When the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor party met last May, it authorized the party's National Office to launch a "special fund." The fund was authorized in anticipation of some unusual expenses and the dangerous financial condition of the Socialist Labor party. When the effect of that drain on the party's funds became painfully clear that to avoid a major financial crisis, the NEC has authorized the National Office to launch a special fund to bolster the party's cash reserves.

One of the unusually heavy expenses anticipated was the need to move the party's headquarters from its present location. About the time the NEC met, the landlord of the building where the party's offices (and the editorial offices of The People) are located announced his intention to retire and to sell the building. Shortly thereafter the party was hit with a whopping 80 percent increase in rent. The search for new, adequate and less expensive facilities began in earnest as soon as the party's present landlord placed the building on the market—and, as luck would have it, those new facilities have been found.

The party's new offices will be in San Jose, Calif. They are 35 percent larger than the cramped quarters into which the party's offices have been crammed for the last three years, and they will cost the party 30 percent less in rent.

However, the expense of moving the headquarters will take a substantial bite out of those savings. When the effect of that drain on the party's resources is combined with other rising costs, it becomes painfully clear that to avoid a major financial crisis the SLP needs a substantial infusion of funds to bolster its depleted cash reserves.

Dick Cheney: A Perfect V.P. Choice—For Capitalism

By Diane Keser
Why was Dick Cheney selected to be George W. Bush's running mate? He is not just a close, trusted friend of the Bush clan, a loyal Republican or a recycled secretary of defense. Cheney has served a broad cross section of American capitalists who are concerned about protecting their holdings in Russia and elsewhere.

The Republican Bush-Cheney team has promised a new administration free of scandal. In this regard, Cheney brings some risks to the ticket. Under Cheney's leadership, for example, Halliburton has had commercial dealings with Iraq and Libya designed to circumvent U.S.-imposed embargoes against those two "rogue states" or "states of concern." According to COLUM Lynne, Halliburton "had a major stake in Dresser Rand and Ingersoll-Dresser Pump Co., two American players in the reconstruction of Iraq's oil industry." (The Washington Post, Feb. 20) As the United States and Britain continue their bombing of Iraq's northern and southern "no fly" zones, U.S. firms such as Halliburton continue to profit off Saddam's regime.

Dick Cheney has served a broad cross section of American capitalists who are concerned about protecting their holdings in Russia and elsewhere.

(Continued on page 6)
Workers’ Lives Still Imperiled by Dallas Smelter

By R.B. *Dallas Morning News*

The EPA’s clean-up effort was conducted between 1991 and 1993. According to the *Dallas Morning News*, the EPA tested, removed and replaced soil over 7,000 West Dallas yards that could have been polluted by lead particles released through the smokestack. Dr. James L. Carter, a professor of geochemistry at the University of Texas, stated that. “There’s considerable environmental risk for the people who live out there.” Despite EPA’s claim that lead in children had fallen from 10 micrograms per deciliter to 3.3 in 1999 screenings, thousands of residents “blame lead from the smelter for illnesses, including heart disease, learning disabilities, kidney problems and birth defects.”

Backlash Over Philadelphia Police Crackdown on Protest

By Linn Washington Jr.* *Philadelphia Inquirer*

Police arrested the protest leader, John Sellers, while he was walking down the street talking on a cell phone and charged him with possessing a dangerous instrument—his cell phone. Bail was set at $10,000, later reduced to $100,000 by a judge who commented that the charge for offense is a nonviolent misdemeanor.

“The defense attorneys are very concerned with what we perceive as overcharging,” said Andy Erha, a member of the legal team representing the protesters. Legal team members promised to fight the punitive arrests. They said they have obtained testimony on 59 incidents of excessive force within police custody: 6 incidents of sexual abuse, 22 examples of medical needs denied and 9 incidents of mental abuse.

Attorneys said they had agreements with the city to treat arrests similar to traffic tickets, a claim denied by city officials, including Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham, who promised vigorous prosecution of all charges against protesters.

Most of the arrests occurred on the second day of the convention, during often violent demonstrations in downtown Philadelphia. Protesters from various groups tied up evening rush-hour traffic and caused minor property damage.

The controversy in the wake of the July 12 beating of a carjacking suspect by Philadelphia police, an incident captured by a TV news helicopter camera, and the July 18 fatal shooting of an unarmed homeless man at Philadelphia’s main train station by an Amtrak policeman, has quickly ebbed in a controversy over police abuse of protesters. Some are calling for a boycott of the antediluvian system based upon the private ownership of property.

Lack of justice for the working class is not the main thing that makes capitalism an antisocial disaster. Injustice is rather a byproduct of the antediluvian system based upon the private ownership of the means of production and the exploitation of labor through the wages system. Advocating removal of this injustice is what the Socialist Labor Party is committed to.

Do You Belong?

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

For information on what membership entails, and how to apply for it, write to: SLP, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218 Ask for the SLP Membership Packet.

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*P.S. Commentator Linn Washington Jr. is an award-winning veteran journalist in Philadelphia who is proficient in coverage of race-related issues. Washington is a journalist—professor at Temple University in Philadelphia. He is a member of the International Human Rights Foundation and the World Socialist Party.*
Stanford Hospital Nurses Settle After 5-Day Strike

By Bruce Cozzini

In August, 2 nurses at Stanford hospital in Palo Alto, Calif., returned to work after setting a 5-day strike. The purpose of the strike was to organize a hospital nurses' union at Stanford, the largest of which, the American Nurses Association (ANA), now represents about 120,000 nurses. The ANA has been attempting to organize a United American Nurses, that now represents about 120,000 nurses. Similarly, the California Nurses Association (CNA) is planning a "boot camp" for nurses' union leaders in September, which so far has attracted about 300 potential leaders.

As nurses begin to show increased militancy, the capitalists that run the hospitals have developed sophisticated strike-breaking capabilities. A number of companies have been organized solely for the purpose of providing scab labor to replace striking nurses and was narrowly approved, even after 51 days. Those dissatisfied with the settlement is indicated by reports that the agreement was only narrowly approved, even after 51 days. The limited scope of the settlement was not made clear.

In any event, the promise of a new contract was a major boost for the striking nurses. Striking nurses were concerned about reports of medical errors and problems with equipment that the scabs did not know how to run. Part-performance leads to questions about U.S. Nursing's ability to screen nurses and check credentials. Also, for the replacements to cover for the nurses on strike required a great deal of overtime in an environment already understaffed, according to the Stanford nurses.

For the scab nurses to earn their $4,000 per month, they had to work 90 hours a week. Stanford nurses were concerned that the scabs leaving their shift. The returning workers had mixed feelings about the return. As an unidentified nurse told Mercury News reporter, "I know many of my feelings for my employer have changed." Another commented, "I'm relieved to be back and I'd like to thank a lot of people here who are very angry.

Patients, on the other hand, were particularly glad to have their regular nurses back.

That the strikers were not entirely satisfied with the settlement is indicated by reports that the agreement was only narrowly approved, even after 51 days. Details of the settlement were not made available, so its limitations are not known. Even so, the settlement was limited in one regard: it covered only nurses. Other workers are involved in the running of a hospital: janitors, custodians, lab technicians, therapists, clerks and housekeepers, to name a few. They too are subject to the same problems facing the nurse-striker.

In fact, at eight other hospitals in the San Francisco Bay area, some 3,800 non-nursing hospital workers represented by that workers are represented in the negotiations by the Committee for the Recognition of Nursing Achieve-
Capitalism creates a warped sense of morality among those in positions of power. Or perhaps it is better said that capitalism is a system under which those with a warped sense of morality naturally rise to the top. David Corn, Washington editor of The Nation, reports, Lieberman “is a leading recipient of funds from Big Insurance—over $197,000 so far in this campaign cycle. And—coincidence or not—he has pressed for health care measures the industry deems a threat, and consumer advocates criticize. He has opposed permitting patients to sue negligent HMOs for punitive damages. He supported product liability reform, which would make it difficult for consumers to sue businesses that manufacture and sell defective and dangerous products.”

Corn also notes that Lieberman failed to criticize Clinton for bombing a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan in 1998, even after evidence turned up showing that the plant’s supposed links to Osama bin Laden’s terrorists were dubious. And, Corn observed, Lieberman supported the use of U.S. bombers in Bosnia against Serb genocide but did not support U.S. intervention in the Rwandan genocide. His rationale was that “we have strong historic, strategic and cultural ties to Europe.” Meaning, of course, that “we” (the ruling capitalist class) that pulls war clouds on and off the world stage (and makes war clouds) still has no material interests in Rwanda worth the expense of getting involved.

Corn writes that, “In the land of Clinton, it doesn’t take much to be a saint.” A truly objective observer of the capitalist society would go further than that.

Karl Marx, after refuting a fallacy advanced by John Stuart Mill, paused to observe that “on the level plain, simple mounds look like hills; and the imbecile flatness of the present bourgeoisie is to be measured by the altitude of its great intellects.” Applied to the field of morality, that would go something like “under capitalism, a Lieberman looks like a saint—and the amorality of the capitalist class and its political defenders is to be measured by the sainthood of such great moralists.”

In short, it is no surprise that “Mr. Clean” is really about as suspect as any other capitalist politician.

After all, he supports and defends the capitalist system under which the overwhelming majority—the great working class—is daily robbed of the lion’s share of the product of its labor. This is the greatest robbery in history. The system of Lieberman only fail to point it out to the workers whose votes help keep them in their positions of privilege and power. They deny the very existence of that robbery, even while they grow fat off the booty shoveled their way by their capitalist sponsors.

What is socialism?

Socialism is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, mines, railroads, and all other instruments of production. Socialism means production to satisfy human needs, not, as under capitalism, for sale and profit. Socialism means direct control and management of all means of service by the workers themselves through a democratic government based on their nationwide economic organization.

Under socialism, all authority will originate from the workers, integrally united in the industrial proletariat, in one, absolutely at one, in one thing, to decide, governed by their private interests, as a goal such as “unity”—a goal the men of the imbecile flatness of the present bourgeoisie is to be measured by the altitude of its great intellects.” Applied to the field of morality, that would go something like “under capitalism, a Lieberman looks like a saint—and the amorality of the capitalist class and its political defenders is to be measured by the sainthood of such great moralists.”

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(Continued on page 7)
Building a Socialist Society

T he word socialism is one of the most interest- ing, and at the same time, most misunderstood words in common usage today. One seldom meets a person who can correctly define it or who has any conception as to what a socialist society would really be like.

For example, socialism has been described as "evil." It is true that the idea of being "opposed to freedom" and is said to be synonymous with bureaucratic state control of business.

Now consider how many people, reading or hearing these tall tales (told as gospel truth) say, "That’s not for me. Let China or Cuba or Vietnam or North Korea have it, but don’t give us socialism, if that’s what it is!"

The Socialist Labor Party heartily agrees! If socialism is what China or Cuba has today, or what the former Soviet Union had it wasn’t! Socialism does not exist anywhere we don’t want it either. But it isn’t and never has been what it is!

Socialism Means Higher Standards

America is the logical country for the initiation of socialism because it has the industrial capacity to produce an abundance of goods that is lacking elsewhere. Without that ability to produce an abundance socialism is an impossibility.

Socialism does not, did not, and could not exist in any of the countries mentioned.

Even those who know virtually nothing about socialism or capitalism have heard the slogan “Workers of the World, Unite!” Karl Marx, the founder of modern socialism, and the author of that line, did not call upon the peasants and subsistence farmers of nonindustrial, agricultural countries to unite, but upon the wage workers of the industrialized countries—the countries where capitalism is dominant. It’s a simple thing to remember. So, the countries where capitalism is dominant. The next time you hear the morning newspaper talks about the “Marxist guerrillas” lurking in some far-off jungle you will recognize for what it is—unadulterated propaganda for a reached goal aimed at mass consumption by those who uncritically accept anything the mass media seeks to impose.

Socialism, to repeat, presupposes a highly developed economy in which an abundance of the good things of life can be readily produced. Furthermore, socialism does not mean a lowering of our standard of living today. What it does mean is that the future will be vastly different from the present day in terms of the equality of all persons, the freedom to express personal ideas, and the full development of human abilities. If socialism is really to be realized, a vast new division of labor will be required.

Socialism Means Industrial Democracy

Socialism is not a paternalistic society in which the good things of life are hand- ed down from above. It is a society of equal economic opportunity for all.

The working class today creates all the wealth but, in the present system, only a fraction of that wealth in the form of wages. Under socialism, the same producers will create the wealth for all of society to enjoy. When those now unemployable and unemployed in specialized lines are put to useful endeavor, and when the ingenuous labor-saving inventions of the present day are put to eosial use, the working day will be shortened tremendously. How would you like to work 20 hours or less per week, and receive in monthly pay checks equal to what a $10,000/year income provides today? Socialism would turn this from a dream or fiction into an actual fact.

Socialism Means Freedom

Under socialism you will enjoy a freedom of thought that capitalism cannot and will not give you. Neither the media, the schools, the churches or your own self-government will be beholden to private capitalist interests for funds and subsi- dies. Workers in the publishing industry, for example, will be under no compulsion to slant their writing in favor of advertis- ers, as happens today. Their minds will be controlled by private owners. They will be free to devote themselves to the printing of the truth as they see it, and the reporting of facts.

Teachers, under socialism, can help de- velop our children’s minds free from the dictation of selfish influences. Every pos- sible facility to aid in the educational processes will be made freely available. And, as with every other industry, whether it produces goods or services, the “educa- tion industry” will be governed by the equal voice and vote of the workers who run it.

Socialism Means Cultural Freedom

The “social health industry” will con- cern itself purely with the prevention and relief of disease. There will be no profit mo- tive to corrupt the practice of doctors, nurs- es, technicians and others charged with the maintenance of the people’s health. Sickness and unhealthy conditions of mind and body that are due to unfavorable envi- ronment and unwholesome social condi- tions will disappear under conditions of peace and security.

The elimination of private profit will in- sure that only healthful foods are pro- duced. The finest of clinics, furnished with the newest in scientific equipment, will as- sist the doctors of the future to correct the physical and mental ills and disorders of the life of unnumbered thousands of workers.

When the economic insecurity of the present day is replaced by the freedom and democracy of socialism; when the crime-ridden environment of dog-eat-dog capitalism is replaced by one in which every man and woman has an equal op- portunity to make a place for themselves as useful producers; when the fear of wars to control some natural resource, market or strategic location is removed so that people can use their combined energies and talents for construction instead of de- struction—when all these things have come to pass, the main causes of mental ills and disorders will have disappeared and these neuroses will be things of the past.

What a far cry this conception of health-maintaining services is from the profit-seeking HMOs and miserly state Medicare system of today! The HMOs and the American Medical Association are correct in pointing out that national- ized health insurance would be a form of government-subsidized medicine. How- ever, their motive in fighting it is the de- sire to keep their lucrative field to them- selves and not share it with a state bureau.

It has nothing whatever to do with health maintenance, and everything to do with profit maintenance.

Socialism Means Security and Leisure

Under socialism, the old and infirm will receive all necessary medical attention, besides their full share from the abun- dant social store—not in the form of miserly pensions, meager “social security” payments or degrading charity, as today, but as standards that make it possible for our workers to retire and enjoy the vast benefits that society can offer them.

The enhanced leisure afforded by shorter hours of work will mean a great enrich- ment of our lives. Travel, the development of hobbies and various forms of entertain- ment—all these will be ours.

Capitalism, Not Socialism, Destroys the Family

Best of all, we shall know the full plea- sure of family life without the nagging cares that frustrate our hopes of happi- ness today. It is under socialism that the family will break up the home. It must be obvious to all now that it is capitalism that is responsible for the rapid increase of divorces and mothers and fathers both forced to work to make ends meet, children are often left without proper family guidance or are farmed out to unwholesome, social activities and even self-destructive behavior. Teen- age suicides—one of the most damning counts in the indictment against capital- ism—would be a thing of the past.

In a sane social order, marriage would cease to be a property relationship. Mu- tual love and understanding would be the sole foundation on which the family of the future will be built. Those who prate the loaded about “family values” today are already working toward the destruction of the very system that is destroying the family, denouncing socialism as an evil and blocking the path to saner social and per- sonal relations.

Perhaps at this point you are shaking your head and saying, “Much of what you say is plausible enough but socialism sounds too much like heaven on earth to be plausible. Socialism can’t hap- pen here. We must be familiar with hu- man nature, you know.”

Let’s reason this out. Would you be op- posed to helping create a veritable “heav- en on earth” if you knew it was possible? Do you really prefer for politicians who are pledged to maintain the present system, just because that is the exact opposite of that “heaven on earth”?

Socialism is not only a possibility, but the only practical solution to the problems of our age. Now let us consider this “human nature” that must be taken into account. Is it your nature to desire peace or war? Are you human enough to answer that question from your own nature? Is it your nature to prefer the insecurity of capitalism’s wage slavery, or do you yearn for security for yourself and your family? The Socialist Labor Par- ty maintains that the best in human na- ture can only be brought out by the best in social and economic conditions.

Only the Workers Can Establish Socialism

You, the workers, have built the mod- ern industrial machinery. You have con- tributed the technical skill, the brains and the brains and the brains. You who have met your obligations to soci- ety and deserve to enjoy the vast benefits that society can offer them.

The Socialist Labor Party urges the workers to realize their own capabilities. You have the brains and skill to operate industry now, as a class, for the benefit of the rest of society. You have the brains and skill to govern industry col- lectively for the benefit of all of society. The establishing of the Republic of Social- ist Labor is dependent upon the grow- ing understanding of socialism among the workers. Study the program of the Socialist Labor Party, spread its message and join its ranks.
Question Period

Why doesn’t The People ever discuss the causes of class conflict from the standpoint of the consumer?

First, who is “the consumer”? Is it the worker? The capitalist would certainly have us think of ourselves as being representative of that category. That is the reason the capitalist media always depict “the consumer” as being the “average” person. If there is a strike on, for example, and the strike interferes with the flow of ordinary articles of consumption, the strikers are depicted as having put the “average” consumer in a bind. Or, if the particular TV station or newspaper happens to be “liber- al” and its job is to turn out some- thing hostile to the power interes- tals, it is the “fat cat” who is de- picted as the enemy of “the con- sumer”. If the TV station or newspa- per that is up in arms against high taxes, the newspaper or com- mercial that is engaged in protest against the system as a whole, is the victim of the bureaucrat.

The reason for these appeals is obvious: the consumer is a constituent —including the striker, the “fat cat”, the bureaucrat and the me- dia itself. If there is any differ- ence in the tax laws he would benefit and the bureaucrat and capitalist consumers, it is that the latter cause disproportionate amounts of the various taxes. Those who work to produce the consumer goods, and that consumer goods are the only source of the population that sustains the capitalist system, it is that the latter cause disproportionate amounts of the various taxes. Those who work to produce the consumer goods, and that consumer goods are the only source of the population that sustains the capitalist system.
...De Leon Editorial

Our Hamilton comrades’ unity remains unshaken1, as at this stage, alone equipped with the necessary information to decide whether the material that they represent is ripe for unity. They alone can tell, by the light of the two beacons, named above and taken from history, whether present-day oystermen or men. This office will have to abide the event, the result of which will be read in the absence, it is hoped, of any party system or men. Our office will have to abide the event, the result of which will be read in the absence of any party system or men. Our office will have to abide the event, the result of which will be read in the absence of any party system or men.

The Hamilton, Out., “unity committee” of the SLP, and SWP organizations in that Canadian city sent their manifestos to the Daily People for publication and “citizens of the merriest of the demoralized policy which we have adopted—likewise the end we have in view.”

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1 At issue was the telephone company's approval of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on June 30, 1950. The court overturned a decision by the New Jersey Bell Telephone Co. that a strike was illegal. The court ruled that the strike was legal, and the board granted an increase.

2 The union, in conjunction with the state, upheld the "constitutionality" of the antistrike law. Actual-
What’s Behind the U.S. ‘Reconciliation’ With Vietnam?

By Diane Secor

Representatives of the United States and Vietnam signed a new trade agreement in July. Congressional approval is needed before the treaty takes effect. Congress is expected to act on it later this year or early next year.

The Clinton administration, which re-established diplomatic relations with Hanoi several years ago, lauded its new agreement with Vietnam as “an historic reconciliation” between the two former enemies. Expanding its economic interests in Vietnam and its overall strategic interests in Asia explain why the U.S. capitalist state is so eager to bury the hatchet. Hopes for developing its economy and profiting from the exploitation of its natural resources explain Vietnam’s motives.

According to the Associated Press, Vietnam agreed to open its markets to U.S. goods by substantially reducing tariffs on imports and by breaking down barriers to investments by American companies. The agreement’s “U.S. tar-iffs on Vietnamese products from the current average of about 40 percent to less than 3 percent, the same rate Wash-ington extends to most other nations.”

Once in force, the agreement not only will allow American corporations to exploit cheap labor in Vietnam, but to export the products back to the United States without paying higher tariffs on “foreign” manufactured commodities. One treaty official reported that the new trade deal resembled those the U.S. has with China, but on a much smaller scale.

American labor unions have lobbied Congress not to ratify the U.S.-Vietnam pact because it might mean that more American factories would shut down or move to Vietnam. In addition, Vietnam’s labor is not only docile, but a repressive state apparatus tightly controls the workers. Strikes and attempts to form unions can be quickly and efficiently crushed. Nonetheless, the Clinton administra-
tion or its successor may have an easier time getting congressional approval for PNTR (Permanent Normal Trade Relations) for Vietnam than for China.

In the race to provide the cheapest, most docile labor to U.S. and other foreign capitalists, Vietnam does not want to be left behind. “Vietnam fears it could be overshadowed by the larger Chinese economy,” as the AP report put it.

Apart from cheap labor, Vietnam is also rich in offshore oil deposits. According to Offshore, a trade magazine, Vietnam is “a hot place for international [petroleum] companies.” (May 2000) American capital-
ists are vying with Japanese, Russian and other foreign firms for a piece of the action, while Vietnam tries to play one off the other.

For example, Conoco recently became “operator” of Block 16-2 in the South Chi-
na Sea in conjunction with PetroViet-
nam and the Korean National Oil Com-
pany.” The Anglo-American corporation, BP Amoco, is negotiating a gas pipeline agreement with the Vietnamese govern-
ment worth approximately $1.5 billion. To gain the competitive edge for U.S. oil and gas firms, Washington must cultivate strong economic ties with Vietnam. Gain-
ning greater access to Vietnam’s growing petroleum industry will provide Congress with ample motivation to approve the treaty.

This provides these specific material inter-
estS, Vietnam is of strategic value to the United States in the region. According to www.stratfor.com, which describes itself as an “intelligence consulting firm,”

The Chilean Court’s Ruling on Pinochet Marks New Era

By Roger Burbach

The Chilean Supreme Court’s deci-
sion unsealing Augusto Pinochet of im-
munity, reflects a sea change in the treatment of former dictators around the world.

As the Chilean justices were voting 14 to 6 to allow the indictment of Pinochet for human rights violations, Indonesia’s former dictator Suharto was indicted for corruption while Haiti’s former military rulers are about to be tried for torture and murder.

Such actions were unknown in October 1998 when Scotland Yard detained Pinochet in London in response to an ex-
tradition request from Spain. That request came from a judge in response to Chilean exiles and Spanish citizens whose relatives had been tortured and assassinated in Chile under Pinochet.

Before he abandoned power in 1990, Pinochet had issued an amnesty decree and imposed a constitution that limited the courts’ ability to prosecute military officers—including Pinochet himself as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. However, Pinochet’s detention in Lon-
don opened a new chapter in internation-
al law.

In England, Pinochet’s lawyers initially argued that he enjoyed diplomatic immuni-
ty and, as a former head of state, was exempt from prosecution in a foreign country. But Britain’s High Court, a newly cre-
ed Amnesty International representa-
tives, argued that Pinochet had violated international law that countries owe to each other.

A March 1999 ruling that Pinochet could be extradited to Spain was greeted with widespread public support—polls in Chile and England showed that between 60 to 80 percent believed Pinochet should stand trial. However, the court ruled that Pinochet should be extradited on the grounds that his arrest violated “national sovereignty.”

Chilean diplomats—ironically headed by a man once exiled by Pinochet as a So-
cialist militant—took a firm line on Pinochet. Worried that Spain might use the case as an excuse to pry open their borders, the government of Prime Minister Jose Maria Merino vowed, “We will not hand over Pinochet to the Spanish government.”

In Britain, the Chilean diplomats flat-
lly got what they wanted when, in early March, Home Secretary Jack Straw at first failed to win Pinochet’s release. Then in early March of this year, Straw (who had participated in demonstrations against Pinochet’s military coup in 1973) ruled that Pinochet be released for health reasons.

Once back in Chile, the general’s ill-
mans disappeared. Disembarking from the military plane sent to fetch him, he reported a wheelchair and walked across the tarmac, waving his crutch in the air.

But the situation in Chile had changed dramatically during the general’s 16-
month absence.

For one thing, Chileans had elected a new Socialist Party president, Ricardo Lagos East, who took office a week after Pino-
chet’s return. Even more importantly, Pinochet’s arrest in London had unleashed a torrent of memories among Chileans. During his absence, human rights groups and a few judges had moved against high-
ranking officers.

Chilean courts found that the amnesty did not apply to the cases of over a thou-
sand “disappeared”—victims whose bod-
ies were never found—on the grounds that these were ongoing crimes not yet re-
solved.

In Argentina itself, amnesty laws ex-
empted the military from prosecution for most human rights violations, but habe-
us corpus—a practice military officials engaged in with the children of parents who were assassinated or disappeared— was not included. Now, nine high-rank-
ing military officers, including Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri, who was president of the military junta in 1981–82, have been jailed on this charge.

Efrain Rios Montt, Guatemala’s leader in the early 1980s, does not travel abroad for fear of being arrested. Even Henry Kissinger has reportedly curtailed his international travel for fear of facing prosecution.

Similar fears may explain the U.S. gov-
ernment’s refusal to sign the treaty estab-
lishing an International Criminal Court now under consideration by the UN. The court’s aim is to try human rights violators and war criminals.

In a certain sense, this is the product of globalization, which until now has been largely limited to fostering corporate in-
vestments. For the first time, families of victims of repression, along with a grow-
ing number of judges, feel they can use in-
ternational and national laws to prose-
cute former rulers for their crimes against humanity.

A brief refracting of the SLP’s role in efforts to unify the so-
cialist movement—and why those efforts failed.

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