the memories of the day. He then introduced Daniel De Leon, who was received with a storm of applause.

Prof. De Leon said in part:

"We have met to commemorate an event that is but one of a large number of its sort. Inscrutable are the ways of Providence. 'Tis with the pangs of travail the babe is born into this world. 'Tis with the pangs of travail progressive thought emancipates itself from the shackles of the past and from the realms of abstraction, to leap into the present and the field of action. The track of civilization is marked in human blood. The landmarks of

social progress are huge hecatombs of human life. Such a landmark is the Paris Commune, its rise full of promise and its tragic end. Yet we are not come to mourn, but to celebrate. We wear today the festal rose, not the sombre crêpe; we are marshaled to the sound of cheerful music, not with the roll of muffled drums; we meet to shake one another by the hand in congratulation, not to condole. And why?

"The Paris Commune, in the first place, presents an object lesson that eloquently points the path of emancipation. The lives laid down there were laid down cheerfully to teach the lesson that the class that produces and renders useful services to society is, under the present system, as distinct from the capitalist or idle class as though the former were black and the latter white of skin; as distinct as was Gurth with his iron collar-band from his feudal lord as described by Scott. It taught the lesson that, via legislation, Labor has nothing to expect

from the ruling, or capitalist class and its political parties, but sops which the right hand will withdraw faster than the left hand will grant; and that, for the rest, the rifle, the bullet and the dagger, calumny, misrepresentation, suppression of the truth, suggestion of the false are the favorite weapons, as it is fit with a ruling class that flies in the teeth of science, and with whom honor is a by-word.

"Secondly, the Paris Commune is a monument that marks the close of one and the opening of another era. Instructed, tutored and enlightened by experience, Labor can foresee that the carnage of twenty years ago cannot be repeated. If the murderous class that lives upon the blood of men, women and children in the United States, as elsewhere, should again initiate bloodshed it will not be the people, but its enslavers who will bite the dust."



A Parisian woman and child slaughtered by the bourgeoisie.

50 YEARS AGO

'De-Stalinization' Couldn't Save Soviet Union From Its Betrayal of Marxist Principles

Assessing Changes in Russia

(*Weekly People*, March 10, 1956)

The changes that are taking place in Soviet Russia in such swift and startling succession have great significance. That is self evident. A concerted effort is being made by the ruling bureaucrats of the Communist Party to undo some of the damage done by Stalin's arbitrary and terroristic rule. Stalin hagiology—meaning the writings that deify the last dictator—is already, in effect, scrapped. Denunciations of "the cult of personality" point to a continued campaign in the course of which we may expect a series of exposures of Stalin's crimes, and the rehabilitation of many of Stalin's victims, especially among the Old Bolsheviks.

Paralleling the dethronement of Stalin as a Communist god, and the rewriting of Soviet and party history, are developments that appear to aim at curbing both the privileges of the bureaucracy and the power of the secret police. Other developments, such as the elimination of entrance fees to high schools and universities, will end the virtual monopoly of education by the bureaucratic caste. And still others suggest that the Kremlin bosses have deliberately adopted a policy of encouraging independent thinking in the trade unions and among the rank and file generally.

How can these charges be assessed? For the Socialist the answer, now and always, is: apply the touchstone of Marxism. Applying this touchstone the luminous conclusion immediately stands forth. It is this: There has been no really fundamental change in Russia nor is a fundamental change indicated.

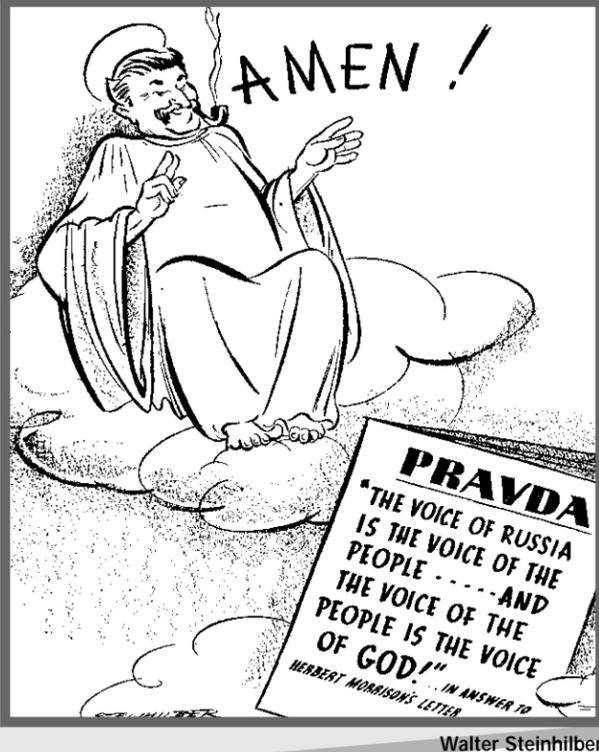
The portrait of Stalin as the all-wise, all-powerful, all-good leader has been shattered, and psychological barriers have been raised against a return to one-man rule. But the alternative to the "cult of personality" is not democracy, not the collective rule of the urban and rural workers; the alternative is rule by a small, circumscribed group, the "collective leaders" who as a group occupy the pinnacle of the party pyramid.

These leaders say there is now going to be a "return to Leninist principles." But even if this follows, it would mean merely a return to the situation that prevailed when Stalin began to consolidate his power. It should not be forgotten that the bureaucratization of the party apparatus began, and was well advanced, before Lenin died. Nor should it be forgotten that the secret police was created in the Leninist era. Moreover, it has yet to be shown how much of Lenin's principles is to be "returned to."

The internal security apparatus has had its powers curbed, and conditions at the slave labor camps have been greatly ameliorated. Some camps have reportedly been liquidated, or are in the process of being liquidated, following wholesale release of prisoners last year. And under the restrictions put upon prosecutors, forbidding arbitrariness and disregard of law, there has been a sharp decline in convictions. But it still remains that the party leaders, who collectively control the state apparatus, are, if they so decide, above the law. And the basic precepts of police power as a coercive organ of the state (which means, in practice, of the handful of leaders who control the state) have not changed.

Again, in the report of the Central Committee, delivered orally by Nikita S. Khrushchev, there was a section on "the development of Soviet democracy." But, while the phrase is pleasing, the substance has nothing whatever to do with the right of the Russian workers to determine the principles under which they work and live. Khrushchev boasted: "Only under a socialist system could...noteworthy forms of popular participation in the solution of important state questions arise and become a regular feature...." And he cited as an "illustration of the development of Soviet democracy...the widespread participation of personnel of plants in working and

discussing drafts of the sixth Five-Year Plan for their enterprises." But there is no more democracy in workers discussing production plans than there was in "labor-management committees" created in this country for a similar pur-



Walter Steinhilber

pose during World War II. Real socialist democracy would require that the Russian workers run and manage industries through management committees and industrial union councils responsible to the rank and file, and this, of course, the masters of the Kremlin would not dream of conceding.

Men cannot be abstracted from their motives. And nothing that has happened in Soviet Russia in recent times alters the Marxist's suspicion that Russia's present rulers are out to strengthen their position of authority just as Stalin did. That their methods are more humane, and that they even open up the possibility of an upsurge of independent thinking by the Russian workers, is beside the point. Indeed, they appear to be replacing the Stalin myth with the myth of the all-wise, all-powerful, all-good collective leadership.

Socialists cannot, nor should they, forget that the men who are demoting Stalin were, only a few years ago, Stalin's lieutenants and high priests. All, through fear, ambition and lack of principle, were accessories in Stalin's crimes. How can it be assumed, therefore, that they are sincere in their "atonement" today? It is true, of course, that the meanest villain is not beyond redemption. But redemption implies confession and repentance—and none of the present leaders has confessed his implication in Stalin's crimes. They have drawn up an indictment of Stalin while exculpating themselves.

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Stalin Dumped as Communist God

(*Weekly People*, March 3, 1956)

Events of tremendous import are now transpiring in the Soviet Union. Utilizing the forum of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party, the "collective leaders" of Russia—"collective rulers" is a more accurate designation—have not only proclaimed a new line respecting such matters as tactics and the theory of the "inevitability of war"; they have also repudiated Stalin's terroristic dictatorship and renounced a basic Stalinist dogma, viz., the infallibility of the leader—and the corollary dogma that mistakes and failures were the work of "enemies of the people," "wreckers" and "traitors."

* * * * *

The 'Cult of Personality'

Throughout the Stalinist era, the Communists glorified leaders, especially Stalin, heaping sickening adulation upon them, and cloaking them in an aura of infallibility. The SLP was the first to draw the logical parallel with the Catholic Church and the "infallible" pope. Now several members of the Central Committee of the CPSU have denounced the "cult of personality" and admitted that for 20 years such a cult did infinite harm.

* * * * *

... De Leon

(Continued from page 4)

the extent of their "abstinence."

Let this, therefore, be well understood, and let it be well kept in mind for use when an attempt is made to sidetrack the laboring class upon a taxation issue. It is not from the wages paid out to the workers, but from the wealth produced by them over and above their wages and withheld—that is, *stolen*—from them by the capitalist class, that this class pays the taxes as well as its butcher's bill and its violins.

Not the cost of capitalist government, but the existence of capitalism itself, is the issue between the exploited and the exploiter. And there is only one party that keeps this issue unclouded, forcing it more and more to the front as by its efforts the classconsciousness of the exploited millions is being awakened. No middle-class cobwebs obscure the vision of the fighting SLP.



53 pp. — \$1.50
(postpaid)

Was the former Soviet Union socialist? State capitalist? Or was it a new form of class society? This instructive pamphlet discusses each of these theories and their implications. Presents the SLP's case for viewing the former U.S.S.R. as a new form of class-divided society.

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

San Antonio Attempts To Whitewash Martin Luther King Jr.

By Michael James

The city of San Antonio has an annual march in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The march is in its 20th year and is apparently one of the nation's largest such events, drawing as many as 70,000 people. This year, the city commission in charge of the event voted to expand the festivities to include a military flyover by two fighter jets from nearby Randolph Air Force Base. The commission, not surprisingly, is headed by a minister named Herman Price. The decision sparked protest, and rightly so.

In a speech on April 4, 1967, at Riverside Church in Harlem, Dr. King said, "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." He made clear his outrage at "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government."

It is sad that civic leaders want to insult Dr. King with a display of military might. His statements against militarism are, after all, perfectly clear. But not precise. For example, in his statement above he suggested that massive and obscene U.S. military spending is for defense. We must demystify bourgeois notions about war in defense of freedom or as a noble effort to expand freedom to other nations. War is a tool of capitalism, a simple business strategy. Capitalist America wages war, sending working-class people to their deaths, in the aggressive pursuit of ruling-class profit.

Dr. King condemned U.S. genocide in Vietnam: "If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read 'Vietnam.'" Yet U.S. military spending has greatly increased since his assassination, and military madness has continued with other illegal, immoral and unprovoked wars in places such as Nicaragua, Somalia, Grenada, Panama and Iraq. Does this mean, as Dr. King declared, that "spiritual death" is upon us? Well, America has never been short on religiosity and there is still a church on nearly every corner. The more progressive ones post signs urging passersby to

"pray for peace," a truly impotent endeavor in the face of capitalist war. But it seems that U.S. Christianity, in general, is content to support ruling-class wars. It is amazing how human beings can embrace conflicting ideologies such as capitalism and Christianity or militarism and Christianity without suffering major brain trauma. A more material and realistic prediction is that America is rapidly approaching not

hand in hand with the landlord."

Dr. King was not a Marxist. He was not a Socialist. He wanted a socially sane society but without altering the material relations which cause capitalist society to be socially insane. His failure to embrace Marxism and socialism is the great failure in his philosophy. Perhaps it was because he was intellectually and ideologically confined by religion, but, for whatever reason, he never grew beyond mere reformism. Yet he aggressively condemned capitalism: "When machines and computers, profit and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered."

Indeed, capitalist society clearly places profit and property ahead of people, and capitalist society can never "conquer" racism, materialism and militarism. Why? Racism serves the ruling class well by keeping the working class divided. Materialism serves the ruling class well by keeping the working class satiated and pacified with the promise of consumer goods. And militarism serves the ruling class well because war is simply a method of conducting business and maximizing profit.

And so Dr. King was a pacifist. He had a dream of peace, economic justice and equality. And that is all that it was: a dream, an impossible dream. There is revolutionary work to be done before his dream can come true. Capitalism must first be abolished. But even though he was not a revolutionary, his clear message about the repugnance of U.S. militarism is being commodified and sanitized, whitewashed and watered down by warmongering parsons and patriotic chambers of commerce. They are reducing his message to a simple-minded and utopian plea for multicultural niceness. Meanwhile, the Pentagon death machine marches on, lavishing U.S. treasury dollars on sophisticated weaponry, waging war abroad and bankrupting domestic programs that might address human needs. A military flyover in San Antonio or elsewhere will cause Dr. King to roll over in his grave.



Martin Luther King Jr.

The People

"spiritual death" but a decadent and degenerate form of capitalism otherwise known as fascism. And religion serves capitalism so well that it will be a theocratic fascism, a thoroughly evil blend of corporate, Christian, police-state militarism. Marx saw religion cozy up to capitalism and declared that "the parson has ever gone

Katrina Victims Victimized Again

While bureaucrats and politicians squabbled in February over who or what was responsible for the complete failure of the federal government to respond to the Katrina hurricane disaster last August, thousands of people whose homes were destroyed by the storm and the flooding that followed were being evicted from hotels in New Orleans and other cities around the country.

On Feb. 9, Michael D. Brown, the Bush appointee who headed the Federal Emergency Management Agency when Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, appeared before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on Hurricane Katrina to defend himself against charges of incompetence and neglect.

Mr. Brown denied the allegations, sought to deflect responsibility to the White House and the Department of Homeland Security, and agreed when a member of the committee suggested that he was a scapegoat for the Bush administration.

Brown said he learned almost immediately when the first of New Orleans' levees had been breached and flooding began. However, he added, he deliberately bypassed DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff and contacted the White House directly to cut bureaucracy and because natural disasters were low on the department's list of priorities.

Chertoff responded a few days later, but



AB CAP for The People

before his own appearance before the Senate panel. "I want to tell you, I unequivocally and strongly reject this attempt to drive a wedge between our concerns about terrorism and our concerns about natural disasters." (*Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 14)

Then, on Feb. 13, FEMA put an end to the program under which the federal government paid to temporarily house thousands of Katrina victims in hotels in New Orleans and elsewhere around the country, and a federal court refused to issue a restraining order that might have

postponed the end of the program. According to *The New York Times*, "12,000 families across the country, including 4,400 now living in New Orleans," were affected by the decision.

In addition, FEMA apparently has failed to deliver promised payments and other assistance to help victims of the storm pay for other forms of temporary housing. "We have hundreds of declarations from people telling us that they aren't getting the checks that FEMA has promised them, or they've been promised trailers months ago—and nothing has come of those promises," said William Quigley of the Gillis Long Poverty Law Center. The *Los Angeles Times*, which reported Quigley's remarks on Feb. 14, also identified him as one of the attorneys who joined in the effort to get the restraining order denied by the federal court. "The government is making these families victims all over again," Quigley added.

NATIONALISM: Working-Class Nemesis

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NEW YORK LABOR NEWS

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...Aides Rebut Bush War Claims

(Continued from page 1)

and disclosures." Referring to the *National Journal*, the publication which was first to report on Libby's testimony to the grand jury, Conyers posed a third question for the president and vice president to answer:

"On Sept. 30, 2003," he noted, "the president declared, 'Listen, I know of nobody—I don't know of anybody in my administration who leaked classified information....If somebody did leak classified information, I'd like to know it, and we'll take the appropriate action.' Do you still stand by the president's pledge and, if so, what action are you planning to take against any individuals who may have authorized the leaks described in the *National Journal* article?"

Libby's accusation against Cheney and Paul Pillar's article in the March-April issue of *Foreign Affairs* magazine stimulated several members of Congress to sign a resolution Conyers introduced last December. Conyers' resolution calls for an investigation that could lead to impeachment proceedings against the president if it gains sufficient support in the House of Representatives. The number of cosponsors had grown from the half dozen Conyers had on board in December to 22 before the middle of February.

In his article, Pillar states that the Bush "administration used intelligence not to inform decision-making, but to justify a decision already made"—the decision to start the war. *Foreign Affairs* identified Pillar as the CIA's former "National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia from 2000 to 2005." "As the national intelligence officer for the Middle East," Pillar said of himself, "I was in charge of coordinating all of the intelligence community's assessments regarding Iraq; the first request I received from any administration policymaker for any such assessment was not until a year into the war."

Pillar added that the gap between the administration's claims about Iraq's military prowess and reality was only part of the misinformation used to justify the war. "But the greatest discrepancy between the administration's public statements and the intelligence community's judgments concerned not WMD...but the relationship between Saddam and al Qaeda," he wrote. "The enormous attention devoted to this subject did not reflect any judgment by intelligence officials that there was or was likely to be anything like the 'alliance' the administration said existed. The reason the connection got so much attention was that the administration wanted to hitch the Iraq expedition to the 'war on terror' and the threat the American public feared most, thereby capitalizing on the country's militant post-9/11 mood."

None of what Libby and Pillar have said about efforts to falsify information to manipulate opinion can change the course of events. Nothing can undo the damage done over the last three years, and nothing that opponents of the war in or out of Congress can do is likely to bring an early end to hostilities or lead to an early withdrawal of military forces from Iraq, much less prevent similar abuses of power in the future. Indeed, experience proves that effective safeguards against such abuses of power can never be achieved without a socialist reconstruction of society to supplant the capitalist system and remove the possibility of the American people being similarly deceived again.

The real problem is not that any of this happened in this or in previous instances, but that it can happen. The problem is that the mechanism facilitates the motivation. The mechanism is not the body of rules and regulations designed to regulate the conduct of the political state in the conduct of foreign affairs, but a social system that needs a political state to facilitate foreign relations based on and determined by the material requirements of a social system that would collapse without control of foreign markets, sources of raw materials, human labor and



Lewis Libby.

AB CAP for The People

strategic advantages. The mechanism is capitalism, from which spring all the manipulation, deception and backstabbing that occurs, and that undermines and overwhelms all efforts to control the natural consequences of such a mechanism (exploitation, war, etc.).

A meaningful inquiry into the war on Iraq

and similar imperialist adventures would reveal not only the characteristics, but the compulsions, of a class-divided, profit-dependent social system that renders international peace and cooperation an impossibility as long as that mechanism is tolerated by the only social force that can put an end to it. That social force is the American working class, but not in its current state of disorganization and apparent obliviousness to its own interests and potential.

The real problem is that the American people are no longer independent. They have lost control over the forces and institutions that govern the nation's course. Capitalism has turned us from a nation of economically independent individuals into a dependent mass forced to sell itself into wage slavery simply for access to the things we need to feed, clothe and house ourselves. Even the institutions that help to form our opinions of what goes on in the country and in the world are beyond our control. That will never change unless the American working class organizes itself to extend into the economy the democratic institutions that once gave concrete meaning to the aspiration after "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." That is precisely what the SLP's program of Socialist Industrial Unionism would accomplish. That is why all those who yearn for a democratic and lasting peace, coupled with a meaningful democracy in our daily lives, should dismiss all efforts to "tweak the system" and instead come together under the banner of the SLP to establish the economic and social democracy that is synonymous with socialism.

directory

UNITED STATES

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

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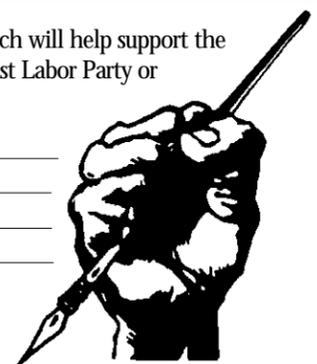
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letters to the People

Evolution

In response to Bruce Cozzini's excellent article, "The Campaign against Evolution" (*The People*, January-February), I would like to point out that the disparaging phrase "evolution is just a theory" shows a basic ignorance of what constitutes a theory in the eyes of science.

The preeminent science writer, Isaac Asimov, clarified this popular misconception when he wrote:

"The word theory is not properly understood by the general public, which tends to think of a theory as a 'guess.' Even dictionaries do not properly describe what the word means to scientists.

"Properly speaking, a theory is a set of basic rules supported by a great many confirmed observations by many scientists, that explains and makes sensible a large number of facts and observations that, without the theory, would seem to be unconnected."

When religionists dismiss evolution because it is "just a theory," they should understand that "intelligent design" is not even a "theory." Nor is it a hypothesis (which is an idea that can be subjected to objective tests). Intelligent design is a disguised tenet of religious faith trying to sneak into scientific education where it will act to weaken the separation of church and state and supply the ruling class with yet another tool to numb the minds of workers.

We must protect every vestige of free and independent thought if we, the workers, are to perform our historic role of replacing this exhausted, exploitive and dangerously destructive capitalist system with a classless, free and rational democratic society—Socialist Industrial Unionism. The human race has never faced a task of greater urgency nor aimed for a greater goal. Scientific socialism invites rigorous investigation. There is a solution.

John Houser
Santa Fe, N.M.

Nigerien Famine

I liked very much the article "We Let the Market Determine the Price" that appeared in *The People* of November-December 2005. It tried to deal with the root causes of the Nigerien famine, which has left about 3 million people at the risk of starvation. The root causes of poverty and famine in Niger and other parts of Africa include the legacies of slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism, and the current IMF and World Bank-sponsored "Structural Adjustment" programs. Yet, three years ago it was almost targeted for either an invasion or destabilization by the U.S. president in his address to the Joint Houses of Congress when he insinuated that a country in Africa (later identified as Niger) was selling uranium to then-president of Iraq Saddam Hussein for purposes of developing the elusive weapons of mass destruction. The only reason why Niger did not legally become a target of invasion and/or destabilization in the same manner as the "axis of evil" countries of Iraq, Iran and North Korea was a report by then-CIA operative Joe Wilson, whose covert trip to Niger turned out nothing in relation to that country's having transacted uranium with Iraq.

Stephen B. Isabirye
Flagstaff, Ariz.

Lynne Stewart

In response to your reply to my letter re Lynne Stewart in the July-August 2005 issue of *The People*, you should be aware that both Marx and Engels were jointly held in 1849 in Cologne, Germany. They were accused as editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of insulting the chief prosecutor and the police. Both were acquitted by the jury.

Trotsky was never tried by Stalin, but was tried in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1906 for revolutionary activities. At the time, he was the elected president of the St. Petersburg Soviet. He was convicted and exiled to Siberia in January 1907.

Martin Rosner
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Xmas Box Fund

I enjoyed reading your poignant article [November-December issue] pertaining to evacuees and Sutter Health—good work. I am sending a small check by regular mail; wish it could be more, maybe next year.

Chuck Fair
via email

ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA

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

San Francisco: Saturday, Feb. 25, 1-4 p.m., San Francisco Public Library, Conference Room, Grove & Larkin streets. Moderator: Robert Bills

Oakland: Saturday, March 11, 1:30-4:30 p.m., Rockridge Public Library, Community Room, 5366 College St. Moderator: Frank Prince

Oakland: Saturday, April 8, 1:30-4:30 p.m., Rockridge Public Library, Community Room, 5366 College St. Moderator: Frank Prince

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

NEW YORK

Buffalo: Discussion Meeting—A discussion meeting will be held on Saturday, March 18, 2-4 p.m., at El Buen Amigo, backstore meeting room, 114 Elmwood Ave. Topic: "What Is Socialism and Why Is It Relevant Today?" For more information phone Ron Ingalsbe 716-681-4094; email Wanblee27@aol.com.

OHIO

Columbus: Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, March 19 and April 23, 1-3 p.m., Carnegie Library, Meeting Room 1, Grant and Oak streets. For more information call 440-237-7933.

Independence: Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, March 5 and April 2, 1-3 p.m., Independence Public Library, 6361 Selig Dr., (off Rt. 21 [Brecksville Rd.] between Chestnut and Hillside). 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, March 4, book review of *Cruel and Unusual: Bush/Cheney's New World Order* by Mark Crispin Miller; and Saturday, April 22, book review of *America Beyond Capitalism* by Gar Alperovitz. For more information call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit the section's website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mind-spring.com>.

'Those Three Little Words'

I enjoyed Michael James' article on "Those Three Little Words" about the yellow ribbon bumper stickers [January-February issue]. I still have his article on "Profit Motives Living Hell for Animals" [August 1996], and over the years I have mailed Xerox copies of that article—at least 200. It's the greatest pro-animal rights article ever written. A classic. A masterpiece.

Wells Bain
Rancho Cordova, Calif.

Made a Clear Case

The January-February issue of your newspaper was the most enjoyable and readable that you have put out in some time.

The Wal-Mart article was timely and I hope consideration can be given to reworking the article for leaflet use. The Arnold Petersen item on Benjamin Franklin used the language of us who are of the working class, and, lastly, the article about New Orleans makes a clear case against the sins of capitalism.

Patrick McElhaney
Cincinnati, Ohio

Funds

(Dec. 17-Feb. 10)

Christmas Box

Section Cleveland \$1,100; Jack Radov \$601; \$200 each Bernard & Rachel Bortnick, Gerald M. Lucas, Irene S. Louik, Joan M. Davis; \$100 each Anonymous, Bill & Joan Kelley, James McHugh, L. Miles Raisig, Marjorie Mills, Nick York, Walter Vojnov; Donna Meyer \$78; William H. Nace \$75; \$50 each Albert Bikar, Brenda Von Wandruszka, Daniel G. Mackintosh, Dimitre Eloff, Lois Reynolds, Roger Caron, Tony Marsella, Wayne W. Urffer, William E. Tucker, Wright W. Bonte; Jim & Nancy Kniskern \$46; Richard A. Aiken \$45.

\$40 each Daniel Goodsaid, John Hagerty; George E. Gray \$36; Harvey Fuller \$35; \$30 each Bruce Gard, Jane Christian, Roy K. Nelson; \$25 each Blake Bearden, Bruce Vild, Gilbert Dewart, James C. Whiteside, John Houser, Joseph Groelke, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Leibfritz, Paul Bakulski, Peter A. Teeuwissen, Phillip Colligan, Richard Deshaies, Richard M. Shuldiner, Robert W. Long, Sid Fink, Steve & Nancy Kellerman; \$20 each Donald L.H. Scott, Edward Madejczyk, Helena Stevens, Irwin Hunsher, John E. Kerr, Lawrence Hackett, Lloyd A. Wright, Michael A. Wenskunas, Olaf Mend, Robert Hatch; T. McGregor \$16.71; \$15 each James H. Lehner, Marotte; \$12 each James & Barbara Pandaru, John & Mary Brlas; \$10 each Alexander J. Iwasa, C. Hensley, Clayton F. Hewitt, Frank Ufert, H.B. Madsen, Harry C. Segerest, Henry Coretz, Janelle Barabash, Joseph Bellon, Keith Ocamb, Lenaerts Guido, Lois Kubit, Louis D. Armand, Mark McGrath, Mary Chapin, Marya Pezzano, Michael Stone, Mike Kowalski, Patrick McElhaney, Richard Yord, Todd M. Jordan & FutureoftheUnion.com; \$8 each David W. Geier, Harry Buskirk; \$5 each Diane Secor; Jack Lally, Lavonne Lela, Sydney B. Spiegel; Harley G. Selkregg \$4.80; Don Patrick \$4.55.

Total: \$5,087.06

Press Security Fund

\$200 each Chris Dobreff, Irene Schelin; Section Cook County, Ill., \$124; Roy K. Nelson \$100; Gary

Dion \$85; \$50 each David A. Wurdeman, Harvey K. Fuller; Brian Blanchard \$49.64; Jim Plant \$40; \$30 each John S. & Rosemary Gale, Tom Puszykowski; Dan Kryk \$28; Matt Casick \$25; \$20 each Alex Iwasa, Ron Ingalsbe, Russell Holder; \$16 each Doug Smiley, Tanner Zahrt; Marshall G. Soura \$15; Ronald H. Harner \$11; \$10 each Ed Poll, Glen Ray Minnick Jr., Joe Randell, Raymond Solomon, Richard Mack; David Bartle \$7.20; \$7 each Anonymous, Robert Jensen, Thomas C. McEvoy; John Houser \$5.40; \$5 each Arlene Haber, Gary Hemphill, Joseph Frank, Robert M. Garavel, William Prinz; Henry Coretz \$3.

Total: \$1,241.24

Prisoner Subscription Fund

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Albert Bikar \$20; \$6 each Patrick McElhaney, Dave Bartle; Joe Randell \$2.

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SLP Sustainer Fund

Joan Davis \$800; Section Wayne County, Mich., \$305; Bernard Bortnick \$300; Chris Dobreff \$200; Robert P. Burns \$160; Lois Reynolds \$100; Al Bikar \$60; Michael Preston \$50; Sect. San Francisco Bay Area: William Kelley \$40; \$25 each Robert Ormsby, George E. Gray, Helen Stevens, Michael Wenskunas; \$10 each Steve Littleton, Jill Campbell; George T. Gaylord Jr. \$1.

Total: \$2,121.00

Socialist Labor Party

Financial Summary

Bank balance (Nov. 30)	\$154,718.87
Expenses (Dec.-Jan.)	23,102.37
Income (Dec.-Jan.)	14,043.68
Bank balance (Jan. 31)	\$145,660.18
Deficit for 2005	\$ 63,260.80
Deficit year to date	\$ 4,193.08

The Burning Question Of Trades Unionism

By Daniel De Leon

De Leon examines every major argument—pro and con—on the union question, traces confusion on what unions can and cannot accomplish to its source in the American Federation of Labor, and outlines the general principles on which genuine and effective working-class unions can be built.

48 pages—\$1.25 postpaid

New York Labor News

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GOOGLE IN CHINA

Do Capitalists Put Profit Before Principle?

"As the West prospers from China's economic boom, companies stand accused of putting profit before principle."

—Scottish *Sunday Herald* (Jan. 29)

By Diane Secor

Western capitalists generally claim to uphold the principles of democracy and free expression. This is particularly true of those that gather and supply or sell information and entertainment.

Now, however, some human rights groups charge Google and other Western Internet firms with "putting profit before principle" by bowing to the Internet restrictions that China demands as a condition for them to expand their share of the Chinese market. Are the allegations true?

It is no secret that Google is eager to expand its holdings in China's booming Internet market. Google holds a 2.6 percent share in the Beijing firm Baidu.com Inc., according to Associated Press. (Jan. 24) Google wanted a license from the Beijing regime to establish its own search engine in China, but China required Google to block searches on certain topics and to limit access to certain websites as a precondition for issuing a license to the Mountain View, Calif.-based company. According to the Scottish *Sunday Herald* report, even searches using the search term "capitalism" are blocked.

Google is not alone. The *Sunday Herald* reported that during the last 10 years such Western firms as San Jose, Calif.-based Cisco Systems, France Telecom and Deutsche Telekom have contributed to China's "filtering system." So many search terms and websites have been blocked by China's censors that this has been called the "Great Firewall of China." Worse, the U.S.-based Internet firms AOL and Yahoo have collaborated with China's police state in the surveillance of Internet users.

China's Internet police routinely scan the Internet for views and information that the regime does not want people to have access to. This system in China has been used to track

down and imprison an estimated 32 reporters and 50 bloggers. These Internet patrols are a branch of what is arguably the world's largest and most powerful police state, where workers can

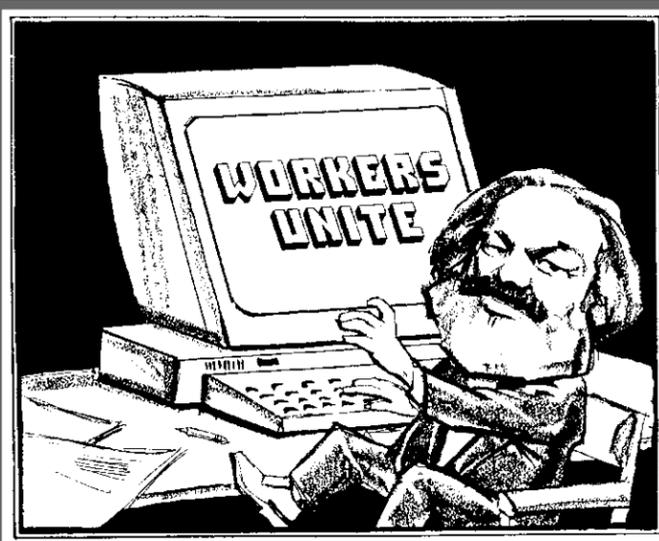
Western capitalists who have made a killing off the status quo. These restrictions on Internet access become more significant as more workers in China gain Internet access. According to a 2005 Human Rights in China (HRIC) field survey, students and workers, both manual laborers and professionals, are accessing the Internet in Internet cafés. Not surprisingly, websites not available at these Internet cafes include the HRIC website and the website for the Hong Kong-based *China Labour Bulletin*, which claims to promote "independent and democratic unions in mainland China," according to the HRIC survey.

Nonetheless, the charge by some human rights groups that Google and other Western Internet firms are "putting profit before principle" is wrong and fundamentally unfair. The allegation is wrong because it proceeds from a false premise. The false premise is that Google has or had some such high-minded principle as democracy, unfettered access to information or free expression to sacrifice.

Nothing could be further from the truth. With Google, as with all capitalist endeavors, profit and principle are one and indivisible. Profit is Google's principle, its reason for being—its *raison d'être*, as the French would say. Disseminating information is only the means to that end.

That and only that is what Google meant when it said that "to operate from China, we have removed some content from the search results in response to local law, regulation or policy." That and that alone is what it meant when it added: "While removing search results is inconsistent with Google's mission, providing no information...is more inconsistent with our mission."

Access to information is what attracts users to the Google search engine. Google users are what attract advertisers to Google, and advertisers are what bring profits home to Google. The saga of Google in China is a prime example of how capitalists rarely, if ever, betray the profit principle.



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form no organization independent of state control and dissent of all kinds is ruthlessly crushed.

Despite their pretenses of democratic principles, Western capitalists are lured to China because of potentially profitable deals with Chinese government agencies and companies. By agreeing to China's restrictions, these Western Internet capitalists indirectly provide a service to other Western capitalists with investments in China. They help to ensure a plentiful pool of cheap labor, where unions organized by workers and strikes are outlawed and where workers' submission is enforced by an efficient police state! What more could a capitalist want?

Without these filters, Internet communications could be a powerful tool for Chinese workers to communicate with each other and to move toward unity in defense of their class interests. This is not only a threat to the PRC regime, but also to a broad cross section of

Sharon's Legacy

By B.B.

Ariel Sharon, prime minister of Israel, suffered a massive stroke on Jan. 4 and remained comatose in a Jerusalem hospital while this issue of *The People* was in preparation. Sharon's friends and supporters held out little hope for his recovery as January faded into February and the stricken politician showed no signs of regaining consciousness. For all practical purposes, Sharon is out of the political picture, but his thoughts, driven by his long devotion to Israel's ruling class, live on, and, regrettably, so probably will the conflict between Israeli and Palestinian workers. That conflict seems likely to continue as long as workers on both sides are misled by the nationalistic illusions that militate against their common interests.

Long before Sharon ordered the removal of Israel settlements in the Gaza Strip, the idea of building a wall to separate Palestinian lands from Israel was in the works. The wall was the inspiration of Sharon and other powerful political figures in the Likud Party, which he had led. The purpose of the wall was to unilaterally establish permanent borders between Israel and an extremely fragmented Palestinian state, of which the Gaza enclave was the most politically absurd.

The excuse given for the wall was to protect



Ariel Sharon.

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Israeli civil society from suicide bombers sent by fanatical factions of various Palestinian groups bent on Israel's destruction. Still far from complete, the wall has only marginally achieved its protective function. Suicide bombers still enter Israel and accomplish their nefarious tasks.

That is where matters stood before the landslide electoral victory of Hamas on Jan. 25, to

the apparent surprise and consternation of the Israeli government and the Bush administration.

However, there are those who believe that the Israeli and U.S. governments secretly preferred to see Hamas defeat the Fatah party. "So as not to interfere with the Hamas victory," wrote one observer, "Sharon held the Israel Defense Force back from striking out against the Qassam missile launchers in the Gaza Strip when they fired at Israeli civilian locations in the western Negev and Ashkelon, site of Israel's main power station, big oil reserves and oil port."

Whether such conniving took place or not, it offers a rationale for the Sharon wall. Many Israeli politicians have long favored unilateral action in obedience to ruling-class circles, contending that they have no reliable Palestinian counterpart to deal with, a claim conceded by some Palestinians as well. The wall also contributes something to settling the demographic concern of some Israeli authorities of an eventual Islamic majority living within a Jewish state—a state ostensibly founded as a political democracy. Sharon and other Israeli politicians agonized over that prospect for decades, and, in that sense, Sharon's wall is Sharon's legacy.

Nationalistic aspirations encumber the minds of Israeli and Palestinian workers and serve only to maintain the rule of capital.