Unemployment Grows As Welfare Limits Approach

By Carl C. Miller Jr.

Stress in the workplace, already a common condition under the capitalist mode of production, became even more severe after Sept. 11, according to a study in USA Today on May 16. The increase cannot be attributed to the attacks alone, but also to the economic downturn that was worsened as a result of the tragedy. The attacks, as well as the sour economic prospects, have produced an increase in the number of workers seeking workers’ compensation benefits because of job-related stress.

USA Today reported that nearly one-third of 60,000 workers’ compensation claims filed in New York after the World Trade Center attacks were stress related or involved some component of stress-related ailments. This is not surprising given that the attacks took place so close to where the affected workers live and work and the resulting economic after shocks. There may be some surprise in that the upsurge in stress-related claims is not confined to New York City. The upward trend exists across the country.

One of example cited by USA Today was that of Darwin Baggett, an Illinois teacher who suffered a heart attack as a result of the stress he endured at his high school. In a court battle over his eligibility for workers’ compensation benefits, the lawyer representing the Baggett family argued that Mr. Baggett’s ailment was triggered by workplace stress. The Illinois Supreme Court found in Mr. Baggett’s favor. “People are becoming more aware of what can happen with stress,” said Robert Howerton, the lawyer who represented the Baggett family. “Baggett himself has since passed away, no doubt as a result of his stress-induced illness.”

In Virginia, paramedic Randall Mottram’s job was so stressful that doctors said he was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. This is the same malady that usually strikes combat veterans as a result of the horrors they face on the battlefield. Mottram’s eligibility was also decided in a legal battle in which Virginia’s Supreme Court found that because of the high levels of stress he dealt with on the job, the medical condition developed as a result of that stress, he too was eligible for workers’ compensation.

The bill, H.R. 4737, called the Personal Responsibility, Work, and Family Priority Act, is now under consideration in the Senate. It would reauthorize and “improve” the draconian 1996 Personal Responsibility, Work, and Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which provided a lifetime five-year limit for assistance under the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

It would do so despite a dearth of evidence that the 1996 act “succeeded” in any way but reducing federal welfare expenditures by throwing millions off the welfare rolls. Most landed in low-paying jobs that at best did little to move them out of poverty and at worst made them even poorer.

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The Turmoil in Central Asia

By B.B.

JIHAD: THE RISE OF MILITANT ISLAM IN CENTRAL ASIA, By Ahmad Rashid, Yale University Press, 2002, 289 pages. Please order from bookseller or publisher.

Ahmed Rashid, whose book Tajikistan was reviewed in these pages a year ago, now offers a parallel book that attempts to outline the entire range of Central Asian movements. As a Pakistani journalist who writes for The Daily Telegraph and The Independent in London, Rashid has acquired over the years an extensive familiarity with the entire region, as well as with the main personalities and historical events that underlie the turbulence.

Rashid's thesis is that the Muslim fundamentalism threatening Central Asia has political and social upheavals as a result of widespread poverty and the oppressive character of at least four of the five former Soviet republics. Those dictatorships have smothered dissent and taken punitive actions against dissenters. Such dissent, Rashid contends, has turned into an ideology stretching across the entire region of Islam of both a pacifist and armed guerrilla character.

Rashid further contends that the West can change all of that by investing in the region through pipeline construction, and by promoting representative democratic institutions. Both are necessary to remove Central Asia from the current cycle of violence and warfare, in Rashid's view.

If the past is any indication of the future when it comes to benevolent capitalist investment, a contradiction in terms, Mr. Rashid is whistling into the wind. Indeed, in the closing paragraphs of his book he gives us a glimpse of what might be expected.

Rashid noted that, “Western policymakers have largely concentrated on two elements that they hoped would allow them to ignore the exclusion of other important factors: the building up of Central Asian armies to help keep out the Russians and the exploitation of energy resources...” The compulsions that shape policy are not only the military-industrial complex and their workforces, but also the exploitive advantages sought by Russia and China. Such is capitalism's future: ever a spiraling descent into conflict and war.

The cast of former Soviet apparatchiks now running things in Central Asia is largely blamed for the increasing threat of militant Islam. Rashid outlines them by country:

• Kyrgyzstan—Askar Akayev has been president since 1990 and has the repugnance of being the least corrupt. He was elected by the people of Kyrgyzstan in 1990, and was the only one who was not a former party apparatchik. Kyrgyzstan remains the poorest of the five states.

• Kazakhstan—Nursultan Nazarbayev has been president since 1990. He is an authoritarian, repressive regime that curries favors from both Russia and the United States. Cheervan has developed a beneficial relationship with Nazarbayev and has been rewarded with its benefits.

• Tajikistan—Emomali Rakhmonov has been president since 1990, he was reelected in 1999 for another seven-year term. Tajikistan was wracked by six years of devastating civil war, has suffered the loss of subsidies from Russia and has emerged as the most impoverished of the Central Asian states where 80 percent of the population lives in crushing poverty.

Central Asia's historic ties to Russia and the former Soviet Union explain much about the political landscape of the region today. Stalin-era machinations complicated by the war, the arbitrary division of primarily tribal and nomadic areas into what are now the five republics. These political subdivisions made the area easier to control by pitting ethnic groups against each other while extracting wealth from the five Soviet republics. Cotton, minerals, fuels, fertilizers, nuts, agricultural products, oil, gas and numerous other products were drained from the Central Asian states, often creating monstrous environmental damage along with health problems and impoverishment. The degradation of the Aral Sea is largely a result of diverting water for the production of cotton in Kazakhstan.

The pollution of the Caspian Sea has come as a result of placing callous bureaucratic profit-making ahead of human need and safety of the natural environment.

Rashid argues that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's liberalizing policies of glasnost and perestroika aroused widespread expectations among the Central Asians of a less oppressive and more prosperous future. Those expectations largely collapsed with the collapse of the U.S.S.R. and the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the emergence of the five Central Asian states.

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Jihad' value lies in the depth of detail and knowledge of the characters, personalities and a measure of historical background that Rashid brings to his subject. Its shortcomings lie in its limited perspective of the formative period of Soviet rule. One is left wondering about the decades of Soviet misrule that contributed to the current state.

Specifically, a reading of Lenin's "On the National and Colonial Questions" deals, albeit briefly with the Bolshevik attitude toward Central Asia. For example, Lenin stated:

"Second, the need to combat Pan-Islamism and similar trends which strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with an attempt to strengthen the position of the khans, landlords, mullices, etc.

"The last statement is particularly revealing. It sheds a far more penetrat- ing view of the current insurgencies throughout not only Central Asia but in the Middle East.

Do you know what the SLP stands for? Do you understand the class struggle and why the SLP calls for an end of capitalism and of its system of wage labor? Do you understand why the SLP does not advocate revolution in capitalism, but instead puts the working class on a path toward the State? Do you know what the SLP membership packet includes? Find out by joining the SLP.
A recent interview in Labor Education, an ILO publication, Takala estimated that more than 4 million workers die on the job every year. Commenting on that statistic, The Guardian, a British newspaper, quoted the ILO as saying, “The total is now three times the annual number of deaths in wars every year (650,000), or the equivalent of a Sept. 11 tragedy every day. It also exceeds deaths from alcohol and drug use combined.”

In short—and while neither Dr. Takala nor the institution he heads addresses the capitalist cause of the mayhem. This was underscored by the argument he offered on why remedial action should be taken to reduce the slaughter—it would cost less.

“The cost of doing nothing is actually much higher,” he said. “We calculate that expenditure related to accidents and diseases represents the equivalent of 4 percent of the output of all countries on this planet, or the equivalent of the total GNP of Africa, the Middle East (including oil-rich countries), and South Asia put together. So addressing the issues of health and safety at work could save a lot of resources and is in the interest of governments, companies, and workers alike. It is in the interests of a whole.

Apart from 2–4 million work-related fatalities, however, Dr. Takala also estimates that 410 million workers are either injured or come down with work-related illness every year. He added that only 10 percent of these working-class casualties of the class struggle in capitalist-developed countries are exported to the developing countries, while 90 percent are left to die or get disabled by pesticides and other agro-chemicals.

Generalizing on the reason for the disparity between the capitalist-developed North and the capitalist-developing South, Dr. Takala said that “one of the trends that is industrialized countries are exporting their hazards to developing countries,” leaving “dirty and dangerous jobs...to the South.”

Casualties are higher in some industries than others, Dr. Takala said, and the worst appear to be agriculture, mining, and construction.

“Today, agriculture is one of the three most hazardous industries, together with mining and construction, in both developing and industrialized countries,” he said. “We estimate that out of a total of 350,000,000 work accidents in all industries worldwide, some 170,000 casualties are among agricultural workers every year. The world’s 1.3 billion agricultural workers are seriously injured in workplace accidents involving machinery, or poisoned by pesticides and other agro-chemicals. That situation led the ILO to adopt a new convention on health and safety in agriculture last year. Mining, which is probably the most dangerous of a profession in industrialized countries, remains highly dangerous in the developing world. Mines in Asia or Africa are still very labor intensive, there do not use new machinery or equipment and many people still die in mining both from diseases and accidents.”

Dr. Takala lamented that most countries reject ILO labor conventions that recommend health and safety standards. Indeed, he as good as confessed that the ILO has failed in stemming the tide when he said:

“A key problem is that safety and health are not given a high priority in the international and national agendas...If people are left to die [or] to get disabled at work, where is the sense in the core labor standards?”

That’s a good question, and one that not Takala, the ILO or the labor explication is the ratification of the “global econo-my” want to answer because the answer is that there is no sense to them at all. Indeed, while most workplace deaths, injuries and illnesses occur today in the capitalist-developing “South,” Dr. Takala also conceded that workers in the “North” face serious workplace dangers. There is no shortage of “labor standards” or governments willing to enact them in these countries, where we provide the very model that Dr. Takala wants “the South” to follow to benefit...
The struggle for existence

(Daily People, July 30, 1901)

What the struggle for existence has come to in this “best of social systems” and “happiest of countries” was exemplified in the recent Fosburgh trial in Pittsfield, Mass.

A man was dragged before a jury on an indictment of murder by his own sister. The trial brought forth not even a semblance of a hook on which to hang the charge that the accused was guilty. From the beginning to the end, the testimony was an insult to the understanding: it was contradictory, it was flimsy, it was irrelevant. So grotesquely was the case presented by the prosecution, that it did not reach the jury, but was summarily thrown out by the trial judge.

Did the police that “worked up the case” not know what sort of a case they had? Did the grand jury that found the “true bill” not realize that, upon such evidence, almost anyone of themselves could have been hauled before the slayer of the girl? Finally, did the prosecuting attorney have no appreciation of the worthlessness of the evidence he was hissing to the present? Only upon the theory that, from the first to the last, every one of those was an idiot, could the Fosburgh case have escaped them. How, then, came they to handle it, pushing it until it was thrown out? Was it an instance of personal malice? There is no evidence of that. Was it an instance of unqualified perseverance? Yet again, no. It was an instance of the struggle for existence, of the lengths to which a social system will drive men when the lash of want or the fear of what the want amidst plenty is the spur for human exertion.

The police have to live; the prosecuting attorney has to live; their ramifications in the machinery of the state's criminal procedure, the grand jury, was with the charade. A crime was committed in the Fosburgh man- saging through had. They had already been and had found the man who had fired after finding a man in the Chamber of the house of the sleepy police, active and who, when the work was to be a lack of it, he left it to them to prepare their jobs endangered if the criminal or escape if for their work, which they use only as a means to a living without any sense of its re- sponsibility, the culprits slipped through their fingers; unable to find the real criminal, they were willing to substitu- ate an innocent man; and pounced upon the murdered girl's brother. The prosecuting attorney, looking, feeling his fears in his own head, joined hands with the police. And thus the Fosburgh case was worked up: a desperate at- tempt to intimidate an innocent man on the altar of official push-holderism.

It is not many years ago when a sim- ilar crime was committed in the city of this town. A streetwalker was found cut to pieces; the appearance of her body, the headless body, the mysterious and at that time active “Jack the Ripper” in London. Inspector poker of the police was the grand jury and this through the force with disgrace, instantly pounced upon a cer- tain miserable waf as the murderer, without the knowledge of the grand jury or the trial judge.

The Fosburgh case carries the evi- dence that many criminals have been discovered and had fled after fir- ing a order to the penitentiary for 15 years. His conviction was necessary for Bynes himself in order to maintain the ef- fect of “effectiveness,” and under that system he allowed for a little while longer.

Socialism is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, mines, railroads, land and all other instruments of production. Socialism means production for social needs, and not for individual profit. Socialism means direct control and management of the industries and social ser- vices by the workers through a democratic government based on their nationwide economic organization.

Under socialism, all authority will originate from the workers, integrally united in Socialist Industrial Unions. In each workplace, the rank and file will elect what- ever committees they deem necessary. Socialist Industrial Unions means direct control and management of the industries and social ser- vices by the workers through a democratic government based on their nationwide economic organization.

Individuals are needed in the ranks of Socialists fighting for a better world. Within each shop or office division of a plant, the rank and file will participate directly in for- mulating and implementing all plans necessary for efficient operation. Socialists do not want to be merely the decision-makers in a system of production. They want to be the decision-makers in a system of production. They want to be the decision-makers in a system of production.

On Dispensing Justice

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The Paterson Silk Workers’ Strikes of 1911–1912

The following article from the Industrial Union News of July 1912 is the fifth in a series of reports on the Paterson silk workers’ strikes of 1911–1912. The Industrial Union News was the official monthly newspaper of the “revolutionary-in-literature” Socialist Labor Party.

The End of the Boer War

Robert H. Park

Thus, in the long run, every triumph of capitalism of this character becomes a triumph of socialism. In our February issue. The series will conclude with an epilogue on the significance of the strikes and the organization that conducted them.

——Editor

FROM THE NEW JERSEY STRIKE ZONE

AFL Loomfixers and Twisters continue to scab on the IWW — H. Richter, Gen. Sec’y-Treasurer IWW, in Paterson

Paterson, N.J., June 14 — The notorious strike was broken by the IWW teachers’ union, said: “I’ve been to a strike in my life and I’ve seen it all. The strike was broken by the IWW teachers’ union, said: “I’ve been to a strike in my life and I’ve seen it all.

A call has come from the strikers in Paterson, N.J., to the IWW to take charge of things there. Caleb Harrison has been sent. The strike in Perth Amboy was broken by the Paterson strikers and a strike at the behest of the bosses.

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The “I’m-a-Bummery” is spreading throughout the country, putting the finishing touch to the “fair and open” type of strike. The “I’m-a-Bummery” is spreading throughout the country, putting the finishing touch to the “fair and open” type of strike.

Several men have been killed and many wounded by hired deputies since the strike began. The companies are howling for the militia but the authori- ties refuse to ask the governor to send troops as the fault lies with the companies.

The powers that be have gone even farther than railroading peaceful pick- eting the strike. They have substituted their own unscrupulous labor legis- lation. It was on such testimony, after refus- ing a postponement of trial to allow counsel to be present, and addi- tional witnesses to be secured, that “Judge” Carroll sentenced Rudolph Katz to 60 days in jail. What a commentary upon our judicial system which allows ignorant politi- cians to be placed over intelligent and honest men, with an uncrated dog, the officers, and the rest of the machinery.

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The End of the Boer War

Robert H. Park

This triumph of modern capitalism was easily foreseen. Small nations, medieval in their structure and life, can no longer resist the wave of new nations, capitalist in their organization and purpose, than can petty industries, medieval in character, survive the economic and political revolution which modern capitalist conditions have long demanded of them. Their mines, with their advanced capita- list development, will more likely dom- inate their fields, with their medieval agriculture.

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...Welfare Limits Approach

(Continued from page 1)

person fell further below the poverty line in 1999 and 2000 than in any other year on record; these data are available back to 1979."

Measurements of the "poverty gap," also from the CBPP report, define the "as is" poverty line for 1999 as $10.6 billion, up from $8.7 billion in 1998, a 20 percent increase.

In California, for example, according to a Department of Social Services count cited by the San Jose Mercury News, "more than 144,000 adults will take part in their welfare assistance check by Dec. 31, when they will be permanently dropped from welfare rolls. More than half are employed, but make so little that they qualify for welfare assistance. Of those, unlike many other states, will continue assistance to children of these adults "until they are 18 or graduate from high school wherever comes later"--but the cuts will drop family income by an average of $120 a month. "To parents already struggling to make ends meet and rent, the cuts will have an impact," observes the Mercury News.

"That impact will come at a time when the working class generally is experiencing worsening hardship, with the official unemployment rate expected to at least 6.2 percent in 2002."

It is at this grim juncture that Congress and the Executive Administration are bemoaning every effort to further stiffen the requirements for TANF and H.R. 7377 would increase the required share of welfare recipients who work to 70 percent in 2007, and raise the work requirement itself to a full 40 hours per week, with no more than 16 hours a week spent in a rehabsilitation or educational program. Those unable to meet these new requirements would be tossed off the rolls, left to compete with a growing army of far more skilled workers recently laid off as a result of the economic recession. The bill would also grant the executive branch -- "welfare supervisors" -- authority to allow governors of some states the "flexibility" to cut state assistance spending.

Clearly, the "success" of welfare reform for the political benchmarks of the Bush Administration in Washington consists first and foremost in the number of welfare caseloads dropped and the total expense saved by the capitalist class that pays for the political state. While they still must plathuatas about bolstering personal responsibility and pride and reducing poverty, their actions speak louder than their words.

Those partisans are instinctive if not cognitively aware that welfare was never intended to do anything more than to manage poverty in the interests of capitalist ruling class. Franklin Roosevelt, with the deepening Great Depression producing massive unemployment and social unrest that threatened the very existence of capitalism as a backdoor, declared the welfare reforms that established the basis of the present welfare system to be, not to reduce poverty, but to "save our system, the capitalist system."

Today's backdoor of a disgraaced working class that has failed so far to formulate any collective response to the growing hardship ship under capitalism provides little impetus for Rooseveltian reforms, which threw the working class a few crumbs of love and quiet. The political partisans of capitalism recognize this, and are pushing for even smaller expenses on welfare while the pushing is good.

The "economic recovery" that was supposed to bring some relief to the American working class not only appears to have taken a detour, but may soon have its place taken by yet another of capitalism's recurring economic crises.

--K.B.

...SLP Emergency Fund

(Continued from page 1)

contribution of $50.00 for the SLP Emergency Fund. I know that a recent call by the people went out, but I wanted to add a personal word of thanks in response to your generosity and the concern it reflects for the people in our midst.

We still have a mountain to climb, as the saying goes, but we are slowly making up ground. If every member and supporter of the SLP responded to the Emergency Fund, with the same selflessness generosity that you have we would scale the top in no time at all. Let's hope that many more friends and supporters of the SLP will soon step forward to emulate your example. I am confident that they will.

Since the Emergency Fund was started last October, the SLP has received over $90,000, nearly $54,500 of which came direct contributions to the SLP Fund--nearly equal to the party's entire income from all sources last year.

If the members and supporters of the SLP continue to respond to the Emergency Fund appeal as they have until now then we soon may see some light coming from the end of the dark tunnel we have been traveling through.

Now is the time to dig in for the long haul, and fight on.

Please use the coupon printed in this issue.

...Activities

Oregon Portland Discussion Meetings -- Section Portland holds discussion meetings every second Saturday of the month.

California Oakland Discussion Meeting -- Section Oakland will hold a discussion meeting on Saturday, June 1, 4-6 p.m., at the Roddick Branch Library, 5366 College Ave., of College Park and Manchester. Oakland, Moderator: Frank Prince. Title: "What Price "Reform. " Is the End of Capitalism?"

Ohio Young Royalton Discussion & Social -- Section Cleveland will hold a discussion and social on Sunday, June 23, 1:30 p.m., at the Bums residence, 9628 York Rd., N. Olmstead. For more information call 440-227-7903.

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You can help provide for the long-term financial security of The People by including a properly worded provision in your will or by making some other financial arrangement through your bank. Write to the Socialist Labor Party, publisher of The People, for a free copy of the booklet, Steps You Can Take. Use this coupon.

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For more information please call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit our Web site at http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com. The general public is invited.

Texas Houston Discussion Meetings -- Section Houston holds discussion meetings the last Saturday of the month at the Houston Public Library, Franklin Branch, 6440 W. Belfort, southwest Houston. The time of the meetings varies. Those interested please call 713-721-5906, e-mail "houston@slp.org" or visit the Section's Web site at http://houstonslp.tripod.com.

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Did Marx say the socialist rev-
olution would come first in an
industrialized country? What was
his reasoning?

Marx did, indeed, state that the
socialist revolution would come first in
an industrialized
country. He based his reasoning
on the fact that, for the
developed nations, capital
was not the "classic
source of excess
value," as it was for
England. But land as
capital was. But land as
capital was
the only country where the cap-
pital in land is con-
trolling the productive
processes. England had already
reached this higher stage
and managed it.  

Marx's reasoning:
1. England was the first
industrialized country.
2. England had already reached
the stage where capital
was the source of
excess value.
3. Other countries would
reach this stage at different
times, depending on their
level of development.
4. The development of capital
would lead to a crisis
in the capitalist system.
5. This crisis would
provide the conditions
for the socialist revolution.

In summary, Marx argued that
industrialization was
necessary for the socialist
revolution to take place.
By Ken Boettcher

VENEZUELA—

AFL-CIO Still Fronting For U.S. Imperialist Interests

By that they did not mean that they

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