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SOCIALIST EDUCATION FUND—

“Symbols”

The red flag makes no bones of its purpose. Its purpose is the overthrow of the existing capitalist order of society, and the substitution of the same with the socialist or industrial order; in other words, to do what society, and the substitution of the same with the socialist order, would have to be done, to set, adjust the national institutions to economic conditions that were beyond change.”

—Daniel De Leon

The red flag symbolizes everything that socialism stands for, but it is only a symbol. The substance of socialism is in the principles it teaches and the goals it has set.

First among the principles of socialism is the unity of all people, regardless of race, color or creed, for the overthrow of class rule and exploitation. In the slogan—Workers of the World, Unite!—socialism proclaims its allegiance to all humanity.

What does the Confederate flag symbolize? What political, social and economic ideas does it represent?

It may seem absurd that such a question could still be matter for serious dispute. Nonetheless, the state of South Carolina is presently embroiled in a controversy on this very question.

Since the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the Confederate battle flag has been flown atop the capital dome in Columbia. It was put there to symbolize the state’s resistance to integration and civil rights, and there it remains.

The NAACP has launched a boycott of the state until the flag is hauled down and relegated to the museum. The state legislature is embroiled in a debate on whether to take it down or let it fly. On Jan. 17, nearly 50,000 people rallied in Columbia, S.C., to express their indignation that the flag still flutters over the capital dome 135 years after the Civil War ended chattel slavery. Most were African Americans and descendants of slaves.

Their demonstration followed another, but much smaller rally of 6,000 people on Jan. 6. The smaller demonstration was sponsored by what a Reuters report called "a coalition of Southern heritage groups." The report quoted one of the demonstrators’ spokesmen: "The issue at stake is the truth," said Rev. Bobzy Embree, a Baptist minister and member of the South Carolina Heritage Coalition. The flag is not a racist symbol. The flag symbolizes the rights of sovereign states.”

Those who participated in the larger demonstration—(Continued on page 6)

Capitalist Skeptics Resist Evidence of Global Warming

A decade ago, global warming was a hotly debated subject. Today, that debate and the intensive research that has accompanied it have led scientists in many parts of the world to conclude that global warming is a fact. Various reports in recent years indicate that there is general agreement among a large majority of meteorologists and climatologists that some degree of global warming has been going on for many years due to natural atmospheric conditions. However, as noted above, the added fact that there is widespread and growing agreement that global warming is being exacerbated by human activity.

Last month the San Jose Mercury News reported that, as far as the nation’s top weather and climate officials were concerned, the debate about the cause of global warming was over. That official is James Baker, the administrator of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, who warned that human interaction with the environment was causing climatic changes of such magnitude as to be a world threat in the 21st century.

The evidence that global warming is now an ongoing phenomenon is growing. Among the items of evidence cited to date are the following:

• The ice cap at the top of the globe is now 40 percent thinner than it was two or three decades ago.
• The climate at the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions is growing warmer in some of their seasons.
• The area covered by sea ice is less and of shorter duration in many places.
• Mountain glaciers in Alaska have begun to shrink.
• The same is true of the Greenland ice cap.
• Spring in the Northern Hemisphere comes a week earlier than it did 30 years ago.
• Severe rainstorms are up about 20 percent, not surprisingly, since warmer air carries more water vapor.
• Coral reefs around the world have been bleached by warmer waters.
• Sea levels are rising.

Dr. Drew Shindell, atmospheric physicist at the NASA Goddard Center for Space Studies, has noted that computer studies indicate that the situation is “not a natural thing.” The computer model suggests that the increasing heat-trapping greenhouse gases are largely responsible for increasing global warming.

“Now we must learn to live with the consequences of rising sea levels that could mandate the lowest lying coastal areas, financially and physically. Eighty percent of the coast is already eroding from rising sea levels, mostly because in recent years the temperature of the earth has increased in ocean temperatures over the past 100 years, he said.” (San Jose Mercury News, Jan. 12)

Despite the growing body of evidence that global warming is a growing threat, and despite the evidence that greenhouse gases are a major contributor to the problem, many U.S. capitalists who rely heavily on fossil fuels as their cheapest source of energy remain skeptics. As Business Week noted shortly after the Kyoto conference on global warming: “There’s no evidence, they [the capitalists] said, that emissions from the burning of fossil fuels are raising the Earth’s temperature.”

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By Ken Boettcher

The infamous history of capitalism and its brigading ruling class is replete with examples of how capitalists have manipulated the environment and humanity for the sake of defending, maintaining or advancing profit or the spheres of influence that enable a smooth flow of profit. The red flag at the top of the globe is now 40 percent thinner than it was two or three decades ago. The climate at the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions is growing warmer in some of their seasons. The area covered by sea ice is less and of shorter duration in many places.

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Concentration of Capital Wipes Out the Family Farm

By Nathan Karp

Despite claims that a record expansion has spread good fortune and affluence to all sectors of the economy during the past decade, the important agriculture industry has been sinking deeper and deeper into the doldrums. Even the federal government's $22.5 billion aid package has failed to prevent the industry's decline, and the prospect of another multibillion-dollar federal aid package is not likely to change the industry's troubled picture.

The number of farms in the United States has been in decline since the Great Depression. Through "good" times and bad, through succeeding waves of "prosperity" and crisis, nothing has stemmed the tide. In November 1994, for example, the Associated Press (AP) reported that the number of farms had slipped below "2 million for the first time since the Civil War." That particular report, which was based on the federal government's 1992 Census of Agriculture, added that: "The total of 1.925,300 is the lowest since 1850, the year Millard Fillmore succeeded Zachary Taylor as president...."

According to the same 1994 AP report, "The number [of farms] peaked at 6.8 million in 1935." Therewith, the drop began. By 1947, the number had fallen to 5.9 million, a loss of 900,000 units. The decline continued during the next decade, accelerated by a growing concentration of land resources, ever-increasing mechanization of farm machinery, better seeds and improved farming methods. By 1958, the number of farms was down to 4.8 million—a loss of 1.1 million. Understandably, most of the last farms were the smaller units, the "family farms" and the so-called independent farmers that were unable to compete with the new and large "farm factories" that were increasingly dominate in all phases of the agriculture industry. Even these developments were just the beginning. During the next 34 years, the decline was truly spectacular. From 1958 to 1992, 2.8 million farms were wiped out!

The decline apparently continues. For example, in Illinois, which had over 100,000 farms in the early 1980s, there were only 73,000 in 1997, a 28 percent drop.

Last November, in a lengthy article on what it called the "new agriculture," The New York Times reported that, "The nation's largest farms—those with more than $250,000 in sales—now account for more than 72 percent of all agricultural sales, up from 53 percent a decade ago." Such concentration exists not only with regard to crops, it prevails in all other agricultural sectors. "The concentration," the Times noted, "is staggering," and it added: "More than a fifth of the nation's pork is now slaughtered at one company. Four big companies now control about 70 percent of all cattle slaughter, up from 39 percent in 1985, according to the government." (Nov. 28)

G. Allen Andrews, chairman and chief executive officer of the huge Archer Daniels Midland Co., explains this rapid concentration and corporate growth as follows: "The competitiveness of the world's global food marketing system has driven many of our togethers to form stronger blocs." That is certainly a bland description of the ruthless process during which many small farms are swallowed up or simply forced out of existence. Many farm groups have expressed concern that the resulting large agriculture conglomerates stifles competition and will doom the family farms.

Family Farms Eliminated

The fact is that the family farms have been largely eliminated already. Now fighting for survival are the so-called independent farmers. They are tiny operators of small family farms of 40 or 50 acres or so. The Times offers an example of an Illinois farmer who owns and farms 700 acres. Thanks to good weather, good seed and other favorable factors he anticipates a bumper crop on which he expects to lose as much as $40,000. "There's just no profit in farming anymore," he says. The figures bear him out at least as far as independent farmers are concerned. According to the Times, "net farm income has fallen more than 38 percent since 1997." In Illinois the economic picture is even worse. There the average net farm income in 1998 was $11,074, down over 80 percent from the 1996 average of $62,000.

There is little doubt that a large percentage of America's 1.9 million farmers will face tough times in the days and months ahead. Those farmers' economic problems severely impact those companies that build and sell them farm equipment. Already the demand for farm equipment during the past year had declined generally by 40 percent. The demand for the real big pieces of equipment was down even more. Also negatively affected are those companies that sell feed, chemicals, feed for livestock, etc. The result along the line are cutbacks in production, mergers, restructuring and layoffs, etc.

Under capitalism, the concentration and extensive mechanization of an industry brings misery and hardship to great numbers of people and their families. The agriculture industry is no exception to this general rule. Yet, as the Weekly People explained in an article some time ago, "This concentration of agriculture into fewer, bigger and more efficient units is a process Socialists welcome (in principle). The giant farms are run like factories. They are manned from top to bottom by workers. Therefore, they will be far easier to take over and integrate into the socialist system.

"For the agricultural industry will have to be taken over in the same way that the textile, or the steel, or the transportation industries are taken over—by the workers who run it, organized on Socialist Industrial Union lines....They will [then be] managed...democratically through Socialist Industrial Union councils. And their continued mechanism, instead of bringing disaster to individuals and families, will lighten the burden of labor all around."

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Homeless Victimized By Brutalized Youth

By B.G.

It has often been said that a society can best be judged by the way it treats its unfortunate members. Under capitalism, this is especially true. By city officials and despise those who can't "make it" in our bourgeois prejudices that lead them to regard these outcasts of society have been formed to be taken over in the same way that the

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Read the Paper That's In a Class by Itself. The Working Class.

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Read the People.
Capitalists Resist Ergonomic Workplace Safety Standard

By Ken Boettcher

The long-running battle over the establishment of a national ergonomic workplace safety standard is heating up. But don’t hold your breath waiting for the national workplace to be free of the repetitive strain and associated musculoskeletal injuries that mar the backs and shoulders of thousands of workers every year. This month the first of three public hearings will be held that may lead to the establishment later this year of the Occupational Health and Safety Administration’s long-proposed “promulgated Ergonomic Program Standard.” That is, unless opponents of the standard succeed again in blocking it. OSHA hopes to have a workplace safety standard in effect by 1999, but has been blocked from implementing any such standard by congressional and other action.

As the AFL-CIO notes in a “Fact sheet on RSIs” (repetitive strain injuries) available on its Web site, “...some employers have a great interest in preventing OSHA from taking action...They also are moving to change state laws to make it difficult, if not impossible, for injured workers to prove compensation for these injuries. These employers have formed the National Council on Ergonomics, an industry front group, to block the standard as long as possible. They do this by arguing that there is no scientific basis for an ergonomics standard and by questioning whether RSIs are related to workplace conditions.

The response of some of these elements to OSHA’s announcement last November that it had begun the procedure to implement the standard seemed to overrule the AFL-CIO’s contention. “There is insufficient scientific evidence to justify a costly new ergonomic regulations,” charged Jerry J. Jasinowski, president of the National Association of Manufacturers. Food Distribution Industry (FDI) said it would challenge any standard, estimated that the standard would require its members to spend $5 billion to reconfigure their warehouses and force some companies to close or lay off employees that OSHA wants to wait for the National Academy of Sciences to finish its study of the question, which would be sometime next year.

But the tactic of greeting each new study with a demand for yet another appears, at least regarding this issue, to have worn out its credibility. So far this year it has failed to bear fruit: OSHA’s path toward implementing the standard has not been blocked.

The practice is morally reprehensible because there is no material or moral reason why any person, child or adult, should live in poverty today. The productivity of the American working class has increased to the point where it is the source of a social problem.

Bradley, however, has no more interest in getting at the true issue than any other politician. He merely points to child poverty to create the impression that he can do something about it. In truth, however, the only thing politicians have ever done about poverty is to manipulate it for their own ends.

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The numerous summaries by capital-
ists, which lead to the leading scien-
tific achievements of the century, the
scientific achievement that will make the
epoch live forever in the memory of the
human race, is a discovery outside the
field of physical science. Yet it is a dis-
covery that is absolutely indispensable if humanity is ever to consolidate its
latest conquests over nature. Today, hu-
mankind stands in danger of being de-
stroyed by its own inventions. It has be-
come commonplace for the scientists themselves to speculate on this and to
observe that science has been outstripped by its own predictions.

However, it is precisely in the sphere of
social science that the leading dis-
coveries of this epoch was made. If the
socialists do not recognize this, and if they
weep and complain that the fruits of
their intellect are being perverted to di-
abolical uses by militarists and ignorant
politicians, it is because they them-
seles are so blinded by class egotism and
class prejudice that they cannot see
what has been coming under the social
awakening and industrial alarm almost from the beginning of the 20th
century.

For the leading scientific and hu-
man achievement of the 20th century is
De Leonism—the discovery by the
great American Marxist, Daniel De
Leon, of the social forms essential to a
society of freedom in an industrial age.

De Leonism is the Marxist program
which change has been stubbornly and
accessibly resisted. We mean, of the man who were to say: "The horse
bears his claim for existence on the fact
that the horse fly and the horse "occupy equal
grounds"—is an ism in which
"ethics" figure only as snakes in Ireland—by
their absence. Such is the fix for the horse's
unionism. "Seller of labor" means the proletarian—
a being who is produced by a social sys-
tem that lowers him from the rank of
human to that of merchandise, that
which he sells being, in the last analysis,
himself; "buyer of labor" means capital-
ist—the being, whose class brought
about the system that produces the pro-
letariat, who upholds the system and
who cannot exist without the continu-
ance of that system. The "horse fly" base
its claim for existence on the fact that
"the buyer bears his claim for existence on the fact that
the horse fly and the horse "occupy equal
state of today is many times larger and
more powerful than what it was 100 years
ago, yet the political state of capi-
talism in the year 2000 is essentially
the same day:

"The trades union bases its claim for
existence on the fact that the buyer and the seller of labor should occupy
equal grounds...The employer declares that
he has a right to receive fair profits—
which is undistributed.

"The fly" means horse fly, an insect
that sucks up the blood of horses; "horse
means horse, a noble animal whom the
horse fly torments, and who would be
betrger better off if there were no horse flies. He who says "horse fly" and "horse" im-
plies the two things—provided his ethics
imply the two things—provided his ethics
say what he means. Obviously, the ism
which he sells being, in the last analysis,
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Should Join the SLP!

The Socialist Labor Party is the fourth oldest political party in the United States. In a sense, however, it may be called the second, because all other political parties are either out-and-out parties of capitalism or parties of reform that identify themselves with the “socialist” or “communist” label. The SLP is the only political party of the country that rejects capitalism and every effort to gloss over capitalism's contradictions with the social cosmetics of reform. No other party can make that claim.

The SLP was founded upon the principles of scientific socialism in 1890, 110 years ago. It has never deviated from these principles nor compromised them for temporary gain. It holds, with Marx, that the approaching social revolution must be accomplished by the enlightened working class and cannot be accomplished by a minority at the head of uneducated masses. To the end of educating our fellow workers to their mission and in the methods of achieving the goal of the Industrial Republic of Labor, the SLP has conducted a tireless campaign of agitation and education. It is the only and only exponent of Socialist Industrial Unionism through which the American workers must and will back up their socialist beliefs and which will become the framework of the new administration—the industrial union administration.

Should I Join the SLP?

If you agree that the prolongation of capitalism means worse wars, more exploitation, and more man degradation; if you agree that society must be reconstructed on a socialist basis for progress to be the law of the future as it has been the law of the past; if you agree that the program of the SLP is the correct program for bringing about such a socialist reconstruction of society; then you should join the SLP and become an active member in its ranks.

At the same time, however, the SLP does not encourage the applications of persons who are carried away by momentary enthusiasm or who concretize with this, among them the so-called Socialist and Communist parties. In the 1920s, for example, the CP made an all-out drive for new members. It started the year, according to one report, with 10,000 members. It took in 10,000 new members. And it ended the year with—10,000 members! The SLP, of course, has nothing in common with the CP. Nevertheless, experience and common sense teach that it is not that kind of enthusiasm which we should join.

The SLP does want new members. But it wants men and women who know beforehand what the SLP stands for, who support the party's program and principles. It wants men and women who have thought it over, and who have reached the conclusion that the Socialist Industrial Union program of the SLP is the way to socialist freedom.

Among the rank and file readers of the People there are unquestionably many who, as far as general understanding and conviction are concerned, have the qualifications required for SLP membership. They are the process of acquiring these qualifications all the time as they build up the social and political knowledge of scientific socialism. Those who do apply for membership. Not only are they wanted, they are needed to strengthen the SLP and to ensure its future.

What Are the Membership Requirements?

First, it requires, among other things, a grasp of the class struggle and its implications. This, in turn, requires an understanding of basic and elementary Marxism, as, for example, what the wages are, what determines the value of commodities and how the capitalists exploit wage labor through the extraction of surplus value. This knowledge is available in the pamphlets of the party and other literature included in the party's New York Labor News catalogue. The party also prints Socialism for Beginners, a brief attempt to explain how to understand the meaning of socialism and what to read. The New York Labor News catalogue and Socialism for Beginners are supplied free on application by interested persons, or may be downloaded from the SLP's Web site (www.slp.org).

The age limit for SLP membership is 18, but the party encourages youths under 18 to attend its activities and to participate in its work, especially in the vital work of distributing SLP leaflets and The People. Dues in the SLP are nominal. The first month’s dues are free and there is no initiation fee.

In states where there are SLP subdivisions, new members become members of sections (local SLP organizations) having jurisdiction. In states where the party is not organized, the individual member can be “national members-at-large,” that is, they would come directly under the jurisdiction of the national organization.

Does the SLP Manage Its Affairs Democratically?

The SLP is a democratic organization. The highest authority in the party is its own enlightened membership. Furthermore, the democracy of the SLP is not a “paper democracy.” It is a living principle that the membership guards zealously. Efforts have been made to short-circuit SLP democracy, reduce it to absurdity and by such means to disrupt the party. They have failed. But, whenever they have been attempted they have brought home the vital lesson that the party's principles are safe from serious internal attack only under a system of collective decision making and of membership participation and control.

One safeguard of the SLP’s democracy is its Constitution, which, among other things, declares that all of the following acts of the National Convention shall be submitted to the membership for a general vote and shall not be effective until the majority of the SLP’s Web site (www.slp.org).

What Duties and What Rights Do SLP Members Have?

In many respects, rights and duties are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Membership in the SLP is a voluntary act. It is up to you to make, to speak to and vote on any motion at their section's meetings. Members of one section who are visiting another section along the right lines of a problem may vote in that section, though visitors have no right to make or second a motion before another section and may be excluded from that section’s meeting under certain circumstances, as when the section they are visiting goes into executive session to consider some matter of exclusive concern to that section.

At the same time, members have the right of attending the meetings of their own section at which they have been made an SLP member may be exercised. In the end, SLP democracy depends on the participation of its members.

While members have the right to make, speak to and vote on motions, they also have the obligation of complying with the decision reached. Democracy, after all, involves more than the rights of individuals and minorities to be heard and to participate in the decision-making process. It involves a willingness to be bound by the decisions once reached by democratic means.

Where important disagreements cannot be settled at the section level, members have the right to appeal against them to the party's National Executive Committee.

Members also have the right to stand for elective office within the section or within the SLP once they meet the basic eligibility requirements, which range from six months to two years of membership in continuous good standing. At all times, members who accept election to office have the duty of discharging the responsibilities of their position. The membership who elects the officers has the right to expect this from those they elect.

The national vote on the membership of every member of the SLP is to keep her or himself in good standing by the organization. By paying their dues regularly and promptly, or by being the financial guarantor of payments to which they are entitled in circumstances of unemployment, financial hardship or illness. Members who fail to maintain good standing lose their rights and risk their membership.

What Does Discipline in the SLP Mean?

In an excellent summation of this point, De Leon once wrote: "In a political party of socialism the Socialist Labor Party Marks 110th Anniversary

The Socialist Labor Party was organized on its present basis as a militant party in the late 1880s. This year of 2000 therefore marks the 110th anniversary of the party.

The Socialist Labor Party was the outgrowth of the Socialistic Labor Party, which was organized in 1866–1877. That party, in turn, was a development of various movements that traced back indirectly to the work of Socialists in unions and in the American branch of the International Workingmen’s Association founded by Karl Marx.

On a linear basis, the SLP can trace its origin back to 1876. On a collateral basis, it can trace its origin back to 1868–1869, when Frederick Engels, working for the formation of the National Labor Union to the International.

Propaganda vs. Action

But such a search for origins is of no academic interest. The fact remains that the SLP of today originated in 1889 when its ranks were joined by Daniel De Leon.

One historian of the SLP has stated that the old Socialistic Labor Party was considered a “party of propaganda” by its members “who wanted it to remain forevermore a ‘party of propaganda’ and endorse what was called this ‘propaganda’ party confusion reigned supreme, much as it (and still reigns) in the so-called Socialist Party of a faceless socialist body. In retrospect, it may be said that the struggle with antisocialist elements is an integral part of the history of socialism. In fact, Marx and Engels, during the struggle sharpened De Leon's awareness of the need for Marxist soundness and drove him on to an examination of sociology and of social forces that culminated in his famous dictum: De Leon once wrote: "In a political party of socialism the...
(Continued from page 1) "the government’s official commit-tee on data protocols, which evolved into the American Na-tional Standards Institute (ANSI), commended a four-digit standard.”

“By 1988 ANSI was recom-mended the four-digit dates be used exclusively. That same year, the government’s National Insti-tute of Standards and Technology called for a four-digit format, and explicitly warned of the millen-ium bug.”

Still the capitalist owners of in-dustry did not listen, and govern-ment failed to implement any regu-lations that may have forced them to do something about the problem.

The major players in the com-puter industry also massed the boat, thereby compounding the problem. “If there is a private sec-tor villain of the piece,” Kuttner observed, “it is of course Microsoft. The early universal operating sys-tem, Microsoft’s DOS, came into widespread use in the early 1980s. It used a two-digit date format. Microsoft continued the two-digit date format with its Windows oper-ating systems in the 1990s, sell-ing millions of copies of an operat-ing system doomed by the millen-ium bug. To continue the two-digit format was cheaper than pushing for the conversion to a four-digit format, so the prob-lem continued.”

Capitalism has also solved the worst of its Y2K problems in its own way. It con-self has dutifully towed this line for years. It has been complicit in its own perpetuation of poverty and human health and safety and has been a servant of the capitalist state. The business unions, too, accept the status quo of the nation and its state: they recognize the “right” of capitalists to exploit workers to make a profit and stay in business; hence, their right to treat workers as commodities. That means treating workers as replaceable and deserving of only the narrowest protections to their health and safety. Having accepted these premises, procapitalist unions have recourse only to the “good will” of the notoriously amoral capitalist class, whose pri-mary aim in life is the pursuit of profit.

Workers have never received any real or lasting relief from workplace hazards or dangers as a result of the legislative action of the political re-presentatives of the capitalist class. They have always been more than happy, thanks to effective capitalism of the state, to live in a world that was—a socialist society, freed from what Karl Marx once re-flected on as “the furies of private interest” that now control the world’s industries and services.

. . . Safety Standard

(Continued from page 3) and that higher profits. Their op-position to the four-digit format, but instead may be read as opposition to an OSHA-mandated program. For this element, Charles N. Jef-fress, assistant secretary of labor in charge of OSHA, has some harsh words when the standard was proposed last November. “You cry well about ergonomics,” said Jeffress, “while at the same time investing in ergonomic programs . . . Haven’t you any shame?” He asked for care about the representation of mis-representation that is creating for your corporations.”

The capitalist owners of the na-tion’s industries and services have long fought such a standard, with all the political ingenuity that it is either unnecessary or will cost them so much that it will “en-danger jobs” by forcing some com-panies out of business. OSHA has itself dutifully towed this line for years. It has been complicit in its own perpetuation of poverty and human health and safety and has been a servant of the capitalist state. The business unions, too, accept the status quo of the nation and its state: they recognize the “right” of capitalists to exploit workers to make a profit and stay in business; hence, their right to treat workers as commodities. That means treating workers as replaceable and deserving of only the narrowest protections to their health and safety. Having accepted these premises, procapitalist unions have recourse only to the “good will” of the notoriously amoral capitalist class, whose pri-mary aim in life is the pursuit of profit.

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To Break the Chains Of Wage Slavery, Workers Need Socialist Education.

activities

(Continued on page 8)
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PONTIAC, MICH.

VANCOUVER

SLP Marks 110th

(Continued from page 2)

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PONTIAC, MICH.
I n accord with the Carter-Torrijos treaty of 1977, after nearly a century of U.S. military occupation, the Panama Canal Zone was turned over to the Panamanian government on Dec. 31. The decision to relinquish direct control over the canal has been hotly debated by policy-makers and in the bourgeois media. Conservatives decry it as a “giveaway” that will adversely affect vital U.S. economic interests. Labor corporatists praise the transfer as an attempt to rectify a historic injustice. Both arguments are based on a false premise. The implication is that the United States has actually surrendered control of the canal and has given up the “right” of intervention to defend it. Also implied is that, on the whole, U.S. economic, military and strategic interests have been sacrificed to honor the principle of self-determination for the Panamanian people. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In reality, the United States has retained the right of intervention to defend its material interests. Moreover, the “privatization” of the Canal has been a boons for U.S. and other multinational corporations.

While the Carter-Torrijos Panama Canal Treaty of 1977 did nominally cede control of the Canal to Panamanian jurisprudence, there is a catch to it called the Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal, or the Neutrality Treaty. A Web site maintained by Americans who grew up and went to school in the former Panama Canal Zone (Panamachristmas.com), posts a document that explains how this makes a mockery of any U.S. claim to “give up” its historic harbor.

Unlike the Panama Canal Treaty, there was and is no termination date on the Neutrality Treaty, as the full name indicates. It stipulates that “both in time of peace and in time of war [the canal]...shall remain secure and open to peaceful transit by the vessels of all nations on terms of equality.” PANamanian sovereignty was further eroded by another provision that U.S. and Panamanian “warships were entitled to operations of the Canal.” It was also made clear that this type of intervention would not be considered as “intervention” as defined by the Statement of Understanding, thus making the entire agreement “between two sovereign states into a facte.

As amended, the Neutrality Treaty was ratified by the Senate, and in June 1978 it was signed by Carter and Torrijos. Torrijos signed under protest, and to placate Panamanian opposition added a statement that Panama would “reject...any attempt by any country to intervene in its internal or external affairs.” Nevertheless, no well-informed person, either in Panama or in the United States, was fooled by this. The facts were painfully obvious. According to cabrutos.com, “The DeCenica Condition, because it was attached to the Neutrality Treaty, would remain in force permanent-ly.” Thus, as amended, the Neutrality Treaty “was never ratified in Panama [and] was received there by a storm of protest.” This “Neutrality Treaty” amounts to little more than a unilateral declaration on the U.S. part to justify U.S. military intervention on grounds of protecting the canal.

The formal transfer of the Panama Canal has opened the door for investors from all over the globe to buy chunks of territory formerly occupied by the U.S. armed forces. The “privatization” contracts are “worth more than $1.5 billion,” according to a report issued by Business Wire. (Dec. 16) Ancillary agreements to the canal treaty laid the groundwork for this, providing for U.S. loan guarantees, including “$20 million...by the U.S. Over seas Private Investment Corporation,” “$200 million...provided by the U.S. Ex port-Import Bank for financing Panama-ian purchase of U.S. exports” and up to $50 million in foreign military sales credits over a 10-year period,” to give American capitalists a head start. As in any intensely competitive and complex set of circumstances of this na-ure, some elements of the U.S. capitalist class will benefit more than others. There will be some winners and a few losers. However, according to Business Wire, some of the most prominent and powerful U.S. corporations have fared pretty well. Among them are “McDonald’s...ICF Kaiser, Kansas City Southern Railroad, Sea Land and Stevedoring of America,” as well as “17 companies...in the Techno-Park, including Oracle [and] Eli Lilly & Co.”

In addition to attractions such as raw materials, cheap labor and opportunities for expanding markets, U.S. companies are lured by “Panama’s strategic loca-tion...the Colon Free Zone, Panama’s in-ternational banking center, ports at either end of the canal, and the canal itself, [which] have attracted manufacturers interested in export processing, light manu- facturing and logistics.” Moreover, foreign capitalists from countries such as “the United Kingdom, Italy, Mexico, Costa Rica, Taiwan, Hong Kong [now under Chi-nese control], South Korea and Canada” have also made substantial investments in “former Canal Zone properties” and re-lated areas.

Far from diminishing the U.S. role in the region, this international investment serves to enhance the U.S. position as de facto guarantor of “security” in the Canal Zone. Since so many nations have a stake in maintaining an environment in which commercial interests can flourish, they are more likely to support U.S. military action if the canal is threatened. Given the track record of both Democratic and Republican administrations to intervene in Panama’s internal affairs with the support of the “in-ternational community,” i.e., ruling classes of the world, imperialist “gun boat” diplo-macy is alive and well. The basic nature of capitalism has not changed.

**...Poverty**

(Continued from page 6)

...sticks deeper and deeper below the condi-tions of existence of his own class. He be-comes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bour-geoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society...It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.” (Com-munist Manifesto)

Even the final statutory definition of poverty currently being used demonstrating an increase of 10.4 million people validates Marx and Engels’ conclusion. The working class must eventually confront the working class in society....It is unfit to rule because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.” (Com-

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