Talk of ‘Recovery’ Ignores Grim State of Working Class

By B.G.

What happens to all the electronic waste that our modern American society generates? What is done with worn-out computer monitors, circuit boards and toner cartridges?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a huge amount of this waste is buried in landfills in the United States. An estimate based on the amount burned or landfilled by the EPA put the amount at 3.2 million tons, and this total will only increase over the years.

In a report issued on March 4, however, a group of five international environmental organizations says that 50,000 tons of U.S. electronics are disregarded for recycling and shipped abroad to various developing nations, but largely to India, Pakistan and China. These electronic waste products, including monitors, photo copiers, TVs, videocassette recorders, fax machines, computers and cell phones, are being dumped at locations nowa-
sadly widespread throughout the United States and Mexico. In addition, some 3.5 million spent batteries, containing toxic heavy metals such as cadmium, lead, mercury and nickel, are imported into the country each year.

Companies Exporting Toxic Trash

Groundwater pollution in this area of China has become so bad that drink-
ing water has to be trucked in from as far as 20 miles away. The five environ-
mental groups took samples of river water and had it tested in Hong Kong. The resulting report indicated that the water had high levels of the heavy metals that are common in computers. In one area where circuit boards were recycled and burned, the water revealed toxic materials in the water 190 times the level recommended by the World Health Organization for safe drinking water.

The report also records similar disastrous results in Pakistan and India relating to unregulated recycling of hazardous materials. The 1989 Basel Convention is a treaty of the United Nations to limit the export of hazardous waste mater-
ials, and these environmental groups are trying to encourage its enforce-
ment. It is doubtful that they will suc-
cceed with one of the most flagrant violators of the treaty, China. It is clear that until the industrialized world faces up to its responsibilities, there will be no true recovery for the world's working class.

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Apart from all this there is the in-
crease in multiple jobholders as a result of this “recession in name only.” A total of 7.3 million workers were working more than one job in February; less than 4 million were doing so a year earlier.

While the media dutifully proclaimed recovery, however, K-Mart momentari-
ly stopped paying show by collapsing into stage and announcing plans to drop 20,000 of its workers.

That may not be the only show-
stopping performance waiting to step out from behind the curtain. The latest unemployment figures—for February—placed the official rate at 5.5 per-
cent, which translated to almost 7.9 million unemployed workers. And even that may not be the half of it, as the following numbers from the Labor Department’s Bureau of Labor Statistics suggest:

• 4.4 million workers counted either as “discouraged” workers who want jobs but have given up looking for them, or otherwise as persons who currently want a job but for a variety of non-economic reasons (e.g., look for work because of the costs of day care or transportation) the gov-
ernment has tossed off the official job-
less count;

• 4.4 million more workers who work only part time but who wanted and would work full-time jobs;

• 9.2 million officially “self-employed” workers who are often employed only sporadically, often as “consultants” in the informal economy from which they were tossed as workers.

The People

By B.G.

the capitalist media are declaring an economic “recovery” based on “indicators” that have little or nothing to do with concrete improve-
ments for workers.

Indeed, some, such as the Los An-
gles Times, even reject the idea that there ever was a recession. According to the official organ of tinsel town, it may have been “A Recession in Name Only.”

Meanwhile, the existence of an “over-
supply” in the labor market shown by millions of unemployed and underem-
ployed continues to exert a downward pressure on wages and “benefits.”

The contrast between the capitalist media’s slick, class-biased procla-
ments of “recovery” and unrelenting massive human suffering from unem-
ployment and its effects is glaring. It breathes the true class orientation of the mainstream media when they begin celebrating “recovery” before any sta-
tistically significant drop in unemploy-
ment is registered, and when they re-
gard the level of such massive suffer-
ing as merely one of many “economic indicators.”

These declarations betray a callous disregard for the plight of the working class; especially so because there is no proof that any “sign” of “recovery” will mean anything for workers.

The People

What the facts about capitalism show is that there can be no true recovery for the working class until it unites to get rid of capitalism itself by building the worker-controlled industrial demo-

craty of socialism.

For the capitalist wealthy it may have been “A Recession in Name Only.” But for workers it is the “recovery” that is only make-believe.

—B.G.
Closing the Book on 

The Clinton Investigation

By B.G.

The rahib right-wing Republicans who had made a cottage industry out of the Clinton—especially President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton in the 1990s are now winding down that investigation by issuing a report that few people now care about in the wake of the Sept. 11 disaster.

Independent Counsel Robert Ray, who oversaw Kenneth W. Starr, issued in early March a "Final Report of the Independent Counsel In Re: Madison Guaranty Savings & Loan Association" and failed to produce a financial institution owned a real estate corpora-
tion known as Whitewater, and the Clintons lost a $45,000 investment in the development project. You search this March "report" for anything about the so-called "Whitewater scandal" that was much-touted by Republicans in Congress a few years ago, you will find nothing, and a very sparse mention of the Independent Counsel In Re: Madison Guaranty Savings & Loan Association issued in early March a "Final Report on the Whitewater inquiry who succeeded Kenneth W. Starr, who after he received 'many serious threats': $2.3 million.

"Cost of initial Whitewater probe examining the Clintons' real estate dealings: $42 million; 

"Cost to investigate death of White House deputy counsel Vincent Foster: $18 million; 

"Cost of probing the firing of White House travel office employees: $2.1 million; 

"Cost of investigating White House use of FBI files: $1.8 million."

This amounts to a whopping $62.5 million out of the total $68.3 million. From the total cost of the whole investigation, the government received $9.1 million in fines and restitutions for a net cost to the government of $59.2 million.

The investigation titillated the whole country for a while. Moreover, it revealed that a number of the holier-than-thou Republican members of Congress and of the House Judiciary Committee investigating the president were also guilty of their own naughty sexual dalliances. (Remember Rep. Henry Hyde's "youthful indiscretions" when he was in his 40s, and Rep. Robert Livingston's embarrassed resig-
nation as speaker of the house when his recent escapades became public one day after his elevation to the speakership? There are always ongoing economic and social problems in the country that should claim the earnest attention of Congress. This past costly investiga-
tion and skewering of a sitting presi-
dent who was roundly envied and dis-
liked by the opposite political party indicates that opportunism and self-
promotion of capitalist politicians often take precedence over the country's real needs.

Enron in India: The Giant’s First Fall

By Sandip Roy

©Pacific News Service

Enron's collapse may have begun with the kind of misadventures it engaged in half a world away among the quiet coastal villages of Dabhol, India.

In 1992, the Enron Corp. announced it would build a $3 billion natural-gas power plant in Dabhol, in the western state of Maharashtra. The project was to be the poster child of economic liberal-
ization in the country—the single largest direct foreign investment in India's history.

Instead, Enron in India has been an economic disaster and a human rights nightmare.

From the get-go, the Dabhol project was mired in controversy. Enron worked hand in hand with in corrupt Indian politi-
cians and bureaucrats in rushing the project through. Charges filed by an In-
dian public interest group alleges Enron and the Indian company Reliance bribed the Indian petroleum minister in 1992–
93 to secure the contract to produce and sell oil and gas from the nearby Punna and Mukta fields to supply the plant.

A Human Rights Watch report recount-
ed incidence of farmers' land stolen, water sources damaged, officials bribed and oppo-
ents of the project arrested on trumped-
up charges. In 1997, the state police at-
tacked a fishing village where many resi-
dents opposed the plant. The pregnant wife of one protest leader was dragged naked from her home and beaten with batons.

The state forces accuses of abuses provided security to the Dabhol Power Corp. (DPC), a joint venture of Enron, the Bechtel Corp. and General Electric, overseen by Enron.

The U.S. State Department issued the plant a humanitarian clean bill of health. Charged with the assessment was U.S. Ambassador Frank Wisner, who also helped Enron get a con-
tact to manage a power plant in Suhai Bay in the Philippines in 1993. Shortly after leaving his post in India in 1997, Wisner took up an appointment to the board of directors of Enron Oil and Gas, a subsidiary of Enron.

Thanks in part to Wisner's positive rights review, Washington exempted some $300 million in loan guarantees to Enron for its investment in Dabhol— even though the World Bank had refused to finance the project, calling it unviable. A recent Indian independent investiga-
tion report exposed an "utter failure of governance"— bribery, lack of competi-
tive bidding, secrecy, etc.—by both the Indian federal government and two successive state governments as they rushed the Dabhol project through.

By June 2001, the Maharashtra state government had already broken off its agreement with DPC because its power cost too much. That was the plant's one and only customer.

By December, news of Enron's collapse appeared in newspapers across the world. But the company still filed a $200 million claim with the U.S. government. Over-
taxed and stunned by the "Workerless Economy "Sounded the Alarm • The 'Knowledge Class' It's Still Capitalism •  Capitalism or Socialism

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By Robert Bills

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Money Lenders Prey on The Poor and the Young

Workers are deeper in debt than ever before. Indeed, much of the so-called prosperity of the 1990s was premised on soaring productivity and laggard wages. There is more than a whiff of irony in this. It hints at the extent to which workers are robbed as producers. Unprecedented leaps in productivity have not matched up with unprecedented rates of exploitation. Hence millions of workers have been forced into debt. As David Liedtke, an executive vice president of the Massachusetts Attorney General's office, which receives 80,000 calls a year, pointed out, "The victims of some predator'skill. In society, however, they serve only to dash the hopes and sap the life out of the living. (Mary Prince contributed to this article.)

Tip Skimming Common in Boston Restaurants

By Carl C. Miller Jr.

Anyone who has eaten at any of the various restaurants and eateries available in the Boston area knows how hard the employees of these establishments work for their money. Not only do they work hard for their money, but they work for tips that they receive from the lefts tips left by patrons to augment their often low wages.

The Boston Globe, however, restaurants generate additional income by "skimming" tips that patrons leave for food servers. "It's the industry's dirty little secret," says Samantha Smith, an employee of Locke-Ober; an upscale restaurant near Downtown Crossing in Boston. "People think they are leaving money for their server and we're not seeing half of it."

The Globe article says that at the end of the night's work, the tips, both from patrons and credit card debt, are collected by management. As much as 25 percent of tips are "skimmed" before the remainder is returned to be divided among the restaurant's staff.

Restaurant executives deny that workers are compelled to share tips with management. "All tipping and tip sharing, if any, is fully voluntary," says Thomas Baldwin, an executive vice president of the Morton's Restaurant Group. But the president of Local 26 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union told the Globe that skimming is a common practice in the Boston area.

A Massachusetts law, however, prohibits tipping by restaurants. As with most labor laws, however, this one has more holes than the sieves in the 18.5 million account holders on its books as of Sept. 30.

"The strategy is part of the credit card industry's attempt to boost profits in a sagging economy," Liedtke wrote in an article distributed in February. "Lenders believe they can offset some losses by collecting more from borrowers who have been flagged as the most likely to miss payments.

Some workers are so far in debt that they may never be able to crawl out from under it. As Liedtke put it: "A customer making minimum payments of 3 percent on a $12,500 balance with a 23.9 percent rate would need 17 years to repay the debt and incur a total of $22,524 in finance charges. The same balance with a 29.9 percent rate would take more than 30 years to repay and incur a total of $6,107 in finance charges, assuming only minimum monthly payments are made."

Critics object that lending institutions are taking undue advantage of the poor, and the situation would only be made worse by saying that they don't mind if they do. They saw their opportunity and they took it: Isn't that what capitalism is all about? Capitalism is about amassing fortunes drawn from the marrow of the working class. The basic robbers are those at the pinnacle of power where workers are separated from the larger portion of the wealth they produce. This leaves millions of workers vulnerable to another set of capitalist parasites who sit on the fence between honest labor and the job exploitation, much as vultures wait until their victim is down on the victim of some predator'skill.

In nature vultures serve a useful purpose by scavenging carrion. In society, however, they serve only to dash the hopes and sap the life out of the living. (Mary Prince contributed to this article.)

NATIONALISM: Working-Class Nemesis

Discusses the origins, development and dangers of nationalism, and what the working-class must do to defeat it and win a socialist alternative.

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NEW YORK LABOR NEWS
P.O. Box 218
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By Robert Bills

The People, founded in 1867, is the oldest currently published socialist monthly in the United States and the only developed country that has refused to sign the treaty. It has been obvious dur- ing its entire existence that capitalism will always put profits before people.

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Editorial: Robert Bills
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The Boston Globe

When the "prosperity" that made capitalists even richer than they were began to sag, many low-paid workers whose jobs and meager wages were threatened or lost not only found themselves out in the economic cold but saddled with debts that they cannot afford to off. This mass maneuver around just to keep body and soul together.

Many of these victims of capitalism's latest economic convolution are seeing interest rates on their credit card debt approaching 30 percent. It is all part of what Michael Liedtke, another AP writer, called a deliberate "strategy" by the money lenders.

One such lender is Prevision Financial, which recently boosted its interest rate from 23.9 percent to 29.9 percent. The company, according to Liedtke, said its "29.9 percent rate will apply to 3.3 million of the 18.5 million account holders on its books as of Sept. 30."

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NEW YORK LABOR NEWS
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A Renewed Arms Race

Although he denied it while in Israel last month, the Bush administration’s refusal to implement its commitment to the purpose of Vice President Dick Cheney’s 12-nation “diplomatic” tour of the Middle East—presumably to work for the “equivalent of a feasibility study.” But where to find it? Cheney dreamed up the state of Israel’s rampage through Palestinian areas for its aerial bombardment of strategic places to pursue its goal of itself thin. It needs backers and allies in the world’s ruling classes, this was heresy. The threat is more about the program and work of the Socialist Labor Party and join us to help make the promise of socialism a reality.

Cheney’s Odyssey

Although he denied it while in Israel last month, the Bush administration’s refusal to implement its commitment to the purpose of Vice President Dick Cheney’s 12-nation “diplomatic” tour of the Middle East—presumably to work for the “equivalent of a feasibility study.” But where to find it? Cheney dreamed up the state of Israel’s rampage through Palestinian areas for its aerial bombardment of strategic places to pursue its goal of itself thin. It needs backers and allies in the world’s ruling classes, this was heresy. The threat is more...
One of De Leon's Best

Two Pages From Roman History
Delivered 100 Years Ago

Daniel De Leon's Two Pages From Roman History ranks with the greatest of socialist books and pamphlets. It has been compared to Karl Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte as an application of the materialist conception of history. It is said to have inspired striking coal miners in Wales in the 1920s. Lenin thought so highly of it that he urged its translation into Russian, and Leon Trotsky is said to have kept a copy on his desk in Mexico.

De Leon delivered the lectures that comprise Two Pages From Roman History 100 years ago this month, on April 2 and 16, 1902, at two public meetings sponsored by Section New York, SLP. (See “100 Years Ago”) Space considerations prevent us from doing justice to this important work, but the occasion makes it mandatory that it be introduced to those who may not be familiar with it.

The first of De Leon's Two Pages From Roman History, entitled “Plebs Leaders and Labor Leaders,” is a comparative examination of the modern labor leader and role of the rich and powerful segment of the capitalist class in feeling the poverty-stricken and struggling plebeians. The second page, entitled “The Warning of the Gracchi,” is an example of true history of the mistake the exploited class makes when it relies upon “saviors,” however well-intentioned and sincere the offer of help that occur when the exploited class and its “saviors” lack a full understanding of class forces.

In short, Two Pages deals with history while applying certain of its lessons to the present day. The application concentrates on this era’s problem of the labor leader, but in doing so it analyzes ancient slavery and modern capitalism, demonstrates the essential likeness of the ancient beneficiary of capital, wage slave, proves that reforms were concealed measures of reaction in the ancient world of class society as they are in the present form of class society; and outlines a code of conduct for Socialists that makes them immune to the temptations and corrupting influences of capitalism.

While Two Pages From Roman History is a title that may not seem to apply to the labor leader, but in doing so it analyzes ancient slavery and modern capitalism, demonstrates the essential likeness of the ancient beneficiary of capitalist wage slave, proves that reforms were concealed measures of reaction in the ancient world of class society as they are in the present form of class society; and outlines a code of conduct for Socialists that makes them immune to the temptations and corrupting influences of capitalism.

De Leon’s Two Pages From Roman History concludes with the prophecy: “In the year 2002, if the facts have been correctly understood by the masses and the government has taken the steps necessary to prevent them from being distorted, if the people are truly aware of the dangers inherent in capitalism, and if the labor leaders are truly aware of their responsibility to the exploited, then it will be possible to begin the destruction of the capitalist system, because the time has arrived for the workers to take the initiative, just as they have in the past.” Two Pages From Roman History is a masterpiece of social portraiture. Basic though other socialist works are, no Socialist is thoroughly grounded with De Leon's Two Pages From Roman History is a masterpiece of social portraiture. Basic though other socialist works are, no Socialist is thoroughly grounded with De Leon's Two Pages From Roman History is a masterpiece of social portraiture.

As noted, the work concentrates on the role of the labor leader—and upon the illusion, delusion and snare that reforms can substitute for the social changes required by the workers.

The reading of Two Pages From Roman History is an experience that is a unique experience for both the Socialist novice and the Socialist veteran. To the Socialist novice it opens doors to an understanding of ancient history and current events; of old and "new" classes; of slavery; capitalism and socialism; of tactics that have entraped the exploited through the ages; of the futility and danger of reforms; of the role of the plebes leader and the labor leader; of the rulers' use of "religion" as a weapon of class rule; and among other things of the code of conduct—what De Leon referred to as "ten canons of the proletarian revolution"—today's workers must accept if they are to win freedom, for all humanity!

Send on immediately 1,000 Industrial Union News and 5,000 leaflets, “Industrial Unionism versus Anarchy and Reform.”

More later from the other strike zone.

R. McAlister, Member GEB
Paterson, N.J., March 22, 1912

De Leon examines every major argument—pro and con—on the economic question. His analysis traces confusion on what unions can and cannot do. He points out the contradictory role of the government's role in the American Federation of Labor, and outlines the great principle which gives value to true working-class unions can be built. One of De Leon’s best.

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April 2002

The PEOPLE 5

The Paterson Silk Workers’ Strikes of 1911–1912

The following article from the Industrial Union News of April 1912 is the third in a series of reports on the Paterson silk workers’ strikes of 1911–1912. The Industrial Union News was the official newspaper of the “Detroit IWW.” Its reports from the scene were written by Board of Publications. This report, however, was written by Robbins, as the report of the Detroit IWW’s General Executive Board. An introduction giving background to the strike and their causes appeared in our February issue. The series will conclude with an epilogue on the significance of the strike and the organization that conducted it.

One of De Leon's Best

Two Pages From Roman History
Delivered 100 Years Ago
The Death of Savimbi

By B.B.
Nicholas D. Kristof, an editorial commentator for The New York Times, took the death of Jonas Savimbi as occasion to drive home some “lessons,” but not before criticizing the United States for its hypocrisy in condemning regimes that support terrorists. Indeed, the United States had a long love affair with arch terrorist Jonas Savimbi, who died when ambushed by Angola’s Revolutionary Armed Forces. As may be recalled, this notorious torturer, butcher and head of the guerrilla army UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) was responsible for the deaths of over 500,000 people and fought a decades-long civil war against the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola). They comprised the legally constituted government in Angola presided over by Jose Eduardo Dos Santos. While tagging Dos Santos as a “red” for his ties to Cuba andigliously constituting CIAs proxy for U.S. capitalism’s imperialist ambitions while countering Soviet and Cuban influence in that hapless country, Jeane Kirkpatrick, U.S. ambassador under Ronald Reagan, once described the MPLA as “one of the few authentic heroes of our time,” and Reagan did her one better by calling him “Angola’s Abraham Lincoln.” America’s “hero” revealed deeds, Savimbi personally murdered the wife and children of a rival. He is known as an authoritarian who sawed many a bemused and personnel missiles throughout Angola and bombed a Red Cross-run factory for the production of artificial limbs.

One African scholar referred to Savimbi as “Africa’s classical terrorist,” underlying his role in the degree of suffering he caused without showing any remorse.” America’s main observation that “on the level plain simple mounds look like hills and the imbecile flatness of the bourgeois mind is measured by the height of its great intellects.”

Flowery euphemisms fail to conceal what history lays bare. Angola is the story of the insatiable greed of capitalist imperialism and colonialism that is alone capable of delivering the credo of the “tender mercies” of Portuguese colonialism that is alone capable of concealing what history lays bare. The ensuing impoverishment of Angola is the story of the insatiable greed of capitalist imperialism and colonialism that is alone capable of delivering the joy to the “joys” of free-market babble to its dead and fallen under the sway of the CIA and Johannesburg.

The real lesson of Savimbi’s death—and the only one—is that capitalism long ago ceased to be an agent of social progress. It can only function as an engine of oppression and exploitation of both its own domestic working class and that of subject countries since profits emanate from the extraction of the wealth labor alone produces. As such, it is bound to generate social conflict, civil war, destruction and resentment. Hence, in foreign lands it can only operate through the cooperation of corrupt and oppressive satraps. Despotism can deliver is the creed of the corporate investor. Those who oppose suffer the fate of Lumumba.

This is why the terrorist phenomenon is inextricably connected to a widespread resentment that is repeatedly and why Mr. Ashcroft can safely predict that the fight against terrorism will be an on-going one. Yes, until the establishment of socialist society overthrows the basis of capitalism, the terrorist system, we can expect to see the rise of many Savimbis.

...SLP Emergency Fund

(Continued from page 1)

people to democratically decide their own fate. But it has unequally pointed out that no such right can be established and ensured against usurpation unless the people collectively own and democratically control the nation’s economy. That’s why The People has relentlessly persisted in its efforts to bring the message of the SLP’s Socialist Labor Union program to the American working class.

But dedication to principle by those who do the day-to-day work of publishing The People is not enough. It also requires a matching level of dedication and financial support from all those who understand why it is important that the SLP and its official journal continue until their mission is successfully completed.

For 111 years The People has survived every difficulty that came its way and every assault made upon it. But it cannot survive without the funds needed to print it, to keep its small staff on the job and to keep a roof over its head. The SLP Emergency Fund has been set up for precisely those reasons. There is too much at stake to allow the fund to fall short of its $125,000 goal. The fate of The People, and perhaps the SLP itself, is in your hands. This is one corner of the world over which our readers exercise complete control. Please use the SLP Emergency Fund coupon in this issue to contribute as generously as you can.

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Portland
Discussion Meetings—Section Portland holds discus-
sion meetings every second Saturday of the month. Meetings are usually held at the Central Library, but the exact date varies. For more informa-
tion please call SLP at 503-226-3881 or visit our Web site at http://slp.pdx-home.mindspring.com. The general public is invited.

TEXAS
Houston
Discussion Meetings—The SLP group in Houston holds discussion meetings the last Saturday of the month at the Houston Public Library, Franklin Branch, 6440 W. Bertol, southwest Houston.

The time of the meetings varies. Those interested please call 713-721-6050, email houstonslp@yahoo.com or visit the group’s Web site at http://houstonslp.tripod.com.

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Pipeline: Oil-Bound Plan for U.S. Troops in Georgia
By Peter Dale Scott
Pacific News Service

Deployment of U.S. Special Operations forces to the Caucasus state of Georgia would go far to uphold a Washington pipeline policy aimed at neutralizing Russian influence in oil-rich Central Asia.

This is the unreported side of the U.S. proposal, which is also about pursuing al Qaeda fighters around the globe. Al Qaeda veterans have reportedly linked up with Chechen rebels, fighting against the Chechen government.

Though Georgia and Chechnya themselves contain limited oil wealth, their territory is essential to both existing and proposed pipelines to carry oil and gas out of the Caspian basin west to Turkey and Europe.

The existing Russian pipeline, from Baku to Novorossiysk on the Black Sea, passes through both countries, with the pipelines, which have had difficulty dealing with the Russians, have proposed two alternative pipeline routes that pass through Georgia and Armenia. These pipelines will allow U.S. companies, and not Russian ones, to control oil and pipeline prices.

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After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Commonwealth of Independent States (which Georgia refused to join), there followed a decade of Russian meddling in the domestic convul- sions of the new states of the former Soviet Union and the Caucasus. In the case of Georgia, Russian troops were stationed there as “peacekeepers.” Their excus was to deal with rebel forces.

In both of the Chechnya wars, the Russian government and leaders and leaders had been trained in Afghanistan. Most of these troops were recruited and trained by a leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, whose camps were financed by wars for the United States and Saudi Arabia. Hekmatyar fell out with his back- ers in the 1990s, but the camps survived and became the base of al Qaeda.

When the U.S. military struck down the camps, the camps became financed partly by drug networks through Chechnya and Georgia, networks that have linked first to Hekmatyar and later to bin Laden. The al Qaeda refuge in Georgia’s Pankisi Gorge is a local center for these drug networks, which have allegedly corrupted local law enforcement officials.

The Russian campaign served to maintain Russian control of all pipelines bringing oil and gas out of the Caspian basin. It seems clear that in the current decade the U.S.-led Bush administration is willing to send troops, from Georgia to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, to neutralize Russian influence in the United States has already sta- tioned 1,000 troops in Uzbekistan, and 300 close to the Chinese border in Kyrgyzstan, with more scheduled to arrive.

This apparent military strategy comple- ments the explicit U.S. energy strategy, both to neutralize the influence of the pipelines and to expand U.S. oil presence in Central Asia and has increased the new nations’ autonomy from Russia and facilitates the export of petro dollars, which workers will use to hunt oil private ownership.

And they will organize a Second Industrial Union to dramatize the workers’ role in bringing about social change in such a lofty, enlightened movement for human freedom. Accordingly, class-consciousness in workers has no room for hatred. In destroying the power of the capitalists to exploit labor, socialism will destroy the capitalists as class-consciousness in workers, but not as human beings. The dispossessed capitalists will have their chance for human redemp- tion, if they choose to realize their own advantage in new world of oil.

Note: With the exception of the 2000-2002 figures, all other data are from the U.S. Energy Information Administration.
T he Christian right is at it again. After the Sept. 11 disaster, conservative church leaders including preachers Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson agreed that the attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., happened because of such American sins as abortion, lies, and the Civil War. After several days of national criticism and ridicule of Falwell and Robertson for this idiocy, Falwell apologized and Robertson weaseled out of the dilemma by saying that he had not fully understood Falwell’s remarks.

Self-Anointed Authorities

Fall last year, Franklin Graham, son of noted evangelist and recently exposed anti-Semitic Billy Graham, told NBC broadcasters that Islam “is a very evil and wicked religion” without giving any specifics from the Koran. Then, on his Feb. 20 “700 Club” television program, Graham informed the world that Islam is a violent religion that seeks “to dominate and then, if need be, destroy.” It is not “a peaceful religion, it wants to conquer,” he emphasized. “They want to exist until they can control, dominate and then, if need be, destroy.”

It is a marvel that certain Christian evangelists have suddenly become self-anointed authorities on a religion to which they are total strangers until Sept. 11, and of which they still have little or no knowledge. Even more amazing is their complete oblivious to the numerous violent acts perpetrated by many followers of their own religion throughout history.

Religious Hucksters

Religious, or Quakers who had the temerity to show their disobedience to the religious will use that ideology to harm religion, Baptists, Congregationalists, Jews, and Muslims to help their God. This often happens because some officials, business leaders or church members, with rare exceptions, had allowed complete freedom to “people of the book,” i.e., Jews and Christians. The victorious Christian monarchs of the Middle Ages, however, had another philosophy. They feared non-Christians who wished to remain in Spain to convert to Christianity. All others had to leave. Many thousands of Jews were then expelled from Spain and fled to North Africa and Portugal. When the Inquisition was subsequently introduced into Portugal, the Jews again faced persecution.

When Martin Luther issued his opposition to canon law and publicized the disputes he had in mind a reform of the Catholic Church, but instead caused a permanent split of Western Christendom into Catholic and Protestant denominations. Protestantism spread rapidly, primarily in northern and western Europe, and continued to split into various denominations, each one vying for the divine truth.

Protestant Versus Protestant

Protestantism was no more tolerant of variant sects of Protestantism than Catholicism were of Protestants and heretics. A wing of the Protestant Reformation, were persecuted by both Catholics and Protestants, and promoted the state-church Protestants. In England, where Anglicanism was the established religion, Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers and many variant sects were persecuted. Groups were harassed and their members thrown into prison. In Boston, where Puritanism was the state church, Quakers who had the temerity to show up in the colony were jailed, expelled, and four were finally hanged.

Religious Hucksters and Misleaders

Even a very brief survey of Christian history reveals the influence of certain popular and influential religious hucksters such as Falwell and Robertson concerning the very serious issues of whether it is a religious matter, or only a personal matter. We do not interfere. We can hope that any person who holds religious views might be individual, political or church leaders.

SLP of Ukraine Organizes New Branch at Mykolayiv

De Comrade Billie

The SLP is continuing its work in Ukraine. Last week we held an open meeting of the Kiev branch, where I continued our education and prepara- tion of your 45th National Convention. All the Kiev SLP branch comrades gave over the 16 comrades who died on Sept. 11, and was burned. Thousands of Jews were then expelled from Spain and fled to North Africa and Portugal. When the Inquisition was subsequently introduced into Portugal, the Jews again faced persecution.

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