Bush Extols U.S. Workers But Ignores Their Plight

President Bush had more to crow about in December than the capture of Saddam Hussein, at least as he saw it. Speaking before an audience of Home Depot workers in Halethorpe, Md., on Dec. 5, Mr. Bush extolled the American worker and heaped praise on himself for his recent tax cut, which he linked to a barely perceptible decline in unemployment in November and touted as a sign that economic conditions are improving for workers.

“Today, the unemployment rate dropped...from 6 percent to 5.9 percent,” the president said. “More workers are going to work, over 380,000 have joined the work force in the last couple of months. We’ve overcome a lot. We’re a strong country, a strong economy. A lot of it has to do with the fact that we got the best workers in the world. (Applause) Our productivity is high. I hope some of it has to do—I know some of it has to do, I hope you understand some of it has to do with the fact that the role of government can help create growth. See, when a person has more money in their pocket, they’re likely to come to Home Depot.”

No, Mr. President, we don’t “see.” A drop of one tenth of one percent in unemployment is hard to see. It takes good eyes and quick reflexes to grasp a straw as thin as that. But if by “the best workers in the world” you meant the most productive it would be hard to argue with you. Indeed, American workers produced more goods and delivered more services during the third quarter of 2003 than in any comparable three-month period in 20 years.

Productivity Outstrips Wage Gains

“Productivity—the amount an employee produces for each hour worked—rose at a 9.4 percent annual rate in the third quarter...up from a 7 percent growth rate posted in the second quarter of the year,” The New York Times reported on Dec. 3, and “output surged at a 10.3 percent annual rate in the third quarter, the biggest increase since the third quarter of 1983...” In spite of what you said about more workers being added to payrolls, unemployment remained high and wages for the employed barely kept pace with rising prices for food and other necessities. “Hourly compensation of all manufactur- ing workers rose 4.1 percent,” as your Labor Department reported on Dec. 3, but rising

(Continued on page 6)
Eugene Sue, Champion of Workers

Eugene Sue was a 19th-century novelist whose best known works are *The Mysteries of Paris* and *The Wandering Jew*. Sue considered himself a Socialist, and although Karl Marx regarded him as a sentimentalist and deplored his election to the French Chamber of Deputies in 1850, Marx nonetheless conceded Sue's sincerity, the proletarian quality of his novels and readily acknowledged his great popularity with the working class of Paris. Sue was born in Paris 200 years ago, on Jan. 20, 1804. Although his understanding of modern socialism was far from perfect, he was unquestionably a great champion of the French working class. His popularity with French workers was established by the two novels mentioned, both of which were serialized in Parisian newspapers before they were printed in book form.

According to a brief biography of Sue that appeared in the *Daily People*, March 29, 1908, the first of these novels was so popular that “When a Paris newspaper...announced that the author of *The Mysteries of Paris* was at work on a story for them, the circulation of the paper increased by nine to ten thousand daily. George Sand said she would not miss one installment. That the readers found the same way is borne out by the fact that the newspapers were often not sold but rented at ten sous a half hour—the time required to read the daily installment.”

However, it is a lesser known work by Sue—*The Mysteries of the People*—that earned him an enduring fame. Although *The Mysteries of the People* is a work of fiction, it is historically accurate in what it depicts. The 31 stories in 21 volumes that make up the complete work provide their readers with a panoramic overview of social development without parallel. It is by far the best work ever written for giving the working class reader an intimate picture of society as it developed without parallel. It is by far the best work ever written for giving the working class reader an intimate picture of society as it developed.

Sue executed the great work went far to defeat the revolution that threw down Louis Philippe in 1848. The ponderousness of the manner in which Sue executed the great work went far to defeat its purposes. The general title conceals the fact that the heavy tomes contain a score of stories. That no doubt kept many from starting to read them. Then, also, between story and story, there is a dry chronology that fills up the period between the social epoch covered by the previous story and that covered by the next. All these circumstances played into the hands of the usurpary institutions upon which Sue meant to turn the light, and it has been comparatively easy for them to choke off the work. The SLP will publish the stories one after another in *The People* and then in book form, taking each story by itself and dropping the intermediaries. There will be no better universal history than that series when completed.”

The bicentennial of Eugene Sue's birth provides an opportunity to salute this champion of the oppressed and herald of their suffering. "Critics may belittle him," said the *Daily People*, "and the ruling class may endeavor to keep the workers in ignorance of his writings; but, do what they will, the great truths Eugene Sue wrote will endure."
Ilness and Death Among IBM Clean Room Workers Prompts ‘Exceptional’ Court Case

By Bruce Cozzini

Two workers suing IBM for job-related cancers represent only the latest chapter in problems dating back over decades. That employees were exposed to chemical compounds that they used.

Hernandez worked in a disk coating room. The majority of workers, but for the products they were making, were carcinogenic. In response to IBM lawyers’ attempts to blame Moore’s and Hernandez’s health problems on preexisting conditions, Teltebaum questioned whether workers were back to work chemicals that would have clearly aggravated their conditions.

The likely results of these suits will at best be no settlement with appeals extending beyond the lives of the workers involved. Cases filed in 1998, are the first of 257 cases to go to trial. But the current suits will be fought hard, since their outcomes may set precedents for future trials. And even findings for the workers will not come close to Democrats winning the presidency against workers. Nor will they change the capitalist practice of cutting corners on safety to maintain production schedules, decrease costs and thereby increase profits.

In a socialist society, there would be no division between managers and workers and no reason to hide potentially harmful substances or processes. With no need to make profits, there would be no need to cut corners on safety and expose workers to risks. Workers democratically managing production, production processes would be designed to isolate harmful substances on the job and in the environment.

At the start of the trial, a group of former IBM workers and family members of workers who had contracted cancer following chemical exposure staged a protest and memorial for those who had died, reading their names aloud. As one protester commented: “We’re here today because a lot of our friends died and to also remind managers of the injuries to workers.

As long as capitalism continues, workers will have no guarantee of job safety.

Blizzards?

If you find yourself tramping through rain, sleet and snow to get your copy of The People: Wouldn’t it be easier to order a subscription? And one for a friend? Use the subscription coupon on page 2.
The holiday season just passed produced among the bourgeois media the normal crop of coverage feigning concern about growing poverty and hunger among U.S. workers. Defenders of the system that itself produces poverty and hunger offer a yearly opportunity to prove by their “concern” that today’s capitalism is a little less Scrooge-like than that of Dickens’ times.

But for the growing millions of workers and their families whose lives of misery are represented by statistics on poverty and hunger, the daily grind under capitalism isn’t much different from when Tiny Tim experienced it. The reasons why are apparent to them: not enough jobs and poverty-level wages for many of those that do exist.

Data released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in October show that in 2002 “food insecurity” and hunger increased in the world’s richest nation from 31 million people in 1999 to 34.9 million people in 2002. Given that the working class has seen almost no economic improvement from the “jobless recovery” that has turned things around for the capitalist class in 2003, we may safely assume that the numbers are likely even worse for 2003.

Also in 2002, according to The Guardian, “another 1.7 million Americans slipped into poverty the year the country was bringing the total under the poverty line, one in eight of the population.” The number of Americans on food stamps “has risen from 17 million to 22 million” since 2001, the British newspaper reported.

In 2002, 30% of U.S. cities, the nation’s largest system of food banks, reports that about 40 percent of food bank recipients have jobs, but can’t make enough to feed their families and pay the rent.

These millions are not hungry or at risk of being hungry because food is unavailable. Food is available. They just can’t afford to buy it. The mighty productive forces built by the workers of this nation can produce whatever every worker needs, whenever they need it.

Indeed, the government still pays billions to agricapitalists every year to keep land out of production, or to produce no more than certain agreed-upon limits, in an attempt to bolster the prices of agricultural products and thereby bolster agricapitalist profits.

In the face of increasing human needs, what has the capitalist class done? Industrial and agricultural production has been cut by that class, which owns and directs America’s industries and services. Under capitalism the decision to cut back production and toss more millions of workers into the ranks of the jobless and hungry rests entirely with this capitalist class.

That tiny minority makes its decisions based solely on whether the produc-tive workers alone produce can be sold at a profit. If they can, production is continued or expanded. If they cannot, production is cut and a recession ensues, with the economy spiraling down as more and more workers are laid off and wages are cut back to increase competitiveness in jobs.

In short, it is the capitalist system itself, with its private ownership of the means of social wealth production and competition among private capitalists whose sole motive for production is profit, that forces upon society the insane paradoxes of overproduction amid plenteous and massive human needs amid the productive capacity to alleviate them.

Workers can end this insanity only by abolishing capitalism itself and building a socialist economic democracy under which the economy is collectively owned and democratically administered, and production is motivated by human needs and wants. Speed the day! —K.B.
Syndicated columnist Clarence Page has assail- ed FBI agents for using the so-called Patriot Act to prosecute a political bribery case involving the owner of some Las Vegas strip clubs. That seems far cry from preventing terrorists from attacking the United States. But it is perfectly legal under the act.

Page wrote: "It turns out that Section 314 of the Patriot Act allows federal investigators wider leeway in obtaining financial information from stockbrokers, banks and other financial institutions on people 'suspected, based on credible evidence, of engaging in terrorist acts or monstrous terrorism.'

As Page points out, the "or" is of critical importance, as anyone familiar with logic or English usage knows. What's more, under Section 314, agents no longer need subpoenas from grand juries to get such records. Their own certification in secret documents does the trick.

According to Page, "The law's powers only begin with suspected terrorists. We have yet to learn how far it goes in targeting normal people like near and civil libertarians have decried various provisions of the act. Some bourgeoisie media have from time to time reported details. A recitation is unnecessary here."

None of this should surprise any Socialist. In "A Mission of the Trades Union," an editorial in the Daily People of March 4, 1905, Daniel De Leon observed: "The mission of capitalism...is so to organize the mechanism of production that we are held in a slavish subjection, produced as a blind man from want and the fear of want, from the brute's necessity of a life of arduous toil in the production of the brute's mere necessities of life." That mission had been completed in 1905; it has been completed in superabundance today.

Conditions are ripe for a nonviolent socialist revolution in the United States in every partic- ular but one, that one is essential. Without property, the working class lacks an element that was a drifing force in previous revolutions. To make up for that lack, the working class needs a new class interests, self-enforced discipline, classconsciousness and organization.

The socialist goal is the building of an eco- nomic democracy under which production will be collectively owned and democratically operated the industries and services to serve the economic order.

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The '18 Quadrillion Question'

By Ken Boettcher

Dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous period didn’t know what hit them. According to the cur- rently accepted theory in today’s scientific commu- nity, that’s when a giant asteroid struck Earth in the Gulf of Mexico, bringing rapid climatic change and perhaps even igniting the atmosphere itself as massive amounts of methane were released by shock waves from the impact. Of course, even if the dinosaurs hadn’t seen the asteroid, they wouldn’t have been able to do anything about it. They had small brains and lacked the ability to wield tools to build any kind of defense against the catastrophe.

Humans, on the other hand, have relatively large brains and hands that can fashion tools—even tools that can warn of an approaching cataclysm that holds the potential for their extinction, but how such a warning would be acted upon depends wholly upon how human and civil libertarians have decried various prov- isions of the act. Some bourgeoisie media have from time to time reported details. A recitation is unnecessary here."

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prices wiped out most of the increase. “When the increase in consumer prices is taken into account, real hourly compensation for all manufacturing workers rose 1.7 percent in the third quarter.” Did you “see” that report, Mr. President?

‘Crushed by Debt’

Workers don’t “have more money in their pocket,” Mr. President, and even if they did much of it would be going off their paychecks while they struggle to stretch their lagging wages to keep up with rising prices. Many are lucky to have any pocket at all—left, right, front or back—to put anything in. Did you “see” that debt-ridden workers trampled into bankruptcy courts in record numbers last year? No? Well, then, you should look at this:

“Total bankruptcy filings rose 7.4 percent to a record 1.66 million in fiscal 2003,” bizjournals.com reported on Nov. 24, and “personal bankruptcies grew 7.8 percent in the year that ended Sept. 30, to 1.2 million.”

“These problems are growing in Arizona” where “nearly as many bankruptcies were filed through November as were filed in all of 2002, which had been the worst year for bankruptcies in the Arizona Republic’s reported” in Dec. 14. “A vast majority are personal bankruptcies...

Many Arizona workers are being “crushed by debt,” the newspaper said. “Pressures mount as households try to delicately balance bill payments so they don’t lose their homes, cars and furniture,” the Phoenix-based newspaper added. “Arguments about who’s at fault to do, he said of the grocery chains involved in the dispute. ‘And shame on us if we don’t stop them.’”

“The Birmingham newspaper went on to draw a connection between the rise in personal bankruptcies and the state of the economy. ‘Personal bankruptcy filings in Alabama have been climbing each year since 1999, when they totaled 30,130. During those three years, Alabama’s economy has been hit by losses in industries such as steel, paper and apparel. Meanwhile, Alabama residents have had to contend with rising consumer debt loads and increasing medical costs.’

Did these reports make it into your daily press briefing, Mr. President?

Worse to Come

What the higher productivity figures reported for the third quarter of 2003 really mean, Mr. President, is that fewer workers were pressed to produce more commodities in less time for wages that weren’t much better than they were before. Some workers may think that these are only signs of better times in the future, as they are doing things for themselves. As former undersecretary of commerce Everett Ehrlich, wrote for the Los Angeles Times on Dec 5:

“The problem is that productivity growth does not automatically turn itself into economic growth. Productivity tells us their potential to grow, but not the actual result. Consider an economy spilling out 9 percent more ‘stuff’...every year without any need for new hires. Who will consume the fruits of this abundance? Incomes would need to rise by a like amount (or prices fall like a son of a gun) in order to smart things up.

“We are told to think of the jobless as indolent, or unlucky in some self-fulfilling way,” Ehrlich added. “In fact, they are the victims of our country's economic fecundity...

In short, Mr. President, the harder workers work the sooner they work themselves out of their jobs. The San Jose Mercury News put it this way on Dec 4: ‘More economists are starting to think businesses have scored large productivity gains the old-fashioned way: Paring down their workforce, sending some jobs overseas and driving the remaining employees to work harder.’

No, Mr. President, we don’t “see,” and we think the misguided workers who applauded you on Dec 5 would see things differently if they took a closer look at the facts.
Letters to the People

Independence
Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland has scheduled discussion meetings for Sunday, Jan. 25, and Sunday, Feb. 22, 1–3:30 p.m. at the Independence Public Library, Meeting Room #1, 6361 Slat Dr. Light refreshments served. For more information please call 365-2281 or visit our Web site at http://slp.pdx.home.mind-spring.com.

Sept. 11
(Continued from page 7)

"That is the figure of value added by manufactured goods reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. If laborers produce that value, it is in wages paid to workers whose labor produced that value." The fault is mine. Although the correct figures are given in part in the subsequent paragraph, the misstate- ment produces at least confusion and should be corrected.

Paul D. Lawrence
Fresno, Calif.

New Subscriber
I read your paper in the library and really liked it—so I want to subscribe for a year. Enclosed is a check for $5.00, and thank you.

Mildred Meisel
Oaksho, Wis.

Special Election Returns
Your recent issue says only 8,408,323 California voters voted on whether to recall Gray Davis. Actually, the state is still counting votes. In fact, Davis's Web site shown today (Nov. 1) shows that the total voted "yes" or "no" on the recall is 8,980,475. It will probably top 9 mil- lion before the count is done. The reason it is taking so long is that absentee and provisional ballots involve a great deal of checking.

Richard Winger
San Francisco, Calif.

...De Leon
(Continued from page 4)

"appearance" of love for peace while practicing car- negie was here temporarily suspended. A war-hur- rah policy was given the right of way. The nation was plunged into the war in a great uniform. The ben- eficiaries of capitalism temporarily required the fan- fare of war. The people had to be intoxicated to their own undoing. The rattle of arms alone was thought efficient. And so it went on for nearly three years. The public mind was treated every morning to a grid- dle-cake plate of fried Filipinos, and every evening to a dessert of "American processes." But this could not continue. The Filipinos refused to accommodate our American capitalists; on the other hand, our own people got tired of "processing" with their blood for the benefit of valorous absentee. This change in the public mind had been noticed by our rulers; they are now acting upon it. And thus it comes that now, right upon the heels of the passing of a bill for an income tax to put down the "Filipino rebellion," with the American government in possession of just 420 military posts on the islands, and the whole territory, outside of those 420 small posts, ablaze against our domination,—now and under these conditions the president, with wooden Indian face, speaks of "peace being restored on the Islands" and recommends legisla- tion for "civil instead of "military control."

The war-hurrah game having run its course, our capitalist government now re-throws the mask of peace, and resumes the policy of "appearances."

Rule by "civil government" will be talked; rule by carnage will be acted.

...Blair
(Continued from page 8)

present at least, to hitch its wagon to American capi- talism. In this circumstance there is no way in which the present political representatives of British capital- ism, Tony Blair, is going to upset his pal George Bush, however authoritarian and human rights take place in Uzbekistan or other allies of the United States.

The alleged "ethnic dimension" of Blair's foreign policy clearly is a sham. It only demonstrates that fake labour parties and their programs and pos- sitions are not the part of solution to capitalism's wars, human rights abuses, poverty and exploitation.

On the contrary, they are part of the problem. They help to prop up decadent capitalism and divert the working class from recognizing the urgent need to organize politically and industrially for a genuine socialist reconstruction of society.

Socialist Labor Party
Financial Summary (October-November 2003)

Bank Balance (Oct.) ............................................. $61,015.69
Expenses (Oct.-Nov.) .......................................... 18,405.01
Income (Oct.-Nov.) ............................................ 10,163.71
Balance (Nov. 30) .................................................. 54,774.39
Deficit for 2003 (as of Nov. 30) .............................. $51,864.72

Ohio
Independence
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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 503-232-2881 or visit our Web site at http://slp.pdx.home.mind-spring.com.

Oregon
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 503-838-0008, e-mail houstonslp@frys.com or visit the section's Web site at http://houstonslp.tripod.com.

Texas
Discussion Meetings—Section Houston holds discussion meetings the last Saturday of the month at the Houston Public Library, Franklin Branch, 6440 W. Bellfort, southwest Houston. The time of the meetings varies. Those interested please call 281-838-0008, e-mail houstonslp@frys.com or visit the section's Web site at http://houston.slp.tripod.com.

Shaw, Philip Sullivan, George Gaylord $1.
Total: $825.50

Daniel De Leon Sesquicentennial Fund
Anonymous $310; Bernard Presser $305, $10 each Gloria Groce Oliver, Irene Leake $300, Jim Hunt $80, $5 each Donald G. Adams, Alvin Chapman, Richard Dohsee, James G. McHugh $80, $25 each Lawrence Keegan, Paul Edward Gil, Collin Phillips, $20 each Albert Einstein, Randy Fleming, Raymond Solomon, Richard Mack, Zephyr Craft, William C. O'Mahoney, Daniel De Leon $15, R. Ingalls $11, $10 each Harry E. Gibson, Richard Wilson, Sarah Rotman, $5 each Costanzo Rub, R. William, $5 each Paul D. Lawrence $2.
Total: $909.50

SLP Statutory Fund
Bernard Bitrock $490, Robert R. Burns $300, Chris Dehoff $300, Carl C. Miller $140, Section Wayne County, Mich. $110, $50 each Lois Reynolds, Michael J. Preston; Archie Sim to represent his 68 years of SLP membership $69, Richard Adamkin (in memory of John W. Adams $45, Clayton Hewett $40; $25 each J. R. Winger, $25, $20 each Jill Campbell, Steve Littleton, Oldfather Bill $15.
Total: $1,624.00

SLP Legate Fund
Total: $20.00

Press Security Fund
Wonder Wendall $25, Roger Reel $20.
Total: $45.00

SLP Emergency Fund
R. Hofen $20.00 (Total)

Genevieve Gunderson Memorial Fund
Paul D. Lawrence $10.00 (Total)

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Tony Blair’s ‘Ethical Dimension’

By Jim Plant

When Britain’s “Labor” Party came to power in 1997 after 18 years of Conservative Party rule it issued a series of postelection declarations of intent setting out how its policies would differ from those of its Conservative Party predecessor. Since then the Labour government, headed by Tony Blair, has experienced a number of embarrassments, particularly in the field of international relations. The Labour government in power since the May 1997 election has turned out to be as constituted as virtually identical to those pursued by the Conservatives.

When Mr. Blair became prime minister Robin Cook became the new foreign secretary, and it fell to Mr. Cook to enunciate one of the new Labour government’s postelection declarations of intent in a “Mission Statement” on May 12, 1997. “The Labour government does not accept that political values can be left behind when we check in our passports to travel on diplomatic business,” Cook declared. “Our foreign policy must have an ethical dimension and must support the demands of other peoples for the democratic processes that are the bedrock of our own constitution. The Labour government will put human rights at the heart of our foreign policy....”

Cook did not claim that Britain’s foreign policy and actions would be completely ethical. Nonetheless, there would be an “ethical dimension,” and Cook talked about such things as “support for demands of other peoples for...democratic rights.” But Cook’s declarations did not prevent the Labour government from supplying weapons to extremely repressive regimes, just as the Conservative government had done.

Within a month of Cook’s mission statement, for example, the Labour government approved export licenses for the delivery of military aircraft to Indonesia. Mr. Blair’s government took that decision while the authoritarian Suharto regime was busily crushing demonstrations for democracy in Jakarta and brutally suppressing the East Timor independence movement. Some of the aircraft sold had been “stranded” in East Timor, but Indonesia fought not only armed insurgents but also where its army, police and paramilitary gangs were conducting a murderous campaign of intimidation and terror against an unarmed civilian population.

Apparently none of this disturbed Mr. Cook very much before he “shuffled” to another Cabinet post in 2001; but last March, when Mr. Blair decided to apply an “ethical dimension” of Labour’s foreign policy to Iraq, he resigned from the Cabinet and delivered a speech in the House of Commons in which he said:

“Iraq probably has no weapons of mass destruction in the commonly understood sense of the term—namely a credible device capable of being delivered against a strategic city target. It probably still has biological toxins and battlefield chemical munitions, but it has had them since the 1980s when U.S. companies sold Saddam anthrax agents and the then British government approved chemical and munitions factories. Why is it now so urgent that we should abandon the weapon that has been there for 20 years, and which we helped to create? Why is it necessary to resort to war this week, while Saddam’s ambition to complete his weapons program is blocked by the presence of U.N. inspectors?”

During Britain’s buildup for war with Iraq, Mr. Blair and his government echoed pronouncements of the U.S. administration and sought to justify an invasion on at least three counts. The first was to extend the “war on terrororism.” The second was to destroy the “weapons of mass destruction” that ostensibly posed a real and imminent threat, despite the doubts expressed by Cook and others in and out of government circles. The third was that it was necessary to remove a brutal regime that terrorized and murdered its own people, even though no such compunctions prevented Mr. Blair’s government from bolstering the equally brutal Bush regime in Saudi Arabia.

“The moral case against war has a moral answer: it is the moral case for removing Saddam,” Mr. Blair declared last February. “Ridding the world of Saddam would be an act of humanity. It is leaving him there that is in truth inhumane.” And in his address before the U.S. Congress last July, Mr. Blair stated: “We are fighting for the inalienable right of humanity, black or white, Christian or not, left, right or merely indifferent, to be free.” Thus did Mr. Blair, on these and many other occasions, proclaim and confirm an “ethical” stance in foreign policy.

No evidence has ever surfaced to indicate that the theocratic terrorist group al Qaeda had a significant presence in Iraq, or that it had any meaningful or viable links to Saddam Hussein’s regime. No evidence of weapons of mass destruction has ever turned up, and it now seems apparent that such weapons did not exist, however plentiful they may be in the hands of British and American capitalism.

Nonetheless, at least one British diplomat continued to take the Labour government’s moral and ethical pronouncements seriously. That was Craig Murray, on his first important diplomatic assignment as Britain’s ambassador to the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan in Central Asia. Mr. Murray caused an international sensation in ruling-class circles in October 2002 when he delivered a speech in Tashkent from which the following is an extract:

“World attention has recently been focused on the prevalence of torture in Uzbek prisons. The terrible case of Arazov and Alimov apparently tortured to death by boiling water, has evoked great international concern. But all of us know that this is not an isolated incident. Brutality is inherent in a system where convictions habitually rely on signed confessions rather than on forensic or material evidence. In the Uzbek criminal justice system the conviction rate is almost 100 percent. It is difficult not to conclude that once accused by the procurator there is no effective possibility of fair trial in the sense we understand it.”

Given the supposed moral and ethical stand espoused by Tony Blair, one might expect the British Labour government to uphold its ambassador’s reports and investigations, and argue for tough measures against the Karimov regime. When Mr. Murray returned to Scotland for the Conservative Party Conference and delivered a speech it was widely assumed that he had been removed from his post. He was subjected to personal attacks and charged with a series of “offenses.” After taking a few weeks before Mr. Murray resumed his duties as ambassador to Uzbekistan:

“Mr. Murray upset the regime of President Islam Karimov [of Uzbekistan] with his blunt remarks on torture. His comments also began to accentuate the differences in the [British] Foreign Office’s supposed ethical foreign policy and its support for U.S. actions.”

“Mr. Murray sent numerous reports to London about human rights abuses, and his dispatches became increasingly heated during the buildup to the Iraqi invasion,” The Guardian continued. “He argued that Uzbekistan’s human rights abuses were as bad as those being used as ammunition against Baghdad. Yet Washington was financing Uzbekistan, rather than threatening it, he said.”

Mr. Murray “became personally involved in exposing torture, commissioning a forensic report on the bodies of two political prisoners...which concluded that they had probably been tortured.”

The Guardian reported that “Mr. Murray incident was sufficiently embarrassing to Mr. Blair and his government, however, that they felt constrained to return Mr. Murray to his post. When Mr. Murray either buckled under, felt sufficient to secure the protests over his presumed removal, or has plans to step aside quietly at a more propitious moment. Time will tell.”

The different attitudes taken by the British and American governments to the dictatorships of Saddam Hussein and of Islam Karimov stem from the fact that Uzbekistan is a staunch ally of the United States: it is important to U.S. plans for an oil pipeline from the region—the “Silk Road of Oil” reported on in some detail in our November-December issue. Uzbekistan, an ally of the United States that Karimov allowed it to establish a military base at Khanabad, near the city of Karshi, as a center for operations in Afghanistan. The United States moved right in, even though the State Department has reported that the Uzbek security services use “torture as a routine investigation technique.” This did not deter Washington from giving Uzbekistan $500 million in aid in 2002, $79 million of which was specifically for the “law enforcement and security services” that routinely use torture.

The invasion of Iraq had nothing to do with defending human rights. Mainly it was for the control of Middle East oil. Not surprisingly, though, for ensuring that Iraq’s oil flows to the United States, or that American oil companies will make vast profits from such control, although both these things may happen. Iraq is a vital segment in the “Silk Road of Oil,” and the central point is that control of most of the world’s oil will give the United States a tremendous advantage and great leverage over its main industrial rivals—Europe, Japan, Russia, China—who will be even more desperate for supplies.

The British capitalist class, which has demonstrated a very ambivalent attitude towards being involved in complete European political and economic integration, has decided instead, for the