Kaiser ‘Discovers’ Effects of Caps On Prescriptions

By Donna Bills

Kaiser Permanente, a “not for profit” health care organization, required a study to learn what many working people already knew—that if sick people can’t afford their prescriptions, their health will suffer.

According to the San Jose Mercury News (June 1), Kaiser’s study, which investigated the impact of spending caps for prescription drugs, focused on 200,000 Northern California members enrolled in its Medicare+Choice coverage in 2003. Four-fifths of those enrolled in the plan had spending caps of $1,000 for prescription drugs. In other words, when drug costs exceeded that amount the individual members would have to pay for their drugs in full and out of pocket. Not surprisingly, many sick, retired workers were compelled to skip their medications after their drug costs topped the limit.

Those older workers suffering from serious chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and heart conditions, fared the worse. Their worsened health forced them to visit emergency rooms more often, become hospitalized or even to die. Commenting on the patients’ worsened blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, Dr. John Hsu, one of the Kaiser researchers, remarked: “It was surprising!”

What was it precisely that caused Dr. Hsu’s surprise? The Mercury News report on his study did not say. Was it that medications meant to control or prevent illness do not work when not taken? Surely, that could not be it. Was it that by pushing the cost of such medications out of the reach of those who need them Kaiser made it impossible for those in need to get them? That seems too silly even to consider.

Although the Mercury News did not explain Dr. Hsu’s surprise, the source of it is clear. Prescription drug spending caps are intended to steer “spend happy” sick work-clear. Prescription drug spending caps are explain Dr. Hsu’s surprise, the source of it is too silly even to consider.

Mr. Bush issued another warning to Iran in a speech on June 19 as he prepared to leave for Europe, but it was not of a bellicose nature. “Iran’s leaders have a clear choice,” he said, then added: “If Iran’s leaders reject our offer, it will result in action before the [UN] Security Council, further isolation from the world and progressively stronger political and economic sanctions.”

The U.S. has prohibited all trade with Iran for years, but Iran can hardly be described as “isolated from the world.” According to the Hindustan Times of May 24, for example, “Iran is the world’s fourth biggest oil exporter....”

“Iran exports about 2.7 million barrels of oil a day,” it added, “with most of that crude going to Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan and Europe.”

Three years ago, Iran announced the discovery of three new oil fields near the Persian Gulf port of Bushehr (of all places), which also happens to be the location of its principal nuclear research projects. The three new fields have been estimated to hold enough to increase Iran’s proven reserves from 90 billion to 133.3 billion barrels and to elevate it from fifth to third position on the list of oil-rich countries behind Saudi Arabia and Canada.

Despite its being the world’s fourth largest exporter of oil and natural gas, however, Iran is (Continued on page 6)

Halliburton Selected to Build ‘Detention Camps’

By Ken Boettcher

An interesting item that escaped our scrutiny earlier this year turned up in our research for other articles in this issue.

In January the Bush administration’s Homeland Security Department awarded an open-ended contract worth at least $385 million to a division of Halliburton, the company Vice President Dick Cheney formerly ran. It is a repeat of a similar contract awarded to the company for 2000–2005.

In a Jan. 24 press release, Halliburton announced that “The contract, which is effective immediately, provides for establishing temporary detention and processing capabilities to augment existing Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detention and Removal Operations Program facilities in the event of an emergency influx of immigrants into the United States, or to support the rapid development of new programs” (emphasis added).

A U.S. Immigration and Customs official told the San Bernardino Sun: “If, for example, there were some sort of upheaval in another country that would cause mass migration, that’s the type of situation that this contract would address.”

It would also address a “need” seen by then Attorney General John Ashcroft in a plan he announced in 2002. The plan went nowhere at the time, but may now be back in different clothing to haunt us. That plan would have allowed Ashcroft or a “high-level committee,” according to an article in the Los Angeles Times, “to order the indefinite incarceration of U.S. citizens and summarily strip them of their constitutional rights and access to the courts by declaring them enemy combatants.”

Whether or not they are based on Ashcroft’s nightmarish vision or some “kinder, gentler”
As one scientific study after another demonstrates, the reality of the phenomenon of global warming is established without any doubt. Yet U.S. capitalism, as currently represented by the Bush administration with their tagalog Democrat, still resists taking any action to reverse or even mitigate warming and its predicted catastrophic effects on world climates. Indeed, it pretends that global warming does not exist or is unproven. Their Orwellian newspeak term for it, “climate change,” implies only that perhaps it should be studied.

“As Inconvenient Truth” is a film version of a slide show that Al Gore has been presenting at colleges and other venues for the last several years. It is his attempt first to establish the reality of global warming and its implications for civilization, and second to mobilize action to deal with it. It succeeds at the former but, succumbing to capitalist realities, drastically misses the mark in providing solutions.

The film is thorough in demonstrating the existence of global warming and demonstrating its devastating consequences for life on this planet if it goes unchecked. With charts and graphs, a rather professorial Al Gore demonstrates the correlation between increased levels of carbon dioxide produced by burning fossil fuels and the increases in average temperatures over recent decades. He shows in graphic and photographic detail the dramatic effects of global warming in the Arctic and Antarctic regions, the accelerated loss of the polar ice in recent years and the reduction through which the ice caps are shrinking. Spectacular photos show the virtual disappearance of glaciers throughout the world. Likewise, diagrams show how melting ice caps reflect a larger proportion of the sun’s energy and accelerates the warming effect as more of the sun’s energy is absorbed.

Predictions of effects include: increases in number and intensity of tropical storms as water temperature rises; drastic climatic effects in Europe and around the world. Likewise, diagrams show how melting ice caps reflect a larger proportion of the sun’s energy and accelerates the warming effect as more of the sun’s energy is absorbed.

In this film Gore seems to deal with global warming on a moral and personal level rather than as a political issue. The personal analogy he presents is his sister’s death from lung cancer and the family farm dropping tobacco as a crop: you see that you are doing something harmful and you stop it. At the end of the film there are nice little suggestions to people to become more involved with the issue, conserve energy, etc. But this is an issue that is already more advanced technologies that reduce carbon dioxide or to develop renewable energy sources for solving this problem. It is the reality of the phenomenon of global warming that is at stake. To move to more advanced technologies that reduce carbon dioxide or to develop renewable energy sources such as solar or wind energy will require major capital investments. These would be the way to avert the expense of the easy profits they now gather from their control over natural resources and conventional energy sources. And they have Democrats as well as Republicans in their pockets and protecting their interests. The chance that the problem will be solved within Mr. Gore's 10-year window is highly unlikely.

Do you know what the SLP stands for? Do you understand the class struggle and why the SLP calls for an end to capitalism and of this system of wage labor? Do you understand why the SLP does not advocate reforms of capitalism, and why it calls upon workers to organize Socialist Industrial Unions?

If you have been reading The People stubbornly for a year or more, you have probably qualified for membership in the SLP. And if you qualify to be a member you probably should be a member.

Dear Socialist Labor Party:

I am a prisoner within the Texas prison industrial complex and also a new Socialist, still learning the philosophy. I am interested in receiving a gratis subscription—if available—to The People, and also any publication you may have that would clarify for me the various “factions” of socialism in the United States.

Thank you in advance for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Abby Clifton

Thanks to the generosity of our subscribers, we had the funds to enter a subscription for Mr. Clifton and to send him the other information he requested. Similar requests from indigent prisoners are received regular-ly. You can help them out by sending a $5 contribution to our Prisoner Subscription Fund, Send to The Peo- ples Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218.

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New Orleans Reconstruction Insures Future Devastation

By B.B.

T he reconstruction of hurricane-devastated New Orleans is proceeding favorably to the interests of the capitalist class, while workers who may yet return to the city face a hazardous future.

Capitalists fear, delays and massive costs that would accompany proper reconstruction, have opted for absurd redevelopment plans. The Army Corps of Engineers “that much of New Orleans labor market, and since, in the final analysis, capitalists pay the taxes, why not do it as cheaply as possible?”

“Making up science” is pervasive under capitalism, and apparently a popular pastime for Louisiana politicians and bureaucrats. The pressure exerted upon FEMA by those anxious to get something done is evident from the connection some wealthy New Orleans gentrify with the White House. One resident was jubilant over FEMA’s decision, stating, “FEMA has agreed Katrina was only a one-time event, and flood insurance won’t be based on catastrophic events but on common sense,” which we all know nature takes into account now and then. The drive to rebuild “on the cheap” impelled by capitalist motivations is in turn linked to what might be termed the “voodoo” engineering of the levees and flood controls.

This fact emerged by way of an admission by the Army Corps of Engineers “that much of New Orleans’ levee system had long been flawed” (New York Times, April 13) and not overcome by natural forces that were beyond the design capacity of construction. Li. Gen. Carl Strock, the Corps’ chief engineer, noted, “We must assume because the foundations of these levees are pretty much the same through the system” the problem is endemic. So the Corps is patching things up, not to withstand another Katrina but only to resist “catastrophic flooding” as a result of a breach in the flood control elements. This is small comfort for residents who are undertaking reconstruction. Experts such as the American Society of Civil Engineers and Professor G. Bea and Jean-Louis Briaud, professors from the University of California, Berkeley and Texas A&M University, engineering and soil experts, respectively, have been very critical of the Corps’ reconstruction efforts. Prof. Bea has stated the soil being used to reconstruct levees “is no better than it was before,” and that during his visit to the levees no clay was being added to the sandy soil. Prof. Bri- au found the erodability of the soil being used was at level 1 on a scale of 1 to 5. Speaking of which, what kind of temporary housing are people living in while they either rebuild or reside in this hurricane-prone area? FEMA to the front of the class! Yes, good old reliable FEMA has sold temporary housing with “nearly 90,000 lightweight trailers in an area prone to flooding and hurricanes.” (New York Times, March 16)

The fact is the temporary units, which number 87,100, are aluminum boxes on wheels and are set atop concrete blocks and anchored with steel straps solely because the foundational materials were engineered to be marginally better than a tent or emergency shelters but not as strong as mobile homes. FEMA set a threshold of winds not exceeding 75 mph. Beyond that limit calls for evacuation.

Such structures clearly are a hazard in high winds and rising waters. The metal components can break apart and become missiles during intense windstorms. One Gulf Coast resident abandoned his trailer for his pickup truck after he “saw sheet metal, trash, wood planks and even the carpet from a nearby house flying during a recent storm.” “I ain’t taking no chances,” he declared. “I don’t feel safe in it.” (New York Times, March 16)

New Orleans police reported at least one FEMA trailer was ripped from its anchor when a tornado came through, and in Pensacola, Fla., trailers were damaged or overturned in 2004 after Hurricane Ivan swept across the coast. “The trailers Corp. has not safe to stay in, in the event of severe weather,” said Ashley Roth of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency.

New Orleans is proceeding favorably to the interests of the capitalist class, while workers who may yet return to the city face a hazardous future.

Upon hearing about the FEMA guidelines he derisively exclaimed:

“Three feet—where did that come from? Why are we building up three feet when the water was up over the roof? What’s that three feet going to do? Instead of coming up with real science, they’re making it up, which means people are going to be at risk, they’re going to die again and taxpayers are subsidizing unwise construc- tion with very cheap insurance.”

The housing question thereby is “solved” and the reconstruction of hurricane-devastated New Orleans is proceeding favorably to the interests of the capitalist class, while workers who may yet return to the city face a hazardous future.

B.B. for The Peoples

New York Times, May 8)

Typically, clay liners are required for landfills but not for hazardous temporary housing. Workers are allowed to live or work in these units close to one another to create a closed environment for the disposal of toxic ingredients. Workers are required to work in these units close to one another to create a closed environment for the disposal of toxic ingredients. Workers are required to work in these units close to one another to create a closed environment for the disposal of toxic ingredients.

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It has been called a “Constitution Kerfuffle.” The first-ever execution of a search warrant in Congress ruffled the feathers of some representatives, but the cackling subsided almost as fast as it erupted when Justice Department agents conducted an 18-hour midnight raid on the legislative offices of Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.), who is suspected of taking kickbacks.

Initial demands by some in Congress that seized documents be returned produced speculation in the media that the legislative body was finally standing up for the Constitution’s separation of powers. But the disturbance died down quickly after President Bush ordered the seized documents locked up for a 45-day “cooling off” period.

Was the first response of Congress merely an election-year pretense by incumbents that they are not the lapdogs of the unpopular Bush presidency for the sake of their re-election and the upcoming midterm elections? The trend toward autocracy will continue as long as the system of privatization and domestic laws regarding torture and the treatment of detainees is left unchecked.

Workers cannot rely on Congress to prevent despotism. In the final analysis they cannot rely on the Constitution either, although they must rely on the Constitution to satisfy human needs, not as under capitalism, for sale and profit. Socialism means production and distribution directly accountable to the rank and file. It requires building a political party of socialism to contest the power of the capitalist class on the political field and to educate the majorities.

Socialism will be a society in which the things we need to live, work and control are owned by all the people, and in which the democratic organization of the people bears the responsibility for the management of the industries and services—collectively owned by all the people and in which the democratic organization of the people bears the responsibility for the management of the industries and services. Socialism means production to satisfy human needs, not as under capitalism, for sale and profit. Socialism means production and distribution directly accountable to the rank and file. It requires building a political party of socialism to contest the power of the capitalist class on the political field and to educate the majorities. Socialism is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, railroads, land and all other instruments of production. Socialism means production and distribution directly accountable to the rank and file. It requires building a political party of socialism to contest the power of the capitalist class on the political field and to educate the majorities.
Torture Still Promoted By Bush Administration

By Ken Boettcher

The Bush administration is still trying to build the public perception that it no longer tortures or abuses those it captures and holds without trial or representation in its so-called “war on terror.” But the facts show it to be an enemy of human rights.

That is hardly surprising from an administration that, as one recent report put it, “created its own detainee dilemma” by deciding around the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that when it came to suspected al Qaeda and Taliban militants, America no longer had to abide by its own constitutional guarantees of a public trial or by international treaties on human rights and the laws of war.

There were photos of abuses at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad. There were leaked memos that revealed an ongoing attempt by administration officials—including now Attorney General Alberto Gonzales—to redefine torture and to assert that President Bush had constitutional authority to violate the Geneva Conventions and other international treaties on torture and human rights.

There were revelations about abuses at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba. Last year there were more revelations, this time about the existence of many secret prisons operated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in nations around the world that lacked prohibitions against torture or where such atrocities could be easily covered up.

A report released in May by the U.N.’s Committee Against Torture attests to ongoing abuses by the administration. It demands the immediate closure of all secret and other prisons, and the immediate release of all those who had been arrested and imprisoned.

In June the White House released “without further delay” or tried, the Administration’s official “cozying up” to torture that should be of concern to workers? Acceptance of such brutality is a reminder of what ruling class cooperation, where military forces for almost 50 years have trained.

If torture has long been a part of U.S. governmental policy, what is there about the Bush administration’s official “coying up” to torture that should be of concern to workers? Acceptance of such brutality is a reminder of what ruling class cooperation, where military forces for almost 50 years have trained.

In a “cover your rear end” feign, CBO Alan Gotchman’s testimony on Aug. 9, 2005, that America’s national security is “inadequate” rests on his premises for nanoparticles. His actions represented a minimal outlay reduction from the surplus value he otherwise extracts from workers. Such expenses are good insurance against potential court costs brought by health-affected workers, so why not test?

Nanotechnology is another of those emerging mind-boggling developments, ironically produced entirely by the talent and ingenuity of the working class that under the present system of private ownership in the means of production and distribution brings forth countermovements to them regardless of what socially beneficial virtues it may possess. The rise of this technology provides yet another demonstration of how capitalists, impelled by the profit motive and the fear that competitors will trump them, recklessly barrel down a well-worn “premature path toward monopoly.”

The Bush administration’s new version of the Field Manual removes Article 3.

Bush claims that he won’t conduct torture, he has the authority to decide for himself whether and when to follow the ban on torture enacted by Congress last year. The planned hearing to review this viewpoint.

History shows that U.S. military forces have repeatedly violated the provisions of Article 3—in Korea, in Vietnam, in virtually all U.S. interventions in Central and South America, and most notoriously through the teaching of torture techniques at the infamous School of the Americas, now the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, where military forces for almost 50 years have trained.

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Immigration (1)

Like many other readers of The People I’m sure, I’ve been bombarded recently with mailings “pro” and “con” on the various bills pending in Congress concerning our immigration laws. So I really appreciated the article appearing in the May-June edition of The People on this topic. The capitalist press goes to great lengths to obscure the obvious: the collective labor of Hispanics should—under a sane system—make life easier for all! I have to admit that this fact was more obvious to me after I read your article than before. Thanks, The People

William Kahn
St. Petersburg, Fla.

Immigration (2)

President Bush plans to spend billions of our dollars to turn the Mexican border into a war zone, using paramilitary troops and high-tech equipment. It’s a force for peace, not war. It will as long as they tolerate the capitalist system. In exchange, Iran would receive “access to the United States and the world to ascertain the potential for international conflicts and war. In addition, and among other things, Iran would receive “support for the modernization of Iran’s telecommunications infrastructure and advanced Internet provision, including by the provision of relevant U.S. and other export restrictions”; and “support for agricultural development in Iran, including possible access to U.S. and European agricultural products, technology and farm equipment.”

As can be seen, the “incentive” package has been presented as providing certain opportunities to Iran, but the reverse side of the coin is that the same package offers considerable opportunity to U.S. and European capitalist interests. If Iran were to accept the proposal, or if the U.S. and the European countries involved were to accept the “amendments” that Iran is expected to propose to the US, Iran would have the “opportunity” to buy such things as spare parts for its aging fleet of U.S. and European manufactured aircraft. The reverse of the coin, of course, is that U.S. and European aircraft manufacturers and other capitalists would gain the opportunity to expand their markets and profit by the sales.

It is too soon to know how Iran will respond to the overtures made to it. Furthermore, it is virtually impossible for the working classes of the United States and the world to ascertain the facts in this or any other instance that holds the United States and the world to ascertain the potential for international conflicts and war. They have no voice in such decisions and never will as long as they tolerate the capitalist system, with its intrigues and manipulation to gain control over markets, sources of raw materials and strategic advantages. What workers should know by now, however, is that politicians serve the interests of the ruling classes they represent and not those of the working-class majority. As Daniel De Leon once observed: “Commercialism deals in war as it deals in potatoes, rum, bibles, etc. It matters not whether the effect of owning a navy [or a nuclear arsenal] is to render a nation readier for war, what of it? War feeds commerce, commerce feeds war, and the end of the song is larger wealth for those to luxuriate in who neither bleed on the battlefields nor swell on the industrial fields of toil.”

Adrienne Weller
Seattle, Wash.

Marx and Religion

I have to express some surprise at the article “Marx and Religion” that was taken from the Socialist Worker in your May-June issue.

Although there might not seem to be too much to take offense at in the article, it would be worth bearing in mind that the motivation for the article is undoubtedly the “Pretzkyte Socialist Workers Party’s electoral alliance with the Muslim Association of Britain in the coalition party Respect and that the purpose of the article is to put a Marxist gloss on the SWP’s political opportunism.

I wonder if many of the American readers of The People would be aware of this. Hasten the day?

Alan Johnstone
Edinburgh, Scotland

letters to the People

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Peace for Sale

By Michael James

New Age pacifists apparently believe that peace can be had by simply adopting the right consumer choices. For example, a recent issue of Utne magazine carries an ad for “Peace Cereal.” The makers hope to inspire people to embrace peace. The ad lists 10 ways to “cultivate” peace, with suggestions such as “laugh a lot.”

New Age snake oil salesman Deepak Chopra, never one to miss out on a whacky idea, has founded a group called “Alliance for a New Humanity” to make peace a “consumer trend.” He and former Coca-Cola president Jeff Dunn founded a group called “Humanity” to make peace a “consumer trend.”

For example, they avoid the need to address the illegitimacy and criminal nature of capitalism. They fail to denounce the anti-social, capital economy system that is inherently aggressive, exploitative, militarist and expansionist. They call for peace without first acknowledging that war is simply a tool of capitalism, a method of conducting business and maximizing profit. And they avoid the reality of class conflict and the necessity of class struggle.

They want peace without seeing that a nation divided by conflicting class interests, a nation with a huge gap between rich and poor, a nation that routinely denies education, housing, employment, health care and other forms of social wealth to large numbers of its citizens can never know peace. An old African proverb reveals the truth about the inequality and unrest that will always plague capitalist society: “The dry grass will set fire to the damp grass.”

Finally, Deepak, pacifists and New Agers want peace without accepting the need to remove the means of production from the control of the bourgeois, appropriating, exploiting class. They choose to pretend that capitalism can one day provide peace, justice or equality. As former slave Frederick Douglass said, such people want “crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.”

And so we are asked to believe that peace is at hand if only we buy the right breakfast cereal. Peace will come when we buy products that “kind of looks like a tree.” The goal is to inspire consumers to purchase products that somehow promote peace.

Such mindless schemes merit no attention or comment except to reveal just how far gone into ideological la-la land people can go without the insight and clarity provided by Marxism. The striking feature of such doomed efforts is their avoidance. In other words, persons who create and promote “Peace Cereal” or the “Alliance for a New Humanity” seem determined to avoid reality.

Pacifists, utopians and other daydreamers must wake up to the fact that capitalism is a violent economic system designed to assault and exploit the working class, the earth, animals and other nations to maximize profit. Marx knew that “Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.” In other words, there is a material context to war and violence.

The inherent, systemic violence of capitalism, as revealed in the drive for corporate profit, provides the context for all violence, ranging from war on other nations to violence in the street, violence in the home, violence against the earth, the form of pollution and violence against animals in the form of factory farming.

If human nature is perversed, capitalism and the profit motive must be blamed. Marxism is the only antidote to childish, pacifist foolishness. Marxists do not avoid truth. Marxism liberates and empowers by revealing the truth about capitalism and the revolutionary work that must be done to ever achieve peace. Marxism rescues from utopianism and reformism. Marxism demystifies. Marxism reveals that only a socialist society can achieve peace.

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Clothing Industry Migrating to Middle East Sweatshops

By B.C.

N
evver underestimate the ingenuity of the capitalist class in cheating workers out of the proceeds of their labor or its ability to sidestep and undermine labor laws meant to limit hours, regulate working conditions and protect the wages of the laboring class. Private ownership of the means of production, coupled with the wage-labor system, makes this exploitation possible.

In the early years of the 20th century, clothing production in America had a strong presence in the Northeast of the United States. Trade unions soon emerged among the clothing industry workers in the attempt to counter rampant capitalist exploitation. By the 1960s and 1970s, however, apparel company capitalists had discovered a clever way of undermining whatever advantage in wages and hours their workers had gained by beginning a steady migration of their factories to the South, where local governments aided with the newly located capitalists and made it difficult or impossible to unionize the new southern factories.

Later, these clothing company capitalists discovered Asia, especially China, where only government-sanctioned “unions” are allowed and workers are cruelly exploited and over-worked in a supposedly “communist” society. Still another area for exploitation of workers has now opened up in the Middle East. A free trade agreement between the United States and Jordan signed in 2001 has given impetus to a rapidly mushrooming and unbelievably brutal exploitation of workers in Jordanian clothing factories.

Human trafficking in obtaining foreign workers for Jordanian factories has become common with some of the unconscionable factory owners in Jordan. Most of these foreign workers come from Bangladesh and China—lured by extravagant promises of good jobs, good pay and good working conditions in Jordan.

Some of these workers claim to have paid $1,000 to $3,000 to traffickers to be transported to Jordan. According to a New York Times (May 2002) investigative report on these workers, usually when they enter Jordan “their passports were confiscated, restricting their ability to leave and tying them to jobs that often pay far less than promised and far less than the country’s minimum wage.” The Times estimates that “tens of thousands of guest workers” are employed in Jordanian garment factories. The reasoning of these garment capitalists is obvious. The foreigners are easier to exploit and control than native Jordanians, who cannot be deported when they complain of working conditions.

One Bangladeshi woman told the Times, “When we were in Bangladesh they promised us we would receive $120 a month, but in the five months I was there I only got one month’s salary—and that was just $50.” She further described the working conditions: “We used to start at 8 a.m. in the morning, and we’d work until midnight, 1 or 2 a.m., seven days a week.”

Mohammed Saiful Islam, a Bangladeshi who worked for a Jordanian garment factory, is now in the United States. The Times reported that a number of workers at the factory where he worked were forced to work until 4 a.m. and then had to sleep on the factory floor until 8 a.m. when they had to resume work again. “The workers became so exhausted they became sick,” he said. “They could hardly stay awake at their machines.”

This exploitation is extremely profitable to the capitalists in Jordan, for in the year 2005, their industry exported $1.2 billion in goods to the United States alone. American companies that do business with these Jordanian factories include Wal-Mart, J.C. Penney, Gap, Sears and Target, among others.

How do these factory owners get away with blatant violation of Jordanian laws and brutal exploitation of their employees? Various former employees have reported that factory personnel hide abuses and force employees to lie when the Jordanian inspectors come around, threatening loss of jobs and deportation. The workers are kept like slaves, for without their confiscated passports and without ID cards, they are in danger at any time of being stopped on the street, arrested as illegal aliens, and either thrown into prison or deported.

The Koran teaches that a good Muslim must help the poor and the needy. It is obvious that these rogue Jordanian capitalists have put this particular Islamic teaching on the shelf and have adopted the grasping and greedy religious capitalism, which tramples all in front of it to achieve more and more and ever more wealth. It is the same with Western capitalists who have also shelved inconvenient biblical teachings concerning mercy, justice and compassion for the unfortunate ones in society. These latter capitalists have also long ago adopted the new religion of capitalist greed.

Early on, many American workers thought they could depend on trade unions and labor laws to protect them. They were wrong. Capitalists took command of the “unions” by such means as the National Civic Federation and with the aid of what its president, Mark Hanna, called his “labor lieutenants,” meaning the bosses of the unions. Jordanian workers do not have such “independent” labor unions. The Jordanian monarchy permits only government-sanctioned unions and so-called labor laws are regularly circumvented and ineffective, which is the same as saying that they are merely a ruse and not worth the paper they are written on. Foreign workers in Jordan cannot belong to any union, sanctioned or otherwise, and are deprived even of the pretense of “labor law” protections.