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Anna Quindlen—Newswear Columnist Bewails Hunger & War

Paychecks Stretched Tight

By Michael James

Two of Anna Quindlen’s recent Newswear editorials reveal the ideological bankruptcy of her “liberalism.” In the Nov. 26 issue, she points to the reality of hunger in America: “A terrible shortage of food for the poor grips the country!” She cites the gap between rich and poor: “The share of the nation’s income going to the top one percent of its citizens is at its highest level since 1928.” She describes slaughters in federal antipoverty programs, with emergency food supplies to New York City cut in half; food supplies to Los Angeles nearly halved, and in the state of Oregon an annual federal supply of 13 million pounds of food now reduced to six million pounds. She condemns a society with “hunger amid affluence.” She is perplexed by the obscene phenomenon of hunger because “America is so rich.”

Ms. Quindlen’s editorial view of hunger in America leaves readers hungry too—hungry for depth, hungry for solutions. She is careful to avoid a systemic view. In other words, she fails to identify capitalism as the root problem. She blames George W. Bush for his indifference: “Poverty is not a subject that’s high on the administration’s list of priorities.” She is offended that certain restrictions still linger in this country, such as the prohibition of women, no matter how able, from serving in the military. She chastises her society for enriching the ruling class to abolish capitalism and class consciousness. She is offended that certain restrictions still linger in this country, such as the prohibition of women, no matter how able, from serving in the military.

Capitalism creates poverty and hunger. No political “will” can abolish them except the class-conscious “will” or determination of the working class to abolish capitalism and establish the democratic economy of socialism. Capitalism divides society by irreconcilable class interests. The ruling class dominates and controls society and always acts in its own interests. Extracting hunger and poverty is simply not among the interests of this small but powerful class.

Thus Ms. Quindlen, in one editorial breath, chastises her society for enriching the ruling class while getting federal food to the poor. Then, in another editorial breath (Nov. 12), she is offended that certain restrictions still limit women’s role in combat! She wants these restrictions lifted so more women can die for capitalism—the same capitalism that abandons the poor and the hungry! She complains of how “regulations still decree that women, in war or peace, cannot serve in Special Operations forces, in infantry or tank units, or in other units that have an offensive mission.” She concludes that “The military

While capitalism’s economic pragmatists debate whether or not the next recession has started, life for increasing numbers of working-class families across the country is proving that it doesn’t take a recession for life under capitalism to be depressingly and increasingly tough.

• In November the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that more than 35.5 million workers in America were “cutting the amount of groceries they give to their families as demand for aid is outpacing donations” during 2006 (Asian Pacific Press, December 2, 2006).

• In October Associated Press observed, “Across the nation, American families are increasingly unable to stretch their dollars to the next payday as they juggle higher rent, food and energy bills.” It’s starting to affect middle-income working families as well as the poor, and has reached the point of affecting day-to-day calculations of merchants like Wal-Mart Stores Inc., 7-Eleven Inc. and Family Dollar Stores Inc.” The stores are making adjustments in their product mix and pricing according to sales data that “show a marked and prolonged drop in spending in the days before shoppers get their paychecks, when they buy only the barest essentials” (Paychecks Stretched Tight).

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Paychecks Stretched Tight

Workers Must Respond to Global Warming Cataclysm

In November the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) submitted its fourth report on global warming (GW) to the United Nations. It reported unequivocal and dramatic evidence that global warming is a human-made effect that will drastically alter environments worldwide, and affect economic and political systems for the entire human race. The report documents the rates at which GW is taking place and the devastation it is causing, and offers scenarios for mitigation of GW based on future productions of greenhouse gases. The U.N. Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia, used the IPCC report as a resource in working towards new accords on global warming. But still with the urgency of dealing with the potential catastrophic implications of this report, the process is painfully slow and retarded by the need to protect capitalist profits and economic growth.

A key conclusion of the report states: “Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level.” It continues: “Eleven of the last 12 years (1995–2006) rank among the 12 warmest years in the instrumental record of global surface temperature (since 1850).” The temperature increase is widespread over the globe, and is greater at higher northern latitudes. Land regions have warmed faster than the oceans. Rising sea level is consistent with warming…Observed decreases in snow and ice extent are also consistent with warming…Average Arctic sea ice extent has shrunk…Mojave desert and snow cover on average have declined in both hemispheres.

The cause: “Changes in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and aerosols, land-cover and solar radiation alter the energy balance of the climate system. Global GHG emissions due to human activities have grown since preindustrial times, with an increase of 70 per cent between 1970 and 2004.” Carbon dioxide (CO2) is the most important anthropogenic GHG. Its annual emissions grew by about 80 percent between 1970 and 2004…Global atmospheric concentrations of CO2, methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O) have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1700 and now far exceed preindustrial values determined from ice cores spanning many thousands of years.” (Note: From 1958 to 2005, CO2 levels, as measured directly by the late Dr. Charles Keeling, a world authority on greenhouse gas concentrations, have crossed the 350 ppm barrier.)

Workers Must Respond to Global Warming Cataclysm

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• Low-income workers are stretching their budgets by “buying more peanut butter and pasta,” skipping “breakfast and lunch to make sure there’s enough food for the children,” and depend-"
...Global Warming

Gases went from 315 ppm (parts per million) to 378 ppm, an increase of 20 percent. The Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, Dec. 3. The report notes that "Most of the observed increase in globally averaged temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic GHG emissions."

Countering claims by antiglobal warming critics that solar radiances change account for warming, the report notes that "During the past 50 years, the sum of solar and volcanic forcings would likely have produced cooling (rather than heating)." Observed patterns of warming and their changes are simulated only by models that include anthropogenic forcings.

But what about the future? Here the report offers predictions based on a variety of approaches. It appears likely that in the current political situation, greenhouse gas emissions will continue to grow for several decades. And the report declares, "Continued GHG emissions at or above current rates would cause further warming and induce many changes in the global climate system during the 21st century that would very likely be larger than those observed during the 20th century." A particularly ominous scenario is one in which warming or increased ocean acidity decreases the solubility of CO2 and releases it into the atmosphere. As for the long-term, the report notes that GW and sea level rise would continue for centuries, even after greenhouse gas levels are stabilized. And some impacts could be abrupt and irreversible.

Lastly, the report looked at mitigation of GW and its effects. These examined various strategies for reducing GHG emissions and mitigating the economic, political and social problems that are being caused by GW.

Not surprisingly, poor countries are most at risk. Andrew Revkin observes (The New York Times, Nov 28) that the report "offers a more detailed view of how poverty, particularly in areas near the equator, creates zones of extreme vulnerability to water shortages, droughts, flooding, rains and severe storms — all of which are projected to be more frequent or intense if concentrations of greenhouse gases continue to build." It also "reboots rich countries for failing to deliver on commitments for helping poor countries increase resilience to climate hazards under the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which dates from 1992 and has been ratified by nearly all the world's nations."

The IPCC report is "the best available as a resource for the UN Climate Change Conference that took place in Bali, Indonesia, in December. The conference was meant to last a two-year negotiation process working towards a treaty to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012."

From the beginning, the Bush administration has done its best to undermine the talks — and show its contempt for the United Nations — by scheduling its own meetings, one in late September with 16 major carbon-emitting nations, and another in January in Hawaii.

At the Bali conference differences between richer and poorer nations were evident as "developing countries demanded the United States agree that the eventual pact not only measure power countries' steps, but also the effectiveness of financial aid and technological assistance from wealthier ones." (Thomas Fuller, Andrew C. Revkin, The New York Times, Dec. 15) U.S. recalcitrance on this issue led delegates to box and boss U.S. delegates. Eventually the United States capitulated on this issue. The United States, as had been the case with Kyoto, still refused to be held to fixed targets for emissions, but allowed them to appear as a nonbinding prelude to the agreement, giving the appearance of compliance with the accord produced by the conference.

But for all the unrepentant represented by the report and the conference, rolling back greenhouse gas production will depend upon capitalist schemes like "cap and trade" that allow some companies to profit from reducing emissions while polluters pay for "carbon credits" and a variety of other reforms like limits on gas mileage. These merely slow the increase in greenhouse gas production.

However, there is no time to delay. Scientists estimate that to reverse the existing buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the world will need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 40 to 70 percent by the end of the century. Such changes will require restructuring the world's energy and transportation systems. They require massive investment and represent a threat to existing capitalist industries, their growth and profits. Capitalism requires profit and economic growth to survive. Capitalists want their profits. "The future has little meaning in a profit-driven society."

Environmental reforms are not the answer. Capitalism has eroded those feeble efforts of the past whenever it is expedient to do so. International agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol are not the answer, either. Similar agreements on disarmament, on peace, on torture, literacy, health, as in the blanched bones and broken bodies of towns of savages whom fate proved just what such agreements are worth. If the future is not to be plagued with the floods, droughts and other catastrophes predicted related to global warming, the political and economic system of capitalism must end, not just in the United States but throughout the world. The urgency expressed in the Bali conference demonstrates the international nature of this crisis. And as workers throughout the world are exploited, so will they be the first victims of worldwide ecological collapse. In a socialist society of production for use rather than profit, we could direct the intellectual and productive capabilities of society toward seeking the technical solutions to global warming and producing them.

The Socialist Labor Party urges workers to organize to abolish capitalism and institute socialist production for use. Workers must realize their latent economic and political power as operators of the industries and services and begin forming industrywide unions integrated into one movement with the goal of building a new society with completely different motives for production: human needs and wants instead of profit — and to organize their own political party to challenge the political power of the capitalists, express their mandate for change at the ballot box and dismantle the state altogether. The new society they must aim for must be one in which society itself, not a wealthy few, would own the industries and services, and the workers themselves would control them democratically through their own organizations based in the workplace. In such a society, the workers themselves would make decisions governing the economy, electing representatives to industrial councils and to a workers' congress representing all the industries that would administer the economy. Such a society — a socialist industrial democracy — is what is needed to solve the environmental crisis. By placing the economic decision-making power of the nation in the hands of the workers by eliminating capitalist control and the profit motive in favor of a system in which workers produce to meet their own needs and wants, the necessary resources and labor could be devoted to halting global warming, employing the renewable resources we now have and develop new ones, and clean up the damage already done.

—Bruce Cozzini

The following is a report from a debate between Daniel De Leon, editor of The People, and Edward Dobson, associate editor of the Brooklyn Standard Union, on Feb. 23, 1908. The complete report, including excerpts from Dobson's remarks, can be accessed in the De Leon Online section of the SLP website.

The "impracticality" of Socialism

Daniel De Leon: Mr. Dobson, Nov. 24, 1908

Hardly had De Leon been introduced to the audience, which greeted him warmly, when he opened up his powerful batteries on the timorous bourgeoisie thrown up by his opponent. "I hope you followed well my arguments in debate, for then you will agree that he has ended by over-thieving his premises," he said. "If socialism is a fallacy then it is out of all possibility that it should ever come about. Mr. Dobson began by showing that socialism was false, and wound up by saying that socialism may come about under certain conditions of division of state and national lines. Consequently, he has knocked out his own position."

"Mr. Dobson's first argument was that Marx and the Socialists claim that labor produces all wealth. This Mr. Dobson denies. Then idleness must be the produce of some wealth [laughing and applause]. He says that the machine is the thing that does the yield-
The economic condition of much of the U.S. working class at the beginning of 2008 is grim indeed. (See “Paycheques Stretched Tight,” p.1.) In fact, the whole working class today may stand at the precipice of another period of much greater suffering—with massive poverty and unemployment and all the social misery they imply.

In November Irwin Kellner of MarketWatch, Dow Jones & Co.’s wholly-owned subsidiary on the web, in a commentary titled “Giddy-Up, Expansion! Hello Recession,” wrote, “No matter what you look, signs of a recession are beginning to proliferate.” One such sign “is the age of the expansion itself.” According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the average expansion since World War II was 20 months shorter than the six years marked by the present “upswing” in November.

Kellner notes that rising costs of food, energy and health care have helped slow “consumer” spending, which many economists credit as an engine of the expansion just past. “Consumer” spending is what capitalist propagandists call spending by workers, and it hit new levels in the years since the last recession ended circa 2002 because capitalist financial institutions self-servingly loosened requirements for credit and, especially, home loans. By the third quarter of 2007, these institutions had, often through illegal tactics highlighted in reports on the “mortgage meltdown,” squeezed so much borrowing out of workers that household debt hit “a record 133 percent of disposable income,” according to the Center for American Progress.

Millions of working-class families, hard pressed by falling real wages and benefit cuts over the past two decades, now owe more than they may ever be able to repay at the interest rates they are being charged.

The blood-sucking financial institutions that egged and sometimes tricked workers into burying themselves in debt are now hard up against the reality that many of their home loans may never be repaid. As an Associated Press (AP) report put it in November, “Squeezing default rates that have shaken major financial institutions and the fallout from more of them, some experts say, could spread into the general economy.”

Since November we have had had many “nose of them,” and U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson predicts that defaults will be more numerous in 2008 than in 2007.

The chief investment officer of PIMCO, “the world’s biggest bond fund,” said in the AP report, “We haven’t faced a downturn like this since the Great Depression.” The report hastened to assert that PIMCO’s CEO, Bill Gross, wasn’t “suggesting anything like those terrible times.” But it went on to observe, “Some of the nation’s leading economists laid out a scenario that is frightening.”

“The already severe housing slump would be exacerbated by even more empty homes on the market, causing prices to plunge by up to 40 percent in one-hot real estate spots such as California, Nevada and Florida.”

“I would be most surprised if there were any large-scale job losses in housing-related and financial services industries would curtail “consumer” spending in many other areas of the economy if such cutbacks brought economic growth to zero, about 3 million jobs would be wiped out, according to the Economic Policy Institute. But a severe recession could result in a significant contraction of economic activity— not merely a lack of growth. Many millions more could lose their jobs.

Massively increased poverty is never the only social cost involved when unemployment grows. Proven increases in crime, spouse, child and other forms of abuse, depression, suicide, hunger and health costs also result from unemployment.

At the edge of such an economic precipice as the U.S. working class appears to stand today, it falls upon Socialists to make plain to the working-class majority that a different road is possible for them.

It must be apparent to many that little materially changes in the possibilities for producing the necessities of life, including food, housing, education and health care, between capitalism’s so-called good times and its worse times for workers.

In the “good” times there are means of production—factories and facilities where the necessities of life can be produced. These exist no less when times are worse for workers. In the so-called good times there are raw materials from which the necessities of life can be fashioned. These are every bit as available when times are worse for workers.

So what is it that is missing when, under capitalism, capitalists pull the rug out from under workers, shut down production and throw all society into the throes of a social calamity like a recession or depression?

What is missing are enough opportunities to produce and sell the things we need to live at rates of profit high enough to satisfy the desires of the capitalist class.

But profit is not needed for production and distribution to take place. It is needed only if we have ownership and control of the means of life where it presently is—in the hands of the relatively tiny minority capitalist class that performs no useful work, living like a parasite on the back of the producing—the class that performs all useful labor. Continuing to allow this state of affairs clearly risks our survival not only in the face of economic calamities, but also from the wars and environmental disasters the system breeds.

We do not have to look far by while the capitalist owners of the means of production force us out of our factories and facilities of production, distribution and communication. The working class alone historically built and daily operates those facilities, and human society as a whole deserves to reap their benefits.

We can look the capitalist class out of those facilities and begin to operate the industries and services in the interests of all society, collectively owned and democratically operated.

Read the article entitled “Build a New Economy” on page 5. If you agree that workers deserve a better world, subscribe to The People and help the SLP spread socialism’s understanding of the present crisis to more workers.

The People

Socialism and the Disabled

I am working to understand. I haven’t found where and how disabled persons fit into the socialist philosophy. I am a disabled former United States Marine who is sick to death of the business as usual of the American government. I am seeking to promote and support an agenda that will bring about positive change. I haven’t found how the socialist philosophy includes and minimizes the assets and resources of disabled persons. I believe that the majority of disabled persons still have a lot to offer society, yet those resources are squandered in poverty. Please point me toward the socialist view of the solution to this waste of talent.

Thanking you in advance...

A.S., via email

Harder Times Ahead For U.S. Working Class

Mortgage Meltdown Feels Recession—

By Irwin Z. Kellner

The so-called mortgage meltdown promises to worsen capitalism’s next cyclical economic downturn, which for many is already under way.

The economic condition of much of the U.S. working class at the beginning of 2008 is grim indeed. (See “Paycheques Stretched Tight,” p.1.) In fact, the whole working class today may stand at the precipice of another period of much greater suffering—with massive poverty and unemployment and all the social misery they imply.

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Thanking you in advance...

A.S., via email

Dear Mr. S.,

Thank you for your email of Nov 7 and your question about socialism and the disabled.

From the tone of your email, it probably is unnecessary to spend much time on what happens to the physically and mentally disabled under capitalism. You undoubtedly are aware of the

(Continued on page 6)
"Events are confirming with a vengeance that a union movement based on anything less than the ultimate call for social transformation of society must prove increasings incapable of promoting or defending the interests of workers." —The People, July-August 2007

The United Auto Workers’ sellouts contracts with General Motors, Chrysler and Ford last year a grain watershed for the precipitate United Auto Workers union and, unfortunately, for the U.S. working class as a whole.

The contracts establish a two-tier wage system throughout the industry. "The UAW agreed to let automakers hire a new class of workers at $14 to $18 an hour, depending on the kind of work. That’s compared with the older class of assemblers, workers who make about $25 an hour," observed USA Today with keen interest in an article entitled "UAW Contracts May Have National Ripples". These new hires, according to another report, will have "no regular pension" and "no regular medical coverage."

The contracts also establish a Voluntary Employees Benefit Association through which the UAW or its designers will shift responsibility for funding health care for 600,000 to 700,000 related workers. Benefits will lose guaranteed medical coverage since the VEBPA reportedly will be funded by less than 60 percent of what is needed to fully cover all retirees, and "company stock and IOUs, worthless in the case of a bankruptcy or sale," will make up much of the funding.

These provisions hold ill for the rest of the working class, as USA Today observed, "The basic structure of the auto contracts is often copied in contracts covering other workers, including teachers, state workers, police and firefighters, and workers in the airline and steel industries." Therefore, the terms of these new labor contracts may descend like a noose around the collective neck of much of the working class.

In return, the contract ostensibly commits the companies to invest in U.S. plants and not close any more plants than have already been earmarked for closures—and in the case of Ford, "to keep open a couple it originally had planned to close."

However, USA Today noted, "The automakers retained the right to alter the agreements or alter market share fall future projects." As an industry analyst quoted in the article put it, "at the end of the day, they didn’t really promise anything." "More and more," he said, "they’re feeling like the union doesn’t have the power to do anything about it anymore."

In truth, the labor unions have had no real power since they voluntarily walked into the noose of the Wagner Act in 1935 and had their necks broken completely by the Taft-Hartley Act 12 years later. The former elevated the straitjacket of "collective bargaining" and the labor contract from optional to mandatory and conceded the right of the state to intervene between capital and labor as a matter of principle. The Taft-Hartley Act moreover tightened the noose of intervention on behalf of capital with regulations limiting the unions’ ability to work even the pathetically weak and essentially useless weapons of the strike and the secondary boycott. In short, the contractual "bargainers" imposed by USA Today are of incidental importance as the large scale of things.

Acceptance of capitalism itself leads directly to a position of impotence. The only "strength" these unions ever had was in the permission to exist-their right to exist. This was granted by their capitalist masters decades ago when US capitalism had relative economic hegemony in the world market. Capitalists were then willing to concede enough to their precipitate union collaborators to keep them in business—in exchange for labor peace.

But conditions changed. In 1981, President Reagan’s basing of the U.S. air traffic controllers, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization, marked the waning of worldwide U.S. economic hegemony in the post-World War II period and the ascendancy of the "brave new world" of globalization—of capitalist competition that has replaced it.

The lap-dog unionism of PATCO and its AFL-CIO ilk was not ready for this watershed. The PATCO watershed marked the waning of worldwide U.S. economic hegemony in the post-World War II period and the ascendancy of the "brave new world" of globalization—of capitalist competition that has replaced it.

The SLP alone has a program for building the strong, classconscious, organized, democratically administered socialist society of peace, plenty and freedom.

Uncle Sam & Brother Jonathan — "Who will do the dirty work under socialism?" is an old question answered many times in the past, as in this early Uncle Sam & Brother Jonathan dialogue from more than 100 years ago.

UNCLE SAM—Under a socialist system there would be no dirty work to do.

B.R.—But there will be dirty work to do.

U.S.—No, by human labor.

B.R.—Then there will be dirty work to do.

U.S.—Ten income you have no idea of what it is that constitutes "dirty" work.

B.R.—I am a plain, simple man. I have no fine-spun theories. I follow common sense. "Dirty" is dirty. Dirty work is degrading; no one cares to do it, yet it must be done; under your hallucinogenic socialism it would remain undone.

U.S.—Is it a cleaner and neat thing?

B.R. (with disgust)—Humph!

U.S.—Pretty dirty and degrading.

B.R.—I should statistic.

U.S.—Is it degrading to a physician to handle it?

B.R. (after a long pause)—No.

U.S.—Does he attend to it with disgust?

B.R. (pursing his lips)—No; physicians seem to go at it with much pleasure.

U.S.—It follows that work is not degrading nor is it exchanged simply because it is "dirty." "Dirty" work is ever degrading and is exchanged, it must be for some other reason. How will you get out of that, smarty?

B.R.—To the shock, I don’t see how I can get out of it.

U.S.—The secret of what constitutes "dirty" work lies not in the work itself, but in the conditions under which the work is done.

B.R.—Well?

U.S.—If a certain work is poorly paid it will be degrading, and all the more degrading in proportion to the proportion of the pay. But work is always noble.

"To work is to pray," so runs the old, old saw. When work is considered ignoble it must be through the contamination of the social vision.

B.R.—What of it?

U.S.—There is this to it: He who does the streets does valuable work, and therefore honorable work for the community. Under the socialist system labor and not "allness" being the badge of nobility, the base we see placed today on work by paying it poorly working it long and otherwise treating it as degrading.

Continued on page 7

"More than 150 of De Leon’s Uncle Sam and Brother Jonathan dialogues have been posted to the SLP’s website at www.slp.org.
Workers can expect little improvement in their collective lot even if an economic recovery does follow the present economic crisis. For even when a capitalist economy is relatively healthy, the needs of great masses of workers remain unmet.

The problem is that capitalism simply doesn’t operate to meet the social needs of the working-class majority that creates all goods and services. Instead, it operates to satisfy the profit interests of the minority capitalist class that owns the means of production.

Capitalist production is, accordingly, marked by grotesque social absurdities—extreme poverty in the shadow of obscene wealth, unemployment and idle productive capacity amid widespread social needs, and vast economic crises that periodically occur when the planned, profit-motivated production under the despotic control of the tiny capitalist minority that owns them churns out too many widgets that can’t be sold at a profit. And the results of many individual capitalist concerns setting production levels at the quantities they hope to sell, despite their competitors’ similar plans, compound these periodic crises.

In short, the great social calamities produced by capitalism’s periodic economic convulsions can be traced almost exclusively to two of its most central tenets: competition and the exploitation of wage labor.

As long as capitalism continues to exist, these contradictions can only grow worse. Capitalism, however, isn’t the only possible social system.

For workers, the solution to capitalism’s contradictions and crises is a social revolution that will sweep away the capitalist relations of production and establish working-class ownership and control of the means of life. Such a socialist transformation of society would eliminate private ownership of the industries and social services as well as profit-motivated production and set up in its place a socially owned economy as which production would be carried on for use—to serve society’s collective needs and wants.

It is with the objective of creating such a society that the Socialist Labor Party recommends its program of Socialist Industrial Unionism to workers. Socialist Industrial Unionism offers a program by which workers can organize to effect the needed social change and to establish the framework for operating a socialist economy.

Socialist Industrial Unionism calls on workers to organize politically to challenge, defeat and dismantle the state power that the capitalist class now wields in defense of its system. It also calls on workers to organize as a class into integrated unions that would set in motion the decisive social power workers are capable of exercising by virtue of their indispensable role in the factories and facilities of production and distribution.

With the revolutionary defeat of capitalism, Socialist Industrial Unionism would become the administrative bodies of a society in which workers would cooperatively and democratically carry on production. Organized along the lines of the economy, they would unite all workers in each industry and then integrate all the industries at the local, regional and national levels.

The principles of workers’ democracy—direct election and immediate recall of all representatives, abolition of bureaucratic privileges, etc.—would ensure that these bodies would remain under the control of the rank and file.

Socialist society would no longer be convulsed by the contradictions that are currently wrecking capitalism because class divisions will have been eliminated. The motive force of production would be social use instead of private profit. The economy would be organized for the express purpose of determining what needs to be produced and how best to produce it.

The allocation of resources, including human resources, would be democratically planned by a society in full control of its productive forces. There would be neither exploitation nor the consequent “crisis of overproduction” due to the accumulation by the ruling class of commodities that workers cannot afford to buy. Instead of the anarchy of the market, the economic decisions upon which we all depend for survival would be made democratically.

Consider what it would mean for the world and the U.S. working class if the “Recession of 2007–2009” or whatever it may be called, were ended by the collective action of an American working class determined to never again allow the absurdity of shutting down production and displaying millions solely for the sake of the profit interests of a tiny despotic minority.

The SLP can use the help of all who understand its program in its work toward a successful revolutionary transformation of society. For those of us who are already committed to this struggle, there is no better time than now to renew our energies and forge ahead. And for those of you who have until now been standing on the sidelines, there is no better time to join the fight.

—K.B.
The SLP is engaged in an ongoing project to post all of its literature to the World Wide Web. Much of that literature is of a historic nature, of course, because the SLP’s publishing department, the New York Labor News, has been printing and distributing books and pamphlets since 1887. In fact, the New York Labor News is the nation’s oldest publisher of socialist literature and has printed thousands of books and pamphlets since its inception 120 years ago.

Although much of the literature being posted to the SLP’s website is historic, many of those older titles explore the broad principles that continue to explain social problems and phenomena that are as contemporary as today’s newspapers; the contents of which still account for the majority of postings to websites devoted to the dissemination of news.

...the Disabled

(Continued from page 5)

who are not disabled, but also and mainly because the disabled worker’s labor power can be bought at a bargain price.

How will socialism be different? First, socialism will put an end to the commodity status of labor. It will abolish the labor market, where human beings are bought and sold as surely as they were bought and sold on the slave markets of the “Old South.” Workers will not have to go around begging capitalists to buy their labor power. They will be free human beings—free, among other things, to join any Socialist Industrial Union they please. Their membership will entitle them to work at any job in the industry for which they are qualified. Disabled workers also have the right to work at any job in the industry for which they are qualified. Disabled workers are equally entitled to the full social value of their work, entitled also to the full social value of their productive labor follows from his previous conclusion in The Depression’s inseparable results of capitalism.”

The Socialists will see to it that all who are seriously disabled that they would be unable to provide for themselves under the best of circumstances, but that is no reason to deprive them of every other opportunity to live and enjoy life without having to live in poverty and insecurity. Socialist society will see to it that all who are simply unable to care for themselves will have that opportunity not as a matter of charity but as a matter of right. That right will be guaranteed by a truly civilized society.

There is another aspect to this: Socialism will create conditions in which the numbers of physically and mentally disabled will decline because socialism will put the security of life and limb above all other things. The workers themselves, by virtue of their democratic control over all of the industries and services, will ensure every effort and utilize every resource to eliminate hazardous working conditions and the production of hazardous products because they will be in control and it will be in their enlightened self-interest to do so. That this is not true of capitalism, where the “us” of safety is always influenced by the hunger for profits, is a matter of record.

Finally, by abolishing the cause of war, i.e., ruling-class disputes over markets, sources of raw materials, sphere of influence, access to cheap labor, etc., socialism will guarantee that no worker will ever again fall victim to imperialist ambition and greed.

Sincerely yours,
Robert Bills
National Secretary

FUND

This is my contribution of $ _______ for the SLP Sentinel Fund, which will help support the SLP’s official journal. (Please make check/money order payable to the Socialist Labor Party or The People and mail to 753, Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218.)

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with continually would be transferred to the head of infamous.

B.J.—I begin to see.

U.S.—Believed of the oppression that now weighs it down, do you imagine that street cleaning would be more disgusting than ulcer cleaning!

B.J. scratches his head.

U.S.—Not could you claim that ulcer cleaning wasn’t scintillating, while street cleaning is unskilled labor—

B.J.—I was just going to claim that.

U.S.—In the first place, whatever labor, skilled or unskilled, is needed to accomplish a desired result is worthy of decent respect. In the second place, just in proportion as a certain work is skilled and scientific it is all the more fascinating and the doors to it should be opened instead of shut. Plain or unskilled labor is needed by society. If it is made onerous, then—why, join either the Republicans or the Democrats, it matters not which, and your work will become even “dirtier.”

A.B.—I begin to see.

U.S.—Relieved of the oppression that now weighs him down, the capitalist can’t afford to exclude women—not from service, not from combat. But Ms. Quindlen should realize that the capitalist masters of war are unlikely to fall short of soldiers. More and more women will probably sign up for military service just to get a hot meal.

The point is that Newsweek helps to mentally demobilize the working class. With one strike of her pen Anna Quindlen points to a society that sustains the rich while allowing the poor to go hungry. With another flourish of her pen she demands that women combatants represent the whole of this mental production. By obscuring the need for revolution, she helps to keep food out of the mouths of the poor and she will be partly to blame as more and more women, denied their own class consciousness and thereby blinded to their own working-class interests, die in combat for corporate, ruling-class interests. Quindlen’s feeble, fuddled appeals to perpetuate capitulation by suggesting that administration change and other reforms are real solutions and by suggesting that women combatants represent true social progress. Newsweek’s reactionary views of capitalism, guardians of bourgeois values and culture, friend of war, ally of hunger, enemy of working people everywhere.

Quindlen (Continued from page 7)

People created an energy and enthusiasm that will make it a joy to share with friends and others who are interested in creating a safe, sane and productive society. The articles were well written, pertinent and educational.

I was especially pleased to see the inclusion of Engels’ introduction to Wage-Labor and Capital: The working class needs to see the process of exploitation analyzed, as well as the fruits of capitalism’s antisocial nature. We are the producers and the majority. Our numbers and our essential role in the process of production and distribution is our power. But to exercise this revolutionary power we need the knowledge that is provided by The People. I invite all who read this to join with us in, what I sincerely believe is, the most important (and urgent) social movement of our time.

Onward.

A.B.—CAP
Santa Fe, N.M.
What Capitalist America Is All About

By Michael James

The December 2007 cover story of Mother Jones magazine is looking for something moral in America’s military occupation of Iraq. The article examines “the moral dilemma of killing Iraq.” A Marine Corps colonel is quoted as bluntly saying, “Obviously we’ve got an enormous moral responsibility for making this mess with our weapons.” Maj. Morgan is quoted as saying, “We have no plan to fix it.” A representative of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) says, “The U.S. is a very bad occupier because while it prides itself on taking the moral high ground, it has failed to provide law and order, which is the first duty of an occupier.” The CSIS apparently believes that the United States can be moral while being an occupier! An equally curious and troubling assessment in the same article comes from U.S. Maj. Daniel Morgan: “We can’t just turn around and arbitrarily leave because the problem became too difficult. That’s not what America is about.”

It is his fundamental assumption regarding capitalist-dominated America that is curious and troubling. In other words, Maj. Morgan clearly believes that America is somehow “about” morality, decency, honesty, fair play or doing the right thing. In truth, America is waging an illegal war and occupation in Iraq. It is creating hundreds of thousands of refugees, deposing the oil wealth of that nation, destroying Iraq’s cultural and infrastructural heritage, sending thousands of young U.S. men and women to their deaths, and killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, none of which, apparently has shaken Maj. Morgan’s faith in what America is “about.”

It is amazing, in the face of this international armed robbery, that the major can cling to some flimsy notion of what America is about. Other observers are saying that what America is about in Iraq is a joke, a motley assortment of free-market policies and military adventurism. A British polling firm in September 2007 estimated 1,280,580 violent Iraqi deaths since the American invasion and occupation. Moreover, this might be a conservative number since it does not include “those who have died because of public health problems created by the war, including breakdowns in sewage systems and electricity, shortages of medi-

What is America about? The reality of capitalist-dominated America makes it about class struggle, inequality, pursuit of ruling-class profits and endless war. We must liberate ourselves from the false hope that our capitalist society can ever be decent, sane or moral. The huge gap between rich and poor is matched only by the immensurable gap between U.S. mythology and U.S. deed. Only socialism can lay the material foundation that will allow the true American aspirations of peace, equality and freedom come true.

Before taking up the question, a word of warning would be in order. The SLP has no detailed blueprint of the Socialist Industrial Republic. The mission of the SLP is to project the ideas of Socialist Industrial Unions (SIUs) government and to explain why government based on industrial constituencies must supercede the political state of class rule. Once the SIU government is organized, once the socialist revolution triumphs at the ballot box and the practical organization of socialist administration commences, questions that I seem formidable today will shrink to their real dimensions or practical questions uncomplicated by conflictual class and economic interests.

There will, of course, be no states under socialism, except as areas of geographic relevance. Their lands and resources will be administered by the Socialist Industrial Unions of forestry, agriculture, mining, etc.

Regrettably, there is little on what the SLP has to say about H-1B visas, the “H-1B visa-hiring program takes opportunity away from Americans.” It contends that a shortage of qualified American workers is available to fill jobs in the engineering, medical and other fields. Moreover, workers on H-1B visas are in the ruling class and demand on their employers for their immigration status.

Many U.S. companies argue the opposite. They claim they must hire foreign workers on H-1B visas because there is a shortage of qualified American workers. However, even capitalist sources, such as David Rosenburg at Merrill Lynch, have relented this according to the Wall Street Journal (Aug. 21), Rosenburg states that there is no real labor shortage, but that these firms cannot “get enough workers at the price they want to pay.”

In truth, however, neither restrictions on H-1B visas nor any other legislation can change the basic nature of capitalism itself. The drive for cheap labor in the cutthroat competition of the market is inherent in capitalism itself. If cheaper labor cannot be found through workers on H-1B visas, companies will relocate overseas where cheaper labor may be available. Indeed, outsourcing has led to high-tech unemployment in many parts of the United States.

It is unlikely that groups like Bright Future Jobs will ever convince Congress to make any significant changes in the H-1B visa program. The state functions as the executive committee of the capitalist class, mediating disputes within the ruling class and deciding what best serves the interests of the capitalist class as a whole. This is why some members of Congress will support quotas on H-1B visas and others will side with high-tech firms, who want more H-1B workers.

In any case, the capitalist class is very class-conscious and the capitalist state by its nature cannot represent American workers or any workers. No “patriotic” feeling can override the inherent capitalist drive for cheaper labor. Higher or lower profits are all that matters under capitalism. Only a united working class of men and women, of all nationalities and races, of skilled and unskilled workers, armed with class-consciousness, can throw off the shackles of wage slavery. As long as capitalism exists, the vast working-class majority will always be at the mercy of whatever is most profitable for the few capitalist owners of industry. Under socialism, every worker will have the opportunity to do useful work, using his or her own talents and skills, because workers will own and operate the tools of production and production will be for the benefit of all, not for the private profits of a few.

Janet M. Ross
davidross777@verizon.net

Question Period

How will states, cities, towns and villages be governed under your conception of socialism based on Socialist Industrial Unions? There are many socioeconomic issues in these areas. How will they be decided?

M.R.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Because the community at large would have an interest in where such a new plant might be located, it is possible that such decisions would be made through a city council of industrial unions, i.e., through a “commune” based on representation from the Socialist Industrial Unions. Daniel De Leon said “...the industrial union aims at a democratically controlled government, accompanied by the requisite ‘local self-

(Continued on page 7)

H-1B Visa Program Divides And Weakens Working Class

By Dane Sevor

Since the H-1B visa program was introduced in the 1990s, a number of groups have sprung up with demands that the U.S. government limit the number of H-1B visas issued to foreign workers, who are said to “take jobs away from American workers” with college degrees.

Bright Future Jobs, for example, argues that the “H-1B visa-hiring program takes opportunities away from Americans.” It contends that a shortage of qualified American workers is available to fill jobs in the engineering, medical and other fields. Moreover, workers on H-1B visas are in the ruling class and demand on their employers for their immigration status.

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