SLP FINANCIAL CRISIS

For Peace on Earth

“Peace on Earth, Goodwill Toward Men,” we are told at this time of year. “To plunder, to slaughter, to steal, these things they name emprise and when they make a desert, they call it peace.”—Tacitus

We are approaching that time of the year called the season of peace and good will. But the Christmas season changes nothing under the barbarous capitalist system. The spirit of peace and good will had in itself and story remains a fata morgana—a mirage that only conceals the source of violence and destruction. We know this is true, despite appearances and claims to the contrary.

It was certainly true during the violent and tumultuous 20th century, when “peace” was nothing but a truce between wars. And it already seems that the 21st century will bring more of the same.

Nonetheless, preachers will chant about the peace that surpasses all understanding (which “peace” certainly does under rapacious capitalism) and hold out the promise of some “better time” in the hereafter.

Politicians will mouth pretty phrases about the “peace” they are shaping, while they go on creating and using deadly instruments of mass destruction.

The hired “opinion makers” of the capitalist media will spin their yarns about the supposed object of their solicitude and what they are. As John Milton said: “They put our put the people’s eyes, reprove them of their blindness.”

Shall we, then, despair of attaining peace, plenty, and the liberty that only flourish and be secured in a society of tranquility and abundance? Shall we resign ourselves to a fate that threatens to be more disastrous to humankind than any that has confronted it in the past? Shall we permit the madness of capitalism to drag society; and such poor civilization as we have attained, below the level of a barbarian long since left behind us? The answer of the Socialist

National I.D. Proposal Threatens Our Liberty

As President Bush prepared to sign the Patriot Act of 2001 into law in October, The People noted that provisions of the newly enacted law “expand previous federal encroachments on civil rights and liberties and further grease the skids toward a political state in the United States.” Given the post-Sept. 11 social environment in which Congress found it feasible to pass the draconian act, Bush found it easy to fulfil its provisions as merely “new tools” to fight terrorism, which would be used by such a system. Liberals like Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Harvard professor Alan Dershowitz have also lent their support to a NID system.

By the time this issue of The People went to press, hearings on the subject were being convened in the House, and a New York State antiterrorism committee had reportedly already called for the creation of such a system.

No matter what the reason for a NID system—as a hedge against terrorism, crime, drugs, illegal immigration and inefficiency in the distribution of government services, all of which have been used as rationales for various identification card schemes, workers would lend them no support. Whether the cards are for particular purposes—such as boarding airplanes—or for universal identification, the people cannot serve workers’ interests.

Proponents claim that everyone will benefit, with personal safety and security, albeit with “a little less privacy.” But such schemes actually work to decrease individual security while doing nothing to curb the activities of terrorists and criminals. Any NID card system conceivable would do far more for corporate bottom lines and the possibilities for police-state repression in the

NEW YORK FIREFIGHTERS PROTEST

From Heroes to Landfill

By John-Paul Cattocco

Many Americans were shocked on Nov. 2 by the images of New York City firefighters staging a massive and violent protest at “ground zero” in lower Manhattan. Most Americans were unaware of the events of the previous day, which prompted the militant protest. A summary of those events follows:

On Nov. 1, Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani announced that more than $230 million worth of gold and silver bars that had been stored in a huge bomb-proof vault owned by the New York Stock Exchange had been unearthed by recovery crews at the ruins of the World Trade Towers. Markets everywhere celebrated the news.

The bodies of five New York City firefighters were also recovered from the rubble on Nov. 1 by the hard-working recovery crews at ground zero, but it was the story of the gold that made the headlines.

After announcing that all of the gold and silver had been recovered, Giuliani also announced that the recovery crews were looking for the still-missing bodies of many of the 345 firefighters and dozens of police and Port Authority workers who died on Sept. 11 would be reduced to a token crew of 75: 25 from the FDNY, 25 from the NYPD and 50 from the Port Authority. These workers would not be taking a direct part in recovery efforts but would be waiting in holding pens for cranes to dig up the bodies of their comrades.

The cranes have been operating at full speed and have sent the tows of a great number of firefighters in dump trucks to the Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island. The speedup has disgusted the FDNY rank and file and other workers everywhere. The mayor is set to sue Giuliani’s plan to have the site cleaned up before he leaves office to add another credit to his already inflated legacy.

On Nov. 2, the recording secretary for the Uniformed Firefighters Association (which represents New York City’s fire fighters) said that when Giuliani said that he would leave no brick unturned in the search for the bodies of missing firefighters he really meant was a threat to leave “no brick of gold unturned.”

With the gold and silver outright it would seem the need to pay city workers over time so they can recover and pay tributes to their brave comrades will not be. “Yesterday my husband and his friends were heroes, today they’re landfill,” said Theresa Bogan, the widow of a missing firefighter.

The firefighters and their normally conservative union know this is the case. They know that Giuliani’s decision to scale back the recovery operation is not about safety concerns, as the mayor and Fire Commissioner Thomas Van Essen have stated. It is about money.

When firefighters went to the WTC site on Nov. 2, they were banned from entering what to them is hallowed ground. One of them punched a police officer, but union officials were quick to point out that most of the 18 firefighters arrested (including five union officials) did nothing more than chant “S.A.W.” and cross a police barricade. When “America’s heroes” then marched down to City Hall to protest Giuliani’s cutsbacks they were met by police in riot gear.

The protests attracted public attention and decided city officials to alter their policy by Increasing the FDNY

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(Continued on page 3)
GE Continues to Resist Hudson River Cleanup Plan

By B.G.

The ongoing battle to force General Electric (GE) to clean up the toxic waste in the Hudson River over the years has entered a new phase. For more than 35 years, GE plants dumped tons of pounds of poisonous chlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) as waste into the upper Hudson. That was before the chemicals were banned in 1979.

In 1983, the Hudson was declared a Superfund site. GE has steadfastly resisted both state and national directives to do its homework and has not settled there, saying that the river is cleaning itself. (The People, July 2001) GE knows that a loss on this issue could force it to clean up any other polluted sites in the country for which it is responsible.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Christie Whitman, however, announced that on Aug. 1 the agency would go ahead with the plan to dredge the upper Hudson to remove the remaining PCBs, and that the nearly half a billion dollar cleanup be done at GE’s expense.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City diverted the attention of EPA officials in Washington, D.C. Those meetings aroused fears that GE is trying to influence the terms of the EPA directive, making the decision order so difficult, if not nearly impossible, of compliance that the whole project will be undercut.

Hinchey, still suspicious. “The state is being kept out of these apparently secret meeting,” he said. He also noted that if the EPA is setting standards and goals for GE to meet “without full and detailed consultation with the state, that would violate agreements we have and violate the Superfund law.”

According to New York State officials, the EPA in Washington has directed its Region 2 in New York State to rework the dredging plan to meet new performance standards. This directive has caused a rebellion in the regional office, which feels that this new decision from above will “bother trap” the original decision on cleaning up the Hudson.

Rep. Hinchey feels that the Region 2 office is trying to implement the project in a responsible way, but that the EPA in Washington “is trying to do something else.” Peter Lehner of the state’s attorney general’s office agrees, noting that the changing of elements in an agreement “takes years of factual analysis” and cannot validly be done on the basis of a few hasty meetings with a defendant, such as GE.

Environmentalist groups, after meeting with EPA officials in Washington, agreed with the assessments of Hinchey and Lehner. To insist on specific performance standards in the EPA directive now, rather than during the next three years of analysis, would be a violation of customary procedure. The environmentalists, however, believe GE is still planning to insert performance procedures now rather than later to scuttle the operation.

Eileen McGinnis, chief of staff to Christie Whitman, said, however, that it was Whitman who conceived the plan to insert performance standards now to ensure that the operation would be done correctly and would “have some accountability.” (The New York Times, Oct. 3)

Whitman, who considers the project of major national significance, was also considering having the whole dredging overweened by EPA headquarters in Washington rather than by the regional office in New York.

The environmentalists who met with the EPA, however, that the New York EPA office is far up to date on the issue and would follow it much more closely in the future than the Washington office.

The Washington EPA office wants to insert its own performance standards to resolve the problem of recontamination—how much the dredging operation will stir up the chemicals in the river’s sediment. This, by the way, is a toxic site and must be cleaned up to kill the project. For Ned Sullivan of Scenic Hudson, who was present at the Washington meeting, suspension of the whole project would be reminiscent of an earlier GE propaganda’sm. “This is setting up the project for failure” because you cannot suspend a “productive” only when you have a specific design.

He simply denied that it is trying to kill the project. It added a statement telling how much it loves New York and how the company has been trying to help New York City recover from the Sept. 11 disaster by donating both money and equipment to aid in the rescue effort. Although the latter statement of disaster aid is true, it is beside the point. It has nothing to do with dredging the river and imposes much less expenditure than the dredging project.

This ongoing struggle is instructive of how a capitalist organization, as GE, operates to protect its own interests.

Union Abdons Meatpackers

By Carl C. Miller Jr.

The SLP has always held that the current social relations are related to interests that run counter to those of the workers they claim to represent. The present unions are nothing more than belief of the capitalists. They have proved this repeatedly by their action, and sometimes by their inaction. For example, trade unions make many false claims to win the support and allegiance of workers. One of their best sales pitches is the promise of protection from the ever-increasing encroachments of the capitalists. When this claim was put to the test at the IBP-Tyson plant in Amarillo, Tex., workers found out just how empty the promise of protection can be.

According to an article in the November-December issue of Labor Notes, hundreds of workers at IBP-Tyson began around Labor Day when a group of workers took the initiative and approached management to negotiate more money and an improvement in the harsh working conditions at the plant. The company replied that they would do nothing without the union “representing” the workers. But the union, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 577, refused to get involved.

The reason behind Local 577’s inaction was made clear on Sept. 17. That’s when management announced that workers would get “No more money, you’re in the middle of a contract.” In short, the protection promised by the labor fakers would not be forthcoming as long as the sacred contract was in effect.

Management, realizing that the workers’ self-organized actions could bring trouble, called in the county sheriff’s department. The company knew it would count on the “law” for protection, and the “law” came through. Many of those “responsible” for the “trouble” were escorted out of the plant.

Since the wildcat strike began, over 500 workers have been fired and the company has vowed to keep strike leaders out of the plant forever. Where was the union? Where was the protection that was promised?

“Local union officials are nowhere to be found,” Labor Notes reported. “No representative of Local 577 has come to visit or support the workers since they were escorted out of the plant. This is not surprising considering that Pres-
...National ID Proposal

(Continued from page 1)

service of capitalist-class control of society than for individual security. 

The AFL-CIO, the largest labor column in the December 2001 issue of Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery corroborates that view. “Its instruc- tive to note,” says the editor, “that most drivers and workers’ licenses,” says the column. “These supposedly unique IDs are often forged by workers to get into bars and get laid to avoid, for purposes including both crime and terrorism. Every attempt at hardening ID cards against forgery has been met with countermeasures.” 

Some proponents contend that new “smart” ID cards would provide infal- licity—right down to a byte or bit or print or retinal data, for example. But low-tech human bribery can always pro- vide a workaround. Moreover, CACM contends, the notion of card data with- out “false positives and negatives is fal- lacious. Also, such systems will still be forged, and the criminals and terroris- ts we’re most concerned about will find ways to exploit them, using the false sense of security that the cards provide. We are advantage—make- ing us actually less secure as a result!” 

"Another set of risks arise," says the CACM article. “With respect to the poten- tials for abuse of the supporting databas- es and communication complexes that would be necessary to support NIDs..., the opportunities for overzealous sur- veillance and serious privacy abuses are almost limitless, as are opportunities for masquerading, identity theft and dra- conian social engineering...” CACM also dispenses with any notion that voluntary cards could be different. 

"The discriminatory treatment that non-cardholders would surely undergo," it contends, "makes this an obvious slip- pery slope—the cards would likely be- come effectively mandatory for everyone in short order, and subject to the same abuses as other more conventional IDs. The result to an Orwellian police state of universal tracking, but actually reduced security, could well be paved with hun- dreds of millions of such NID cards.” 

Such observations rest on empirical data. A spokesperson for Privacy Inter- national, a London watchdog group, said in an article in The New York Times that ID systems already exist in “abut 100 countries.” PI’s spokesperson says “the card is just the visible part of a vast information spectrum...[that] is worthless without some sort of inte- grated computer system behind it.” 

Such systems allow governments and their police agencies to more easily as- semble dossiers on everyone. Such data can be used to keep track of noncon- formalists, political dissidents, militant workers and anyone else some reac- tionary state functionary considers a threat to the status quo. It can be an effective tool for domestic spying, harassment, repression and the regimentation of workers in general. 

The political state targeted political activists in the notorious COINTEL- PRO and other operations; it has spied on union leaders and members and assembled extensive dossiers. A uniform, supposedly coun- terfeit-proof ID card would simply make it easier to conduct such actions and for capitalists who illegally garner such data to blacklist “troublemakers.” 

The full repressive potential of such a system is clear. Under the reactionary tenor of the ruling class is unmistakable. A national identification system would be one more step toward the police state. An industrial worker- class could one day resort to in an effort to save its system.

K.B.
Debs’ Tribute to Daniel De Leon

Daniel De Leon was born 189 years ago on a tiny colonial island off the coast of Venezuela, Dec. 14, 1825. He died young by modern standards, but still in his 21st year. Nonetheless, few men of eminence, power and potential and ability who lived long enough to see what a man of his quality may achieve in life. De Leon’s achievements, impressive by any standard, were largely summed up by Arnold Petersen of the Socialist Landmarks, an SLP publication that contains four of De Leon’s major addresses.

“De Leon played a stellar role in the socialist movement,” Petersen wrote. “To the immortal Karl Marx belongs the discovery of the role of class struggle in history, the materialist conception of history, and the formulation of the theory of class, surplus value and its scientific application. But to the Americans, Daniel De Leon, who discovered the actual structure of socialist society and laid down the basic tactics for achieving proletarian victory in a highly industrialized society.”

De Leon was called when he lived, particularly by the labor fighters who regarded the theory of the socialist societies whose doctrines to the working class he unfailingly exposed. These enemies of De Leon’s class were often at odds with the American unions, and it was therein that he was able to make full use of all its resources, and above all its numbers.

The material possibilities for workers to remanage society have existed for nearly a century. As Daniel De Leon, America’s foremost labor leader, said in 1914, "The leisure, the freedom from arduous toil for the necessities of life, the emancipation from the clutches of the fear of want, all those of the necessities to mental and spiritual expansion that time expends, but by some, are today possible to all. Today—all statistical researches confirm it in dozens of ways. An abundance at his disposal with no more exercise of physical energies than is requisite for health. "

Unemployed men, unemployed women...socialism boldly seizes the archangel’s trumpet, boldly plies it to its lips, and boldly proclaims: for human beings—"the call for revolution—the call for the abolition of poverty."

As the present economic recession worsens, the problem of hunger in America can only widen—until the working people who bear the brunt of unemployment at long last for a socialist reconstruction of society that will enable them to take real control of their own lives.

Daniel De Leon was a true disciple of Marx and Engels and one of their ablest and most brilliant interpreters. His editorials in The People covered the whole range of economics, sociology, politics, history and philosophy, and his versatile genius appears at its best in these columns.

De Leon’s Tribune to De Leon

By Eugene V. Debs

(Preferable article was sent to us by Eugene V. Debs)

"The enclosed tribute to Daniel De Leon was written for the National Rip-"-Scoop and should be of interest to you. It was written in 1908 and continued to endorse the theory of revolution of the social democratic movement, believing that only through their economic and political solidarity could the workers emancipate themselves from wage slavery. He fought the craft unions and in out of season, exposing without mercy their weakness and im-}

pansion, believing that only through their economic and political solidarity could the workers emancipate themselves from wage slavery. He fought the craft unions and in out of season, exposing without mercy their weakness and im-
Ladies and gentlemen, Comrades and Friends:

Everyone here today is here because they were touched in some way, at some time, by Genieve Gunderson. For some of us the memories are entirely personal. For others they are largely connected to the organization and the movement to which Genieve devoted most of her adult life. For some it is not easy to separate those two aspects of Genieve’s life. I am sure she never imagined and certainly did not intend that she was a woman of remarkable endurance (and of socialist endeavor) to which she devoted many of her vacations from her job as a banker in Minneapolis. It was in a report written by a NEC member during her vice presidential campaign in 1972, one of the few that I can find, that she was the party’s candidate for mayor of Minneapolis. It was there, at Detroit, that she accepted the party’s nomination for vice president of the United States. I don’t know if you can ever find a true hero. The de-
Funds

[Continued from page 1] with the recovery operation and say that the effort to recover the bodies of those who lost their lives has been turned into a “scrap and dump” operation.

This capitalism is pure and simple. It is a case of money over human beings. The city closed the street, the area became a landfill. In 1983, the membership elected a national committee that had to be done where it was allocated to the cranes to save time and money.

Yes! I want to help support The People. Enclosed please find my contribution of $_____.

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________________________
Apt. ____________________________
City ____________________________ State ______ Zip ______

[Please send a receipt. Contributions are not tax-deductible. Please do not mail cash. Make checks or money orders payable to The People, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218]

THE PEOPLE DECEMBER 2001

. . . From Heroes to Landfill

[Continued from page 4] work and hardworking member of the SLP. He knew her—my children, certainly knew her—my children, certainly knew her, and her family birthdays were known in an appropriate tribute, and she was a remarkable woman, and a remarkable something in our Bay Area section of the SLP, but the exact time varies. For more information please call 503-258-2281 or visit our Web site at sbp.sldc.org. 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, 6640 W. Bellfort, south of Braeswood. The time of the meetings varies. Those interested should e-mail houstonsp@lycos.com or visit the group's Web site at http://houstonsp.tidd.com.

. . . Tribute to Daniel De Leon

[Continued from page 5] the SLP's National Executive Committee from 1981 to 1983, and again from 1989 to 1991. Outside the office, Genevieve did many of the same things in our Bay Area section that she had done in Minneapolis. She was the section's financial secretary, its newsstand committee, its mailing committee, and she was always a tireless worker in the local social and fundraising affairs. Apart from being the caretaker of the SLP's finances on the national and local levels of organization, she was always a tireless worker in the SLP, a tireless worker and con- tributor to party funds.

To my family and me, however, Genevieve was something more than a dedicated and hardworking member of the SLP. She became a close personal friend, and in many ways she was as much a sister as a friend of mine.
Lives. She was subtle and Engels in her bookcase. There stories of Jack London.

But—and there is a but—we cannot be deterred or encouraged by the recent terrorist attacks, the current hostility could trigger deadlier attacks on the road. 

Stephen B. Isabirye Flaggstaff, Ariz.

(Continued from page 4)

\section*{... Peace'}

\section*{DOING HIS PART}

B. W. Augustine, Fla.

Please use the Xmas Box cua-
International capitalism suffered a major embarrassment after Sept. 11 when the Saudi Binladen Group, a construction and investment company, felt compelled to cut its financial ties to the Carlyle Group.

The Carlyle Group, as recently described by The New York Times, “is a private investment firm known for its connections to influential Washington political figures.” (Oct. 26) Its chairman is Frank C. Carlucci, former deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency and former secretary of defense. Former President George H.W. Bush and former Secretary of State James A. Baker are also prominent members of the group. Carlyle invests in buyouts of military and aerospace companies, among other things. For this reason, the bin Laden family faced criticism after the Sept. 11 attack that it might prof- it from the increase in U.S. military spending during the present war. The other greatest embarrassments to the family has been its scapragge son and brother, Osama bin Laden, one of 33 siblings, whom the family disowned in the 1990s and claims never to have had contact with since. The bin Laden family has also publicly condemned the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

The family’s main company, the Saudi Binladen Group, is a huge construction company headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. It also has vast global investment interests. The Binladen Group first established its connection with the Carlyle Group in 1994 with an investment in a Carlyle buyout fund. Since then, Frank Carlucci’s former President, Ronald Reagan, and James Baker have all, in recent years, visited the family’s headquarters. The Carlyle Group will find itself in a quandary if the family decides to cut its financial ties to the family. Some of the other members of the family have also made trips to Jeddah and have talked to the family to make contacts with this important capitalist firm.

When criticism of the bin Laden family arose after Sept. 11 because of their capitalist relations with an American firm, the Carlyle Group willingly helped the family to sever its ties with Carlyle by buying out the Binladen Group’s investment stake with its American partner. One hand washes the other.

Surely the Carlyle Group will not suffer financially from this departure because their ties to the Saudi Binladen Group are still strong and can be revived whenever the political situation is more auspicious. Also, the Carlyle Group will find the current war very profitable for their investment program.

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**Political Parsimony Threatens California’s Mentally Disabled**

By Mary Prince

One feature of a caring society is the way it treats its mentally disabled. The society we live in cannot be called caring. It is propo­sed to close down some, if not all, of California’s treatment centers and transfer 3,000 patients into a “community setting,” which critics believe would not be able to adequately serve those patients. The existing facilities are not the answer, of course, particu­larly since many are dilapidated and considered structurally unsafe; but shunting patients to less adequate facil­i­ties just to save money is not the answer either.

A bill introduced in the state assembly last February by Berkeley Democrat Don Arner would phase out at least three of the five remaining centers for the developmentally disabled and transfer for those patients into the so-called community-care system. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 47 to 24. Since then, however, it has been stalled in a committee of the state senate.

“Ruthless motivation,” according to the San Jose Mercury News, “one aim of the legislation is to save money—using the $60 million that would get to provide more care in the community, where costs are lower.” (July 23)

The other motivation ostensibly is to do away with the state’s “dual system” of providing care for the mentally dis­abled. But the state deliberately divided patients out of facilities it decided were too costly to maintain. Even then, however, it was done under the guise of giving ill patients a choice. In a recent newspaper put it: “It was also the result of a heightened awareness of the right of the disabled to choose where they want to live. Over the past decade, many have opted to move to a community setting.”

The opt-out was not for the humani­tarian reasons that the Mercury News’ wording would have its readers believe. Indeed, the same article went on to note some of the problems that have arisen because of the lack of funding, services and monitoring of the “community-care system,” which is neither communal nor particularly caring.

A study by researchers at the University of California-Riverside cited by the Mercury News found that patients had a much greater risk of dying prematurely in community-care homes than in the cen­ters where they are now. The article went on to boast that, in 1993, “the Mercury News uncoverd the deaths of nine children within a month at a care center in San Bernardino that was the state’s first attempt at providing community care for retarded and medically fragile children. Four years later, the Orange County Register identified at least six mentally disabled persons who had died since 1991 as a result of preventable incidents.”

Sunny Maden, president of the California Association of State Hospital Parent Councils for the Retarded, said: “To thrust our children into the community setting,” which is neither communal nor particularly caring would not be able to care for their mentally disabled children in a community-based setting, because of the man­ner they have been able to in the past. And this from Santos Rogers, former executive director at Agnews Developmental Center and now executive direc­tor at San Andreas Regional Center in San Jose: “The majority of people in the community say we ought to look at other alternatives. Options are what this bill talks about.”

As some wit once said, “Money talks!”

“One of the reasons why the state had money to find for disabled patients to receive treatment at ade­quately funded hospitals, someone would be sure to find that that money could be better spent on elsewhere. Needless to say, these patients cannot speak up for themselves. They are at the mercy of those people who wield more influence in society.

This is the way capitalism treats its more vulnerable members of society. Everything that does not turn a profit and everything that might eat into profits is expendable under capitalism, and bureaucrats are not to be outdistanced in safeguarding the profit interests of the ruling class.

If this is capitalism’s response to the outworn, outmoded system of caring for its helpless then it clearly is an entirely unfelt and uncaring response. A soci­ety that really cared about its mentally disabled would build modern, well-equipped and well-staffed centers for their rehabilitation, allot the resources needed for their proper operation and provide caregivers with an income commensurate with their humanitarian service to society.

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