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The Wars In Iraq and Afghanistan

The following statement on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq is one of three resolutions on national and international affairs adopted by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party while in Session in July. The others can be found on page 4.

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party, in regular session assembled, reasserts that all wars in the modern world are rooted in the conflicting material ambitions of competing ruling classes. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are no exception. Thousands of American working-class sons and daughters, and tens of thousands of innocent Afghani and Iraqi men, women and children, have been sacrificed over the last three years to further our ruling class' ambition to establish firm control over the oil and other resources of the Middle East.



The working class of America has nothing to gain and much more to lose in the continuation of that conflict. Accordingly, the SLP repeats its demand for the complete and immediate withdrawal of all American military forces from Afghanistan and Iraq. However, we recognize that the government of our country as presently constituted is nothing but an instrument to serve the interests and further the ambitions of our country's power- and profit-driven ruling class, and that any demand addressed to that government is doomed to fall on deaf ears. Only the working class of the country has both the interest and the potential power to bring an immediate end to the insane slaughter in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Therefore, we appeal to the working class of America to heed the SLP's message for organizing its political and economic might to take control of the nation's affairs as the only feasible and practical method of bringing a speedy end to the conflict and resolving all other major social problems produced by the blood-soaked system of capitalism.

Hezbollah-Israeli Clash Could Spark Wider War

The long-simmering conflicts in the Middle East exploded again in June and stretched well into August. Following what, in other places and under other circumstances, might have passed as two minor border incidents along its southern and northern borders, Israel unleashed unrestrained attacks on the Gaza Strip and across the entire length and breadth of Lebanon. The result was murder, destruction and misery for the region's working classes, and the heightened possibility of an even wider and more destructive clash to come.

Gaza Strip

Because of the brutality and wanton destruction of the monthlong war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, Israel's equally atrocious attack on the Gaza Strip to the south has not received the same attention. The latest round of hostilities on that front broke out on June 25, when three Palestinian paramilitary groups, Hamas among them, crossed into Israel. In the ensuing encounter, several on either side were killed or wounded and one Israeli soldier was captured or kidnapped.

Israel responded to the incursion with a horrific show of force that indiscriminately swept up combatants and civilians alike. By Aug. 17 Israel had "carried out 768 military strikes against Gaza," according to a *Counterpunch* report, and

by Aug. 8 "131 Palestinians, including 108 civilians—among them 26 children—were killed and 395 Palestinians were injured," according to the Palestinian Monitoring Group.

Lebanon

The conflict in the north began when Hezbollah staged a raid across the Israeli border in which two Israeli soldiers were killed and two others captured. Thereafter, Israel unleashed an unrestrained aerial bombardment of cities, towns and villages throughout Lebanon, as Hezbollah fired hundreds of rockets across the border aimed primarily at towns and cities in which only civilians were likely to be harmed. By the time both sides agreed to a ceasefire that was supposed to begin on Aug. 14, Reuters reported on Aug. 19 "at least 1,183 people in Lebanon and 157 Israelis were killed." Most of the casualties were civilians and most of the damage was to homes, buildings and infrastructure having no military significance. Thousands had been injured and thousands displaced and left homeless.

At first, the United States refused to intervene, claiming that Israel had the right to defend itself against the attacks initiated by the Lebanon-based Hezbollah group, which unquestionably has been armed and trained by nearby Syria and

(Continued on page 6)

USDA Claims No Threat From Mad Cow Disease

By Bruce Cozzini

Meat producers and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) claim that there is no danger to the public from mad cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalitis), citing the small number of cases detected, only three from 2003 to 2006. But this is in the face of low testing rates, about 1,000 cattle per day, approximately one percent of the 35 million cattle slaughtered each year. Now, in July, only four months after the most recent case was detected, the Department of Agriculture has reduced the testing rate by a factor of 10 to about 100 per day, increasing the probability that infected cattle will pass into the market and infect consumers, but decreasing costs for agribusiness and the likelihood that embarrassing information will become public.

The original testing program was viewed as "seriously flawed" at its inception in 2004 by the USDA's inspector general, who stated it would lead to "questionable estimates." Based on a 2004 draft report on the program, Dr. Peter Lurie of Public Citizen, a consumer group, criticized the testing program as "sloppily imple-

mented in every possible way," saying it has been "oversold to reassure the public and the export market." If that program was flawed, how should we characterize one that tests one-tenth the number of cattle? Michael Hansen of Consumers Union says of the USDA, "They're playing Russian roulette with public health."

Clearly, the testing program is not aimed at protecting public health, but with protecting the economic health and profits of the U.S. beef industry. Before mad cow disease, beef exports were a \$3-billion-a-year market. As *The New York Times* noted on July 21, "More than 50 nations, including Japan and South Korea, shut their borders after the first case was found." Thus, a testing program that finds no incidences of mad cow disease is in order. (Amazingly, in spite of the reduced testing, Japan opened its market to U.S. beef in August, although with the restrictions that the cattle are less than 20 months in age and the meat contains no brain or spinal material to decrease likelihood of transmitting the disease.)

(Continued on page 3)

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CIA Kept Nazi Criminal's Hiding Place Secret

By Jim Plant

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) released documents in June showing that it was complicit in disguising the identity and concealing the whereabouts of Adolf Eichmann, the notorious Nazi arch-criminal from World War II.

Eichmann was a key figure in Nazi Germany's "Final Solution" program to exterminate European Jews. He was captured briefly after the war but then escaped to Argentina, where he lived under an assumed name until 1960.

The newly declassified documents show that the CIA knew where Eichmann was in 1958, but made a deliberate decision not to expose him. As the London *Guardian* explained in its issue of June 9:

"There were good reasons not to go hunting for Eichmann...the immediate fear was what Eichmann would say [if he was put on trial] about Hans Globke, who had also worked in the Nazis' Jewish affairs department, drafting the [anti-Jewish] Nuremberg laws....While Eichmann had gone on the run, Globke stayed behind and prospered. By 1960 he was [West German] Chancellor Adenauer's national security advisor."

Globke was the main point of contact between the West German government, the CIA and NATO. According to Timothy Naftali, a U.S. historian who has reviewed the freshly declassified CIA archive, "Globke was like a time bomb for NATO."

In spite of the CIA, Israeli agents succeeded in

locating Eichmann in 1960. They kidnapped him and took him to Israel where he was put on trial and executed by hanging in 1962.

When *Life* magazine decided to publish Eichmann's memoirs, the U.S. government pressured the magazine into deleting all references to Globke. Globke, however, was not the only Nazi in the West German government working closely with Washington; there were many.

One of the most prominent was Reinhard Gehlen, Hitler's chief of the military secret service on the Eastern Front. Immediately after the war Gehlen and virtually his entire organization, consisting of SS and Nazi military security service personal, were placed in the service of the U.S. Secret Service.

It should not come as a surprise that the U.S. government used and fostered former members of Hitler's Nazi Party. While, like all capitalist governments around the world, they will constantly talk about promoting freedom, democracy, human dignity and decency in general, they are ever ready, if they feel that it will further their commercial and perceived diplomatic interests, to cooperate with—and promote—dictators, tyrants, rogues and assassins.

To list all such cases in recent times would fill an entire page of *The People*, so we will limit ourselves to just a few examples: The murderous "Contras" in Nicaragua in the 1980s; Gen. Augusto Pinochet in Chile (indeed the CIA helped engineer his military-fascist coup against a democratically elected govern-

ment in 1973); then there was U.S. support of Osama bin Laden and of the Taliban when they were engaged in a guerrilla war against the Soviet Union. The United States even backed Saddam Hussein when he attacked Iran in the 1980s, and never uttered a word of complaint or dissent when he used poison gas against the Iranians and never at that time mentioned his "weapons of mass destruction."

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, however, Washington decided that Saddam Hussein was getting too big for his boots. Suddenly he became a threat to Middle East oil supplies and a danger in general to U.S. interests in the region. The "problem" of Saddam Hussein was not fully resolved by the 1991 Gulf War, so the current administration of George W. Bush decided to "finish the job" by toppling him in 2003.

However, "freedom and democracy" for Iraq was not the outcome, as the murder, mayhem, destruction and chaos that we see today demonstrates. As far as the Iraqi people are concerned, they are out of the frying pan and into the fire.

While capitalist "democratic" governments try and camouflage their policies and actions with a cloak of "legality," "morality" and a pretense of being motivated by "the good of humanity" and the spread of "democracy," the real motivation is the imperialistic pursuit of raw materials, markets and military and strategic advantages against capitalist rivals. The claimed "moral high ground" is in reality a sham: when the chips are down the doctrine of "the end justifies the means" prevails. A doctrine that often means supporting despicable governments and individuals, and which also provides the background and climate that result in barbarisms such as the torture and maltreatment of prisoners in Abu Ghraib, not to mention the deliberate rapes, murder and other criminal acts committed by U.S. troops in Iraq.

SLP Program Squares With Marxist Principles

Greetings,

I am very interested in your party as I am coming into much agreement with De Leonism. However, I was wondering what your stance is on internationalism, as I see on your website that the focus is solely on the U.S. party as well as a strong focus on socialist revolution in the U.S.

I strongly believe that socialist revolution is international or it is nothing. However, all current parties that are completely international reject the revolutionary potential, etc., of unions.

I am in complete agreement with the SIU program; however, I am curious about whether or not you give support to any working-class union activity, i.e., trade union strikes, even IWW strikes.

Please let me know. Thank you.

Jason B.
via email

Dear Jason,

Thank you for your email of April 21 and your questions about the SLP.

The SLP is both national and internationalist. It is national in that its program of Socialist Industrial Unionism is in harmony with American political and economic conditions and with American traditions. It is internationalist in that it calls upon the working classes of all nations to organize for the overthrow of class rule in harmony with the conditions and traditions of their own countries. This position, or policy, is consistent with the views expressed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels on the same subject. As they put it in the *Communist Manifesto*:

"Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie."

They reiterated the point when, in the same document, they added:

"Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word."

The SLP agrees that the socialist revolution must be international, and always has. However, it also understands that the industrialized countries, our own in particular, must take the lead. As Daniel De Leon put it:

"All countries are not equally ripe for the Cooperative Commonwealth. From this fact flows the conclusion that

the revolution which will set up the Cooperative Commonwealth cannot break out in any but the ripest of the ripe. Again, the Cooperative Commonwealth cannot break out in any country, even the ripest, without a sufficient number of others have reached a minimum degree of ripeness. The supposition that any one country can have reached the necessary ripeness for the social revolution while all others remain substantially unripe is unacceptable. Capitalism—a world-embracing movement—sees to it that that shall not, cannot, be. Were such a thing possible, then, ill starred would be that singular country. All others would fall upon it like a pile of bricks. The international capitalist steamroller would flatten out the social revolution within such boundaries in short order."

As for today's unions: While the SLP recognizes that its members and supporters sometimes must join them to keep their jobs, and while it provides guidelines for conducting party work within them, it also rejects their claim to being genuine unions in any meaningful sense of the word.

For example: The present "unions" make no effort to organize the workers as a class. They divide them into separate units and effectively utilize the "labor contract" to prevent the workers from acting as one in their own interests. They do not and cannot educate workers in their own class interests because they are organized on the false premise that capital and labor have interests in common. They do not and cannot prepare the workers to assume control of the industries and to conduct production for the benefit of all society

because they are committed to the "principle of private ownership, private initiative and the protection of private property," as the Executive Council of the AFL once put it.

Furthermore, these "unions" are controlled by well-entrenched bureaucratic machines that have a vested interest in capitalism. In truth, they are nothing more than mechanisms for the defense of capitalism. Indeed, by miseducation, intimidation and, above all, by exercising control over workers' jobs, they discourage the rank and file from organizing in accord with their class interests.

By contrast, the Socialist Industrial Unionism advocated by the SLP aims to organize all the workers as a class and would operate on the basis of the class struggle. The SIU would also proclaim the need for political organization of the working class to establish, via the ballot, its democratic right to accomplish peacefully the socialist reconstruction of society. At the same time, it would equip the working class with the physical power needed to back up their democratic decision to abolish capitalism by "taking, holding and operating" the means of production and distribution in the interests of society as a whole.

The IWW is a special case. It claims to have revolutionary aims, but rejects the political action needed to educate the working class and the ballot as the means of giving expression to their mandate. It is "anarchosyndicalist," and the SLP rejects it for the same reasons that Marx and Engels rejected the anarchists who sought to commandeer the First International in the 19th century. For those same reasons, the SLP prohibits its members from being members of the IWW.

I realize that these are not exhaustive answers to your questions, but I hope they help to clarify the main points that interest you.

Sincerely yours,
ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary

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Texas Pushing Coal Use Despite Global Warming

By B.B.

“Coal contains measurable amounts of most naturally occurring elements. These elements became bound up with coal before, during and after it was formed. Some of these elements are toxic to plant and animal life, and due to the large amount of coal used by power plants, appreciable quantities of potentially hazardous trace elements are released into the atmosphere each year.”

—Center for Applied Energy Research,
University of Kentucky

Texas may be leading the nation in a shift from natural gas to coal as a source of power and energy. In spite of mounting evidence linking coal to global warming and against all reasonable judgment, Gov. Rick Perry has authorized and placed on “fast track” construction of 16 new coal-fired, electricity-generating units by various companies. The locations for all but two of these new plants are in North Texas, upwind from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. That coal is a major cause of global warming and greenhouse gases does not seem to faze the Texas governor.

Texas is the country’s leading producer of lignite, or “brown,” coal. Lignite is the lowest grade of coal and the dirtiest to burn. That the plants will burn huge quantities of lignite is perfectly reasonable to Gov. Perry. Texas “brown” coal is cheaper to extract from the ground than higher grades and would lead to huge profits. After all is said and done, that and only that is what capitalism is all about.

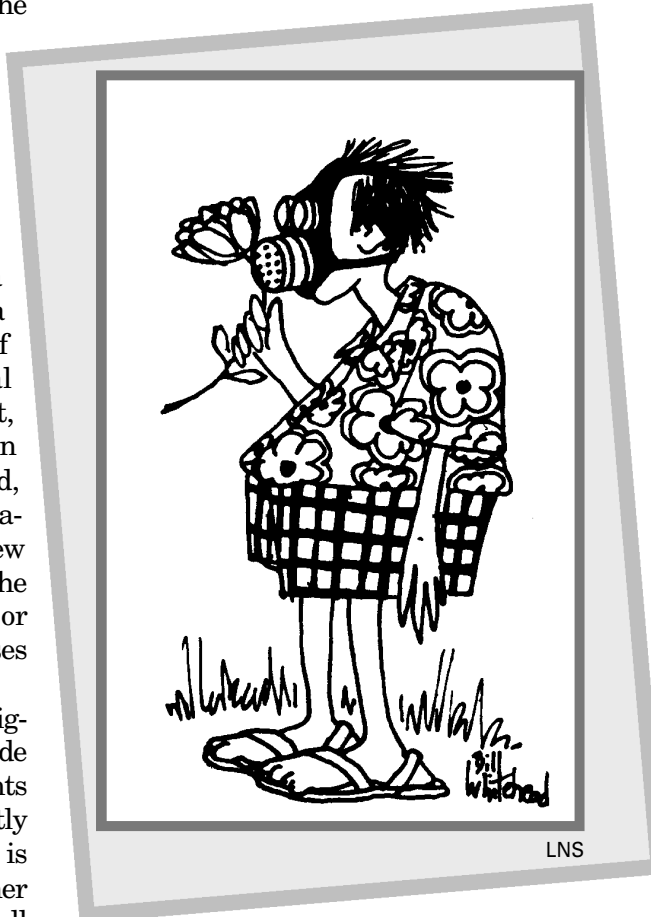
State Rep. Lon Burnam, Democrat of Fort Worth, may be on the verge of figuring out that profits and the environment mix as well as a barrel of Texas oil and a barrel of briny gulf water. Burnam was the lone representative to oppose the plan at a public meeting held recently by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. “I have watched this agency and its predecessors for 25 years,” he said, “and I have yet to see it work for the people instead of the polluters.” The commission is loaded with Perry appointees who have obsequiously bowed to industry pressure and their profit objectives. Indeed, the companies involved will not be required to demonstrate to the commission that additional coal-fired plants will be within federally mandated limits on pollution.

“The state, not the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], decides whether to grant the permits,” *The Dallas Morning News* reported on July 10. “All the federal agency can do is to object if it finds a problem.”

The federal agency apparently does not object. Richard Green, regional administrator of the EPA, accepted at face value a Texas Utility (TXU) promise to cut emissions by 20 percent. The state permit applications include no such

qualification, however, so Texans would do well to practice at holding their breath.

How familiar! EPA “limits” on pollution are straw men designed for industry to play fast and loose with to meet their profit goals. Meanwhile,



high ozone levels in the Dallas-Fort Worth area already are creating smog, scarring lungs, burning eyes, afflicting asthmatics, children, and sick and elderly people, particularly during the summer months. TXU, which plans to add the largest number of units, insists “it’s a good deal for customers and shareholders because burning coal is relatively cheap—dragging down overall Texas electricity prices—and produces big profits.”

No doubt that “good deal” represents a consensus among capitalists and their political lackeys. Others who appeared before the commission saw it differently. Dr. David Allen, whom the *Morning News* identified as a leading air pollution expert at the University of Texas at Austin, underlined the harmful effects of such added capacity. In a contrived rebuttal, TXU offered its own “expert,” Environ Corp., which also happens to be the state commission’s “expert.”

The sleight-of-hand strategy employed by the state is to evaluate each of the 14 permits being tendered for plants upwind of Dallas-Fort Worth separately, rather than the total number, in determining the environmental impact! “Critics say that defies reason,” the *Morning News* asserted. Rep. Burnam showed that he saw through the ruse when he declared: “The whole permitting process is about allowing pollution in the air for economic gain.” Burnam to the head of the class!

...Mad Cow

(Continued from page 1)

Earlier this year the USDA blocked a program by Creekstone Farms, a Kansas-based beef company, which wanted to test all of the cattle it slaughters. The USDA’s testing not only tests a small fraction of cattle slaughtered, it tests only high-risk cattle, those that are sick, unable to walk, known in the trade as “downers.” The fear is that 100 percent testing may reveal a higher rate of infection or force other producers to test all cattle in order to prove the safety of the product.

Again, capitalism shows that its priorities lie with profits rather than safety and demonstrates its propensity to control information when it is unwilling to control quality.

Despite all the hoopla about alternative energy, capitalism prevents the development of energy sources that could decrease the use of fossil fuels and reduce pollution. Developing the technology needed to reduce the use of fossil fuels does not suit capitalism’s *raison d’être*—it is not as profitable, runs counter to established vested interests and would, in fact, undermine the market for the sale and burning of fossil fuels. Instead, what we have is the compulsive cycle of pollution and global warming: the more heat buildup, the more relief sought by air conditioning; the more demand on electricity, the more fossil fuels used, the more global warming; and the cycle repeats.

Moreover, the system has arranged its societal matrix and inherent social relationships to maximize the waste of energy resources. This is evident in the extravagant fragmentation of urban and suburban areas, the dissolution of communities into sprawl, the huge proliferation of freestanding houses and the compulsion that requires extensive use of private automobiles.

In the rational society of socialism based upon production for use and democratic control of industry, new socioeconomic relationships will generate a total reconstruction of the urban fabric and methods will be widely employed to dramatically reduce the need for either natural gas, oil or coal use. We need only mention two possible alternatives to make the point. One is solar hot water for domestic and industrial uses, and another is photovoltaic cells for generating electricity. The country is awash with enormous quantities of sunshine, particularly Texas and the Southwest, but rare are such technological applications found when they could be mounted on every rooftop in the country.

Until that happens, Texas and the rest of the country will suffer the consequences of burning coal, and people will choke, sicken and die; pollution and global warming will continue, and humanity will spiral downward to an unknown and uncertain abyss.

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Civil Liberties & Repression

The following statement on civil liberties and repression is one of three resolutions on national and international affairs adopted by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party while in Session in July.

It is a salient fact that the leading assault on the democratic rights of U.S. workers today comes from the United States government—the same government sworn to uphold our Constitution and the Bill of Rights, that preaches democracy in the Middle East while it wages wars there for control of oil.

For decades civil liberties have been assaulted under the guise of fighting crime, drugs and terrorism. The Supreme Court chips away at our protections, Congress increasingly circumscribes our freedoms and intelligence agencies routinely ignore constitutional protections, compile files on tens of thousands of citizens, spy, wiretap and plot break-ins and disruptions.

Today, the government's "war on terror" has brought few terrorists to justice, yet serves to justify full-scale assaults on our liberties under the Patriot Act and other post-9/11 legislation. U.S. citizens have been "disappeared" and unconstitutionally held without trial. Persons defined as "enemy combatants" have been spirited off and tortured. Phone records, bank records, email and library records are subject to seizure without warrants.

Our freedoms and liberties are not mere privileges we enjoy by the grace of our ruling class or government bureaucrats. They are, it has been said, conquests of civilization wrested from tyrants by our forebears at the price of rivers of blood.

Capitalism is increasingly incompatible with freedom and democracy. To save capitalism, its ruling class must destroy freedom and democracy. To save freedom and democracy, the capitalist system, the system of economic despotism, must be destroyed. Socialist economic democracy alone can fully guarantee lasting freedom and democracy.

Adopted by the National Executive Committee in Regular Session,
Santa Clara, California,
July 16, 2006

Unions & The Class Struggle

The following statement on unions and the class struggle is one of three resolutions on national and international affairs adopted by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party while in Session in July.

As tens of thousands of workers are losing jobs, being "bought out," or experiencing forced wage reductions in the auto industry are unions organizing and fighting back on class lines? Unfortunately not! Instead, union leaders muddy reality by declaring that their members are being kicked "out of the middle class" by unscrupulous corporate executives. And they are offering deals to capitalists to "share the suffering" of bankruptcy-threatened companies.

By their statements and actions these union officials are showing themselves as betrayers of the working class and allies of the capitalist class. Workers can defend themselves only if they understand their status as working class. Regardless of their income, workers must sell their labor power to survive in a capitalist world. And the capitalists must pay the lowest wage that they can manage in the labor market in order to compete with other capitalists in the same commodity markets. That is the basis of the class struggle.

Capitalist production takes place only if profits can be made. And if that requires firing workers, cutting their wages or offshoring their jobs to countries where wages are substantially lower, so be it. Increasingly, wages are being forced downward as jobs are cut and wages reduced in auto, airline and other major industries. It isn't about individual capitalist villainy; it's about the capitalist system.

Workers cannot count on procapitalist unions to defend them. They must get beyond union smoke screens and organize as a class to form Socialist Industrial Unions and begin the fight to establish socialism and end capitalist exploitation. It is more than a choice; it is a necessity.

Adopted by the National Executive Committee in Regular Session,
Santa Clara, California,
July 16, 2006



A De Leon Editorial

Capitalist 'Civilization' Breeds War And Its Atrocities



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

The 'Water Cure' and Others

(Daily People, April 23, 1902)

The atrocities of "civilized" warfare are daily provoking fresh outbursts of horror, despite the callousness which their frequency has engendered. One day a Russian battalion fills a river with the bodies of killed and wounded Chinese; the next the British use defenseless Boer women and children as shields in attacking, and now comes the news of the iniquitous "water cure" administered to helpless Filipinos by the American soldiery.

Every one of these savage acts has in turn elicited the unsparing criticism of all the nations, especially those involved. They have also awakened the denunciations of the party out of power against the party in, as in this country, where the Democrats have denounced the Republicans as the incarnation of all that is bloody and revolting.

Considering that every one of these heinous offenses against decency and humanity are directly the outcome of principles avowed and held sacred by modern "civilization," these international and party criticisms would be indeed laughable were they not so tragic. When practically all nations and parties are tarred with the same stick, a "holier than thou" attitude, when assumed by any of them, becomes the acme of conscious or unconscious hypocrisy only worthy of derision and laughter.

Modern society contends that if the race is to progress there must be broadly speaking two classes: one, very small numerically, that owns and controls the land, the capital and the machinery used in wealth production and distribution, and lives by exploiting the other, the greater part of the population, that is without land, capital and the machinery, etc., etc., and that in order to live must consent to be exploited.

The profit, the superabundance of wealth, arising from such an arrangement, to this small class, is held to be a necessary incentive to the advancement of the race. Without it, we are told, men would not seek to emulate each other and all would be on a dead level, a theory which the early communistic development of the race flatly refutes.

This profit, this superabundance of wealth, leads to an accumu-

(Continued on page 7)

what is socialism?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

High Court Strikes Down 4th Amendment Safeguard

By Ken Boettcher

Dismantling democracy takes time. No people can be expected to willingly accept the yoke of tyranny. That yoke is more easily fastened upon the necks of the unsuspecting if installed bit by bit.

The Supreme Court has played a leading role in a decades-long, relentless assault upon the democratic rights and liberties of U.S. workers carried on by government at all levels—the very legislative, executive and judicial branches of government sworn to uphold the Constitution upon which our rights and liberties are based.

This summer the Supreme Court took up that role again. The court rendered its decision in the context of the familiar “get tough on crime” campaign used so often by ruling-class elements to “justify” circumscribing the rights and liberties, not merely of criminals, but of all.

The court’s June 15 decision in *Hudson v. Michigan* may be a fatal blow to the Fourth Amendment, for it completely eviscerates the so-called exclusionary rule, which excludes evidence garnered as a result of illegal searches or seizures.

Some history is in order. The Fourth Amendment upholds the “right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures.” It allows for searches and seizures only under authority of a warrant, issued “upon probable cause” and “supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”

The Supreme Court wrote in 1886 in *Boyd v. United States* that the Fourth Amendment’s prohibitions apply “to all invasions on the part of the government and its employees of the sanctity of a man’s home and the privacies of life. It is not the breaking of his doors, and the rummaging of his drawers, that constitutes the essence of the offence; but it is the invasion of his indefeasible right of personal security, personal liberty and private property.”

That right was based on a common-law knock-and-announce principle dating to the 13th century. As the Supreme Court itself once affirmed, there was “little doubt that the Framers of the Fourth Amendment thought that the method of an officer’s entry into a dwelling was among the factors to be considered in assessing the reasonableness of a search or seizure.”

In 1914, in *Weeks v. United States*, the Supreme Court held that evidence seized unconstitutionally could not be used at trial, pointedly observing that if “letters or private documents” were unconstitutionally seized and “used in evidence against a citizen accused of an offense, the protection of the Fourth Amendment declaring his right to be secure against such searches and seizures is of no value, and...might as well be stricken from the Constitution.” In a decision in 1961, the Supreme Court first imposed this “exclusionary rule” on the states.

Rulings since have whittled away at the Fourth Amendment’s provisions and the exclusionary rule. Cars were exempted from the exclusionary rule, then motor homes, on the basis that immediacy was needed when movable property was involved. By the same logic any wheeled, winged or hulled craft are also exempted. Special no-knock warrants have been held to be legal in certain cases where the police convince a judge that officers or evidence

would be at risk if they announced themselves before busting down a door.

Warrantless searches have been approved in “antiterrorist” legislation. Probable cause is no longer needed in certain cases. Unconstitutionally obtained evidence can be used under circumstances approved by such legislation.

But until *Hudson v. Michigan*, the exclusionary rule still stood, however wounded. Justice Scalia wrote the 5-4 majority opinion, joined by Chief Justice Roberts and Justices Kennedy, Thomas and Alito. Kennedy wrote a concurring



opinion that weakly and unconvincingly asserted that the decision didn’t completely negate the exclusionary rule.

Scalia went for the jugular, however, asserting that the “social cost” of letting defendants go free when illegally procured evidence is disallowed in court was too high relative to the privacy protection citizens receive from the knock-and-announce principle. “Resort to the massive remedy of suppression of evidence of guilt is unjustified,” Scalia wrote.

Today’s police forces, Scalia wrote, are so professional that the knock-and-announce rule isn’t needed. There is “increasing evidence that police forces across the United States take the consti-

tutional rights of citizens seriously.” Moreover, he opined, police knock-and-announce compliance can be assured by administrative proceedings and civil lawsuits.

Justice Breyer wrote the dissenting opinion, joined by Justices Stevens, Souter and Ginsberg. He observed that, far from police taking constitutional rights seriously, “The cases reporting knock-and-announce violations are legion,” with available data indicating “a widespread pattern” of disregard of this constitutional right among the police. Moreover, Breyer observed, the record of periods during which there was no enforcement of the exclusionary rule explicitly show that civil lawsuits and administrative actions have never been enough to ensure compliance with the knock-and-announce rule. In fact, as Breyer failed to point out, even with the exclusionary rule in effect, knock-and-announce violations have been “legion.”

Breyer observed that the majority’s opinion in *Hudson v. Michigan* “weakens, perhaps destroys, much of the practical value of the Constitution’s knock-and-announce protection.” Further, he wrote, “The majority’s ‘substantial social costs’ argument is an argument against the Fourth Amendment’s exclusionary principle itself.”

In fact, without the exclusionary principle the Fourth Amendment itself is in real danger. A few more incidental decisions should do it in completely.

The court’s ruling reflects more than merely a capitalist-class campaign to “get tough on crime” and never mind about “protecting criminals’ rights.” Giving the police wider latitude to invade a person’s privacy is a basic characteristic of a police state. Today, in the United States, that latitude is no longer merely threatened. It is established precedent. And any who believe that “professionalism” among the enemies of the working class who call themselves police will hold the threat at bay are fooling themselves.

How many more provisions of the Bill of Rights will be gutted before workers in this country begin to mobilize against the danger of approaching totalitarianism? None, we hope, lest the mobilization arrive too late.

SLP’s NEC Meets Over Work-Packed Weekend

By Donna Bills

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party followed a streamlined agenda when it met in Santa Clara, Calif., July 14–16 and salvaged enough time from a work-packed weekend to issue three resolutions on important social developments.

The first resolution on unions and the class struggle, with special reference to the auto industry, emphasized that present-day procapitalist unions betray the working class and concluded that workers must organize into Socialist Industrial Unions to protect themselves and to fight for socialism.

The second resolution on civil liberties and repression pointed out that the U.S. capitalist government leads the assault on workers’ democratic rights and concluded that only a socialist democracy can fully ensure freedom and democracy for all.

A third resolution restated the SLP’s position on the cause of war in the modern world and called upon the working class to abandon appeals

to the capitalist government and to take matters into their own hands.

The three resolutions have been posted to the Party’s website (see SLP Statements and Documents) and are printed in this issue of *The People*.

In his report to the NEC, the National Secretary highlighted a number of party matters requiring serious consideration, most of which received extensive discussion.

During that discussion the NEC affirmed the need to review and possibly update the Socialist Industrial Union program because of the many changes that have taken place within capitalist industry over the last several decades, i.e., outsourcing, globalization, automation, etc. To pursue this challenge systematically, the NEC appointed a special committee to evaluate the scope of the problem and “submit a joint report to the NEC within three months.”

Another matter given considerable attention was the effectiveness of the party’s efforts to recruit and retain new members. The NEC elect-

(Continued on page 6)

... Mega-slums

(Continued from page 8)

expelled from the world system," Davis asserts, "and who can imagine any plausible scenario, under neoliberal [capitalist] auspices, that would reintegrate them as productive workers or mass consumers?"

None of this was anticipated by Marxism, according to Davis, and "the 20th century became an age, not of urban revolutions as classical Marxism had imagined, but of epochal rural uprisings and peasant-based wars of national liberation." "The global growth of a vast informal proletariat...is a wholly original structural development unforeseen by either classical Marxism or modernization pundits," he added.

We cannot speak for "modernization pundits," but the contention that the globalized version of what Marx not only saw, but that he examined and explained for 19th-century England and Europe as a whole, is simply wrong. The uprooting of the rural populations of England and Ireland, and their forced concentration into the

slums of Manchester and other English cities, was brought on by essentially the same economic laws of capitalism that are still at work today. The rural populations forced off the land and into the cities of 19th-century England were no better equipped to become industrial workers than their modern-day counterparts in China, India or Mexico.

Marx was optimistic enough to believe that the working classes of Europe would not allow themselves to be degraded and exploited indefinitely, but he did not allow himself to be misled by fond hopes. As he put it in the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*:

"No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces, for which there is room in it, have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society. Therefore, mankind always takes up only such problems as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely,

we will always find that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation."

Although capitalism, global or otherwise, may not have worked out all of its possibilities even now, it certainly has worked out all of its possibilities for social good and human progress. Left to itself it will lead the world into colossal crises, the basic characteristics of which were foreseen well enough by Marx, though the scale of the crises now emerging may have caused even a Marx to catch his breath.

No power on earth can stop it except the working class, conscious of its interests in creating a world in which exploitation and human misery are made impossible by the collective ownership and democratic administration of all means of production, distribution and communications, combined with the abolition of the system of wage labor and establishment of a productive system designed to fill human needs. The SLP, with its program of Socialist Industrial Unionism, makes that aspiration possible. Indeed, it is the only practical and realistic response to the threat that capitalism, run amok, poses to the world.

... Hezbollah-Israeli Clash

(Continued from page 1)

the highly ambitious theocratic state of Iran. However, as Hezbollah proved to be a more tenacious foe than anticipated, and as international opposition to the ferocity of Israel's attack increased, the United States suddenly lined up behind efforts to impose a ceasefire to be enforced by an international "peacekeeping" force hurriedly pieced together by the United Nations. Although the ceasefire was finally agreed to by Israel and Hezbollah, signs of it breaking down were already evident as this issue of *The People* was in preparation. "Helicopter-borne commandos raided a Hezbollah stronghold...early Saturday [Aug. 19] in what Lebanon called a 'flagrant violation' of a fragile six-day-old ceasefire," *The Washington Post* reported.

Conflict Can't Be Justified

The Israeli state's brutal incursions into the Gaza Strip to the south of Israel, and its massive aerial assault against southern Lebanon and Beirut to the north of Israel, had no justification. Nor was the Katyusha rocketing attacks

on Haifa and other Israeli cities by Iran's surrogate Hezbollah army any less brutal or justified. Both resulted in the indiscriminate murder of innocent men, women and children, all working-class populations that have no interest in the conflicting material interests of their respective ruling classes.

The specter of a much broader conflagration that could yet erupt from the latest outburst of conflicting material interests is underscored by how Iran's ruling-class ambition to become the dominant power in the Middle East come into conflict with those of Israel, which has long been an extension of American imperialist interests in the region. Israel's possession of nuclear weapons, coupled with Iran's ambition to become a nuclear power, make this prospect all the more fraught with danger, not only for the region's workers but for the entire world.

This potential conflagration places working-class populations in conflict with one another solely at the behest of their ruling classes.

The material motives of the ruling classes of the various states involved and the world's

imperialist powers have conflicting ambitions.

- The Israeli state and the Palestinians both have irredentist claims to the land and its resources, both of which are also hung up on the horn of secular religious conflicts.

- Syria maintains a surreptitious unofficial presence and fronts for Iranian interests.

- Iran masks its immense poverty, nuclear ambitions and imperialist aspirations behind Shiite fanaticism, perceiving Israel as a surrogate of Western imperialism.

- The imperialist powers have long coveted the oil of the Persian Gulf, but are stalemated by Iranian control and threats against these profitmaking resources.

- U.S. imperialist interests are torn between a widening of the Iraqi and Afghan debacles, maintaining relations with the majority Iraqi Shiites and support of Israel.

This potential conflagration once again places working-class populations in conflict with one another solely at the behest of their ruling classes. Socialist society, by eliminating the capitalist system and the profit motive imbedded in production, will remove the source of these more and more frequent conflicts that can only lead to greater and greater catastrophes.

—B.B.

... SLP's NEC Meets

(Continued from page 5)

ed a Membership Recruitment and Retention Committee "to evaluate SLP membership recruitment and retention policy and practice." The NEC instructed the committee to "submit a report with recommendations for modifications of the [membership] materials to the NEC within 90 days of receipt of all materials by the committee." Ways and means for effecting greater participation in the members-at-large online discussion list was referred to the committee, too.

The NEC also established a Press Committee "to evaluate the party's existing propaganda methods and to submit a report on its findings within 90 days of this session." In addition, the Press Committee is to review for possible updating or replacement the party's old "questions and answers" pamphlet and home study course, both of which were referred to the NEC by the 46th National Convention. A recommendation that short statements on current topics could be used as agitational material also was referred to the Press Committee.

In keeping with instructions of the 46th National Convention, the NEC reported completion of "a first draft of the website redesign" and that...a second draft will be...submitted to the NEC for approval or further revisions."

This year's NEC Session, as the one held in 2003, did not include a traditional fundraising banquet so that the NEC could devote the entire weekend to its work. And work it did, from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. daily—and often longer—through the entire weekend. The discussions that took place were tough at times but always enlightening. In the end, however, the NEC set a positive course for itself that should redound to the party's benefit.

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NEW YORK LABOR NEWS

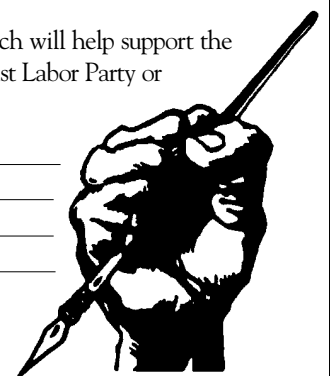
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This is my contribution of \$ _____ for *The People's* Press Security Fund, which will help support the SLP's official journal. (Please make checks/money orders payable to the Socialist Labor Party or *The People* and mail to P.O. Box 218, Mountain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

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letters to the People

Anarchism

Having just moved from an area rife with liberal, magical-thinking "peace proponents," I fully appreciated Michael James' excellent article, "Peace for Sale" (July-August 2006). It brought to mind another irritating segment of politically naive activists—noisy malcontents and militant appearing, self-proclaimed "anarchists." Despite what it might say on their T-shirts, attitude is not everything and anarchy is not a plan. It's merely (no matter their age) adolescent defiance of authority.

The only effective positive social change will come from a total socialist reconstruction of society and it will be neither romantic nor glamorous and probably won't make you feel all warm and fuzzy during the process. Preparation for revolution is serious work. It requires personal responsibility, commitment, study, cooperation, patience and perseverance, among other things. Most

importantly, one who wants to replace the violent, competitive chaos of capitalism with a sane civilization of genuine socialism needs to understand that it will be the classconscious organization and collective effort of the working people of the world that will make it happen. Anything less—like pledging allegiance to a heroic or charismatic leader who'll do our thinking for us or appealing to, boycotting of, or thumbing our noses at the ruling class—is just mindless reaction that will lead to more of the same.

I carry around with me a quotation taken from parts of SLP National Secretary Robert Bills' address to the 41st National Convention banquet in May 1993 in Santa Clara, Calif. In it he says, "People who go around pulling capitalism's small hairs...waste their time and they divert attention from what needs to be done...We,

the men and women who comprise the Socialist Labor Party, condemn the capitalist system and call upon the working class to organize its economic and political strength to rid the world of that evil and to usher in the socialist era."

Jill Campbell
Portland, Ore.

Pacifism

As a long-time reader of *The People*, I must take exception to an item in your July-August issue in which you equate pacifists with capitalists ("pacifists...pretend that capitalism can one day provide peace, justice or equality"). In fact, pacifism refers to an attitude about war, and says nothing about one's particular political sentiment. I feel certain that you would find a much higher percentage of people sympathetic to your cause among pacifists than you would find among the general public. Personally, I identify myself as a Quaker pacifist revolutionary Socialist.

Paul Sheldon
Drexel Hill, Pa.

ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA

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

OHIO

Columbus: Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, Sept. 17, and on Sunday, Oct. 8, 1-3 p.m., at the Carnegie Library, Grant and Oak streets. For information call 440-237-7933.

Independence: Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, Sept. 17, and on Sunday, Oct. 22, 1-3 p.m., Independence Public Library, 6361 Selig Dr. (off Rt. 21 between Chestnut & Hillside). For information call 440-237-7933.

OREGON

Portland: Discussion Meeting—Section Portland will hold a discussion meeting on Saturday, Sept. 16, from 10 a.m.-12 noon at the Portland Main Library, SW Yamhill & 10th. Topic: A book review of *Dark Ages America* by Prof. Morris Berman. The book condemns U.S. capitalist culture and warns of an impending collapse of capitalism. For more information call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit the section's website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>.

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

...De Leon Editorial

(Continued from page 4)

lation of goods, an overproduction, in all modern countries. The home market is glutted and foreign markets become a necessity. Territorial expansion, commercial wars for the capture and subjugation of present and prospective customers, are consciously advocated as a relief to the situation; while the doctrine that weak nations are the legitimate prey of strong ones—to be subdued or exterminated as conditions require—is unblushingly promulgated and practiced by monarchist and republican alike.

What can one expect of a society actuated by such principles—anything less or more beautiful than the brutal excesses of modern warfare? When it is held that society cannot progress without exploitation, war and extermination, why stand aghast, if you believe this to be true, at its logical results—a river full of dead and wounded Chinese, the use of defenseless Boer women and children as shields for the British, or the administration of the "water cure" to the Filipinos by Americans?

The modern strong man has no squirmings, no Christ-like sweat of blood for the sacrifices that must be endured—he accepts with Napoleonic stolidity the logical outcome of a policy based on and advanced by brutality.

Modern society is fast becoming like the modern strong man. It is acquiring a stolidity, which the intensity of the conflict for new territory and new markets is bound to accentuate and to lead to still more revolting and abhorrent spectacles.

There can be but one remedy for this abnormal condition. Society must abandon its fundamental principle of class exploitation. It must make the land, the capital and the machinery used in wealth production and distribution social property, democratically organized and administered. Use will then take the place of profit and the excesses of production will disappear, while the race, enjoying a greater wealth and comfort, will progress proportionately more rapidly, just as the capitalists of a nation enjoying great wealth progresses today with greater rapidity than do those of a nation of lesser wealth.

With the excess of production gone, the necessity of territorial expansion, commercial wars and national extermination, with their bloody and increasing repetitions, will go also.

Evolution points the way to this end. It is leading up to it. It is the goal, the only goal worth striving for, especially for the working class: the class that is exploited and robbed by the capitalist class.

Funds

(June 17-Aug. 11)

Press Security Fund

Anonymous \$500; \$250 each Roy K. Nelson, Irene Schelin; Chris Dobreff \$200; Severino Majkus \$107.71; Section Cook County, Ill., \$107.60; Harvey Fuller \$75; Arthur Glazier \$72.50; \$50 each John S. & Rosemary Gale, Jim Plant, Donald Rogers; \$40 each Bruce Gard, Anonymous; Robert F. Jensen \$37; Daniel Connolly \$30; \$25 each Robert Ormsby, Margaret & Frank Roemhild; \$20 each Valery Zaytsev, Marshall G. Soura, Alex Iwasa; T. McGregor \$17.63; Robert Long \$15; \$10 each Richard Mack, Paul Sheldon, J.A. Dingman, Doug Smiley; Gary Hemphill \$6; \$5 each Karl Piepenburg, Dave Nagel.
Total: \$2,058.44

Prisoner Subscription Fund

Michael Preston \$25; Valery Zaytsev \$20; Diane Lorraine Poole \$10; \$5 each Richard Mack, James Lehner.
Total: \$65.00

SLP Leaflet Fund

Chris Dobreff \$100; F. Cline \$25; \$20 each

Henrietta Lasher, Sid Fink; Jill Campbell & Steve Littleton \$10; \$5 each Anthony William Greco, James Lehner, Lisa Toth; Richard H. Cassin \$2; Joseph Bellon \$1.
Total: \$193.00

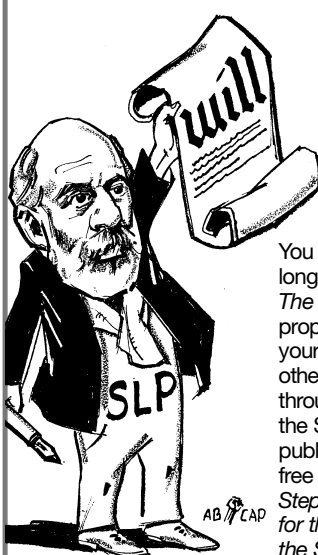
SLP Sustainer Fund

Joan M. Davis \$800; Michael Preston \$350; Robert P. Burns \$320; Bernard Bortnick \$300; Chris Dobreff \$200; Lois Reynolds \$100; \$50 each Section Wayne County, Mich., Michael Wenskunas; Richard A. Aiken (In memory of John W. Aiken) \$45; Helena Stevens \$40; Jill Campbell & Steve Littleton \$20; Arthur Glazier \$10.
Total: \$2,285.00

Socialist Labor Party

Financial Summary

Bank balance (May 31) \$116,691.19
Expenses (June-July) 18,175.48
Income (June-July) 7,034.16
Bank balance (May 31) \$105,549.87
Deficit for 2006 \$44,303.39



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Global Capitalism Producing Massive Slums and Poverty

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural....

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralized the means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralization. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments, and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, one frontier, and one customs tariff.

—Communist Manifesto

By B.B.

They are called “megacities” and “hypercities,” and during the last 20 years they have sprung up all over the globe. They are cities surrounded by enormous slums into which 10, 20 or even 30 million people have been pushed, then crushed under the weight of enforced poverty and misery on an unprecedented scale. These enormous concentrations of human misery and degradation are direct byproducts of what has come to be called “globalized capitalism,” the sanitized term for the unrestrained imperialism of the 21st century.

Nearly three years ago, the United Nations published a lengthy study or “Habitat report” on these developments under title of *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003*. Although the report is laden with inane observations (“Poverty and slums are closely related....”; “...it is very difficult to survive in cities on less than a dollar a day...”) and with academic code words to dress up and disguise more accurate but apparently distasteful ones (“neoliberalism” for unfettered, i.e., post-Soviet, capitalism and “globalization” for uninhibited imperialism), some of what it says is plain enough to be understood.

For example: “Some 1.2 billion people globally live below the World Bank U.S.-\$1-a-day extreme poverty line and about half of the world’s population lives below U.S.-\$2 a day. Poverty increased very rapidly from 1975 to 1993, but since then the numbers have barely increased. This disguises considerable regional variation: the biggest changes in poverty during the 1990s were in the transitional countries following liberalization, where extreme poverty increased from 14 million to 168 million....”

“...Much of the economic and political environment in which globalization has accelerated over the last 20 years has been instituted under the guiding hand of a major change in economic paradigm—neoliberalism, which is associated with the retreat of the national state, liberalization of trade, markets and financial systems and privatization of urban services. Globally, these neoliberal policies have reestablished a rather similar international regime to that which existed in the mercantilist period of the 19th century when economic booms and busts followed each other with momentous regularity, when slums were at their worst in Western cities and colonialism held global sway.”

Mercantilism is a legitimate term, but it was 18th- and 19th-century Western capitalist industrialization—including industrialization of the land—that subsumed peasant and rural

populations by compelling them to seek survival as wage laborers in towns and cities. “The expropriation and expulsion of the agricultural population, intermittent but renewed again and again [from the 15th century forward], supplied...the town industries with a mass of proletarians,” as Karl Marx observed in the first volume of *Capital*. “Large-scale industry and large-scale mechanized agriculture work together,” he added in the third volume of the same work.

issue of the London *New Left Review*.

“The brutal tectonics of neoliberal globalization since 1978 are analogous to the catastrophic processes that shaped a ‘third world’ in the first place, during the era of late Victorian imperialism (1870–1900),” Davis wrote in his article. “In the latter case, the forcible incorporation into the world market of the great subsistence peasantries of Asia and Africa entailed the famine deaths of millions and the uprooting of tens of millions more from traditional tenures.”

Similarly today, the resulting collapse of subsistence agriculture and the expulsion of large peasant and tribal peoples from traditional ways of life is compelling massive migrations to urban areas. Indeed, this is what is fueling the desperate workers of Mexico and Latin America to hazard the border crossings into the United States, as well as Africans risking Mediterranean crossings to reach Europe. As before, the land they left behind is now being exploited for mining, forestry and raising livestock, in other words, capitalist commodity production. But what of the millions left behind? They are swelling immense slums on the edges of existing towns and cities, and in some cases linear roadside slums, as in Africa or Asia. The results? According to U.N.

observers, by “2020 urban poverty in the world could reach 45 to 50 percent of the total population living in cities.”

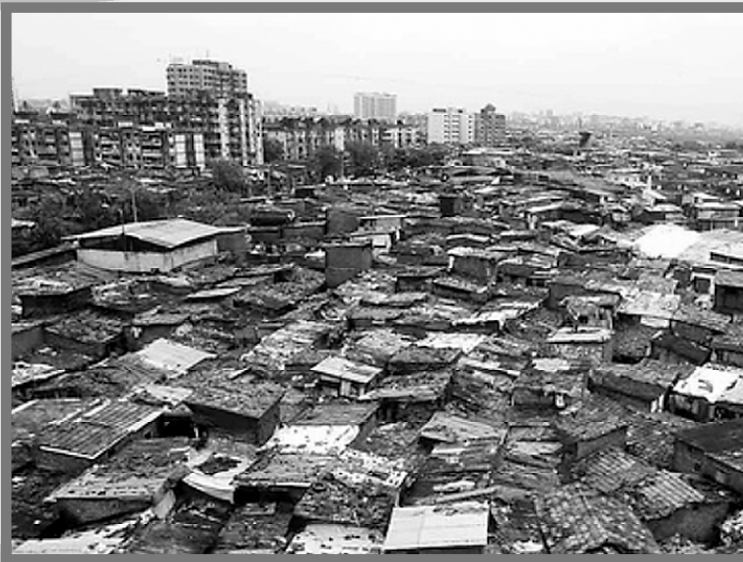
During this period of urban influx, villages have become towns, towns cities, cities megacities of 10 million or more, and hypercities with more than 20 million. Jakarta, Karachi, Shanghai, Dhaka all fall into the latter category, with Mumbai (Bombay) headed for 33 million. This trend will continue until 2020 when an estimated maximum of 3.2 billion in rural populations will decline relative to future increases in urban populations, the total reaching an expected peak of 10 billion by 2050. Now “there may be more than a quarter of a million slums on earth,” Davis wrote.

The resulting concentrations of working-class populations largely barred from the traditional labor force (itself in steep decline, as frequent storms of technology reduce the need for human labor) eke out a living as marginalized workers, occupying what are termed, the “informal proletariat.” According to Alejandro Portes and Kelly Hoffman, two sociologists cited by Davis, this so-called informal proletariat is defined as “the sum of own-account workers minus professionals and technicians, domestic servants, and paid and unpaid workers in microenterprises.”

Davis contends that this “informal proletariat” does not constitute a “labor reserve army” or a ‘lumpen proletariat’ in any obsolete 19th-century sense,” but “a stealth workforce for the formal economy” wherein “subcontracting networks of WalMart and other megacompanies extend deep into the misery of the *colonias* and *chawls*.” These *colonias* are slums that lack such basic services as sewage disposal, clean water and electricity, and *chawls* are multistoried tenement buildings in which families are jammed into a single room, worse even than the abominable tenements in the lower East Side of New York City during the 19th and well into the 20th centuries. These slums take the place of the commodity-emasculated countryside as the storage capacity for excess labor.

“The labor power of a billion people has been

(Continued on page 6)



Mumbai slums.

Soumik

This process created an urbanized working class, but it also created a “surplus” population of unemployed workers who served to keep wages low. This excess of human labor—“excess” in that capitalism has no employment for it to earn a living by—is with us to this day, but now it is reaching gigantic proportions on a global scale.

History may not be repeating itself with what the U.N. report called a “similar international regime” so much as taking up where it left off when the Russian Revolution came along in 1917. What happened in Russia was not what Western capitalism feared and millions of workers around the world hoped for, but the Stalinist tyranny into which it sank raised a barrier and a threat sufficient to slow down the unfettered expansion of capitalism into every nook and cranny of the globe.

Accordingly, rather than something “similar” to what occurred in the past, the emergence of megacities and hypercities in Africa, Asia and Latin America today is a continuation on a global scale of what occurred in Europe and the United States more than a century ago.

The rural population of the earth has always exceeded that of its cities, but this is rapidly changing, just as it changed in Europe and the United States decades ago. Rural populations in Africa, Asia and Latin America have declined precipitously over the past two decades while urban populations have grown enormously to create an urbanized global working class crushed by poverty and unemployment. In large measure, the shift results from the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In broad terms, these dominant capitalist financial institutions have used the threat of withholding development funds to compel governments to open their markets, sources of raw materials and labor for capitalist development.

Earlier this year urbanologist Mike Davis published a book, *Planet of Slums*, largely based on the U.N. report, which he first took up in an article by the same title in the March-April 2004