Socialism Is the True ‘Ownership Society’

When President Bush introduced his idea of an “ownership society” at last year’s Republican convention, Socialists naturally prickled their ears. When he added that he wanted “to build an ownership society, because ownership brings security and dignity and independence,” Socialists naturally bristled themselves for another bombardment of propaganda to deceive the working class into accepting some new scheme designed to benefit the capitalist class.

Socialists, of course, have been calling for an “ownership society” right along, and knew immediately that what President Bush had in mind and what the Socialist Labor Party is aiming for are poles apart.

Socialists want a society in which the means of life are collectively owned and democratically operated to insure full, prosperous and healthy lives to all. President Bush’s plan for an “ownership society” is less ambitious. Indeed, it bears all the hallmarks of a swindle that would simply allow high-stakes speculators to raid the federal treasury.

The central feature of Mr. Bush’s “ownership society” plan to provide “security and dignity and independence” to the American working class is to overhaul the Social Security system. He claims a crisis in Social Security is imminent. His critics disagree. They claim that with minor alterations the system will remain “solvent” and serve its purposes for decades to come.

“The system’s trustees estimate the Social Security trust fund is in good shape for another four decades,” as Kevin Drum of the Christian Science Monitor put it. “The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office figures five decades. Many independent economists think Social Security is healthy for more like six or seven decades.”

President Bush’s proposal has not reached the legislative stage yet; his administration is still “testing the political waters” to see how it might be received. For now, at least, understanding the differences in formula between the state-run system created by Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal during capitalism’s Great Depression and the partially privatized system being pushed today may be less important than understanding the purposes Social Security was initially meant to serve. There will be time enough to explore how those original purposes have changed or expanded over the years, and what the new Bush proposals suggest about changed conditions, when and if those proposals are introduced in Congress.

Social Security and kindred measures (unemployment insurance, Medicare, etc.) were never intended to provide security for workers. They were intended to provide security for capitalism. They were intended to tie the working class to the corporation’s owners. As the New York Times put it, “she was unable to build Hewlett-Packard into a profitable fortune....” (Feb. 10) She did not measure up, though we do not doubt that she tried. She failed where USA Today says others are succeeding. “Although the pace of growth in productivity or worker output has not been as strong as expected, government safety officials warned that more than 60 percent of train tracks in the United States have electronic signals to indicate switches. Sixty percent of train tracks in the United States have electronic signals to indicate switches. Sixty percent of train tracks in the United States have electronic signals to indicate switches. Sixty percent of train tracks in the United States have electronic signals to indicate switches.

The disparity attests to the vulgarity of the capitalist system in more ways than one. Most of the workers who lost their jobs worked hard, but hard enough or for wages low enough to satisfy their former employers. Out they went. Their jobs were to produce or to distribute what other workers had produced. Carly Fiorina’s job was to make sure that Hewlett-Packard received what that one received to share with her and what that one received to share with her and what that one received to share with her and what that one received to share with her and what that one received to share with her and what that one received to share with her.

In February, the BLS reported that the Labor Department had given states “$18.6 million to continue unemployment insurance improvements.” Whatever “Improvements” means, it does not mean jobs. At best, it means temporary unemployment checks or a temporary extension of “benefits.”

We do not know how many workers are supposed to share that $18.6 million, but we suppose the number is somewhat higher than the number of CEOs that got the boot from the Hewlett-Packard list. That number is one, and what one received to share with herself has been estimated at between $14 million and $21.4 million.

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Train Crashes & Terrorism

By Paul D. Lawrence

In 2002, the FBI warned that at Qaeda might attack U.S. railroads. Attacks could cause derailments or release toxic chemicals. In January, two train crashes killed 20 people, injured hundreds and caused the evacuation of thousands. The crashes were not the work of al Qaeda. A different kind of terrorism—the profit motive—caused them.

On Jan. 6, in Graniteville, S.C., a train carrying pressurized chlorine gas ran into a parked train. Chlorine was used in gas warfare in World War I. The results in Graniteville were deadly. Railroad workers were blamed for leaving a switch open.

On Jan. 27, a would-be suicide drove his SUV onto a track in Glendale, Calif. A commuter train struck it. The lead car derailed and struck a parked freight train. The commuter train then jackknifed into a second.

Human beings make mistakes. Some attempt suicide. A sane society, however, would do everything possible to protect against such acts. Capitalism is not a sane society. The profit motive drives it, not concern for health and safety.

As to the Graniteville “accident,” the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) admits that in the first nine months of 2004 there were 23 “accidents” caused by improperly aligned switches. Sixty percent of train tracks in the United States have electronic signals to indicate switch positions. The switch in Graniteville was among those without such signals. The FRA “urged” railroads to have crews report to dispatchers that they had restored switches to the normal position. It also asked railroads to require conductors to fill out forms about switch positions. A few pieces of paper are much cheaper than electronic signals.

Then there is the problem of tank cars. The New York Times reported that last year “government safety officials warned that more than half the nation’s 60,000 pressurized rail tank cars did not meet industry standards, and they raised questions about the safety of the rest of the fleet as well.” (Jan. 9) That suggests stronger cars might have averted the Graniteville tragedy. The Times did not report that the FRA “urged” or ordered that anything

(Continued on page 6)
Iraq's History of War, Profit and Conflict

By B.B.

Black begins his narrative with an abbreviated history of Iraq that provides a useful review of the vicissitudes that have wracked this ancient land. Useful, too, is Black’s discussion of the bitter divisions that developed between the Sunni and Shiite factions in Islam which continue to this day.

Mr. Black’s account offers dizzying detail in the imperialist machinations leading up to World War I and its aftermath. After the vectors surveyed the spoils of the Middle East, they arbitrarily divided the lands of the Ottoman Empire into “nations.”

The connivance of all of the major capitalist victors in World War I produced the so-called Red Line Agreement that “created a closely held oil monopoly within the circumscribed area.” This agreement included Standard Oil, British Petroleum, Royal Dutch Shell, Turkish Petroleum Co., Atlantic Refining and Gulf. It eventually formed the basis for the next round of capitalist control of the resources of the Middle East.

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'Intelligent Design' vs. Evolution in the Schools

By B.G.

The battle between science and religion, which many believed was settled by the Scopes "monkey trial" in 1925, has been making a vigorous comeback. A "monkey trial" in 2002 has made headlines and created controversy. It can certainly increase public awareness of the topic of evolution, many of these biblical literalists are now beginning to challenge geography, physics and carbon-dating techniques when these sciences disagree with religious teaching on the age of Earth or the origin of the universe.

Parents who were opposed filed a lawsuit on Dec. 14, 2004, claiming that such a curriculum is government establishment of religion taught as science.

The problem does not stop with the topic of evolution. Emboldened by their assault on the teaching of evolution, many of these biblical literalists are now beginning to challenge geography, physics and carbon-dating techniques when these sciences disagree with religious teaching on the age of Earth or the origin of the universe.

Where will it all end? Stay tuned.

'Asylums of the Street'

By Paul D. Lawrence

The snake pits are largely gone in their place are the "asylums of the street." People obvious- ly mentally ill are all over America. Mistreat- ment of mentally people is one of the great crimes of capitalism.

The answer to the question of nature or nur- ture is "both." It depends on the illness and the social environment. Illnesses such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia are likely rooted in biology. The social environment may awaken latent tendencies. It can certainly increase suf- fering.

Maltreatment of mentally ill youth is espe- cially deplorable. California ranks high on the dishonor roll. The "first ever" study of govern- ment-funded mental health care for California's neediest children showed horrible problems.

"Quality of Publicly-Funded Outpatient Specialty Mental Health Care for Common Childhood Psychiatric Disorders in California," published in the February issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, included the following among its findings:

• Less than one-third of children given psy- chiatric drugs are checked for ill effects. Some drugs may cause permanent damage or even death.
• Prescriptions of psychotropic drugs for chil- dren increased two- to three-fold over a decade. (Psychotropic drugs affect brain functions called "mind.") Many children receive several such drugs although no one understands the safety or effectiveness of doing that.
• Abuse, neglect and parental drug abuse— the social factors—played large roles, affecting about one-third of those studied.
• These facts are chilling enough. Worse, they are from medical records from August 1998 to June 1999! That is how important children's mental health is.

The Democratic staff of the U.S. House Government Reform Committee did a second study. It found that hundreds of mentally ill children in California spend weeks in juvenile jails. Capitalists, their politicians and the media shun that term. The reason? Treatment facilities cannot meet the need. Juvenile jails seldom can treat mental illness. The report noted this: "A major problem in California." Indeed!

A Socialist society itself will democratically determine what it does. Yet, the treatment of people suffering mental illnesses would obviously improve. Compassion, production for use, social ownership of productive property and social planning will replace callousness, produc- tion for profit, private ownership and the anar- chy of competition in the "free" market.

These changes would themselves reduce mental illness caused by the social environ- ment. Put bluntly, few people would crack. The changed environment under socialism would also reduce the triggering of latent biological tendencies.

When those disorders do occur, people afflicted will be treated humanely. They will receive the best possible care.

Moreover, research into the causes of and treatment for mental illness would increase. Mechanisms of illnesses are still poorly under- stood despite considerable progress in the past half-century. Under socialism, research would discover causes and treatments to the minim- um extent humanly possible. New medica- tions would be found—and thoroughly tested for safety before being used.

Not every problem will disappear. Socialism, however, will constantly make things better, not worse as under capitalism. No Socialist would promise heaven on earth. Eliminating the hell of capitalism is more than enough.

Do You Belong?

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 reforms of capitalism, and why it calls upon workers to organize Socialist Trade Unions?

If you have been reading The People steadily for a year or more, if you have read the literature recom- mended for beginning Socialists, and if you agree with the SLP's call for the political and economic unity of the working class, you may qualify for mem- bership in the SLP. And if you qualify to be a mem- ber you probably should be a member.

For information write to: SLP, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218. Ask for the SLP Mem- bership Packet.
Arthur Miller

When Arthur Miller died in February at age 89, The New York Times referred to him as the “Moral Voice of the American Stage.” The Times, however, did not mean the stage—it meant capitalism. Referring to Miller’s best-known play, “Death of a Salesman,” the paper on which he wrote or the theaters in which artists performed his plays, was not recognizing Miller’s work as the “moral voice” of a social system, any more than he viewed himself as the moral voice of his stage.

Pointing out the evils produced by a social system is not the same as appealing to that system to change its ways. Systems are insensate and no more responsive to cries of pain than flames from a fire or bullets from a gun.

“Attention must be paid.”

“I once was...” Arthur Miller once told the Washington Post how he had been a “successful” salesman and at one point was making $35,000 a year. And yet, he said, his son was on welfare. “Is this America? Is this what democracy means? Is this what capitalism means?”

The playwright’s battle against capitalism was fought on the stage—it meant capitalism. Referring to Miller’s best-known play, “Death of a Salesman,” the paper on which he wrote or the theaters in which artists performed his plays, was not recognizing Miller’s work as the “moral voice” of a social system, any more than he viewed himself as the moral voice of his stage.

At the end of his life, Miller was working on a play called “The American Clock,” about the effects of automation on human values. But he never finished it. In his last work, he wrote, “I long to bring an ending... towards the revaluation of the human. I am not interested in the human for its own sake. I am interested in the human as a means of communicating with the Divine.”

In spite of all the layoffs, and in spite of increased sales during the holiday season, wholesale inventories rose by 1.2 percent in November and by four-tenths of one percent in December. Although the December figure was less than anticipated, it was not a decline and until then it was a decline. Workers can expect even more layoffs in the months to come.

Workers as Squeezed Lemons

(Daily People, Aug. 19, 1963)

One morning last week the papers contained the announcement that a working man, Henry Ballinger, was found dying of starvation in the doorway of a private residence in this city. Inquiry brought out a tale that is an indictment upon the social system of today.

The spokesman of capitalism are in the habit of committing the double crime—a crime that wrongdoers always resort to—of seeking to cover their own malfeasance by throwing blame upon their victims. Thus one is familiar with the charges that the workingman is “improving the law,” “disrupting the life of society,” “cheats the state,” “robbery,” “criminal,” etc. One and each of these “justifications” for capitalist felony on the working-class inquiry in the case of Ballinger barred out; it barred them out so completely that even the brazen apologist of capitalist inhumanity have not ventured to advance them.

In times of crisis, it is all too easy to have been prophesied, he was found to have led an orderly life; he was temperate, a model husband, industrious, diligent. For 20 years he had worked as a bookbinder in one firm. Although the ground that he was too old to work... At the same time, the bulk of it went to the idle employer: he kept it, was allowed to keep, no more than the dry horse, aye, less: worn out, his life support expended in the service of the capitalist fleecer faster than the pittance wages more and more lost to him, at the age of 55 to the breaking, a squeezed lemon, squeezed of all its juice, and thrown as such into the garbage barrel of society, to rot with other refuse!

Under socialism, all authority will originate from the workers, integrally united industrial unions to engage in the production 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.

Socialism is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, mining, railroads, banks and all other instruments of production and consumption. It requires building Socialist Industrial Union organizations to unite all workers in a class-conscious industrial movement, where committees or representatives are needed to facilitate production. Within each shop or office division of a plant, the rank and file will participate directly in formulating and implementing all plans necessary for efficient operations.

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 all the industries and services. This all-industry congress will plan and coordinate production in all areas of the economy. All persons elected to these congresses will be chosen by democratic election on the basis of a nationwide economic organization.

Socialism does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a state bureaucracy in the former Soviet Union or China, with the working class forced back into the labor market, and the number of workers involved totaled 161,271. The number of layoffs was the lowest for any December since 1999, and the number of initial claims was the lowest since December 1995, when data became available.

In February, The New York Times reported that many workers who retired or were forced to retire in their 50s or early 60s are now being forced back to the labor market, because companies are “seeking ways to reduce their roles in financing former employees in retirement... Some find low-paying jobs to supplement the insult known as “Social Security,” but others aren’t so “lucky.” While it may not appear that unemployment is an economic evil, it is in fact what DeLeon wrote this editorial more than a century ago, the growing number of castoff, homeless and destitute workers adrift on our streets proves the opposite—and some who escaped that fate for a time may be joining them soon.

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**Marx on Alienation**

By Michael James

Do you feel alone, depress, or out and isolated? Do you feel insignificant, purposeless or disconnected? The Marxian term for this personal and political malady is alienation. Consider the varieties of alienation we suffer in capitalist society.

**Alienation From Our Fellows**

The two most dominant values in capitalist America are competition and extreme individualism. Lack of cooperation and collectivism. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to trust, for example. We are guarded, defensive and suspicious as we brace ourselves for the next hustle or swindle. The job can come from the government, the corporations or the person next door, but sometimes it seems as though everybody in capitalist society is on the make. Many blame human nature, suggesting that people are naturally greedy, violent or predatory.

Marx, as a materialist, knew better. He explained that consciousness does not determine life but that life determines consciousness. The point is that the relations of production set the tone of human consciousness and human relations. The singular purpose of capitalism is to exploit. Therefore, exploitation characterizes human relations in this society. Marx brilliantly captured the depravity of human relations in capitalist society, charging that the bourgeoisie "has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than cold 'cash payment.'" Whittaker Chambers confirmed, "Our present economic, social and international arrangements are based, in large measure, upon organized lovelessness." Indeed, it is capitalism that creates the material conditions prompting many to reject the cliché about seeing only two roles for themselves in our society; be the victim or be the predator. The big fish swallow the small fish. Dog eats dog. Only fathers before they can do unto you. Whichever cliché you dredge up, rest assured that it is capitalism that so pervades human relations in America.

Marx, however, gave due credit to capitalism: "...What earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor?" Even the magnificent technology created by the productive forces of capitalism contributes to alienation from our fellows. Products are introduced into our society to create productivity and growth for the social impact so that, according to Marx, "every new product represents a new capacity of mutual swindling and mutual plundering." For example, there is a social element to mass transit, permitting us to say "hello" conversely, perhaps share a newspaper. In capitalist America, however, corporations have forced us to be automobile dependent, each of us separated by chrome, steel, glass and ego.

The VCR and DVD player are wonderful inventions but they have taken a toll on the social act of leaving the house and visiting the local theater. In the past, if I saw you walking down the street or in the supermarket, we could say "hello" and chat. Now, almost everyone is talking on a cell phone. This little invention, while great if your car breaks down, wreaks havoc with human psychology in several ways. It promotes an inability to delay gratification. It contributes to a breakdown of boundaries and privacy. It adds stress by inviting people to do more than one task at a time. It contributes to rudeness when pursuing private conversations in public places. It promotes self-importance and ego. It destroys community by privatizing public space.

Computers likewise contribute to alienation by promoting human isolation, burdening us with useless information and encouraging virtual rather than genuine face-to-face interaction. The MTV music video, another technological innovation, has been described as "the death of imagination." Traditionally, when listening to a song, it was our freedom and responsibility to conjure up corresponding mental images or associations. Now the song and the visual imagery are presented together for our passive consumption.

There are many smaller ways to assess alienation from our fellows. Our lack of community, as revealed in the way that many of us don't know our neighbors, often shocks foreigners. Lawyers promote litigiousness thereby prompting people to admit, "I didn't want to get involved" rather than helping out a crime or accident victim. Those who are victims of discrimination, a useful tool of the capitalist class for preventing worker solidarity, are alienated in their inability to live freely, openly and safely.

The ways that we are estranged from our fellow workers are numerous, communal, cooperative and collective nature is thwarted and frustrated. Capitalism denies human beings comradeship, belonging and true community. American iconic poet Walt Whitman wrote of the "need of comrades." Psychology they become more absorbed in computers, TV and other technology and less observant of the natural world. It is heartbreaking to contemplate children and adults who no longer experience a feeling of wonder at the song of a bird, the complexity of a spider web, the formation of a cloud or the color of a flower.

**Alienation From Labor and the Wealth Produced by Labor**

Marx knew that our labor is an expression of our deepest essence. Our labor is the cornerstone, in a sense, a fundamental and profound manifestation of our energy, ideas, strength, determination and creativity. Capitalism defiles and perverts work. Intellectual and physical labor is a more commodity that must be sold to a buyer. Many people despise and dread their work and many are made physically or mentally sick by it. The diagnostic manual of the American Psychiatric Association even includes a diagnosis termed "mailing," used to describe a worker who feels ill in order to escape work.

Small wonder in this society, most of us are alienated from our labor activity and from the product of that intellectual or physical labor. Our productive activity is not our own, the product created is not our own and the wealth generated is not our own. We are thereby alienated from our sweat and blood. Labor is an expression of you, of your deepest and truest self, but Marx saw that in capitalist society "the worker's activity... belongs to another, to the owner of his self." Labor creates all wealth. When your labor belongs to another, you are left with nothing. You are nothing. Therefore, Marx urged workers to claim, "I am nothing and I should be everything."

The point is that capitalism is a system designed to steal. That theft is so grand that it is hard to fathom. In America, it is tantamount to the theft of Native American peoples, continued with the capture and enslavement of Africans and marches on today with an assault on Native and African-American cultures. Alienation from our fellow workers is a product of alienation from our fellows, from our ability to delay gratification. Capitalism is a system designed to steal. That theft is so grand that it is hard to fathom. In America, it is tantamount to the theft of Native American peoples, continued with the capture and enslavement of Africans and marches on today with an assault on Native and African-American cultures.

**Alienation From Nature**

Another key value associated with capitalism is dominance over nature. Respectful coexistence is lost. Human restraint and reverence for nature are virtues smashed beneath capitalism's insatiable demand for development, expansion, appropriation and profit. Nature becomes a commodity for corporations and individuals to have, to consume, to degrade. Pollution is simply good business. How many of us grieve about the development and sprawl that has transformed our once charming green, unique communities into garish, impersonal, commercial eyesores?

Another aspect of alienation from nature is simply being out of touch. Many of us are so stressed or overworked that we are numb to natural beauty. Technology again plays a role in distancing us from nature. One psychotherapist has observed a "loss of wonder" in children as they become more absorbed in computers, TV and other technology and less observant of the natural world. It is heartbreaking to contemplate children and adults who no longer experience a feeling of wonder at the song of a bird, the complexity of a spider web, the formation of a cloud or the color of a flower.

**Alienation From Class Identity**

Capitalism steals materially, through private control over the means of production and by appropriation of the wealth produced by labor, and capitalism steals ideologically, through bourgeois popular culture, education, and corporate news and entertainment. U.S. working-class history is ignored and erased. There is no worker's consciousness presented in current affairs. There is no working-class culture. There is no working-class creative or critical. The significance of class and the class struggle is minimized, downplayed and ignored. The truth, however, is that class is our most defining characteristic, more so than race, gender, ethnicity, religion, affiliation or sexual orientation. This is so because we are material creatures.

As Frederick Engels said at Marx's funeral: "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx has discovered the (Continued on page 6)"
...Ownership'
(Continued from page 1)
the political impact of making it appear that the working class had a stake in the capitalists’ sys-
tem. It was a politically expedient measure adopted at the height of capitalism’s greatest
economic crisis to stave off what “enlightened” skilled craftsman and ruling class, led by Roosevelt,
fear would develop into an equally destabiliz-
ing political crisis.
Many capitalist interests were as fiercely opposed to the reforms of the 1930s as they are in favor of President Bush’s proposals for “reform ing” the system today. Then, as now, both sides of the argument claimed to take their
stand in the interest of America’s workers. When Congress adopted Roosevelt’s proposals in
1935, for example, Rep. John V. Tolan of New York
de-nounced it as “insidiously designed to pre-
vent business recovery, to enslave workers, and
to prevent any possibility of the employer pro-
viding more work for the people.”
Many of the same capitalist interests that ini-
tially opposed the New Deal measure eventual-
ly became reconciled to it. The New York Times
came out against it in 1935, but in 1940 it de-
scribed Social Security as “a permanent part
of the American life, not only because it works, but also because it is a large part of the population
has a personal investment in it.” (Our emphasis.)
Of course both sides of today’s capitalist argu-
ment also claim to speak for the working class, which they can get away with because the working class is unorganized and cannot speak for itself.
Regardless of which side capitalists and politi-
ticians take in the debate, however, the “success” of
either approach is linked to future expansion of
the economy and high rates of employment. Yet
the economy continues to stagnate, and only recently the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
reported that a smaller proportion of working-age Americans are active in the labor market today
than at any time since 1988. The fact that so many
American workers have been dropped from the
labor market entirely helps to keep the official
unemployment rate low because those who give up
the search for work entirely are excluded from the
official jobless figures. Included or not, how-
ever, they are there, and wholly apart from what
that might mean in terms as a growing source of
social breakdown and unrest, it under-
cuts the arguments on both sides of the debate on
Social Security.
In short, even if we were to accept the argu-
ment that workers really do pay into the Social
Security system, and that the fund is not simply
diverted from surplus value, the systemic elimi-
nation of a large and growing portion of the
working class from the economy removes them
from the Social Security system.
Bush’s “ownership society” idea did not pro-
voke the same response before last year’s elec-
tion as it has since he brought it up again in his
State of the Union address in January, but it was
not totally ignored during the campaign.
Last September, for example, former labor sec-
retary Robert Reich dismissed it as “hokum.”
“Ownership of America is now more concen-
trated than since the days of the Robber Barons
of the 19th century,” Reich said. “The richest one
percent of America owns more than the bottom
90 percent put together.”
(“The most current Monthly Population
Estimate for the United States is 293,382,953,
(Continued from page 5)
...Crashes
(Continued from page 2)
be done. Most trains do not crash, and that
apparently is good enough.
As to the Glendale “accident”: it shows that
the nation’s mental health care system is utter-
ly inadequate. Even so, much could have been
done to lessen the impact of a would-be suicide’s
jumping off the train tracks or driving a vehicle onto train tracks.
First was the configuration of the train. The
heavier engine pushed the lighter passenger cars. A locomotive engineer official said: “There is no question you are safer when
the engine is pulling the train. For years, I have
thought that using engines to push trains was going to end in a disaster. Had there been a loco-
motive-at-the-front-end, this would have hap-
pened in Glendale.” (Los Angeles Times, J. an 7)
An FRA representative claimed “the evidence
is not conclusive.” Any student of high school
physics, perhaps even a good science teacher, earlier
should know about momentum. Of two objects
moving at the same speed, the heavier will have
greater momentum. A locomotive would have
likely thrown the SUV aside or carried it along
with the train.
The Los Angeles Times also reported that a loco-
motive-behind configuration is “less expensive be-
cause train operators don’t have to buy addi-
tional locomotives or build turnarounds to move
engines from one end of the train to the other.”
There is another problem. It is quite easy for
anyone, including a terrorist with explosives, to
drive a vehicle onto railroad tracks. In
California alone, there are some 9,000 grade
crossings. It costs between $20 million and $40
million to separate one grade crossing. The fed-
eral government provides the state $15 million a
year. At an average cost of $30 million, sepa-
rate them about every 270 miles. About what the
U.S. plutocracy has allocated for subjugating
and occupying Afghanistan and Iraq. Money is
available, but capitalism has other priorities.
The facts cry out. Capitalism is to blame, capi-
 talism must go. How will workers realize these
facts and act?

...Alienation
(Continued from page 5)
...Workers and the ‘Workerless’ Economy
By Robert Bills

• Technology & Sociology
•A ‘Workerless’ Economy
•SLP Sounded the Alarm
•The ‘Knowledge Class’
The ‘Knowledge Class’

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Alienation From Our Historic Purpose

Worse, the working class exist merely to fight ruling-class wars? Does the working class exist just to be
forever duped, swindled and misled by the bourgeoisie? Does the working class exist to scratch and claw for mere reforms from the bourgeoisie? Is it the fate of the working class to eventually perish in a holocaust created by capitalist’s military servants at the Pentagon? Is it America’s poor and working class who create all wealth to act in our own class interests? Is it the capitalist class daily commits ecological catastrophe created by corporate poli-
lutes? The answers are “No.”

Marx saw that capitalism could be the last “antagonistic” period in which society is divid-
ed by conflicting and irreconcilable class inter-
ests. He therefore assigned one task to his
esteeled working class: revolution! Abolish class distinctions! Abolish the profit motive! Abolish private control over production and distribution! Produce and distribute sanely! Create the new society! Create the new world! Marx summed it up beautifully: “The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing.” (Marx to Engels, Feb. 18, 1865)

The choice is obvious. Is it right for a slave to be free of the master? Is it right for a battered
wife to be free of the tormentor? Is it right for a child to be free of the bully? Is it right for we
call who create all wealth to act in our own class interests? The capitalist class daily commits crimes against humanity as it acts in its class interests!

We must not be alienated from our historic task. It is our purpose to overcome alienation by realizing who we are and what our historic and revolutionary duty is. It is our purpose to build
Looking for Like-Minded People

I have a feeling that my subscription is close to expiring. Please keep The People coming. We at Wall Street Earth Fund and the Socialist Labor Party wish and wish there were more like-minded people in our little corner of the Intermountain West.

Gene Thompson, Brigham City, Utah

Appreciated

Oberlin College gratefully acknowledges your gift-in-kind during the 2004 calendar year of one subscription to The People. Subscriptions are important to this institution. Gift subscriptions are particularly appreciated in light of escalating costs and budgetary constraints. Thank you for this fine donation, which helps maintain the high quality of the Oberlin College libraries.

Linda R. Sloum
Gifts Librarian
Oberlin, Ohio

Home at Last

Wow! It feels like I’ve just “come home at last” when I read and understand all the principles of the Socialist Labor Party. You bet! I look forward to every issue of The People and pass my love along to many others who also wish to bring a better political/social system to America. This “free market capitalism” is rapidly destroying the lives of the helpless people of our once-great America. The SLP is the better way. We’ve got to get the word out—our time has now arrived.

Donald L. Ward
Corning, Calif.

Spreading the Message

I want you to know that I am out here yet spreading the message of the SLP in my everyday life, wherever and whenever I can! I know I must do more, such as donating money once again and distributing literature, but my belief is that true socialism can save the world we have never yet to be.

William R. Tews
Milwaukee, Wis.

Priced for Workers

I received the pamphlets I ordered last week today. Many thanks for your expediency in shipping them out. Thanks also for the complimentary issue of the paper. Lastly, thanks for keeping the costs of your materials very reasonable. As a low-wage worker who makes a minimum wage, you understand what it means to me.

Carmen F.

and where man is thrown back upon the brute conditions he has slowly been developing out of—the condition that predisposes the life of one man to the expense of another. Cannibalism,Ballingered, is the result of capitalist rule, a

race is so tremendous that the joys of childhood,

and the repose of old age are all securable to all. That the reverse is the fact; that a few—

safety of each promotes the safety of all. This

undergone a complete revolution. Today the

way that the brute law of self-preservation has

self-preservation no longer can justify the

man upon the death of an other. Cannibalism

of—the condition that predicates the life of one

and where man is thrown back upon the brute

that it enforces on man, the productivity of the

age. Thanks to the modern machinery of pro-

sibilities, is the glory of the

the line between modern possibilities for good

An Injustice

Voting without economic equality is an injustice. Today the American working class vote from where they sleep and should be voting from where they work. That is why their vote lies between their employer and worker power to control their own destiny. They do not have power in their own homes but do have economic power in the places they work. Workers have economic power to back up their vote providing they all belong to the same national union to deal with all the corporations today and in the future to manage production and social services for use and not profit.

Where does the working class start in order to live in a society that is based on production and social services for use and not profit? They start by becoming class-conscious. This class awareness includes all workers, such as street cleaners, garbage collectors, cleaning personnel, waiters, scientists, engineers and others that are involved in production and social services. Workers that make a minimum wage are just as important as the ones that receive higher wages.

Next, they must form unions that represent their economic power. Their economic power is based on recognizing that the workers control and run the industries and social services. Once they have a sufficient majority to vote for their unions candidates at the ballot box then the individual democracy can be replaced with an industrial democracy. Operating the industries collectively will provide economic equality for all workers. Voting without economic equality is an injustice.

John M. Lambase
San Pedro, Calif.

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You can help provide for the long-term financial security of The People by making a planned gift. This can be a bequest or by naming The People as a beneficiary of a more immediate 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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W
ile international attention has been riveted on the natural disaster caused by the tsunami in the Indian Ocean, certain unnatural disasters affecting this region have gone largely unnoticed. Newmont Mining Corp., of Denver, the largest gold producer in the world, has been bringing systemic environmental and human degradation to this region ever since it opened operations, launched in 1996 at Buyat Bay and Ratatotok on the northern island of Sulawesi, has sickened many people in the area. Local villagers evoked chastisement from one of its big shots, declaring, "Yeah, I think there was contamination a village in Peru!"

Commendable as Kurlander’s moralizing seems, his was a "sermon" delivered from a bed of quicksand, which is the muck that forms the basis of capitalist morals. The compulsions that drive Newmont to pollute Indonesian and Peruvian villages have nothing to do with morals and everything to do with maximizing profits at the expense of its workers, their families and the communities that they live in. The bankers, investors, political retainers, indeed the capitalist class collectively, profit from Newmont’s depredations.

Production for use, not for profit, will be the driving motive in socialist society. That, in turn, will transform the uses of gold and all other precious metals whose monetary basis will vanish with the anachronism of commodity production. Along with those changes, the well-being of people, communities and the environment will ascend to the highest consideration ever known in human history.

U.S. Mining Devastates Indonesian Environment

By B.B.

While international attention has been riveted on the natural disaster caused by the tsunami in the Indian Ocean, certain unnatural disasters affecting this region have gone largely unnoticed. Newmont Mining Corp., of Denver, the largest gold producer in the world, has been bringing systemic environmental and human degradation to this region ever since it opened operations, launched in 1996 at Buyat Bay and Ratatotok on the northern island of Sulawesi, has sickened many people in the area. Local villagers evoked chastisement from one of its big shots, declaring, "Yeah, I think there was contamination a village in Peru!"

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