IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM

Bush Defends War on Iraq, Police-State Spying at Home

n a series of five addresses toward the end of the year, the last from the Oval Office on Dec. 18, President Bush sought to demonstrate that his administration’s plan for winning the war in Iraq and establishing a political democracy there is succeeding. His purpose, ostensibly, was to reassure the American people that he knows what he is doing and that the war has been worth the cost in life and destruction.

Regardless of how the administration is progressing toward its goals in Iraq, however, what reportedly prompted President Bush to deliver his speeches is his sagging popularity and growing doubts about the war. In short, most Americans do not believe that President Bush or his advisers know what they are doing and that the administration has led them by the nose down the primrose path to international scorn and contempt.

The doubts that trouble a majority of Americans, at least as presented through the media, range from the knowledge that Mr. Bush misled them about Iraq’s ties to terrorists, its nonexistent weapons of mass destruction and by fabricating a connection between Saddam Hussein and the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. These central doses of false information have been spiced up at various intervals along the way with such additional tidbits of misinformation as, for example, that Iraq bought nuclear rods from impoverished and famine-plagued Niger to enhance a nuclear weapons program. That tidbit proved to be not just fiction, but a purposeful falsehood meant to deceive the American working class into believing that Iraq posed an immediate and serious threat to its neighbors and even to the United States itself.

Mr. Bush did not confess that any of these and other falsehoods imposed on the American public were deliberate efforts at mass deception, much less what was the motive behind it, it’s just “creationism in a cheap tuxedo.”

But Darwin’s theory of evolution through natural selection is far more than “just a theory.” It is one of the basic organizing principles of all of biological science. Repeatedly tested and challenged since Darwin published On the Origin of Species in 1859, its principles have been upheld and strengthened throughout the years. Incorporation of Mendelian genetics showed the mechanism of passing natural selection from one generation to the next. And the discovery of DNA in recent years has made evolutionary theory stronger, and has provided the mechanisms for understanding the evolution of antibiotic resistance in microorganisms and the continual modification of viruses. One cannot understand biology without an understanding of evolutionary theory. To not teach it is to cripple the learning of students.

Six years ago, the Kansas Board of Education tried to block teaching of evolution in the state’s public schools. A change in the membership of the board reversed that action in 2001. As of November, a new board has again formalized an anti-evolution stance, but of a more subtle and insidious nature. Leaning heavily on ID, the Kansas board has tried to redefine science itself.

(Continued on page 10)
Beware the Mysteries!

By Michael James

Beware! There are those in our society who pretend to think, guide and enlighten. They promote and present themselves as having wisdom or expertise. But they are breathtakingly ignorant. Consider the antics of spiritual guru Deepak Chopra. For example, in a recent U.S. News & World Report article, he makes the claim that "war is simply a tool of business." Instead, Chopra suggests that the capitalist war machine is not hindered by morality or ethics. His incantations can make this a kind of casual conversation, as if his declarations will allow Halliburton and its Pentagon servants to more easily pacify the Iraqis who resist U.S. occupation. At any rate, war in the pursuit of profit can be made to seem somehow noble with a little spiritual whitewashing. Richard Nixon had Billy Graham to secure God's blessing for mass murder in Vietnam, and now the Pentagon has Deepak Chopra. Praise God and bombs away!

Another culprit is Newsweek editorialist Anna Quindlen. She recently examined the U.S. occupation of Iraq and found it tragically similar to the U.S. war against Vietnam: "The war in Iraq is a disaster in the image and likeness of its predecessor." She has no answers, of course, in spite of her standing in the world of bourgeois journalism. She can only articulate a question that truly reveals her hopeless and thorough lack of insight: "If we are such a great nation, why are we utterly incapable of learning from our mistakes?"

Her confusion can at least make a more enlightened person grateful for the gift of truth and vision that is Marxism. It is only with a Marxist analysis that we can understand that capitalism means war. War, is despite its glorification and romanticization in American culture, simply a business. War profits are intimately tied to the search for corporate profit. Marx denigrated capitalist wars for us when he wrote that the need for resources, markets and profits "chases the bourgeois over the whole surface of the globe." Miss. Quindlen, without Marx, cannot get beyond the lame notion that the criminals in government and business, the masters of war, should learn some lesson "from our mistakes" in Vietnam. Apparently then, according to her thinking, war will end. The masters will suddenly become moral or humane and will no longer resort to warfare to pursue their class interests. There are two lessons that she should learn from the genocidal holocaust that America unleashed against peasants in Vietnam.

The first is that the American ruling class is capable of any horror, and the list of those it has committed and continues to commit is long and growing. It includes the near extermination of our own indigenous Native American peoples, the brutal enslavement of Africans, the massacre of countless industrial workers, the use of atomic bombs on civilian populations, environmental degradation and assaults on such developing nations as Nicaragua, Cuba and Chile—not to mention the current criminal enterprise in Iraq. The second lesson is that this capitalist class will never stop waging war until the working class carries out its historical and revolutionary mission of abolishing capitalism. And so Deepak Chopra is out to make the Pentagon, the muscle behind bloodthirsty capitalism, a spiritual place. And Anna Quindlen, unless she is somehow visited by Marx in her dreams, will keep on mystifying and bewildering and asking naive questions. It is the bright, shining light of The People and Marxism that saves us from the world of darkness.

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By Arnold Peterson

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New Orleanians Meet Appeals With Skepticism and Scorn

By B.B.

C. Ray Nagin, mayor of New Orleans, has traveled from Houston to Atlanta since last September to meet with refugees from his devastated city and convince them to return and to participate in the rebuilding effort, but skepticism has met him all along the line.

Nagin and other officials have spoken of a new “Big Easy” with decent housing, schools, services, infrastructure in short, with all the things that the “unloved” Big Easy did not have, at least not in the working-class neighborhoods where a majority of the city’s population lived before Hurricane Katrina came roaring through last August.

After Nagin spoke in Atlanta in December, for example, the Atlanta Daily World reported the reactions of some of the 2,000 people who sat through the mayor’s appeal.

“Many former New Orleans residents now living in the Atlanta area yelled questions at Nagin, and were angry when he did not have the answers or the authority they were looking for,” the Atlanta newspaper reported.

“Home to what?” one refuge at the Atlanta meeting wanted to know.

“Bringing us back to living in poverty is not a new beginning,” declared another former resident.

“I feel like he’s coming down here to say he’s doing something, but this is more of aploy to get the workers to come back,” declared another.

Nagin is not the only one whose appeals have met with skepticism and resistance. Local capitalists who hope to rebuild have met with similar reactions among refugees. In November, for example, Donald T. Bollinger, president of Bollinger Shipyards, the nation’s third largest, sent money orders in U.S. dollars.

Payment by international money order in U.S. dollars.

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Other local capitalists have their own worries.

Banker and real estate developer Joseph C. Canizaro, out it this way, “The key problems is jobs. You look at the housing situation, and the schools situation, and you wonder where businesses are going to find the people they desperately need to get things going.” Businesses, after all, can’t make a profit without workers.

Workers, however, know that a number of problems would confront them if they returned, one of which is lack of food. “The American Red Cross is still serving about 37,000 meals daily to New Orleans residents,” Reuters reported on Dec. 15. Reuters went on to say that “nearly one-quarter of current residents do not have water or gas in their homes.”

In addition, the Mayor’s Office reported in December that one-fourth of the homes are without electricity, and the local phone company announced it would be January or February before it could restore service to 40 percent of the city.

Worse, workers are getting conflicting reports of the area’s toxicity. State and national officials declared most of the city safe for resettling. The Washington Post, however, reported on Dec. 15 that a recent study found “some New Orleans neighborhoods are covered in a layer of sediment containing lead, above levels that have caused the federal government considers hazardous to human health.” Several environmental groups contend that “as much as 75 percent of the city still is marred by toxic deposits of heavy metals, pesticides and petroleum products.” (New Orleans Times-Picayune, Dec. 10)

Compounding the problem for displaced New Orleanians and others from the region is the housing situation. Many homes and apartment buildings have been destroyed or condemned, of course, but that is not the worst of it. Mr. Canizaro’s woes notwithstanding, banks and mortgage companies will soon begin foreclosing on homes. Already New Orleans property owners have begun evicting absentee renters, and rents on habitable apartments and rental homes have gone up drastically.

“Three months after Katrina flooded most of the city’s neighborhoods and displaced nearly 80 percent of its residents,” Reuters reported on Dec. 7, “both sale and rental properties are fetching prices 30 percent higher than prestorm levels.” The same report added.

“The state lifted a stay on evictions in early November, and relief officials said many evicted tenants had not been contacted before being kicked out.”

“There is basically lawlessness with regard to landlords,” said Judy Browne, an attorney with Advocates Project and Grassroots Legal Action Network. “We are dealing mainly with the worst: people are being evicted with the last of their belongings being thrown out to the street.”

Truth is that capitalism and capitalists are capable of much worse, and those with a stake in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast seem bent on proving it. Met by the well-funded skepticism and scorn of many working-class refugees from the devastated city and region, they began the search for other workers who are desperate enough to do the hazardous cleanup work, with little shelter and no need of schools—and they found them.

Shortly after the cleanup began, immigrant workers, many of whom are undocumented and especially vulnerable to ruthless exploitation, were lured by recruiters to the area with promises of “good pay.” Because they are mostly young and lack roots in the United States, many migrants are ideal for the exploitation of construction jobs.”

The Los Angeles Times wrote back in September. By then, migrant workers had already established themselves on the outskirts of New Orleans, living in squalid mobile homes without electricity or running water. Others were forced to sleep on New Orleans streets or in warehouses. Some set up tents in a nearby churchyard.

Immigrant workers have few protections if they should become sick, or suffer disability or fatal accidents, or not receive the full wages promised. Immigrants have no bargaining power. Immigrant rights groups were already fighting for unpaid wages on behalf of workers in the area. One group has filed a complaint with the Department of Defense, alleging that a subcontractor owed 74 workers $56,000 in back wages.

Rights groups also report immigrant workers engaged in the cleanup suffering from illness, cuts and bruises, sprained ankles and other injuries without being given medical attention. The Public Broadcasting Service also has reported that Latino workers were sent on jobs without protective clothing.

The abuses of immigrant labor have become so pervasive, that Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) said, “It is a downright shame that any contractor would use this tragedy as an opportunity to line its pockets by breaking the law and hiring a low-skilled, low-wage and undocumented workforce.”

It’s more than a “downright shame” that New Orleans and the gulf area are being rebuilt at the expense of workers’ safety and well-being. It’s a crime, part of a crime that capitalists commit against every worker, every day. Exploitation of wage labor is the very foundation of capitalism, and if capitalists can get away with particularly inhumane exploitation of particularly vulnerable workers “to get things going,” they will do so.

(Donna Bills contributed to this article)

Toxic Cloud Released Over Davenport, Iowa

By Michael Wenskus

A capitalist newspaper in Davenport, Iowa, recently reported another incident of capitalists disregard for human life in the race for more profit. The newspaper printed its story under a heading of “Chemicals Go Away,” as if the chemicals had a mind of their own and simply lost control of themselves.

What really happened is that a toxic chemical released from an unexpected violent reaction during the mixing of large quantities of several acids. An orange, yellow and red plume of smoke billowed out of a building on Davenport’s west side, just across the Mississippi River. It sent workers, residents and customers of the mixed industrial, commercial and residential neighborhood fleeing.

Officials sealed off a several-block area, and removed hazardous industrial and automobile traffic. One person was sent to the hospital with difficulty breathing. A worker at a business across the street from the chemical plant said he could not stand the building because the smoke was so thick.

Firefighters went to neighboring houses and told residents to stay inside and to turn off their air conditioners.

Although the newspaper did not say the smoke was toxic, it seems apparent that it was. Cars and skateboards were directed out of a gro
Ending Barbarism

"Is there not a necessity for deeply reflecting upon an alteration of the system that breeds these crimes, instead of glorifying the hangman who executes a lot of criminals to make room enough for the supply of new ones?" — Karl Marx

Two grim events briefly focused public attention recently on the death penalty in the United States: The execution of Tookie Williams, co-founder of the Crips street gang, and the passing of a milestone marking the almost 2000th execution since the death penalty was reinstated in the United States in 1976. The issue deserves the attention of every worker.

The evidence shows that the judicial system's ability to correctly deter guilt or innocence in such capital cases is no more reliable today than it was in 1972, when the Supreme Court ruled that the arbitrary manner in which the death penalty was then applied amounted to "true and inhuman punishment," and "abandoned" it. In 1976, four years after having blunted growing criticism of the barbaric practice, however, the Supreme Court ruled that revised capital punishment laws were constitutional unless applied in a "discriminatory" manner and without "uniform" criteria.

The arbitrary and discriminatory application of such laws since 1976 has produced plentiful travesties of justice. During these past three decades, according to Witness to Innocence, 122 people have been exonerated and released from death row, innocent of the crimes for which they were convicted.

Studies of racial and class bias in the application of the death penalty repeatedly deliver similar results. According to a press release that summarized a study published late last year in the highly respected Law Review of Santa Clara University in California, "the race and ethnicity of the victim and the location of the crimeplay a critical role in determining who will be sentenced to death. The study found, among other things, that 90 percent of executions in California were for those convicted of killing whites, while only 27.6 percent of murder victims are whites," and that "Those who murder whites are over four times more likely to be sentenced to death than those who kill African-Americans."

Class status ultimately plays the determining role in death penalty prosecutions and convictions. According to the website of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty, of defendants convicted of capital crimes are indigent and cannot afford their own attorney. U.S. Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg has said she has "never had a capital defendant who could afford sophisticated legal counsel and a battery of expert witnesses."

It may well be that the latest round of news reports surrounding these cases will convince some that the death penalty is necessary. If that is so, it is a misleading judgment. As Karl Marx pointed out in a prefatory note: "He remains more than Washington or Patrick Henry, or even Lincoln or Grant, the typical American."

Consider the standards of greatness prevalent today. This is high praise indeed. But it is worth remembering that the typical American, according to Franklin, "is a man and a great-minded man. He was veratilie without being superficial; active without being strenuous; a genius without being an egomaniac. Born amid Puritanical surroundings, he personified the most liberal culture of the world of his time. Karl Marx, in one of those luminous and profound notes to Capital (p. 629), for which he is justly renowned, names Franklin as one of the men who originally studied political economy, in contrast to other "revered economists," like Malteus and Ricardo.

"Originally, political economy was studied by philosophers like Hobbes, Locke, Hume; by businessmen and statesmen, like Thomas Moore, Temple, Sully, De Witt, North, Law, Vanderlin, Cantillon, Franklin, and especially, and with the greatest success, by medical men like Petti, Barbon, Mandeville, Queeney." To have one's name mentioned among such names by a man like Karl Marx is a tribute to greatness of the highest order.

And Marx, in an oft-quoted line of his admirers, states: "Class status ultimately plays the determining role in death penalty prosecutions and convictions. According to the website of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty, of defendants convicted of capital crimes are indigent and cannot afford their own attorney." U.S. Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg has said she has "never had a capital defendant who could afford sophisticated legal counsel and a battery of expert witnesses."

What is socialism? Socialism is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, mines, railroads, land and all other instruments of production. Socialism requires productivity 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. Under socialism all authority will originate from the workers, individually united in industrial unions. In each workplace, the workers will be directly accountable to the rank and file for the success or failure of their efforts. Besides electing all necessary shop officers, the workers will also elect representatives to a local and national council of their industry or service—and to a central congress representing the interests of all the industries and services. This all-industrial congress will plan and coordinate production in all areas of the economy. All persons elected to any post in the socialist government, from the lowest to the highest, will be directly accountable to the rank and file. They will be removable at any time that a majority of those elected to decide if they are necessary. Such a system would make possible the fullest democracy and freedom. It would be a society based on the most primary freedom—economic freedom.

For individuals, socialism means an end to economic insecurity and exploitation. It means workers cease to be commodities bought and sold on the labor market and forced to work as appendages to tools owned by someone else. It means a chance to develop all individual capacities and potentials within a free community of free individuals. "Socialism does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a state bureaucracy as in the former Soviet Union or China, with the working class oppressed by a new bureaucratic class. It does not mean a closed party-run system without democracy. It means participation by the workers through their own elected officials, or "shop stewards," 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 in the political field and to educate the majority of workers about the need for socialism. It requires building Social and Industrial Union organizations to unite all workers in a classconscious 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.
Wal-Mart a Natural Outgrowth
Of Capitalist Concentration

By Ken Boffitche

T

The world's largest corporation, Wal-Mart
Stores, Inc., has expanded over the past
two decades into communities all over
the country and the world. A debate has also
grown in those communities over the social
and economic costs incurred when a Wal-Mart
store opens. Groups opposed to Wal-Mart have
sprung up everywhere. Last year even
saw the release of a feature-length film
called "Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low
Price." (See sidebar.)

Critics of the company point out that the
average full-time worker at a U.S. Wal-
Mart is paid only $9.68 an hour—about
$17,500 per year before payroll deductions,
which, for all practical purpose, means that
the average wage is substantially less than
the figure cited, as it does for all American
workers. If this average worker is the sole
wage earner in a family of three, that wage
puts the family only about $1,500 above the
poverty line, which many economists
agree is substantially low. Only about 48 per-
cent of Wal-Mart workers can afford to buy
to the company's health care plan.

In 2004, a study detailing "The Hidden Cost
of Wal-Mart Jobs" was released by the Center
for Labor Research and Education (CLRE) of
the University of California at Berkeley. It
found that Wal-Mart workers "disproportion-
ately rely on...public health programs in
California compared to workers in large retail
stores as a whole." An Oct. 26 press release from
the authors of the CLRE report corroborated and updated its
findings based on a new information revealed in
an internal Wal-Mart memo leaked to The New
York Times. According to the press release,
"Applying [the memo's] percentages of workers
and children enrolled in Medicaid/SCHIP*
implies Wal-Mart workers and children cost
$456 million nationally through their use of
public health programs.

The company's main counter to such revela-
tions is its assertion that it "creates 100,000 jobs
a year." In fact, the announcement covers a year's
economic sleight-of-hand; adding 100,000 jobs per
year to the company does not necessarily mean
adding that many to the economy.

"When Wal-Mart opens a store in a previously
untouched city or county" syndicated colum-
nist Paul Krugman recently noted, "the new
store takes sales away from stores that are
already in the area; these stores lay off workers
even go out of business. Because Wal-Mart's
stores employ fewer workers per dollar of sales
than the smaller stores they replace, overall
retail employment surely goes down when Wal-
Mart comes to town. And if the jobs lost come
from employers who pay more generously than
Wal-Mart does, overall wages will fall when
Wal-Mart moves in."

"This is precisely the process confirmed by the
CLRE study," Krugman noted. The study used
"sophisticated statistical analysis to esti-
mate the effects on jobs and wages as Wal-Mart
spread out from its original center in Arkansas."

"The authors found retail employment did, indeed, fall when Wal-Mart arrived in a new
county," Krugman said. "It's not clear in their
data whether overall employment in a county
rose or fell when a Wal-Mart opened. But it's
clear that average wages fell." As the report put it,
"Residents of local labor markets earn less fol-
lowing the opening of Wal-Mart stores."

Andy Grossman is the executive director of a
lobbying and publicity organization called Wal-
Mart Watch that coordinates the efforts of sev-
eral anti-Wal-Mart groups. According to an arti-
dle in Macleans, the Canadian weekly maga-
azine, Grossman maintains that "Wal-Mart is
driving a vicious cycle: it starts with lower
prices, and leads over time to a single player
essentially rewriting the economics of the
industry for everybody. Pretty soon, there are
fewer employers, lower wages, less medical cov-
erage, more poverty—all widening the gap
between the rich owners of Wal-Mart...and the
poor who shop and work there."

"This is a societal fight," Grossman says.
"Wal-Mart is a symbol, because they're so good at
what they do, others have to emulate them. This
company's reach is so broad. We need to change
the relationship between it and the communities it seeks to do business in, other-
wise it's going to continue to destroy our soci-
edies."

Stacy Mitchell of the New Rules Project, a
program of something called the Institute for
Local Self-Reliance, like many "progressives," has some "solutions" she thinks might
whip the likes of Wal-Mart into shape. In a recent
article on TomPaine.com, entitled "What to Do About Wal-Mart," Mitchell maintains
that some good old-fashioned trust busting is
needed. She, like others, argues that the govern-
ment should expand their control over development,
support small business creation and "value
work."

Such opponents of Wal-Mart—and Target, Low-
expressed a similar concern. For example, Ben Cardin, the one-
chamber Democrat, Best Buy and other big

to bust up all the trusts and keep them that way
among the dominant elements of the capitalist class—
state—which serves as the executive committee
of the trusts and monopolies. Moreover, forcing the modern political
system that nurtures them, a system
that always ends in the ruin of many small capi-

turalists, whose capitals partly pass into the hands
of the big business owners, is a means of disorganizing
the productivity of labor, and this again on the scale of production. Therefore, the
larger capitals beat the smaller. It will further
be remembered that, with the development of the
capitalist mode of production, there is an in-
crease in the amount of individual capital nec-

ecessary to carry on a business under its normal conditions.

"The smaller capitals, therefore, crowd into
spheres of production which modern industry has
only sporadically or incompletely got hold of.
Here competition ranges in direct proportion
to the number, and in inverse proportion
to the magnitudes, of the antagonistic capitals.
It always ends in the ruin of many small capital-
ists, whose capitals pass into the hands of
their conquerors, partly vanishing."

In short, build up a trust, and the many small-
er pieces will eventually produce a similar
dominance. Moreover, forcing the modern political
state—which serves as the executive committee
of the dominant elements of the capitalist dass-
to bust up all the trusts and monopolies—has
in history proven all but impossible.

To even posit the possibility of legislating some
sort of “perfect” condition under capitalism in
which all its devices to impoverish and enslave
the working class, poison the environment,
make war on its neighbors, and other antisciolog-
tic tendencies could somehow be tamed and
managed for the benefit of all is women.

It serves to keep workers divided and diverted
from the urgent task that holds the only possi-


* SCHIP is the State Children's Health Insurance Program of the federal government's Department of Health and Human Services.
(Continued on page 10)
Arnold Petersen, former national secretary of the Socialist Labor Party, wrote the following essay on Benjamin Franklin for the Weekly People on Jan. 14, 1939. We reprint it here to mark the 300th anniversary of Franklin's birth, on Jan. 17, 1706.

It is the fashion with many academics today to denigrate the founders of the republic, to dwell on their human weaknesses and to detect “hypocrisy” in their proclamations for “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” while tolerating or profiting from human slavery. While expatiating on the shortcomings of these founders, however, many of these academics are fully aware of the horrors perpetrated by the capitalist system and its wage slavery. Yet, they abstain from the struggle to rid humanity of the evil for fear of losing their positions, of having to defend themselves against the disfavor of their peers, or other excuses that turn their pointing fingers back on themselves.

Whatever one might say about the shortcomings and failings of a Washington, Jefferson, Madison or Franklin, they were men who stood up to the tasks that history carved out for them, though they knew they could not accomplish them all and might fail at what they attempted. Their detractors have less to excuse themselves from today’s struggle, not only because the science of socialism has exposed the evil source of today’s social problems, but because it points the way out. Socialism provides a better guide for our generation than the simplest moral precepts with which—and often against which—people struggled two and three hundred years ago.

If we looked upon men and women for what they failed to do at specific junctures in history, rather than what they managed to accomplish in their time and their surroundings, there would be nothing to admire, to aspire to or to strive after.

Benjamin Franklin truly was a great man whose agile, inquisitive and inventive mind added immeasurably to the storehouse of human knowledge and progress. He did not overcome all the obstacles that his social surroundings placed in his path, but together with the other outstanding personalities of those revolutionary days, he helped to build a nation and lay the foundations of a system—capitalism—that was outstanding personalities of those revolutions.

When...we say that a great man symbolized and logically expressed and fully served his age, we do no more than express the thought that a certain material and economic stage had been reached which brought with it a train of superstructural problems which, with the basic economic problems, demanded solution—a stage to which there had to be brought a bear a process of rationalization requiring an intellect of a certain propriety—an intellect of high order endowed with faculties so all-embracing that it at one and the same time summed up the present and envisioned the future—the future, that is, in logical sequence to the present. That this intellect happened to be this particular human being was, of course, more or less an accident. For had the particular individual not responded, some other, equally great, intellect would have appeared—then, or perhaps a little later, but surely within the period calling for the “right man” to serve the “right time.” Thus, while the conditions do produce “the man,” the advent of “the man” may obviously be hastened or delayed, though in a manner or degree that is no “great pith and moment” to the process of social evolution in a given economic period, however much the latest of millions of individuals may momentarily be affected one way or the other.

By Arnold Peterson

Erripuit caelo fulmen, spectroque tyrannis.

(“He snatched the thunderbolt from heaven, the scepter from tyrants.”)

I. Here are those two and three hundred years ago. Turgot.

“...the whole of British North America; when no printery was found two and three hundred years ago. Franklin begins at a time when Queen Anne still thought as well as action. As the historian Thwaites has put it: “This incident is valuable as showing the utter simplicity [!] of life in the colonial seaport, where books and men who read them were so limited—two years of study of reading, writing, and limited—two years of study of reading, writing, and limited savings. Again, when

of the attendant circumstances, and both respond precisely in the degree, and largely in the manner, that circumstances are compelling.

When...we say that a great man symbolized and logically expressed and fully served his age, we do no more than express the thought that a certain material and economic stage had been reached which brought with it a train of superstructural problems which, with the basic economic problems, demanded solution—a stage to which there had to be brought a bear a process of rationalization requiring an intellect of a certain propriety—an intellect of high order endowed with faculties so all-embracing that it at one and the same time summed up the present and envisioned the future—the future, that is, in logical sequence to the present. That this intellect happened to be this particular human being was, of course, more or less an accident. For had the particular individual not responded, some other, equally great, intellect would have appeared—then, or perhaps a little later, but surely within the period calling for the “right man” to serve the “right time.” Thus, while the conditions do produce “the man,” the advent of “the man” may obviously be hastened or delayed, though in a manner or degree that is no “great pith and moment” to the process of social evolution in a given economic period, however much the latest of millions of individuals may momentarily be affected one way or the other.

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(“He snatched the thunderbolt from heaven, the scepter from tyrants.”)

I. Here are those two and three hundred years ago. Turgot.

“...the whole of British North America; when no printery was found two and three hundred years ago. Franklin begins at a time when Queen Anne still thought as well as action. As the historian Thwaites has put it: “This incident is valuable as showing the utter simplicity [!] of life in the colonial seaport, where books and men who read them were so limited—two years of study of reading, writing, and limited savings. Again, when

of the attendant circumstances, and both respond precisely in the degree, and largely in the manner, that circumstances are compelling.

When...we say that a great man symbolized and logically expressed and fully served his age, we do no more than express the thought that a certain material and economic stage had been reached which brought with it a train of superstructural problems which, with the basic economic problems, demanded solution—a stage to which there had to be brought a bear a process of rationalization requiring an intellect of a certain propriety—an intellect of high order endowed with faculties so all-embracing that it at one and the same time summed up the present and envisioned the future—the future, that is, in logical sequence to the present. That this intellect happened to be this particular human being was, of course, more or less an accident. For had the particular individual not responded, some other, equally great, intellect would have appeared—then, or perhaps a little later, but surely within the period calling for the “right man” to serve the “right time.” Thus, while the conditions do produce “the man,” the advent of “the man” may obviously be hastened or delayed, though in a manner or degree that is no “great pith and moment” to the process of social evolution in a given economic period, however much the latest of millions of individuals may momentarily be affected one way or the other.

By Arnold Peterson

Erripuit caelo fulmen, spectroque tyrannis.

(“He snatched the thunderbolt from heaven, the scepter from tyrants.”)
Franklin preached moderation in eating and drinking, or morality, such as was prevalent at his time, or when he stressed the supposed value of continence, etc., he was far from lending his time, or when he stressed the supposed value of continence, etc., he was far from lending.

The People 7
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2006

As might naturally be expected, Franklin was an ardent opponent of slavery. His enlightened mind revolved against the concept and practice of human slavery, but he also argued against it as disadvantageous, as uneconomic. The first anti-slavery society was established in 1775. It did not thrive, but when it was revived in 1787 Franklin was the president. He was one of the signers of a memorial to General Gage petitioning for the abolition of slavery, but the petitioners, in true style, "passed the buck," invoking the already hoary excuse of states’ rights. This so outraged Franklin that he published a sup- plement to the Virginia laws for the abolition of slavery in Algeria in 1687, where "good Christians" had been captured by the pirates and sold into slavery. The satirical hoax goes on to relate how one Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim, a member of the "Divan" (diet—i.e., Algerian legislature), reported on a petition to free the Christian slaves, with the result that the following resolution was adopted by the "Divan":

RATIVATION OF THE RICHEST ROUGES

Franklin was no Cincinnatus indeed, no Yahoo!...Franklin was no Cincinnatus...

...[Money] is a medium of exchange; and what ever else. Suppose one man employed to carry on trade. More than this sum can be productive of no real use. Less than this quantity is always productive of serious evils.

...[Money] is a medium of exchange; and what ever else. Suppose one man employed to carry on trade. More than this sum can be

**For more on this subject see "Franklin on the Richest Rouges" in another column.—Ed.**

As might naturally be expected, Franklin was an ardent opponent of slavery. His enlightened

**For more on this subject see "Franklin on the Richest Rouges" in another column.—Ed.**

Franklin was no Cincinnatus...
Franklin on the ‘ Richest Rogues’

(Weekly People, Jan. 21, 1956)

Of Benjamin Franklin, Maj. William Pieries of Georgia, wrote in his ‘Notes’ on the Constitutional Convention of 1787: “Dr. Franklin is well known to be the greatest philosopher of the present age—all the operations of nature he seems to understand,—the very heavens obey him, and the Clouds yield up their Lightning to be imprisoned in his rod. But what claim he has to the politician, posterity must determine. It is certain that he does not shine much in public Council,—he is no Speaker, nor does he seem to let politics engage his attention. He is, however, a most extraordinary Man, and tells a story in a style more engaging than anything I ever heard. Let his Biographer finish his character. He is 82 years old, and possesses an activity of mind equal to a youth of 25 years of age.”

Yet the far more comprehensive notes of James Madison revealed that Franklin played a most significant part in the convention, entering several debates and expressing reasoned views. On two or three occasions, instead of speaking on the subject debated, he submitted a paper that another read. Throughout he showed concern that those without property (they were a small minority then) should be protected against the ambitions and aspirations of wealth. Thus, while the subject of property qualifications for voting was being debated, Madison entered this note: “Dr. Franklin expressed his dislike of everything that tended to debase the spirit of the common people. If honesty was often the companion of wealth, and if poverty was exposed to peculiar temptation, it was not less true that the possession of property increased the desire of more property. Some of the greatest rogues he was ever acquainted with were the richest rogues.”

Franklin had long been perturbed by the tendency of wealth to accumulate. He was, of course, a product of his age and therefore his thinking was hemmed in by its material possibilities. But that he grasped the implications of this tendency is shown by the following: “Better days may come when, the true principles of the happiness of nations being better understood, there will be some sovereign sufficiently enlightened to put them in operation, that the causes, which tend continually to accumulate and concentrate property and wealth in a few hands may be diminished.”

Today the true principles of the happiness of nations are understood. And understood also are the means, not to diminish the concentration of economic power in private hands, but to terminate this power and render free those who now wear the yoke of servitude. But no ‘sovereign’ (ruler) will do this. It will be the work of the working classes, the propertyless who now compose the overwhelming majority. What more fitting salute to Benjamin Franklin, the man of revolution and initiator of change, than to help this work—the historic task of our generation—along.

...No Ordinary Bourgeois

(Continued from page 7)

...restraint—fond of good living...witty companions and learned fellow-savants. He was, in short, a strange combination of diverse personalities, as for instance, of an Icarus, a Plato, a Falstaff. But, unlike Icarus, his wings of invention were not melted by flying too close to the sun, though a teacher and a scholar, he was not a didactic Plato; and though he lived his life richly, fully and with gusto, he escaped the grossness of Falstaff. It is perhaps as much for his purely human, lovable qualities, his essentially (and pardonable) human weaknesses, as for his great contributions to human thought and social progress, that we love him. Though born into a primitive society, essentially a parochial society, he was anything but primitive or parochial. His was a universal, all-embracing mind. Daniel DeLeon hails him as being the first to suggest the international brotherhood of man when he (Franklin) suggested that the field of stars on the American flag would eventually be widened to make room for many more stars, these to represent all the people and races on earth. Of all the great Americans he is peculiarly of the people—even more so than Lincoln—because he is elemental, of the earth earthy, and we understand him and love him in the same sense that we love the wind, the rain, and the earth, and all things sweet and natural; all that is fruitful and truly great and imperishable! He represents true progress, human spirit, it is the Franklins who rule, while the petty kinglets grovel in the dust!

‘When monarchs tumble to the ground Successors easily are found; But, matchless Franklin! What a few Can hope to rival such as you, Who seized from kings their sceptered pride, And turned the lightning’s darts aside!’

—Philip Freneau

T his is my contribution of $_______ for The People’s Press Security Fund, which will help support the SLP’s official journal. (Please make checks/money orders payable to the Socialist Labor Party or The People and mail to P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218.)

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of the feudal system that occurred at the same time, by the disbanding of the retainers of the feudal lords, the eviction of the peasants from their homesteads, etc. The separation was made complete between the means of production and the people. The capitalist appropriation manifested itself as the contradiction between socialized production and bourgeoisie—

that becomes an antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie.

Not all of China’s uprooted millions have been able to abandon the countryside and move to its already overcrowded cities. China’s headlong rush away from its supposed communism toward full-fledged and bona fide capitalism has acted as a magnet to draw farmers and peasants to the cities where they hope to find decent jobs and lift themselves out of poverty.

Many have been disappointed, of course, not only because the number of people pressing into China’s urban centers far exceeds the number of jobs available, but because the flood has expanded the pool of available labor, increased the competition for work and enabled China’s “entrepreneurs” to hold wages down.

Whether driven on the land and forcibly evicted from their homes, or simply drawn to China’s burgeoning industrial centers to better their lives, one thing is certain: the revolutionary changes transforming China’s economy have also brought a revolutionary transformation of China’s social structure. China has today what it did not have in 1949 when the “Communist Party” came to power, and what it could not have in 1949 because China has today—or will have before many more years pass by—is the industrial foundation and the industrial working class needed to build socialism. With that comes the modern class struggle already emerged, the working class, on the one side, and the capital class and its champions in power, the Chinese “Communist Party.”

China, of course, is on the verge of evicting millions of people from their homes, against their will, and in violation of the sanctity of housing. COHRE is particularly concerned about the forced evictions of at least 400,000 people carried out in Beijing in connection with the upcoming 2008 Summer Olympic Games—a figure to which the Beijing Municipal State Land Administration itself admits. Removing people from their homes against their will is not only a human rights violation, but contrary to the ‘Olympic Spirit’ as well.

Whatever the violence to the “Olympic spirit,” China’s actions are in perfect harmony with the “spirit” of capitalism. Indeed, what is happening in China today bears an uncanny resemblance to what happened in Europe a few hundred years ago in the wake of a technological revolution that cleared the way for capitalism to uproot the old system of feudalism. Engels summed up that revolutionary transformation in the same work in which he identified the sanctity of the home as the “basis of all personal freedom.”

Hand-held tools and individual production were the foundation of the feudal economy. Engels observed, and continued:

“But all this changed as soon as the means of production became socialized and concentrated in the hands of capitalists. The means of production, as well as the product, of the individual producer, became more and more worthless; there was nothing left for him but to turn wage-

worker under the capitalist. Wage-Labor, aforetime the exception and accession, now became the rule and basis of all production; of the economy, as of the government, heretofore an auxiliary, it is now the basis of all production; the place of the baker in the ancient Greek city, where he served his customers with bread, is now occupied by the modern working class, who produce bread for the owners of the means of production.”

Frederick Engels

Those Three Little Words

By Michael James

Driven anywhere lately? Been stuck in traffic? Who hasn’t? The only thing worse than gridlock is being forced to stare at one of those “Support Our Troops” yellow ribbons attached to the back of the car or truck in front of you. It is bumper-sticker brainwashing. Those three little words deserve critical analysis.

First, the term “our” is so misleading. The troops do not serve the working class. They are in the service of the capitalist ruling class, which, unlike the U.S. working class, always acts in its own interests. Marx said this bourgeois class is always “squeezing in practical wars the peoples blood and treasure.” In other words, corporate and governmental leaders, the pirates of capitalism, routinely send working-class soldiers to their deaths as part of conducting business.

The term “support” is an invitation to close your eyes and let the military officiais and their ilk, the warmongers, put your children in harm’s way.

The term “for” signifies nothing more than the support of the capitalists, who orchestrate the mutilation and murder of working-class soldiers.

The ruling class is predatory, not unlike sexual predators, preying upon the minds and bodies of working-class youth. If you think this is an extreme accusation, pause and consider the seductive, manipulative and aggressive tactics of the U.S. military.

Socialism: Utopian & Scientific

Traces the development of socialism from a movement of “social uplift” to one in which the workers self-consciously struggle to free themselves by changing the social structure. Central to its analysis is the development of the socialist concept, including Engels’ introduction to the 1892 edition and the essay “The Marx International in History.”

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For example: the federal government strengthens high schools with the “No Child Left Behind Act” into giving recruiters access to student phone numbers and addresses or facing loss of federal monies. Recruiters are stalkers, waving the flag while searching for young flesh. “Support Our Troops” signifies complicity with U.S. military and a policy of pouring a billion dollars per day into the quagmire of Iraq, a quagmire from which the U.S. has no intention of pulling its military. Those who believe “Support Our Troops” is an expression of good citizenship are blind to the interests of their class, their country and the soldiers themselves. Good citizens, on the other hand, know that capitalism must be abolished because it always means war. Good citizens understand the need for resistance and revolution. In addition, good citizens know the beauty of another set of three little words: “Peace Through Socialism.”
... War and Spying

(Continued from page 199)

them, and hence, his real motive for starting the war. He seemed to step down from the arrogant self-assurance that has characterized all his ear-
lier pronouncements on the war, and took refuge behind what may be the most brazen attempt at deception in history. He seemed to have performed from behind a mask of seeming con-
trition, in contrast to the self-assured and arro-
gant posturing that had become all too familiar since the 2001-2003 period, when he had or-
dered the assault on Iraq to begin. The new posturing was accompanied by a new script built on the theme that “mistakes” had been made, that there had been a breakdown in the gathering of the evidence that had been used to justify an attack that presumably based their decision to start hostilities.

Somehow, however, the war “has” to continue regardless of past mistakes. Somehow, it is still the right thing to do, even though the justifica-
tion for it was wrong. Somehow, the American working class must accept that the war has mysteriously turned righteous because its aims are righteous, or so he would have American workers believe.

Yet, to reach that point in his speeches Mr. Bush and his speech writers could not quite make a clean break with the old falsehoods and half-truths. By the time he delivered his fifth and concluding speech from the Oval Office on Dec. 18, he had substantially reiter-
at all the old hash:

The invasion of Iraq was a justified response to the thuggery of Iran, as though Iraq was re-
sponsible or had had a hand in the events of that day.

Bush, his aids and other governments thought Iraq had those elusive weapons of mass destruction that some Americans thought, as though United Nations inspectors had not determined that no such weapons existed before the invasion began.

That there were “mistakes” to start, they are to be “learned” and so not concern the American people because they thrived to insig-

... Campaign Against Evolution

(Continued from page 1)

The old definition of science used in Kansas reads in part, “Science is the human activity of seeking natural explanations for what we observe in the world around us.” The board is replacing that with one that calls science “a sys-
tematic method of obtaining information that uses observation, hypothesis testing, measure-
ment, experimentation, logical argument and theory building to lead to more adequate expla-
nations of natural phenomena.” As a physics pro-
fessor at the University of Kansas notes, “The old definition of science used in Kansas re-
educed teaching of ID while the trial was

already under way. The trial started in late September and ended on Nov. 5 after prolonged testimony. The judge in the case was expected to rule in late December or early January. And regardless of the out-
come, appeals are expected, maybe going as high as the Supreme Court.

Fortunately for Dover, however, the outcome of the case will be moot. On Nov. 9 voters in Dover ousted the pro-ID board, removing eight of the nine members and electing a board com-
mited to teaching evolution.

The outcome of a similar trial, in Georgia, sug-
gests the path of appeals that may apply. In a Georgia county, the school board had required that biology texts that reject evolution have a sticker affixed that warned the students, “This textbook contains material on evolution. Evolution is a theory, not a fact, regarding the origin of living things.” A group of parents, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union, sued to have them removed on the grounds that the sticker expressed religious, not scientif-
ic, beliefs. A federal district judge agreed and ordered the stickers removed. Now before the Georgia Supreme Court, the outcome is in doubt, with one of the judges on the three-judge panel expressing his doubts about evolution as follows: “From mantle to life is the greatest gap in the fossil record. There is less evi-
dence supporting it than there is for other theo-
ries.” The judge’s ignorance and evident religious bias shows the danger of the courts’ deciding what is and isn’t science.

The courts are not the only place that the threat to science appears. George W. Bush endorsed teaching of ID while the trial was

... Wal-Mart

(Continued from page 198)

ability for workers to begin to solve all the social, economic and environmental nightmares in which capitalism has suffocated the world. The task is the building of a movement to organize the workers along industrial lines to assume col-
lective ownership of the machines of social pro-
duction which they and their ancestors have built, and to establish democratic control of the whole economy by the producers themselves.

Only such a social reconstruction of society holds any potential to solve such problems—
because only it would provide the clear and con-
crete interest in solving those problems in direct and cooperative control of the social resources needed to accomplish their solution.

... Movie

(Continued from page 198)

The film fails precisely because successfully fighting to keep Wal-Mart out of your own back-
yard is hardly a success. It leaves audiences with the impression that “victory” in the struggle against the likes of Wal-Mart can come simply by making sure the company builds in someone else’s backyard.

Vigilant against rapacious companies such as Wal-Mart and the rapacious socioeconomic sys-
tem they spring from—capitalism—will begin to be forged when the workers become tired of their suppression and combine their efforts.

In socialist Wal-Mart’s facilities will become democratically controlled facilities from which socially produced goods may be equitably distributed to those who do the work—with pro-
vision for workers to be the expropriators of the bourgeoisie who own Wal-Mart, and they will exist within the context of a collectively owned economy that will free us all from the eco-
mocratic dictatorship of the capitalist class under which we presently live—the very system which reverses Wal-Mart’s examples of “success.”

—K.B.
... Toxic Cloud Released

(Continued from page 3)

cery store parking lot just east of the plant. The
midday incident sent some people fleeing, it
said, but it described others as onlookers.

As firefighters in yellow protective suits and
breathing apparatus心跳ensured that the build-
ing, a Davenport fire captain said: “Products
were mixed together that should not have
been mixed together.” He also said it was “safe
down there.” However, he did not explain why,
it was safe, firefighters needed protective suits
and breathing apparatus.

The plant makes industrial cleaners in a for-
er potato chip factory. Within a few blocks are
homes, school, grocery stores, food-processing
plants, heavy industries and shops. One stu-
dent who lives nearby said the smoke smelled
like sulfur. Others said it smelled like iodine
and that the smoke only went up high and came
back down.

The business owner reported that he was not
sure what happened during the blending of
about 300 gallons of several acids. The chemicals
were being mixed for the first time for a cus-
tomer that supplied the formula, but the formula
just had to be saved for use as a metal
brightener. The unexpected violent reaction pro-
duced the cloud of what was thought to be nitric
acid. The owner said that all the employees got
out of the building just fine and without any
injuries. Referring to what he thought to be the
nitric acid vapor, he said that “it’s certainly noth-
ing you want to be around very long” but that he
didn’t “think there’s anything dangerous.” He
also wasn’t sure how the building or any residue
would be cleaned, and that his “guess” is that “it
just needs to be hosed down.”

Perhaps the “invisible hand” of the capitalist
market will clean it up for him. That is what
the invisible hand does. It always protects indus-
try and protects us. Well, the “invisible
hand” made a very visible chemical cloud in
Davenport.

While politicians and capitalist media distrac-
t generalized discussions with debates about such things as the
word “God” in the Pledge of Allegiance, people all
over the earth try to run away from capitalism’s
disasters. The senseless and reckless location of
dangerous chemical plants near residential
neighborhoods, combined with careless exper-
imentation of volatile chemical mixtures, forced
people to flee in Davenport. It was not long ago
when several thousand people died in Bhopal,
India, when another of capitalism’s chemical
plants went “away.”

Yet, the capitalist news media, in its service
to their masters, still attempt to make people believe
that the chemicals themselves went “away.”

... of that society whenever its necessities shall require it,
even to its last farthing: its contributions, there-
to, to the public exigencies are... the return of an
capitalist in the world will perhaps receive from his
contributions to the basic economic doctrines of socialism.

Whether it does or not, the economic and socio-
logical contributions of Franklin to the worlds
progress will add to his stature and raise him above
the bourgeoisie he so well served.

All honor to Benjamin Franklin, genius of his
age, and, like all genius, in advance of it!

... De Leon

De Leon makes clear why re form may be logical
at one stage of social development, while at anoth-
er it may be the worst of criminal nonsense.

Reform or Revolution
An address by Daniel De Leon

De Leon makes clear why reform may be logical at
an earlier stage of social development, while at another
it may be the worst of criminal nonsense.

(Oct. 15-Dec. 16)

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Prisoner Subscription Fund
Emily C. Cohen $15; $5 each Joe Randel, Donald F. Cudderee Sr.
Total: $25.00

SLP Leaflet Fund
Chris Dobreff $200; Michael Preston $100; Alex Iwasa $50; Ali Ebrahim $43; $30 each Michael Wenskunas, Mike K. Bagnic, Mary J. & John Brias $25; James F. Cline $15; Sid Rasmussen $12; $25 each
James Dobreff $60; $50 each John S. Gale, Daniel Kryk, Reagan B. Ellingson; $10 each Bill Cudderee; $100 each
Robert Ormsby, Ross Schelin; R.C. Maddox; $25 each
Emilya C. Cohen $15; $5 each Joe Randell, Donald F. Cudderee Sr.
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Total: $3,051.00

Socialist Labor Party

Financial Summary
Bank balance (Sept. 30) $171,638.58
Expenses (Oct.–Nov.) 24,281.06
Income (Oct.–Nov.) 7,363.35
Bank balance (Nov. 30) $154,718.87
Deficit for 2005 $ 58,395.19
Scientists Alarmed by Shrinking Arctic Ice Cap

By B.B.

A recent series of articles in The New York Times links socially induced global warming to a dramatic decline in the average size of the Arctic ice cap over the last 25 years. Most scientific observers believe that these changes will have a serious effect on the earth in the not-too-distant future. Some predict summers without any ice cap at all within the next 100 years. Yet, while scientists are alarmed, many capitalists and their governments see nothing in the receding ice cap but new opportunities for making money.

Polar Meltdown

With the aid of satellite photography, scientists have learned that the Arctic ice cap expands less in winter and shrinks more in summer with each passing year. Between its summer contractions and its winter expansions, the Arctic ice cap has covered an average minimum of 2.69 million square miles since 1979. According to scientists interviewed by the Times, however, last year “was the fourth in a row with the ice cap areas sharply below the long-term average.” (Sept. 12)

The Times cited Mark C. Serreze as its source for this information. Serreze is a scientist with the Snow and Ice Center at Boulder, Colo. The center compiles its data on the ice cap in collaboration with NASA. Ted A. Scambos is another scientist with the Snow and Ice Center. He told the Times that the effects of the changes observed over the last 25 years in the Arctic winter will be enduring ones. “Feedbacks in the system are starting to take hold,” and that makes “it pretty certain that a long-term decline is under way,” he said.

What he meant by “feedbacks” is that cause and effect are starting to intermix. As greenhouse gases cause the earth to heat up by trapping more of the sun’s heat in the earth’s atmosphere, they prevent the ice cap from expanding as much in winter as it did before those gases came along. With less ice to reflect the sun’s heat back into space, and more exposed water to absorb it, the surface of the earth heats up. The heat that the exposed water retains compounds the effect of the greenhouse gases and accelerates the global warming process.

Global warming caused by capitalist industrial practices affects others besides the working class. The melting Arctic has raised protests and confusion among such indigenous peoples as the Inuit, Yukt and Sami in the Arctic region. They depend upon eking out a living from the frozen north. For example, changes in the weather patterns have affected the reindeer’s ability to forage for food, reducing their numbers. This, in turn, has adversely affected the Sami people, who have traditionally maintained large herds of the animals. Other traditional livelihoods—trapping and fishing—also have suffered from warmer Arctic weather. In addition, many native peoples have lost their homes and villages as warmer weather melts the permafrost, collapsing coastlines and allowing the sea to engulf the land upon which they once lived.

Conflicting Territorial Claims

Several other capitalist nations around the Arctic Circle are weighing in for a piece of the action that only portends future conflict, destruction and war. The United States, Russia, Canada, and Denmark are being drawn into a North Pole version of the “great game.”

In Russia, for example, last time in sending a ship to the North Pole to lay claim to half the Arctic. The ship reached the pole on Aug. 29 without the help of an icebreaker, a first. This follows an old claim by Stalin that Russian territory stretched from Murmansk to the pole to the Chukchi Sea, which did not raise an eyebrow when the former Soviet dictator laid claim to that vast territory more than half a century ago. Now that the “land grab” is in full swing, Canada, the United States, Russia and Denmark are considering their options, with Norway emerging as a major contender to Russian claims in the Barents Sea.

Additional antagonisms have emerged with claims between the United States and Canada, and between Canada and Denmark. Bill Graham, Canada’s defense minister, while beefing up the Canadian military in the region, made a visit to Hans Island, a two-mile stone outcropping disputed with Denmark. For its part, Denmark wants to claim the thousand-mile undersea ridge known as the Lomonosov Ridge. If the ridge is geologically linked to Greenland, a Danish possession, it would give Denmark a claim to the North Pole.

Canada’s claim over portions of the Beaufort Sea has led to protests over unannounced visits by U.S. naval vessels into disputed waters. Indeed, the United States is entertaining a claim of Arctic seabed larger than California, which has stoked the Pentagon’s appetite for the appropriate military and naval equipment to enforce any potential claim.

Global warming and its effects prove that capitalism is an insane and suicidal social system. Global warming, and the consequent destruction of the Arctic, can only be arrested and reversed by an organized effort of the majority working class, based in a democratic integral industrial union prepared to take, hold and operate the industrial apparatus of society.

Receding Polar Region Affects Native Peoples

Reindeer Habitat, Herds Shrinking

Global warming, however, has been less than a childhood dream for the people of the Arctic. The melting of the Arctic has raised protests and confusion among such indigenous peoples as the Inuit, Yukt and Sami in the Arctic region. They depend upon eking out a living from the frozen north. For example, changes in the weather patterns have affected the reindeer’s ability to forage for food, reducing their numbers. This, in turn, has adversely affected the Sami people, who have traditionally maintained large herds of the animals. Other traditional livelihoods—trapping and fishing—also have suffered from warmer Arctic weather. In addition, many native peoples have lost their homes and villages as warmer weather melts the permafrost, collapsing coastlines and allowing the sea to engulf the land upon which they once lived.

---D.G.B.