We're Back!

We are pleased to resume publication of The People with this issue and thereby end a suspension that began last July. We are pleased, not only because that is what we were working toward all these months, but also because at last we are able to respond to all those who shared that hope and encouraged us to start again.

Once the decision to resume publishing was made we had to move quickly. That sense of urgency may reveal itself by the absence of articles in this issue. Our readers have the right to expect articles on certain recent developments. That is what we were working toward all these months, but also because at last we are able to make it clear ever since.

Two problems intersected to make the suspension necessary.

One was an uncertain situation regarding the national headquarters of the Socialist Labor Party, which also houses the editorial offices of The People. For months it appeared that the headquarters would be forced to move. Fortunately, that proved unnecessary, at least for now, although the problem may come up again within the next seven or eight months.

The second problem was a dangerous drain on the SLP's cash reserves. SLP members and supporters responded to that emergency with great generosity. Their efforts stopped the month-to-month deficit and prevented the problem from getting worse.

From the moment our July issue went to press, the letters began pouring in by the score. Most were brief, to wish us luck, to say they missed the paper, to praise our work, to encourage us—but above all to urge a resumption of publication at the earliest opportunity. And they have been making it clear ever since.

That is part of what Nancy Cleeland wrote in the Los Angeles Times of last June 19. Boiled-down versions of her article on “Need for speed has workers seething” also found their way into The Seattle Times, The Dallas Morning News, and, we suppose, other newspapers around the country.

“A decade-long obsession with productivity has been healthy for the corporate bottom line,” she added, “but workers say they are paying for it with exhaustion and pain.”

Apparently more workers are starting to grumble, not only among themselves and not only because they are tiring at the pace, but also because their health and safety are at stake.

“Job speedup is emerging as the top complaint for low-wage employees in sectors as diverse as food processing and tourism,” Cleeland wrote. “It has become a pivotal bargaining issue in some union contracts. And increasingly, health and safety experts consider it a source of injury and illness.”

Cleeland cited some examples to illustrate the growing discontent.

• “In a Los Angeles pork-processing plant, workers once limited by union contract to bottling 60 hams an hour are up to 70 an hour.”

• “Maids at a Las Vegas Strip resort have in five years gone from cleaning 14 rooms to 17 rooms per shift.”

• “A frozen-food plant in Marshall, Mo., runs 1,200 chicken pot pies an hour, compared with 1,100 two years ago and 400 in 1980.”

Cleeland said there is anger, resentment, fear and rage among workers, particularly those engaged in low-wage sectors of the economy.

Speedups Are Pushing Many Workers to the Breaking Point

American workers are the most productive in the world, which is just another way of saying they are the most thoroughly exploited workers in the world. They are worked harder to produce more in less time than workers anywhere else. “In small but growing numbers,” however, “many workers are taking a stand and saying ‘no more.’”

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Poor, Vulnerable Day Laborers Exploited By N.Y. Contractors

By B.G.

Exploitation of immigrant day laborers by their employers is rampant in New York State. Refusal to pay wages after the workers have finished the job is one popular tactic used by the employers, who rely on the trust and innocence of these workers, many of whom speak little or no English and who know nothing of American laws. Also, many day laborers are undocumented, subject to arrest and deportation if found out by the police and immigration authorities. Unscrupulous employers thus take advantage of the situation.

One organization that tries to help these workers left in the lurch by their employers is Workplace Project in Hempstead, N.Y., run by Nadia Marin-Molina. One tactic that Ms. Marin-Molina’s group uses, but with only minimal effect, is protest demon-
United Airlines Bankruptcy
A Tool to Bust Airline Unions

UAL's bankruptcy filing last December gives the airline a powerful tool to wield against the unions that represent its 85,000 workers—even though those workers made up only 5 percent of the company.

As a Dow-Jones Newswire report put it last month, “The bankruptcy code has a provision that would allow United to ask the judge to abrogate existing labor contracts as it could impose terms on workers—a step that would allow United to sharply reduce labor costs and trim losses.”

United's bankruptcy forces its “owners” to preside over the workers' exploitation as workers. The employee stock “ownership” plan the corporatist unions negotiated in 1984 exchanged wage and benefit cuts of over $8 billion for meaningless “ownership” without achieving any real control. Besides bilions in new cuts, the bankruptcy will likely wipe out this “ownership.”

Industry analysts say it isn't likely the company will immediately ask the bankruptcy court to nullify exist- ing labor contracts. Bankruptcy law requires that an attempt be made to negotiate reductions in wages and benefits. If the unions reject the “offer” the court can then go to work cutting wages and benefits to the bone.

Cutts for United's workers would pressure other air- lines to push for their own cuts and put all airline workers on the forefront of the class struggle.

New York City Transit Workers Threatened into Submission

New York City's Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 struck a last minute deal with the Metropoli- tan Transportation Authority (MTA) on Dec. 16, which appar- ently averted a strike that appeared imminent. The settle- ment provides for a one-time cash payment of $1,000 to each member of the union and annual pay hikes of 3 percent over the three-year life of the agreement. The union entered negotiations demanding annual wage increases of 8 percent.

The 34,000 member local had voted to fight the MTA's initial demands for a wage freeze and for increased worker payments into health care and pension plans. A strike was authorized despite the state's infamous 1987 “Taylor Law,” which unconstitutionally makes it illegal for public employees to strike.

Before the negotiators reached their agreement, Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Jules Spodick issued an injunction citing the law. The injunction barred a strike and threatened fines against workers who could have amounted to as much as two days' pay for each day on strike, and the union could have lost the state's per- mission to collect dues from workers' paychecks. The court could also have jailed any worker declared to be in contempt of court.

Earlier, Governor George Pataki threatened use of state troopers and the National Guard to back up city police. Michael Bloomberg, the former mayor, warned of “drastic repercussions” for any striking transit workers.

On Dec. 17, the New York Post reported that the local's executed on the first day of the deal and that union president Roger Toussaint was confident it would be “easily ratified.”

Dockworkers Under Taft-Hartley
Injunction to Vote on Contract

The Bush administration's invigoration of the repressive Taft-Hartley Act and its threat to upsetting West Coast ports with Navy personnel last fall made it clear that the federal government was backing the demands of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) against the struggle of dock workers “organized” by the International Warehouse and Longshore Union (ILWU).

The injunction forced an 80-day “cooling off” period and banned the ILWU's 10,500 members from working at anything less than a “reasonable” pace. Union members had been acclimating itself to productivity in an attempt to fight the demand of the PMA that, in any new labor contract, it could cut our jobs however it saw fit. It was a demand that would have erased the union’s role against the picture of the technology that was implemented. At press time, union negotiators claimed they had negotiated a “win-win” agreement with the PMA. Details on the new contract were not yet available at press time, but union spokesmen beat their chests about small increases in wages, health care and pensions for present workers. Consequently absent, however, was any chest-beating about retaining any say in new jobs. ILWU members will have their say in a January vote.

Tainted Meat Threatens Health Of Working-Class Consumers

By R.G.

How safe is the food that you eat? Reports of tainted meat and poultry that cause illness or death have become increasingly frequent in recent years. The increase of such incidents has caused fears that safety procedures at slaughterhouses are woefully inadequate, and justifiably so.

Indeed, slaughterhouses rank among the dirtiest and most dangerous places to work, and wages are often lower than in other industries where the risk of job-caused illness and injury runs high. Although meat and poultry products rarely get to the super- market without the government's stamp of approval, federal regulation of the industry is inade- quate at best. However, that is not the primary reason why tainted meat and poultry are causing more illnesses and deaths. More important by far are the ordinary compulsions of the profit system to minimize costs and maximize profits. Those com- pulsions comprise a formula that all but guaran- tees the inhuman treatment of animals raised for food and the dangerous and unsanitary working conditions that exist in the industry.

Compelled to work quickly, workers slaughter, skin and gut animals at a brutal pace and with methods that can lead to contamination of the meat when the E. coli pathogen escapes from intestines or fecal mat- ter attached to animal hair and hides. The E. coli then can enter the muscle meat destined to become hamburger.

One of the most devastating outbreaks of E. coli contamination occurred in January when the Jack-in-the-Box restaurant chain sold hamburger meat tainted with E. coli 0157:H7. The infected meat caused the deaths of four children and hundreds of illnesses.

The largest recall of beef was in 1997 when 25 mil- lion pounds produced by Hudson Foods was contam- inated. Representatives in Congress then introduced legislation to increase the number of inspections and improve safety standards in meat-packing plants, but the meat industry successfully blocked it.

Last July, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a recall of 19 million pounds of ground beef probably contaminated by E. coli. The beef came from ConAgra Beef Co. plant in Greeley, Colo. It caused illness in 19 people in California, Colorado, Michigan, South Dakota, Washington and Wyoming. Several people were hospitalized.

This particular plant has been no stranger to trou- ble. It has been cited nearly 10 times in the past three years for violating safety codes meant for work- er protection in dangerous conditions, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Labor officials have frequently complained about poor training for workers who are doing this dan- gerous work in the Greeley slaughterhouse.

Other ConAgra plants have also been cited for sloppy and dangerous work procedures. The USDA last year briefly stopped work in two ConAgra plants because of health violations. At another ConAgra plant, inspectors found the highest salmonella rate among all turkey processors tested by the USDA. Inspectors found contamination in nearly half the birds in the plant.

A large part of the problem comes from the feed lots outside the slaughterhouses, where tens of thou- sands of cattle fatten while waiting for slaughter. Not all cattle today come off range land, feeding on grass and tended by cowboys. The more modern method favored by the giant agricapitalists is the pen, or feed lot, into which they cram huge numbers of cattle. A plant, such as the ConAgra operation in Greeley, has many feed lots close together on the grounds, often stretching off as far as the eye can see. There is no grass for the cattle to eat grows in these huge pens, although it is their natural food. Today's meat provducers—whether chickens, pigs or cattle—feed off corn mash poured into troughs at feeding time. The corn mash fattens cattle quicker than grass, even though it causes have with their digestive sys- tem. As a result, corn-fed cows also receive antibiotics to guard against sickness and infection. Another major drawback of corn-fed beef as food for people, even if it is free of infection, is that it is higher in saturated fat than grass-fed beef.

Cattle penned up in feed lots move about very lit- tle and fatten faster. They are constantly stepping in and lying down in vast amounts of dung, and faces still cling to their hides when the time comes to herd them into the slaughterhouse.

The methods used to raise and slaughter animals today give way to wide opening to E. coli pathogens to enter the animals’ system. However, sanitization and the health of cattle and humans are not nearly as important in a capitalist system as are greed and profits. First things first!
Carl C. Miller Jr., organizer of Section Houston, SLP, delivered the following address before an antiwar rally in Houston, Tex., on Saturday, Nov. 9. Miller reported that his address "received a very good response," that one of the rally organizers "heard several compliments about the speech," and several people came up to him personally to tell him the same. Miller also reported "that the rally received some local TV coverage." "The footage was taken during my speech," he said, "though not one of the actual speech was aired." Section Houston is one of several groups that organized the rally, which attracted about 200 people.

Last Tuesday was Election Day. Last Tuesday voters turned the Democrats out and turned Congress over to the Republicans. Now Republicans control the White House and both Houses of Congress. Now it seems inevitable that President Bush will have his way and our country will soon be waging war on Iraq.

That is how it looks to many people. In their minds, the Democratic setbacks on Nov. 5 removed the last real barrier to a second war on Iraq. All the pollsters were wrong about how the elections would turn out. All the pundits feign surprise. The election results supposedly show something no one suspected. They supposedly show that the people of the country are in back of the Bush administration's threats against Iraq and the dictatorial regime that has that country in its grip.

How convenient it is that the pollsters were wrong. What a fine impression it creates when all the pundits seem to be scrambling to explain their mistake. What a great show they are putting on. But don't be fooled by it, because that's all it is—a show. It is nothing but theatrics. It is meant to deceive and discourage people like you, and millions more like you—decent people, honest people, working people who no more want their country to make war and bring death to other decent and honest people in Iraq than they want to see a repetition of what happened on Sept. 11, 2001.

What the pollsters and pundits have done is spice up the sham duel between two indistinguishable sets of politicians. President Bush says he is a man of peace! He says he has no real wish to wage war on Iraq. He says that the unspeakable dictator who oppresses his own people. It's the dictator he's after. It's those weapons of mass destruction we hear so much about, but always in such vague and generalized terms that it's impossible to know what Iraq's military abilities really add up to. They certainly didn't add up to much during the Gulf War 11 years ago, and it's unlikely that they add up to that much.

SLL Organizer Delivers Antiwar Message at Houston Rally

after the embargo that has been in place ever since the war. Saddam Hussein is a tyrant. No informed person would deny it. His regime oppresses the people of Iraq. That's as plain as day. It's a fact, and Mr. Bush and his administration are milking that fact for all it's worth. But that's only half the truth, and like most half-truths it is meant to cover up a greater lie.

The greater truth, the full truth, is that American capitalism wants to control Iraq's oil. Yes, I know, there are those who deny it. We are told that the United States can't be after Iraq's oil because the world is awash in oil. There's no shortage of it, at least not yet. There are other supplies easier to get than oil, which will guarantee peace and prosperity for all.

If you are interested in the SLP's program and you would like more information, come talk to us or visit our Web site at www.slp.org. You are needed in this struggle for human emancipation. Join us and help us build a brighter future for all of humankind. Thank you.
Unemployment went up for the third consecutive month in November, and that is likely to be the way of it for sometime to come. The Department of Labor reported 8.5 million people were unemployed and an unemployment rate of 6.0 percent. The rate was much higher for some workers than for others. For Hispanic workers it was 7.8 percent, and for African-American workers it was 11 percent.

These figures shamelessly understate the true state of affairs. Even so, they are enough to refute the capitalist claim that we live in the land of equal opportunity for all, without regard to race, creed or color. Minority workers did not fare well by what capitalism considers acceptable standards for workers even during the “prosperous years” that closed out the 20th century, but now things are getting downright grisly.

The shortest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation, should be one uniting all working people, of all nations, and tongues, and kindreds.”

—Abraham Lincoln

Worse yet, this capitalist system of piracy and theft is so riddled with contradictions, so corrupting in its influence, and so badly managed by corporate and government bundlers, that the economically dependent working class really cannot depend on it even to provide the jobs where they are “privileged” to produce billions for the corrupt and useless class of owners and crumbs for themselves.

Looking for work can be a difficult and humiliating experience even when jobs appear to be plentiful and the competition for them is relatively mild. During difficult times, when jobs are scarce and workers find themselves forced into a fierce competition for them, what was “merely” difficult and degrading becomes a frantic, even desperate, experience that must inevitably leave some workers out in the cold.

These days, when companies are folding faster than newspapers on a press and job openings rival hens’ teeth in point of scarcity, finding work can be even more of a difficult, stressful and humiliating proposition than capitalism ordinarily makes it. Throw anything resembling a swarthy crowd and job openings rival hens’ teeth in point of scarcity, finding work can be even more of a difficult, stressful and humiliating proposition than capitalism ordinarily makes it. Throw anything resembling a swarthy crowd and job openings rival hens’ teeth in point of scarcity, finding work can be even more of a difficult, stressful and humiliating proposition than capitalism ordinarily makes it. Throw anything resembling a swarthy crowd and job openings rival hens’ teeth in point of scarcity, finding work can be even more of a difficult, stressful and humiliating proposition than capitalism ordinarily makes it. Throw anything resembling a swarthy

Our brother, the Journal of the Knights of Labor, launches forth a theory on political parties that, if correct, should cause history to be forthwith recast.

It says: “Political parties, no matter what their name—whether Republican, Democratic, People’s, Socialist or Prohibition—are short-lived, vacillating, changeable things that invariably become corrupt before they become of age.”

As far as we know anything about the history of political parties, in this and all other countries, the facts deny the theory of the Journal’s philosopher, that political parties are vacillating, etc., and that they invariably fail.

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

Socialism does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a state bureaucracy or a new bureaucratic class. It does not mean “nationalization,” or “labor-management boards,” or “state capitalism of any kind. It means a complete end to all capitalist social relations.

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

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

By Bruce Cossin

Pharmaceuticals topped the Fortune 500 list of most profitable industries in 2001. In its rush to profit from new drugs, however, the industry reaps superprofits from new drugs under copyright. Without a steady flow of new drugs, however, all drugs would eventually lose patent protection and become available as generics and prices—followed by profits—would drop.

Before any new drug can be sold it must be tested in numerous studies. The FDA's policy of approving drugs intended to treat "serious" disorders, FDA regulations and congressional actions in 1992 provided fees and goals for such acceleration, as noted by David Willman in a Los Angeles Times article in December 2000, "President Clinton urged FDA leaders to trust industry as 'partners, not adversaries.'"

As a result, the FDA approved what the Times referred to as the "seven deadly drugs" between 1993 and 1999. The FDA sanctioned them "while disregarding danger signs or blunt warnings from its own specialists" and then dragged its feet after learning of significant harm to patients.

In all, 1,002 deaths were attributed to these drugs in "adverse event" reports reported to the FDA. Because reports by doctors and hospitals are voluntary, however, some epidemiologists suggest that the true number could be far greater.

Ironically and tragically, none of these "seven deadly drugs" had major life-saving potential. They included an antibiotic, a diet drug, a pain killer, and treatments for diabetes, blood pressure and intestinal problems. And this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Workers at the FDA did their jobs under major time constraints and pressure to get the "right" results. Willman noted instances of reviewers having negative reviews overturned by management. The question was not, as one reviewer said, "Should we approve this drug?" but, "Hey, how can we get this drug approved?"

The pressure on workers was such that the scientific integrity of their work became an issue in union contract negotiations, but Dr. Janet Woodcock, direc-
Funds

(June 15-Dec. 6, 2002)

**Daniel De Leon Sesquicentennial Fund**

$500 each: Section Cleveland, Jack Rod; Roy K. Nelson, Henry Coretz $102; Glenn Scheid $100; Richard Wilson $12; $10 each Daniel Brian Lanazus, Jay Martin; Harvey Kravitz $5; Paul D. Lawrence $3.

Total: $1,456.00

**SLP Emergency Fund**

Harold Brak $5,000; Joan M. Davis $2,800; Marie & Bay Simmons (In memory of all the comrades who lived or passed that kept the SLP alive) $2,000; Joseph B. McCabe $1,100; Irene Scholten $1,000; Joseph L. Bregis $600; Anonymous $654; $500 each: Angelo Kehrte, Anonymous, Jack Rod; (In memory of my dear brother and comrade, Chris Rodv), Section Cleveland.

Daniel Dersen $480; $300 each: Glenn Scholten, Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Scholten (In memory of Rudy Gustafson); $250 each: Marty Radov, Jay Martin; Mrs. G.J. Olman, Robert Kelly, S.W. Andrick, Miles Raisig, George S. Taylor, Gerald M. Lucas, Meyer $128; Daniel Worcester $107; $100 each: Aune Frederick Vogelgesang, Robert Ormsby; Donna $170.48; Joe Groelke $170; $150 each: Dimitre Eloff, Donald Rogers $175; Section Cook County, Ill., Elizabeth Stanich, Marty Radov; $200 each: Chris Gustafson; $250 each: Marty Radov (In memory of & Mrs. Glenn Schelin (In memory of Rudy Angeline Kleist, Anonymous, Jack Radov (In memory of Ray Simmons (In memory of all the comrades who lived or passed that kept the SLP alive) $2,000; Joseph B. McCabe $1,100; Irene Scholten $1,000; Joseph L. Bregis $600; Anonymous $654; $500 each: Angelo Kehrte, Anonymous, Jack Rod; (In memory of my dear brother and comrade, Chris Rodv), Section Cleveland.

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...Parties

(Continued from page 4)

become corrupt before they become of age.

The Republican Party, born of a people's determin-
ination to abolish chattel slavery; inspired by Lin-
coln's great motto, "This country must be either all
slave or all free," and nailing to its
mausoleum the principle set down in its platform:
"The normal condition of the territory of the
United States is that of freedom"; that party never
once vacillated, unless to tack against adverse
and fierce winds with the eye steady on the
goal to be reached or be styled vacillation.
Nor is it true that it became corrupt before it
became of age. During its manhood it was pure and
unsullied, as a body, and true to its mission, dis-
avowering in its purpose. After it had accom-
plished its mission, and not until after its old age,
did it grow corrupt. With nothing more to do than
to hunt for jobs it ran to seed.

The Democratic Party, born by the democratic
breath of Jefferson, determined that this should be
a democratic country in fact as well as in
name, and it set its face against the Hamiltonian
design to make us an oligarchy of the "well-born
and well-to-do." With that clear object before it, it
fought and succeeded in overthrowing almost
everywhere the property qualifications that orig-
nally hampered our suffrage. It is not true that it
vacillated or became corrupt before it became of
age. During its manhood it was the inspiration of
noble and pure sentiments. After, however, it had in
the man and very substantially accomplished its
mission, and not until after its old age, did it become corrupt. Like the Republican Party, with
nothing more to do than to get offices for its camp
followers, it ran into the ground.

This is the history, not of the leading old politi-
cal parties of this country alone, it is the history of
all political parties born anywhere of a positive
movement. From the facts thrown up by them the
philosophy of the history of political parties can be
determined. It is this: "A political party with a clear-cut central idea and program soundly planted
attracts stalwarts that bring it up to manhood, lead it to victory and put its program through. After its historic mis-
sion is fulfilled, it, like the butterfly that has laid
its egg, withers and decomposes. It may continue to
eat for a time, but if it does, it does so only as an
historic cripple, rope for overthrown by the next
vire movement that should give birth to another
political party possessed of a vigor imparting,
and, consequently, victory-assuring program."

Tested by this test one can easily cast the horo-
scope of any political party that may come up.
The Prohibition Party, for instance, is planted
upon a sociologic fallacy. It strives to remove pover-
ty and not to widen the scope of any political party that may come up. The

The Prohibition Party, for instance, is planted
upon a sociologic fallacy. It strives to remove pover-
ty by removing alcohol. History shows that popular
drunkenness falls off like the scab from a wound
that is healed just as soon as the fear of want are removed. On false foundations no suc-
cessful political superstructure can be reared. The
Prohibition Party will consequently vacillate; and
we have it recently not only embroiled foreign ques-
tions foreign to its central idea, but one wing leaning
against socialism, while another is reacting back-
ward toward intensified capitalism. It has been a dwarf and never can grow into manhood.

The People's Party, so called, proceeds upon a
socialist conspiracy. It carefully and deliberately abstains from denying the right
of private ownership in things necessary to pro-
duce the necessities of life, and yet it denies or would wipe out the consequences of its
socialism. It wants private ownership of land and capital, but reins up against private monopoly, trusts, banks,
etc. He who starts from the idea of private own-
ership subscribes to trusts, Rothschilds, etc. You
can't stick your finger in the fire and then kick
that you are burned. It follows that the People's Party must vacillate, that corruption must morti-
fy its body, and that it is stillborn. From all parts of the country the evidences thong to the bar to
demonstrate the existence of a political party that is
determined to abolish the old condition of things.

Different, altogether, is the case with the Socialist Labor Party. Planted upon a clear-cut central idea and a program that nothing can
destroy and that will remain unshaken as long as
there will be a soul to inherit and to sustain the
work and the truth. This party, therefore, is the
expression of the sentiments of all the people of
the world toward intensified capitalism. It was born a
dwarf and never can grow into manhood.

...Day Laborers Exploited

(Continued from page 1)

February, the four workers quit, being owed a total
of $8,360 unpaid wages.

Holowchak simply ignored their continued pleas for
payment. As a consequence, the four appealed for
help to a local pastor, Allan Ramirez, of Brecksville
Reformed Church. Pastor Ramirez filed a complaint
with the state's attorney general's office and got a
favorable response from Attorney General Eloit
Spitzer, who began proceedings against Holowchak.

Perhaps not taking the charge seriously,
Holowchak failed to show up for a court appearance
in June. A warrant was then issued for his arrest.
On June 12, the authorities conducted a 6:30 a.m.
raid on Holowchak's home in Locust Valley and
THE PEOPLE 7

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2003

CALIFORNIA

Oakland
Discussion Meeting—Section San Francisco
Bay Area will hold a discussion meeting on
Saturday, Jan. 18, beginning at 4 p.m., at the Rock-
dridge Branch Library, Community Room 1,
5366 College Ave. (corner of College & Manila
streets), Oakland. Moderator: Frank Prince.

Ohio
Columbus
Discussion Meeting—Section Cleveland will
hold a discussion meeting on Sunday, Dec. 29,
from 1–3 p.m., at the Columbus Main Library,
Conference Room 1, 96 S. Grant, Columbus.
Refreshments served. For more information please call 440-237-7933.

Independence
Discussion Meeting—Section Cleveland will
hold a discussion meeting on Saturday, Jan.
5, beginning at 1:30 p.m., at the Days Inn, 556
Brecksville Rd., Independence. Refreshments
served. For more information please call 440-
237-7933.

Oregon
Portland
Discussion Meetings—Section Portland holds
discussion meetings every second Saturday of
the month. Meetings are usually held at the
Central Library, but the exact time varies. For
more information please call Sid at 503-226-
2861 or visit the section's Web site at
http://slp.oxo.home.mindspring.com. The general
public is invited.

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ferences. Presents the SLP's

Socialist Labor Party. Planted upon a clear-cut
central idea and a program that nothing can
destroy and that will remain unshaken as long as
2 plus 2 equal 4, neither vacillation nor corruption
can enter its ranks before it has reached man-
hood and triumphed. It points to the plain and
unchangeable fact that production has become collective, and it
draws the inevitable conclusion that the system of
ownership must likewise be turned into a corpo-
rate into a collective one. It points to the historic
fact that this change implies a social revolution;
that the class called upon to accomplish it is the
proletarians or wage-slave class, because that class
and, consequently, the system of ownership
does not determine the program; that it is the
historic mission of that class, by establishing the
Cooperative Commonwealth, to abolish all class
distinctions, and thereby to redeem mankind;
and, lastly and consequently, that the Socialist Labor
Party is the party of the people, to whose
standard all the intelligence, decency and man-
hood of the country is bound to flock. Such a
party, as the long history behind all the Socialist Labor
parties of other countries attests, is built
on the Rock of Ages; it cannot be swerved; it
cannot be pollinated.

Philosophy is a deduction from facts, not from
fiction. And such is the philosophy of the history
of political parties.

The funny man, Mark Twain, built himself a
house near Boston with the back turned to the
street. The Journal of the Knights of Labor
plants itself with its back to history. In a funny
street. The

enlightened and filter the laws that

they have from the common

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Public.
How Capitalism Came to Russia
Tracing the Career of an Oligarch


"You have to remember that the president [Yeltsin] was a member of the Committee [of the Communist Party]. So was Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and so was the leader of the opposition" Genady Zyuganov. "They're all from the same nest. But some managed to throw away their Party cards in time and take up the demonstration in the streets. They have always regarded ordinary people as garbage: the stoves at the foot of the pyramid."

—General Aleksandr Lebed

Paul Klebnikov's Godfather of the Kremlin is neither the newest nor the most comprehensive book on Russia's transition from "communism" to capitalism. David E. Hoffman's newly released The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia is broader in scope and has the advantage of being written later. Hoffman attempts to trace the development of an emerging ruling class, whereas Klebnikov's focus, as the subtitle of his book makes clear, is on the role of one man, Boris Berezovsky.

Berezovsky devotes much space to the Russian working class or the Russian labor movement, as does, for example, Simon Clarke's 1996 Where the Night Watchmen Seated. Moreover, the description of Klebnikov's book as "pioneering" by one reviewer is justified, not only because it came earlier than some others, but also because it was based on Klebnikov's first-hand encounters with Berezovsky and other Russian "oligarchs" and state functionaries, among them agents of the KGB, Russia's magnate's secret police and one of the overlapping state institutions that survived the collapse of the Soviet Union to render new services to new masters.

"So much of contemporary Russian history is conveyed by word of mouth, asserted by people who were there," Klebnikov wrote, that Godfather of the Kremlin may be better described as exposé than history.

"Whenever I met important Russians over the past decade I always taped our conversations," Klebnikov wrote at the very outset of his Preface, adding that, with certain exceptions, "the assertions made in this book are based on taped-record interviews with the businessmen and politicians who ruled Russia in the 1990s."

Klebnikov is a senior editor of Forbes, and his book grew out of an article he wrote on Berezovsky for the February 1997 issue of the magazine. The article, also called "The Godfather of the Kremlin," led Berezovsky to sue Forbes for libel in a British court, with what result we cannot say.

As to the worthiness of Klebnikov's subject, another review described Berezovsky as "the most wealthy and powerful businessman in Russia." During the years immediately after the Soviet implosion in 1991, Berezovsky "seized control of Russia's largest automobile manufacturer; the largest television network, the national airline and one of the world's largest newspapers." Klebnikov was also the "most trusted political adviser" of Boris Yeltsin "and masterminded the financing of his 1996 presidential campaign."

"Nasty or scandalous," the reviewer continued, "and chances are that Boris Berezovsky is in the thick of it: Election fraud, organized crime, the misuse of IMF funds, money laundering, assassination attempts, extortion plots, international arms smuggling, kidnapings in the Chechen war."

Klebnikov's Godfather of the Kremlin is a tale of rampant corruption, misappropriation, conspiracy and gangsterism on an unprecedented scale in which former Soviet state property was converted into capitalist private property. His thesis is that "Western democratic principles: personal liberty, free speech, electoral government, protection of minority rights, market economies, self-reliance and the opportunity to make an honest living" were abandoned and subverted in the interests of a rapacious minority.

Inasmuch as Berezovsky is the exemplar in his narrative, the book describes how capital came to Russia, and therein lies one of its values.

Klebnikov takes us through a dizzying labyrinth of events starting just after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the eclipse of Mikhail Gorbachev and the assumption of power by Boris Yeltsin, and ending with the election of Vladimir Putin to the presidency.

"Inasmuch as the author maintains the outlook of a capitalist true believer, and cites Russia's spiraling devolution as "the biggest disaster (economically, socially and demographically)," since the Nazi invasion of 1941," he offers incredible insights into the ruthless character of capitalist formation that parallels the centuries of bloody capital formation in Western history. However, in Russia's case, it is the transformation of state capital into private capital.

Klebnikov introduces this transformation with an account of the ferocious mob wars of the early 1990s, in which Chechen cutthroats, allied with crooked Moscow and St. Petersburg oligarchs, "would use the privatization process to accumulate Russia's largest fortune."

Berezovsky was not one of the KGB-CP anointed ones, having risen to a prestigious position in the Soviet Academy of Sciences as an expert in decision-making theory. Early on he observed that Gorbachev's reforms were "going down the tubes," and he attached himself to the Russian automaker, Avtovaz, with an automation and modernization program. After it was accepted, he established Logovaz, a company exclusively devoted to selling Avtovaz's products while dropping the automation proposal.

This, according to Klebnikov, was the beginning of a career involving conspiracy, murder of rivals, alliances with mobsters, ingratiation of state functionaries with Chechen insurgents, swindling and mayhem that ultimately led to Berezovsky becoming a confidant and power broker in the government and adviser to a Yeltsin family fortune, not to mention a government role as deputy secretary of the Security Council and, ultimately, Russia's wealthiest oligarch.

What emerges as Klebnikov presents the Berezovsky story is a bewildering array of personalities, enough to fill several Tolstoy novels. Most apparent are characters drawn from the self-same cadre that nurtured numerous top Communist Party apparatchiks who, opportunist to the core, seized the occasion to become "businesses." One gains insight into what was considered socialism in the Soviet Union and why that system of state despotism is universally despised in the commentary from one of its turncoat exponents, Yegor Gaidar. This glit and shallow opportunist declared: "The socialist economic system is a complete system...For it to work you need...an effective Gaponov, a system of orders which are obeyed, the ability to jail the factory head who does not deliver his goods to the place he is supposed to, to fire the head of the local government if he doesn't deliver the grain he's ordered to, the ability to seize the grain from a collective farm that doesn't want to surrender it."

This glimpses and detailed accounts of the effluvia that emanated from 70 years of bureaucracy--opportunism and communism masquerading as a working-class movement that gives this book its value as a working-class read. At the end, the author offers us a homily of the virtues of family values, honesty, decency, religion and moralizing instead of realism that makes us wonder under what capitalist system he is living.