The Wars In Iraq and Afghanistan

The following statement on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq is one of three resolutions on national and international affairs adopted by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party while in Session in July. The others can be found on page 4.

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party, in regular session assembled, reasserts that all wars in the modern world are rooted in the conflicting material ambitions of competing ruling classes. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are no exception. Thousands of American working-class sons and daughters, and tens of thousands of innocent Afghans and Iraqis, women, children and men, have been sacrificed over the last three years to further our ruling class’ ambition to establish firm control over the oil and other resources of the Middle East.

The working class of America has nothing to gain and much more to lose in the continuation of that conflict. Accordingly, the SLP repents its demand for the complete and immediate withdrawal of all American military forces from Afghanistan and Iraq. However, we recognize that the government of our country as presently constituted is nothing but an instrument to serve the interests and further the ambitions of our country’s power- and profit-driven ruling class, and that any demand addressed to that government is doomed to fail on deaf ears. Only the working class of the country has both the interest and the potential power to bring an immediate end to the insane slaughter in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Therefore, we appeal to the working class of America to heed the SLP’s message for organizing its political and economic might to take control of the nation’s affairs as the only feasible and practical method of bringing a speedy end to the conflict and resolving all other major social problems produced by the blood-soaked system of capitalism.

USDA Claims No Threat From Mad Cow Disease

By Bruce Cozzini

Meat producers and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) claim that there is no danger to the public from mad cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalitis), citing the small number of cases detected, only three from 2002 to 2006. But this is in the face of low testing rates, about 3,000 cattle per day, approximately one percent of the 35 million cattle slaughtered each year. Now, in July, only four months after the most recent case was detected, the Department of Agriculture has reduced the testing rate by a factor of 10 to about 100 per day, increasing the probability that infected cattle will pass into the market and infect consumers, but decreasing costs for agribusiness and the likelihood that embarrassing information will become public.

The original testing program was viewed as “seriously flawed” at its inception in 2004 by the USDA inspector general, who stated it would lead to “questionable estimates.” Based on a 2004 draft report on the program, Dr. Peter Lurie of Public Citizen, a consumer group, criticized the testing program as “sloppily implemented in every possible way,” saying it has been “overvalued to reassure the public and the export market.” If that program was flawed, how should we characterize one that tests one-tenth the number of cattle? Michael Hansen of Consumers Union says of the USDA, “They’re playing Russian roulette with public health.”

Clearly, the testing program is not aimed at protecting public health, but with protecting the economic health and profits of the U.S. beef industry. Before mad cow disease, beef exports were a $23-billion-a-year market. As The New York Times noted on July 21, “More than 50 nations, including Japan and South Korea, shut their borders after the first case was found.” Thus, a testing program that finds no incidences of mad cow disease is in order. (Amazingly, in spite of the reduced testing, Japan opened its market to U.S. beef in August, although with the restrictions that the cattle are less than 20 months in age and the meat contains no brain or spinal material to decrease likelihood of transmitting the disease.)

(Continued on page 3)
SLP Program Spheres With Marxist Principles

Greetings,

I am very interested in your party as I am coming into much agreement with De Leonism. However, I am wondering what your stance is on internationalism. You have written on your website that the focus is solely on the U.S. party as well as a strong focus on socialist revolution in the U.S.

I strongly believe that socialist revolution is international in nature. However, all currents of Capitalism are completely international and reject the revolutionary potential, etc., of unions. It is within your sphere of influence that Livermore should be put into the SIU program; however, I am curious about whether or not you give support to any working-class union activity, i.e., trade union activity.

Please let me know. Thank you.

Jason B.
via email

Dear Jason,

Thank you for your email of April 21 and your questions about the SLP.

The SLP is both national and internationalist. It is national in that its program of Socialist Industrial Unionism is in harmony with American political and economic conditions, but with American traditions. It is internationalist in that it calls upon the working classes of all nations to organize for the overthrow of class rule in harmony with the conditions and traditions of their own countries. This position, or policy, is consistent with the views expressed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels on the same subject. As they put it in the Communist Manifesto: “Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.”

They reiterated the point when, in the same document, they added: “Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.”

The SLP agrees that the socialist revolution must be international, and always has. However, it also understands that the internationalism issue of June 1926 in particular, must take the lead. As Daniel De Leon put it: “All countries are not equally ripe for the Cooperative Commonwealth. From this fact flows the conclusion that the revolution which will set up the Cooperative Commonwealth cannot break out in any but the ripest of the ripe. Again, the Cooperative Commonwealth cannot break out in any, even the ripest, without a sufficient number of others have reached a minimum degree of ripeness. The supposition that any one country can have reached the necessary ripeness for the social revolution while all others remain substantially unripe is unanswerable. Capitalism, like a wobbling movement—sees to it that that shall not, cannot. Be. Were such a thing possible, then, it’s starved would be that singular country which would be the Like a wobbling movement. The inter- nationalist capital smoulderer will flatten out the social revolution within such boundaries in short order.”

As today’s current text, the SLP recognizes that its members and supporters sometimes must join them to keep their jobs, and while it provides guidelines for conducting party work within them, it also rejects their claim to being genuine unions in any meaningful sense of the word.

For example: The present “unions” make no effort to organize the workers as a class. They divide them into separate units and effectively utilize the “labor con- tract” to prevent the workers from acting as one in their interests. They do not and cannot educate workers in their own class interests because they are organized on the false premise that capital and labor have interests in common. They do not and cannot prepar- e the workers to assume control of the industries and to conduct production for the benefit of all society because they are committed to the “principle of private ownership, private initiative and the protection of pri- vate property,” as the Executive Council of the AFL once put it.

Furthermore, these “unions” are controlled by well- entrenched bureaucratic machines that have a vested interest in capitalism. In truth, they are nothing more than mechanisms for the defense of capitalism. Indeed, by mediation, intimidation and abuse, all, by exercising control over workers’ jobs, they discourage the rank and file from organizing in accord with their class interests.

By contrast, the Socialist Industrial Unionism advo- cated by the SLP aims to organize all the workers as a class and would operate on the basis of the class strug- gle. The SIU would also proclaim the need for political organization of the working class to establish, via the IFW, its democratic relations in a society of equal for all. The socialist reconstruction of society. At the same time, it would enable the working class with the physical power needed to back up their democratic decision to abolish capitalism by “taking, holding and operating” the means of production and distribution in the interests of society as a whole.

The IWW is a special case. It claims to have revolu- tionary aims, but rejects the political action needed to education the working class to the act of expressions of giving expression to their mandate. It is “anarch- syndicalist,” and the SLP rejects it for the same rea- sons that Marx and Engels rejected the anarchists who sought to commandeer the First International in the 19th century. For those same reasons, the SLP pro- hibits its members from being members of the IW.

I realize that these are not exhaustive answers to your questions, but I hope they help to clarify the main points that interest you.

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT BILLS
National Secretary
Texas Pushing Coal Use Despite Global Warming

By B.B.

“Coal contains measurable amounts of most naturally occurring elements. These elements become more concentrated before, during, and after it was formed. Some of these elements are toxic to plant and animal life, and due to the large amount of coal used by power plants, appreciable quantities of potentially hazardous trace elements are released into the atmosphere each year.”

—Center for Applied Energy Research, University of Kentucky

Texas may be leading the nation in a shift from natural gas to coal as a source of power and energy. In spite of mounting evidence linking coal to global warming and against all reasonable judgment, Gov. Rick Perry has authorized and place[d] “fast track” construction of 16 new coal-fired, electricity-generating units by various companies. The locations for all but two of these new plants are in North Texas, upwind from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. That coal is a major cause of global warming and greenhouse gases does not seem to faze the Texas governor. Texas is the country’s leading producer of lignite, or “brown,” coal. Lignite is the lowest grade of coal and the dirtiest to burn. That the plants will burn huge quantities of lignite is perfectly reasonable to Gov. Perry. Texas “brown” coal is cheaper to extract from the ground than higher grades and would lead to huge profits. After all is said and done, that and only that is what capitalism is all about.

State Rep. Lon Burnam, Democrat of Fort Worth, may be on the verge of figuring out that profits and the environment mix as well as a barrel of pressure and a barrel of briny Gulf water. Burnam was the lone representative to oppose the plan at a public meeting held recently by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. “I have watched this agency and its predecessors for 25 years,” he said, “and I have yet to see it work for the people instead of the polluters.” The commission is loaded with Perry appointees who have obsequiously bowed to industry and have shrunk profits objectives. Indeed, the companies involved will not be required to demonstrate to the commission that additional coal-fired plants will be within federally mandated limits on pollution.

“The state, not the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], decides whether or not to grant the permits,” The Dallas Morning News reported on July 10. “All the federal agency can do is to object if it finds a problem.”

The federal agency apparently does not object. Richard Green, regional administrator of the EPA, accepted at face value a Texas Utility TXU’s plan to cut emissions by 20 percent.

The state permit applications include no such qualification, however, so Texans would do well to practice at holding their breath.

How familiar? EPA’s “limits” on pollution are straw men designed for industry to play fast and loose with to meet their profit goals. Meanwhile, high ozone levels in the Dallas-Fort Worth area already are creating smog, scaring lungs, burning eyes, afflicting asthma-sufferers, children, and sick and elderly people, particularly during the summer months. TXU, which plans to add the largest number of units, insists “it’s a good deal for customers and shareholders because burning coal is relatively cheap—dragging down overall Texas electricity prices—and produces big profits.”

No doubt that “good deal” represents a consensus among capitalists and their political lackeys. Others who appeared before the commission saw it differently. Dr. David Allen, whom the Morning News identified as a leading air pollution expert at the University of Texas at Austin, underlined the harmful effects of such added capacity. In a contrived rebuttal, TXU offered its own “expert,” Environ Corp., which also happens to be the state commission’s “expert.”

The sleight-of-hand strategy employed by the state is to evaluate each of the 14 permits being tendered for plants upwind of Dallas-Fort Worth separately, rather than the total number, in determining the environmental impact. “Critics say that defies reason,” the Morning News asserted. Rep. Burnam showed he saw through the ruse when he declared: “The whole permitting process is about allowing pollution in the air for economic gain.” Burnam to the head of the class!

Despite all the hoopla about alternative energy, capitalism prevents the development of energy sources that could decrease the use of fossil fuels and reduce pollution. Developing the technology needed to reduce the use of fossil fuels does not suit capitalism’s raison d’être—it is not as profitable, runs counter to established vested interests and would, in fact, undermine the market for the sale and burning of fossil fuels. Instead, what we have is the compulsive cycle of pollution and global warming: the more heat buildup, the more relief sought by air conditioning; the more demand on electricity; the more fossil fuels used, the more global warming; and the cycle repeats.

Moreover, the system has arranged its societal matrix and inherent social relationships to maximize the waste of energy resources. This is evident in the extravagant fragmentation of urban and suburban areas, the dissolution of communities into sprawl, the huge proliferation of freestanding houses and the compulsion that requires extensive use of private automobiles.

In the rational society of capitalism based upon production for use and democratic control of industry, new socioeconomic relationships will generate a total reconstruction of the urban fabric and methods will be widely employed to dramatically reduce the need for either natural gas, oil or coal use. Weans, in Texas and the rest of the country will suffer the consequences of burning coal, and people will choke, sicken and die; pollution and global warming will continue, and humanity will spiral downward to an unknown and uncertain abyss.

...Mad Cow

(Continued from page 7)

Earlier this year, the USDA blocked a program by Creekstone Farms, a Kansas-based beef company, which wanted to test all of the cattle it slaughters. The USDA testing not only tests a small fraction of cattle slaughtered, it tests only high-risk cattle, those that are sick, unable to walk, known in the trade as “downers.” The fear is that 100 percent testing may reveal a higher rate of infection or force other processors to test all cattle in order to prove the safety of the product.

Again, capitalism shows that its priorities lie with profits rather than safety and demonstrates its propensity to control information when it is unwilling to control quality.

New Leaflets Ready for Distribution

• America’s Workers Can Build a Better World (SLP National Platform)
• Global Warming: All Talk, No Action
• Worsens Threat
• Socialist Industrial Unionism: The Workers’ Power
• Technology & Job Loss: What Workers Can Do About It
• What Is Socialism?

Please send me $2 copies of each of the above titles. I enclose $____ to help cover printing and postage costs.

Name
Address
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Civil Liberties & Repression

The following statement on civil liberties and repression is one of three resolutions on national and international affairs adopted by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party while in Session in July.

It is a well-known fact that the leading assault on the democratic rights of U.S. workers today comes from the United States government—the same government sworn to uphold our Constitution and the Bill of Rights, that preaches democracy in the Middle East while it wages wars there for control of oil.

For decades civil liberties have been assaulted under the guise of fighting crime, drugs and terrorism. The Supreme Court chips away at our protections, Congress increasingly circumvents our freedoms and intelligence agencies routinely ignore constitutional protections, compile files on tens of thousands of citizens, spy, wiretap and plot break-ins and disruptions.

Today, the government’s “war on terror” has brought few terrorists to justice, yet serves to justify full-scale assualts on our liberties under the Patriot Act and the FISA Amendments Act. U.S. citizens have been “disappeared” and unconstitutionally held without trial. Persons defined as “enemy combatants” have been spirited off and tortured. Phone records, bank records, email and library records are subject to seizure without warrants.

Our freedoms and liberties are not mere privileges we enjoy by the grace of our ruling class or government bureaucrats. They are, it has been said, conquests of civilization wrested from tyrants by our forebears at the price of rivers of blood.

Capitalism is increasingly incompatible with freedom and democracy. To save capitalism, its ruling class must destroy freedom and democracy. To save freedom and democracy, the capitalist system, the system of economic despotism, must be destroyed. Socialist economic democracy alone can fully guarantee lasting freedom and democracy.

Adopted by the National Executive Committee in Regular Session, Santa Clara, California, July 16, 2006

Unions & The Class Struggle

The following statement on unions and the class struggle is one of three resolutions on national and international affairs adopted by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party while in Session in July.

As tens of thousands of workers are losing jobs, being “bought out,” or experiencing forced wage reductions in the auto industry are unions organized and acting back on class lines? Unions have not! Instead, union leaders muddy reality by declaring that their members are being kicked “out of the middle class” by unscrupulous corporate executives. And they are offering deals to capitalists to “share the suffering” of bankruptcy-threatened companies.

By their statements and actions these union officials are showing themselves as betrayers of the working class and allies of the capitalist class. Workers can defend themselves only if they understand their status as working class. Regardless of their income, workers must sell their labor power to survive in a capitalist world. And the capitalists must pay the lowest wage that they can manage in the labor market in order to compete with other capitalists in the same commodity markets. That is the basis of the class struggle.

Capitalist production takes place only if profits can be made. And if that requires firing workers, cutting their wages or offshoring their jobs to countries where wages are substantially lower, so be it. Increasingly, wages are being forced downward as jobs are cut and wages reduced in auto, airline and other major industries. It isn’t about individual capitalist villainy; it’s about the capitalist system.

Workers cannot count on procapitalist unions to defend them. They must get beyond union smoke screens and organize as a class to form Socialist Industrial Unions and begin the fight to establish socialism and end exploitation.

Adopted by the National Executive Committee in Regular Session, Santa Clara, California, July 16, 2006

Capitalist ‘Civilization’ Breeds War
And Its Atrocities

War and its atrocities are inseparable from capitalist “civilization.” Only socialism can put an end to them.

The ‘Water Cure’ and Others

(Daily People, April 23, 1902)

The atrocities of “civilized” warfare are only provoking fresh outbreaks of horror, despite the callousness with which their frequency has engendered. One day a Russian battalion fires a river with the bodies of killed and wounded Chinese; the next the British use defenseless Boer women and children as shields in attacking, and now comes the report of the inquiry “war and humanity” administered to help Filipinos by the American soldiers.

Every one of these savage acts has in turn elicited the unsparring criticism of all the nations, especially those involved. They have also awakened the denunciations of the party out of power against the party in, as in this country, where the Democrats have denounced the Republicans as the incarnation of all that is bloody and revolting.

Considering that every one of these heinous offenses against decency and humanity are directly the outcome of principles avowed and held sacred by modern “civilization,” these international and party criticisms would be indeed laudable were they not so tragic. When practically all nations and parties are tarred with the same brush, “holier than thou” is no longer, when ascribed by any of them, becomes the acme of conscious or unconscious hypocrisy only worthy of derision and laughter.

Modern society contends that if the race is to progress it must be broadly divided into two classes: one a small, a very small minority, that owns and controls the land, the capital and the machinery used in wealth production and distribution, and lives by exploiting the other, the greater part of the population, that is without land, capital and the machinery, etc., etc., and that in order to live must consent to be exploited.

The profit, the superabundance of wealth, arising from such an arrangement, to this small class, is held to be a necessary incentive to the advancement of the race. Without it we would not seek to emulate each other and all would be on a dead level, a theory which the early communist development of the race flatly refutes.

This profit, this superabundance of wealth, leads to an accumu-
High Court Strikes Down 4th Amendment Safeguard

By Ken Boeticher

Desmantling democracy takes time. No people can be expected to willingly accept the yoke of tyranny. That yoke is more easily fastened upon the necks of the unsuspecting if installed bit by bit.

The Supreme Court has played a leading role in a decades-long, relentless assault upon the democratic rights and liberties of U.S. workers carried on by government at all levels—the very legislative, executive and judicial branches of government sworn to uphold the Constitution upon which our rights and liberties are based.

This summer the Supreme Court took up that role again. The court rendered its decision in the context of the familiar “get tough on crime” campaign used so often by ruling-class elements to “justify” circumscribing the rights and liberties, not merely of criminals, but of all.

The court’s June 15 decision in Hudson v. Michigan may be a fatal blow to the Fourth Amendment, for it completely eviscerates the so-called exclusionary rule, which excludes evidence garnered as a result of illegal searches or seizures.

Some history is in order. The Fourth Amendment upholds the “right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures.” It allows for searches and seizures only under authority of a warrant, issued “upon probable cause” and “supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”

The Supreme Court wrote in 1886 in Boyd v. United States that the Fourth Amendment’s prohibitions apply “to all invasions on the part of the government and its employees of the sanctity of a man’s home and the privacies of life. It is not the breaking of his doors, and the rummaging of his drawers, that constitutes the essence of the offense; but it is the invasion of his indefeasible right of personal security, personal liberty and private property.”

That right was based on a common-law knock-and-announce principle dating to the 13th century. As the Supreme Court itself once affirmed, there was “little doubt that the Framers of the Fourth Amendment thought that the method of an officer’s entry into a dwelling was among the factors to be considered in assessing the reasonableness of a search or seizure.”

In 1914, in Weeks v. United States, the Supreme Court held that evidence seized unconstitutionally could not be used at trial, pointedly observing that if “letters or private documents” were unconstitutionally seized and “used in evidence against a citizen accused of an offense, the protection of the Fourth Amendment declaring his right to be secure against such searches and seizures is of no value, and the very essence of the protection from the Constitution.” In a decision in 1961, the Supreme Court first imposed this “exclusionary rule” on the states.

But since the Court has since whittled away at the Fourth Amendment’s provisions and the exclusionary rule. Cars were exempted from the exclusionary rule, then motor homes, on the basis that immediacy was needed when movable property was involved. By the same logic any wheeled, winged or hulled craft are also exempted. Special no-knock warrants have been held to be legal in certain cases where the police convince a judge that officers or evidence

would be at risk if they announced themselves before busting down a door.

Warrantless searches have been approved in “antiterrorist” legislation. Probable cause is no longer needed in certain cases. Unconstitutionally obtained evidence can be used under circumstances approved by such legislation.

But until Hudson v. Michigan, the exclusionary rule still stood, however wounded. Justice Scalia wrote the 5-4 majority opinion, joined by Chief Justice Roberts and Justices Kennedy, Thomas and Alito. Kennedy wrote a concurring opinion that weakly and unconvincingly asserted that the decision didn’t completely negate the exclusionary rule.

Scalia went for the jugular, however, asserting that the “social cost” of letting defendants go free when illegally procured evidence is disallowing in court was too high relative to the privacy protection citizens receive from the knock-and-announce principle. “Resort to the massive remedy of suppression of evidence of guilt is unjustified,” Scalia wrote.

Today’s police forces, Scalia wrote, are so professional that the knock-and ANNOUNCE rule isn’t needed. There is “increasing evidence that police forces across the United States take the constitutional rights of citizens seriously.” Moreover, he opined, police knob-and-announce compliance can be enforced by administrative proceedings and civil lawsuits.

Justice Breyer wrote the dissenting opinion, joined by Justices Stevens, Souter and Ginsberg. He observed that, far from knowing constitutional rights seriously, “The cases reporting knock-and-announce violations are legion,” with available data indicating “a widespread pattern” of disregard of this constitutional right among the police. Moreover, Breyer observed, the record of periods during which there was no enforcement of the exclusionary rule explicitly show that civil lawsuits and administrative actions have never been enough to ensure compliance with the knock-and-announce rule. In fact, as Breyer failed to point out, even with the exclusionary rule in effect, knock-and-announce violations have been “legion.”

Breyer observed that the majority’s opinion in Hudson v. Michigan “weakens, perhaps destroys, much of the practical value of the Constitution’s knock-and-announce protection.” Further, he wrote, “The majority’s substantial social costs’ argument is in argument against the Fourth Amendment’s exclusionary principle itself.”

In fact, without the exclusionary principle the Fourth Amendment itself is in real danger. A few more judicial decisions should do it in completely.

The court’s ruling reflects more than merely a capitalist-class campaign to “get tough on crime” and thereby maintain their criminal rights.” Giving the police wider latitude to invade a person’s privacy is a basic characteristic of a police state. Today, in the United States, that latitude is no longer merely threatened. It is established precedent. And any who believe that “professionalism” among the enemies of the working class who call themselves police will hold the threat at bay are fooling themselves. How many more provisions of the Bill of Rights will be gutted before workers in this country begin to mobilize against the danger of approaching totalitarianism? None, we hope, lest the mobilization arrive too late.

SLP’s NEC Meets Over Work-Packaged Weekend

By Donna Bills

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party followed a streamlined agenda when it met in Santa Clara, Calif., July 14-16 and salvaged enough time from a work-packed weekend to issue three resolutions on important social developments.

The first resolution on unions and the class struggle, with special reference to the auto industry, emphasized that present-day procapitalist unions betray the working class and concluded that workers must organize into Socialist Industrial Unions to protect themselves and to fight for socialism.

The second resolution on civil liberties and repression pointed out that the U.S. capitalist government leads the assault on workers’ democratic rights and concluded that only a socialist democracy can fully ensure freedom and democracy for all.

A third resolution restated the SLP’s position on the cause of war in the modern world and called upon the working class to abandon appeals to the capitalist government and to take matters into their own hands.

The three resolutions have been posted to the Party’s website (see SLP Statements and Documents) and are printed in this issue of The People. In his report to the NEC, the National Secretary highlighted a number of party matters requiring serious consideration, most of which received extensive discussion.

During that weekend the NEC affirmed the need to review and possibly update the Socialist Industrial Union program because of the many changes that have taken place within capitalist industry over the several decades. Also discussed was the need for labor sourcing, globalization, automation, etc. To pursue this challenge systemically, the NEC appointed a special committee to evaluate the scope of the problem and “submit a joint report to the NEC within three months.”

Another matter given considerable attention was the effectiveness of the party’s efforts to recruit and retain new members. The NEC elect-
...Mega-slums.
(Continued from page 6)

expelled from the world system," Davis asserts, "and who can imagine any plausible scenario, under neoliberal (captive) auspices, that would reintegrate them as productive workers or mass consumers?"

None of this was anticipated by Marxism, according to Davis, and "the 20th century became an age, not of urban revolutions as classical Marxism had imagined, but of epochal rural uprisings and peasant-based wars of national liberation." The global growth of a vast informal proletariat...is a wholly original structural development unforeseen by either classical Marxism or modernization pundits," he added.

We cannot speak for "modernization pundits," but we can mention that the globalization version of what Marx not only saw, but that he examined and explained for 19th-century England and Europe as a whole, is simply wrong. The uprooting of the rural populations of England and Ireland, and their forced concentration into the slums of Manchester and other English cities, was brought on by essentially the same economic laws of capitalism that are still at work today. The rural populations forced off the land and into the cities of 19th-century England were no better equipped to become industrial workers than their modern-day counterparts in China, India or Mexico.

Marx was optimistic enough to believe that the working classes of Europe would not allow themselves to be degraded and exploited indefinitely, but he did not allow himself to be misled by false hopes. As he put it in the Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy: "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces, for which there is room in it, have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society. Therefore, mankind always takes up only such problems as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation."

Although capitalism, global or otherwise, may not have worked out all of its possibilities even now, it certainly has worked out all of its possi- bilities for social good and human progress. Left to itself it will lead the world into colossal crises, the basic characteristics of which were foreseen well enough by Marx, though the scale of the crises now emerging may have caused even a Marx to catch his breath.

No power on earth can stop it except the working class, conscious of its interests in creating a world in which exploitation and human misery are made impossible by the collective ownership and democratic administration of all means of production, distribution and communications, combined with the abolition of the system of wage labor and establishment of a productive system designed to fill human needs. The SLP, with its program of Socialist Industrial Unionism, makes that aspiration possible. Indeed, it is the only practical and realistic response to the threat that capitalism, run amok, poses to the world.

...Hezbollah-Israeli Clash
(Continued from page 1)

the highly ambitious theocratic state of Iran. However, as Hezbollah proved to be a more tena- cious force for than anticipated, and as international opinion began to shift to the Hezbollah side,less attacks, such as the 2006 classic war attack, the United States suddenly lined up behind efforts to impose a ceasefire to be enforced by an international "peacekeeping" force hurriedly pieced together by the United Nations. Although the ceasefire was finally agreed to by Israel and Hezbollah, signs of it breaking down were already evident as this issue of The People was in production. "Helicopter-horne commandos raided a Hezbollah stronghold...early Satur- day [Aug. 19] in what Lebanon called a 'flagrant violation' of a fragile six-day-old ceasefire," The Washington Post reported.

Conflict Can't Be Justified

The Israeli state's brutal incursions into the Gaza Strip to the south of Israel, and its mas- sive aerial assault against southern Lebanon and Beirut to the north of Israel, had no justifi- cation. Nor was the Kasyusha rocketing attacks on Haifa and other Israeli cities by Iran's surro- gate Hezbollah army any less brutal or justi- fied. Both resulted in the indiscriminate mur- der of innocent men, women and children, all with no interest in the conflict, but only in the military material interests of their respective ruling classes.

The specter of a much broader conflagration that could yet erupt from the latest outburst of conflicting material interests is underscored by how Iran's ruling-class ambition to become the dominant power in the Middle East come into conflict with those of Israel, which has long been an extension of American imperialist interests in the region. Israel's possession of nuclear weapons, coupled with Iran's ambition to become a nuclear power, make this prospect all the more frightening, not only for the region's workers but for the entire world.

This potential conflagration places working- class populations in conflict with one another solely at the behest of their ruling classes. The material motives of the ruling classes of the various states involved and the world's imperialist powers have conflicting ambitions.

• The Israeli state and the Palestinians both have irredentist claims to the land and its resources, both of which are also hung up on the horn of secular religious conflicts.

• Syria maintains a surreptitious unofficial presence and fronts for Iranian interests.

• Iran masks its immense poverty, nuclear ambitions and imperialist aspirations behind Shiite fanaticism, perceiving Israel as a surro- gate of Western imperialism.

• The imperialist powers have long coveted the oil of the Persian Gulf, but are stalemated by Iranian control and threats against these profitmaking resources.

• U.S. imperialist interests are torn between a widening of the Iraqi and Afghan backdoors, maintaining relations with the majority Iraqi Shites and support of Israel.

This potential conflagration once again places working-class populations in conflict with one another solely at the behest of their ruling classes. Socialist society, by eliminating the capi- talist system and the profit motive imbedded in production, will remove the source of these more and more frequent conflicts that can only lead to greater and greater catastrophes. —B.B.

...SLP's NEC Meets
(Continued from page 5)
ed a Membership Recruitment and Retention Committee "to evaluate SLP membership recruitment and retention policy and practice."
The NEC instructed the committee to "submit a report with recommendations for modifications of the membership recruitment and retention policy and practice in 90 days of receipt of all materials by the com- mittee." Ways and means for effecting greater participation in the members-at-large online dis- cussion list was referred to the committee, too.
The NEC also established a Press Committee "to evaluate the party's existing propaganda media and to submit a report on its findings within 90 days of this session." In addition, the Press Committee is to review for possible updating or replacement the party's old "questions and answers" pamphlet and home study course, both of which were referred to the NEC by the 46th National Convention. A resolution was referred to the NEC that short statements on current topics could be used as agitational material also was referred to the Press Committee.

In keeping with instructions of the 46th Nation- al Convention, the NEC reported completion of "a first draft of the website redesign" and that "...a sec- ond draft will be submitted to the NEC for approval or further revisions."

...People's Press Security Fund

This year's NEC Session, as the one held in 2003, did not include a traditional fundraising banquet so that the NEC could devote the entire weekend to its work. And work it did, from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. daily—and often longer—through the entire weekend. The discussions that took place were high in times but always enlightening. In the end, however, the NEC set a positive course for itself that should redound to the party's benefit.

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Anarchism
Having just moved from an area rife with liberal, magical-thinking “peace proponents,” I fully appreciated Michael James’ excellent article, “Peace for Sale” (July-August 2006). It brought to mind another irritating segment of politically naive activists—noisy malcontents and militant pacifists, who confuse the two radically different concepts of “peace.” Despite what it might say on their T-shirts, attitude is not everything and anarchy is not a plan. It’s merely (no matter their age) adolescent defiance of authority. The only effective positive social change will come from a total socialist reconstruction of society and it will be neither romantic nor glamorous and probably won’t make you feel all warm and fuzzy during the process. Preparation for revolution is serious work. It requires personal responsibility, commitment, study, cooperation, patience and perseverance, among other things. Most importantly, one who wants to replace the violent, competitive chaos of capitalism with a sane civilization needs to understand that it will be the class-conscious organization and collective effort of the working people of the world that will make it happen. Anything less—like pledging allegiance to a heroic or charismatic leader—who do our thinking for us or appealing to, shouting at, or thumbing our noses at the ruling class—is just mindless reaction that will lead to more of the same.
I carry around with me a quotation taken from parts of SLP National Secretary Robert Bills’ address to the 41st National Convention banquet in May 1993 in Santa Clara, Calif. In it he says, “People who go around pulling capitalism’s small hair...waste their time and they divert attention from what needs to be done...We...the men and women who comprise the Socialist Labor Party, condemn the capitalist system and call upon the working people to organize its economic and political strength to rid the world of that evil and to usher in the socialist era.”
Jill Campbell
Portland, Ore.

Pacifism
As a long-time reader of The People, I must take exception to an item in your July-August issue in which you equate pacifists with capitalists (“pacifists...pretend that capitalism can one day provide peace, justice or equality”). In fact, pacifism refers to an attitude about war, and says nothing about one’s particular political sentiment. I feel certain that you would find a much higher percentage of people sympathetic to your cause among pacifists than you would find among the general public. Personally, I identify myself as a Quaker pacifist revolutionary Socialist.
Paul Sheldon Drexel Hill, Pa.

letters to the People

...De Leon Editorial

(Continued from page 4)

ocation of goods, an overproduction, in all modern countries. The home market is glutted and foreign markets become a necessity. Territorial expansion, commercial wars for the capture and subtraction of present and prospective customers, are consciously advocated as a relief to the situation; while the doctrine that weak nations are the legitimate prey of strong ones—to be subdued or exterminated as conditions require—is unblushingly promulgated and practiced by monarchist and republican alike.

What can one expect of a society actuated by such principles—anything less or more beautiful than the brutal excesses of modern warfare? When it is held that society cannot progress without exploitation, extermination, why stand aghast, if you believe this to be true, at its logical results—a river full of dead and wounded Chinese, the use of defenseless Boer women and children as shields for the Boers, or the administration of the “water cure” to the Filipinos by Americans?
The modern strong man has no squirmings, no Christ-like sweat of blood for the sacrifices that must be endured—he accepts with Napoleonic stoical the logical outcome of a policy based on and advanced by brutality.

Funds

June 17-Aug. 11
Press Security Fund
Anonymous $590; $250 each Roy K. Nelson, Irene Schelin, Chris Dobbrell $200; Severing Magnus $107.71; Section Cook County, Ill.; $107.60; Harvey Fuller $75; Arthur Glazier $72.50; $50 each John S. & Rosemary Gale, Jim Plant, Donald Rogers; $40 each Bruce Gard, Anonymous, Robert F. Jensen $37; Daniel Connolly $30; $25 each John Ormsby; Margaret & Frank Reosholm; $20 each Valery Zaytsev, Marshall G. Sours, Alex Iwassow; T. McGregor $17.63; Robert Long $15.60 each Richard Mack, Paul Sheldon, J.A. Dingman, Doug Smiley; Gary Hemphill $6; $5 each Karl Piepenburg, Dave Nagel.
Total: $2,058.44

Prisoner Subscription Fund
Michael Preston $25; Valery Zaytsev $20; Diane Lorraine Poole $10; $5 each Richard Mack, James Lehner.
Total: $65.00

SLP Leaflet Fund
Chris Dobbrell $100; F. Clene $25; $20 each Henrietta Lasher, Sid Frid, Jill Campbell & Steve Littletop $10; $5 each Anthony William Greco, James Lehner, Lisa Toth; Richard H. Castrup $2; Joseph Belas $1.
Total: $193.00

SLP Sustainer Fund
Joan M. Davis $800; Michael Preston $350; Robert P. Burns $320; Bernard Borntick $300; Chris Dobbrell $200; Lois Reynolds $100; $50 each Section Wayne County, Mich., Michael Wenskusans; Richard A. Aiken (In memory of John W. Aiken) $45; Helena Stevens $40; Jill Campbell & Steve Littletop $20; Arthur Glazier $10.
Total: $2,285.00

Socialist Labor Party
Financial Summary
Bank balance (May 31) $116,691.19
Expenses (June-July) $18,175.48
Income (June-July) $7,034.16
Bank balance (May 31) $105,549.87
Deficit for 2006 $44,303.39

...
Global Capitalism Producing Massive Slums and Poverty

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural population.

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomeration of population, concentration of the means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessity consequent of this was political centralization, Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments, and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, one frontier, and one customs tariff.

—Communist Manifesto

This process created an urbanized working class, but it also created a “surplus” population of unemployed workers who served to keep wages low. This excess of human labor—“excess” in that capitalism has no employment for it to earn a living by—as with us to this day, but now it is reaching gigantic proportions on a global scale.

History may not be repeating itself with what the U.N. report called a “similar international regime” so much as taking up where it left off when the Russian Revolution came along in 1917. What happened in Russia was not what Western capitalism feared and millions of workers around the world hoped for, but the Stalinist tyranny into which it sank raised a barrier and a threat sufficient to slow down the unfettered expansion of capitalism into every nook and cranny of the globe.

Accordingly, rather than something “similar” to what occurred in the past, the emergence of megacities and hypercities in Africa, Asia and Latin America today is a continuation on a global scale of what occurred in Europe and the United States more than a century ago.

The rural population of the earth has always exceeded that of its cities, but this is rapidly changing, just as it changed in Europe and the United States decades ago. Rural populations in Africa, Asia and Latin America have declined precipitously over the past two decades while urban populations have grown enormously to create an urbanized global working class crushed by poverty and unemployment. In large measure, the shift results from the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In broad terms, these dominant capitalist financial institutions have used the threat of withholding development funds to compel governments to open their markets, sources of raw materials and labor for capitalist development.

Earlier this year urbanologist Mike Davis published a book, *Planet of Slums,* largely based on the U.N. report, which he first took up in an article by the same title in the March-April 2004 issue of the London *New Left Review.*

“...The brutal tectonics of neoliberal globalization since 1978 are analogous to the catastrophic processes that appeared in the first place, during the era of late Victorian imperialism (1870–1900),” Davis wrote in his article. “In the latter case, the forcible incorporation into the world market of large swaths of the continent’s new territories. Both subverted the interests of the state and drove further foreign resource theft (and the extraction of foreign labor) by the transnational companies. And both subverted the interests of the state and drove further foreign resource theft (and the extraction of foreign labor) by the transnational companies.”

By B.B.

They are called “megacities” and “hypercities,” and during the last 20 years they have sprung up all over the globe. They are cities surrounded by enormous slums into which 10, 20 or even 30 million people have been pushed, then crushed under the weight of enforced poverty and misery on an unprecedented scale. These enormous concentrations of human misery and degradation are direct products of what has come to be called “globalized capitalism,” the sanitized term for the unrestrained imperialism of the 21st century.

Nearly three years ago, the United Nations published a lengthy study or “Habitat report” on these developments under title of The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Set- tlements 2003. Although the report is laden with inane observations (“Poverty and slums are closely related...”; “...it is very difficult to survive in cities on less than a dollar a day...”) and with academic words to dress up and disguise more accurate but apparently distasteful ones (“neoliberalism” for unfettered, i.e., post-Soviet, capitalism and “globalization” for unliberalized imperialism), some of what it says is plain enough to be understood.

For example: “Some 1.2 billion people globally live below the World Bank U.S.$1-a-day extreme poverty line and about half of the world’s population lives below U.S.$2 a day. Poverty increased very rapidly from 1975 to 1993, but since then the numbers have barely increased. This disguises considerable regional variation: the biggest changes in poverty during the 1990s were in the transitional countries following liberalization, where extreme poverty increased from 14 million to 108 million...”

“...Much of the economic and political environment in which globalization has accelerated over the last 20 years has been instituted under the guiding hand of a major change in economic paradigm—neoliberalism, which is associated with the loss of the welfare state, liberalization of trade, markets and financial systems and privatization of urban services. Globally, these neoliberal policies have reestablished a rather primitive urban and rural social and economic regime that to which existed in the mercantilist period of the 19th century when economic booms and busts followed each other with momentous regularity, when slums were at their worst in Western cities and colonialism held global sway.”

Mercantilism is a legitimate term, but it was 18th- and 19th-century Western capitalist industrialization—including industrialization of the land—that subsumed peasant and rural populations by compelling them to seek survival as wage laborers in towns and cities. “The expropriation and exploitation of the agricultural population, intermittent but renewed again and again (from the 15th century forward), supplied...the town industries with a mass of proletarians,” as Karl Marx observed in the first volume of *Capital.* “Large-scale industry and large-scale mechanized agriculture work together,” he added in the third volume of the same work.