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Sam Bortnick for *The People*

A Safeway worker on picket duty hands out leaflets to passers-by.

UFCW's Tactics Limit California Safeway Strike

By Ken Boettcher

The California Safeway strike that began over five months ago and quickly led to a company lockout and sympathy strikes at other Safeway stores remains at an impasse as this issue of *The People* went to press.

The strike began when Safeway, in contract talks with the United Food and Commercial Workers union, refused to budge from its demand that workers accept cuts to their health care coverage or increases in their payments for health care, the virtual elimination of future pension benefits, and lower wages for new hires.

As a Feb. 10 open letter from union representatives to the company put it: "Putting aside your erroneous claims of a consensus that the plan you propose is 'excellent,' you fail to address the reality created by that proposal. Every one of your 71,000 current employees would have their current health care benefits slashed by 40 percent immediately if your proposal was accepted." The only "option" to the cuts? Employees could "pay over \$350 per month to maintain their current benefits."

In the face of these company demands, over 97 percent of Safeway employees now involved in the dispute voted to strike, according to the union. The union chose to limit the strike to merely one chain—Safeway—rather than immediately bringing into the struggle workers at other chains, or at Safeway stores across the country. Safeway, Albertson's and Ralph's then chose to lock out workers in many other outlets in California.

In December, as *The People* noted in its January issue, "Five hundred union leaders met in Los Angeles...to adopt a new strategy to bolster and win [the] strike. The best they could come up with...is to call for a national boycott against Safeway Inc. and its subsidiaries." "Insofar as other unions and workers generally have supported the strike and respected picket lines," the article further

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THE IRAQ WAR

Don't Blame Bush; Blame Capitalism

If the war on Iraq was not *all* about oil, it definitely was not about weapons of mass destruction. Now, however, American workers are in danger of being misled again by the Bush administration and by its critics on why the United States went to war on Iraq.

Supporters and opponents of the administration alike want workers to believe that somewhere, hidden behind the exchange of charges and countercharges about Iraq, some high-minded objective of U.S. foreign policy has been twisted, distorted and betrayed. Nothing could be further from the truth. No high-minded principle or objective was ever involved.

In October 2002, President Bush told the nation that Iraq "possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons." He said it was "seeking nuclear weapons," and that it had "given shelter and support to terrorism." In his State of the Union address in January 2003, he said:

"Iraq has 500 tons of chemical weapons, 25,000 liters of anthrax, 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin, 30,000 prohibited bombs and warheads..."

He left no room for doubt about the accuracy of these figures, and underlings of his administration claimed that the Iraqi regime had proven ties with the al Qaeda terrorist group believed to have conducted the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. "The CIA has collected solid facts about a decade of

senior-level contacts between Iraq and al Qaeda," Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz asserted at one point.

Now a different set of facts and assertions come out to undermine the credibility of the Bush administration and to provide ammunition to the administration's opponents, among them a rapidly dwindling field of potential Democratic candidates to replace Bush as chief magistrate of the capitalist government.

A former treasury secretary charged that President Bush made his intentions to invade Iraq known in Cabinet meetings long before the Sept. 11 attacks and the leader of the Bush administration's own postwar search for Iraq's supposed cache of banned weapons publicly stated that the weapons did not exist. Bush himself seemed intent on undermining his own credibility last December in an ABC-TV interview with Diane Sawyer, in which the following exchange occurred:

"SAWYER: But stated as hard fact, that there were weapons of mass destruction as opposed to the possibility that he [Saddam Hussein] could move to acquire those weapons still—

"BUSH: So what's the difference?"

Bush's appearance on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" program in January, in which he had the following exchange with correspondent Tim Russert, was no improvement over his per-

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Workers' Safety Impaired by OSHA

By B.B.

Capitalism is rife with reform illusions that obscure the predatory nature of the system and distract workers from seeking out fundamental solutions to dangerous, life-threatening and even life-ending social problems. Creating these reforms, and the illusion of progress and safety that comes with them, provides "work" for battalions of lawyers, judges, politicians and bureaucrats. The output of these producers of such social sleights of hand are numerous laws and governmental agencies, ostensibly designed to protect society from capitalist greed and anarchy, but that do just the opposite—they protect capitalism and its beneficiaries from society at large.

New York Times staff writer David Barstow reported on the performance record of one of these reforms and the reform agency created to enforce it in a three-part series of articles on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published in December. With statistics, interviews and some "investigative re-

porting," Barstow found that OSHA has done little or nothing to protect workers from the workplace hazards that result in numerous illnesses, injuries and deaths every year. Indeed, he makes a case to show that the agency has done just the reverse. "OSHA has increasingly helped employers, particularly large corporations, avoid the threat of prosecution."

OSHA has a long record of running interference for capitalist enterprises responsible for the maiming of thousands of workers. Some of what OSHA's trail of misdeeds has led to, as tracked by Barstow, revealed:

- About 100 workers are killed annually because of "acts of intentional wrongdoing or plain indifference."

- Of the 1,242 "horror stories" reported to Congress by senior officials of OSHA between 1982 and 2002, and cited as "willful" violations, OSHA declined to seek prosecutions in all but 7 percent. Not a perfect record, perhaps, but close to it!

- Of the 1,242 capitalist-caused deaths, 70 cor-

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH:

Sojourner Truth's Struggle Against Oppression

By B.G.

The age-old struggle for freedom and equality within class-divided societies obviously has encountered certain obstacles and limits over the generations. Gender and race may struggle with success for all the freedom and equality within their class that class-divided society can allow, but equality between ruled and ruling classes, between slaves and masters, is impossible. It is impossible within capitalism, for example, because the line that divides the working class from the capitalist class is more than an obscure or abstract thing based on mistaken ideas or prejudice. It is as concrete as the factories, the offices, the mills and the other means of wealth production and distribution that the capitalist class owns and that the working class does not. Capitalists may nurture and manipulate prejudice and ignorance for their own purposes, but that is incidental to their power.

All historic struggles for freedom and equality have been blocked and limited by similar barriers. Today it is possible to think of abolishing class divisions, but that was not the case in earlier times. It was not the case in the middle of the 19th century, when chattel slavery still held millions of African Americans in bondage. Freedom from that form of bondage became possible and inevitable only when capitalism could no longer tolerate it, but freedom from wage slavery would have to wait for a later day.

The struggles of those who fought against chattel slavery and to extend political rights to every American, regardless of race or gender, were indispensable steppingstones along the historic path towards the greater freedom that socialism will ultimately bring. With this understanding of what was and what was not possible at different historical stages we gain a true appreciation of the importance of those whose earlier struggles against oppression, bondage and inequality moved us forward to the very threshold of complete human emancipation from all forms of tyranny.

March is Women's History Month, and International Women's Day falls on March 8. In looking back over the history of the country, we can see the results of women's long struggle for political, educational and economic equality. Although there has been progress and women are farther ahead today than were their sisters two centuries ago, they still have far to go. For working-class women, the path to equality is particularly steep.

On this occasion, we can remember and honor one of the great women of the past who struggled under almost insurmountable odds to overcome the humiliations and physical abuse of her slave past to become one of the country's most noted spokespersons for antislavery and women's rights. She was born Isabella in 1795 in Ulster County, N.Y., where she worked as a slave field hand and house servant for Dutch-speaking farm owners. By her husband and fellow slave Thomas, she had five children, one of whom evidently died in infancy. When New York State abolished slavery in 1827 Isabella's emancipation was immediate and complete, but her children were legally required to complete a period of indentured servitude before they became free, a legal stipulation that caused her and her children much anguish.

After a number of years, she moved from Ulster County to New York City. In 1843, she felt called to a greater service, changed her name to Sojourner Truth and joined an antislavery and prowomen's rights commune, the Northampton (Mass.) Association of Education and Industry.

Here she was treated as an equal. She was able to share her experiences as a slave with the residents, to teach them and to learn from them, and to listen to visiting lecturers from some of the country's leading abolitionists, such as Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips. She would later form valuable contacts with them and their families.



In the fall of 1844, Sojourner Truth gave her first antislavery speech in Northampton. In May of 1845, she spoke at the annual meeting of William Lloyd Garrison's Anti-Slavery Society in New York City. In 1850, she was one of the speakers at a large national women's rights meeting in Worcester, Mass. It was also in 1850 that she published her autobiography, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. Although she had never learned to read or write, she dictated her life story to Olive Gilbert, an antislavery friend.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, she began vigorously supporting the Union cause. Although she was well aware of Northern race prejudice, she experienced her first violent assault in Indiana while speaking at a pro-Union rally at the Steuben County Courthouse. A mob interrupted the meeting and Sojourner Truth was arrested and charged with violating the 1851 Indiana law that prohibited persons of African descent to enter the state. After 10 days' detention, she was released. She later visited Abraham Lincoln in 1864 and thanked him for issuing the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862. In later years, in a brief visit to President Ulysses S. Grant she thanked him for signing the Civil Rights Bill.

From 1864 to 1868, Sojourner Truth worked in the refugee relief camps sponsored by the National Freedmen's Relief Association and the Freedmen's Bureau to help the refugees who had fled slavery.

After the Civil War, she continued her women's rights activities, speaking not only for voting rights and political equality but also for economic equality. As a woman who had been at the very bottom of the economic ladder and who had worked as hard as any man had, she well knew the oppression and despair of economic inequality. As she once expressed it:

"I have done a great deal of work; as much as a man, but did not get so much pay. I used to work in the field and bind grain, keeping up with the cradler; but men doing no more, got twice as much pay; so with the German women. They work in the field and do as much work, but do not get the pay. We do as much, we eat as much, we want as much."

In her later and infirm years, Truth lived in Battle Creek, Mich., with her daughters Diana and Elizabeth, who cared for her. She died Nov. 26, 1883. The great men of the abolition movement, Frederick Douglass and Wendell Phillips, were the first to pay her tribute. The black press presented her as a hero of her race. The women's suffrage movement and its leaders also memorialized her for her courage, her wisdom and her loyalty to the cause.

We cannot forget those who have gone before us who fought the good fight for freedom. We can marvel that one who was born into lowly circumstances—where she was oppressed, beaten, abused, deprived of liberty and denied education—could have the strength and the wisdom to become a leader of the freedom movement. Sojourner Truth did precisely that. She stood and fought with strength and eloquence along side of men and women who had far better education and opportunities than she in life. She earned their respect and support because in her humble beginnings she had the experience of oppression that they lacked. They could only talk about oppression and condemn it. She had lived through it and had overcome it.

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 Industrial Unions?

If you have been reading *The People* steadily 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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What Will Globalization Mean For Silicon Valley Workers?

By Bruce Cozzini

How important is globalization to Silicon Valley? Important enough for the *San Jose Mercury News* to convene a panel of experts to discuss the subject and then to devote most of a six-page "Perspective" section of its Dec. 28 issue to a "roundtable" discussion about it.

The panel comprised two corporate vice presidents, four CEOs or chairmen, three from think tanks or academia, one venture capitalist, the congresswoman from Silicon Valley, and the editor, publisher and a columnist from the *Mercury News*. Apart from the panelists' comments, the "Perspective" section included an interview with the CEO of chip giant Intel and a couple of editorials.

What the *Mercury News* did not consider important enough to include, however, were the views of workers. Although globalization already has had tremendous impact on employment, the *Mercury News* failed to include a single worker or workers' representative on its panel and none were interviewed. What it did instead was to invite readers to send letters and e-mails, to be printed or not as the newspaper might decide.

Most of the discussion dealt with the opportunities and problems of globalization, how capitalists should adapt and how the government should support U.S. industries and Silicon Valley's technological corporations. The panelists made it clear that the coming challenge was not the shift of routine jobs to India or China, but engineering and research and development, and that they are eager to get started with it.

The scope of this shift was described by Intel CEO Craig Barrett who spoke of the impact of the "integration of India, China, Russia and Russia's satellite countries into the world's economic infrastructure." He estimated an *educated* workforce in these countries of 300 million workers, a number that is larger than the entire population of the United States. He added that it is "well-educated labor that can do effectively any job that can be done in the United States."

Barrett speculated on what venture capitalists with money and mindful of the shift would tell the principals of companies asking for funding. What they are likely to say, according to Barrett, is "of course you are not going to do your R&D in the States, you are going to do it in India or China or someplace where the costs are only 25 percent of what they are here."

Some panelists likened the rise of China to the Industrial Revolution, but with a difference. The difference, as Brian Halla, CEO and chairperson of National Semiconductor, said, is that "this time, we're Great Britain, and the Great American dream is moving to Shanghai."

While the capitalists interviewed practically

were salivating at the opportunities globalization would make for them, they acknowledged that the Great American Dream was dimming for American workers. Barrett noted that foreign competition would drive American wages lower and denied that Intel had any "obligation to suffer a financial disadvantage to hire more American employees" as opposed to Indian or Chinese workers.

Some of the panelists commented on the need of workers to retrain, although jobs have not been lost for lack of technical competence among American workers. Furthermore, no one suggested what jobs American workers might retrain for.

Kevin Fong, the venture capitalist on the panel, was dismissive of Silicon Valley workers. After claiming engineers in China worked 14-hour days, six days a week, he said: "And

here," she continued, "is a concentration of high-level activities that explains the very extraordinary wealth level that we enjoy."

High value-added activities include jobs like engineering that require extensive education and cannot be automated. As the value collectively produced (new products to be put forth in the marketplace) is high, so is the wage of the workers, the value of their labor power in a restricted and highly competitive labor market. It is these workers whose jobs are now being offshored.

So, we see that engineers and other high value-added folks are just workers too. Like other workers, they are finding their jobs being offshored to India and China. They do not like it, and as two letters to the *Mercury News* editor a week after the panel noted, they have no voice in it.

In one of those letters, a woman who had lost her customer support job to offshoring

commented on the lack of a worker's voice on the panel and decried the patronizing suggestion by a highly paid executive that she "retrain to qualify for a more 'sophisticated, innovative' job." In another, two activists from the National Writers Union questioned the *Mercury News* why, with all of the unions and anti-offshoring groups and tens of thousands of laid-off workers, they didn't seek out any of them. Indeed, the principal concern of the panel, as expressed through an editorial in the Jan. 25 *Mercury News*, was that if displaced workers are not treated well there could be a political "backlash" against offshoring.

However, more is needed than that. As the September-October issue of *The People* stated, globalization is a fact that workers must face. Workers' voices will be heard when they unite as a class and fight the capitalist system itself. Rather than fighting U.S. capitalism's export of exploitation to Asia, end the system itself.

[Editor's note: A printable transcript and downloadable video of the panel discussion are available at the *Mercury News*' Web site.]

Retraining Options For High-Tech Workers

For workers laid off from high-tech jobs in Silicon Valley who are asked to "retrain," the options don't look very good. According to the Economic Policy Institute (*San Jose Mercury News*, Jan. 23), from November of 2001 to November of 2003, jobs in California have shifted from higher paying industries to lower paying ones (similar shifts have occurred in 48 of 50 states).

In the higher paying (shrinking) industries (average pay \$57,800) a total of 198,000 jobs were lost. The breakdown of job loss by industry was:

- Manufacturing 127,000
- Information sector 55,000
- Professional and business services 6,000

In the lower paying (growing) industries (average pay \$34,742) a total of 145,000 jobs were gained. Job gain by industry was:

- Education and health services 65,000
- Leisure and hospitality 48,000
- Retail 32,000

The jobs in growing industries average about 40 percent less in pay than in the shrinking industries. How is that as an incentive for retraining? Can you say, "Do you want fries with that?"

—B.C.

so we have to recover from the sense of entitlement. Individuals have to want to get retrained. They're going to have to want to work hard. Sometimes I wonder whether we've lost that in the Valley."

Fong's statement was contemptuous, contemptible and absurd. Anyone who has worked in the tech industry in Silicon Valley knows that long hours and hard work have always been part of the "culture." Workers, misled into seeing themselves as partners in the enterprise rather than as workers, aligned themselves with the corporate goals. This atmosphere was fueled by expectations of high pay and stock options that would lift them above typical working-class status.

Fong and his fellow panelists exposed this fable for what it really is. They showed that they do not care about the workers, only about their tasks and the level of their exploitation. Work in manufacturing, data processing or other highly automated tasks was referred to as "lower value-added activities." That is to say, the manufacturing worker adds a small fraction to the value of the product above the fixed costs, such as raw materials and physical plant. Since the profit comes from the difference between what the worker produces and is paid, based on the value of the worker's labor power in the labor market, profits are increased by moving manufacturing to places where that value is the lowest.

According to Diana Farrell, director of the McKinsey Global Institute, the San Francisco Bay Area has achieved productivity twice that of the average of the United States "by outsourcing lower value-added activities." "What you have

Biomonitoring: The First Findings

By Paul D. Lawrence

Some 200 years ago industrial and political revolutions established capitalism. Since then capitalist industry has been spewing poisons into the air, water and land. Now some scientists have begun measuring precisely how these toxins affect people. That is like locking the barn door after the horse has been stolen.

Scientists use a process called biomonitoring. That process enables them to measure pollutants building up in the human body—the "body burden." They sample urine, blood and mother's milk. They have their work cut out for them. Biomonitoring proponents say there are around 75,000 chemicals used in the United States. Few have ever been tested for their health effects.

Yet the first findings are appalling. A few studies have been completed. One is a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC tested 2,500 volunteers for 116 pollutants. That's about 15-hundredths of one percent of the chemicals in use. Among other things, the CDC found that Latino children have three times the amount of a chemical derived from DDT as non-Latino children. DDT was banned

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The Space Program

When President Bush outlined his "vision" for America's space program on Jan. 14, he called for a shift in certain areas of the current program and a return to the moon by 2020. He spoke of technological development, scientific research and the exploration of "other worlds" to evoke a sense of high purpose and adventure for humanity, for which America would take the lead. He also likened his vision of interplanetary exploration to the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804–1806.

"Two centuries ago," he said, "Meriwether Lewis and William Clark left St. Louis to explore the new lands acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. They made that journey in the spirit of discovery, to learn the potential of vast new territory, and to chart a way for others to follow."

Indeed, when Thomas Jefferson agreed to pay a money-strapped Napoleon \$15 million for Louisiana he brought into the national domain an enormous territory of 800,000 square miles—miles that if set end to end in a continuous line would stretch almost as far as the 865,400-mile diameter of the sun. That vast expanse included all or parts of what would become 15 states.

President Jefferson, unlike President Bush, was a man of science, but he did not buy Louisiana and send Lewis and Clark on their historic trek across a great wilderness just to satisfy his curiosity or a national urge to explore the unknown. Jefferson not only envisioned a time when that huge addition to the national domain would be explored, but occupied, developed and integrated into the nation. He envisioned a time when its lands would be farmed, when cities would be built, when its forests would be felled and its minerals drawn from the ground. As Jefferson put it on June 20, 1803, in a letter to Lewis:

"The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri River, and such principal streams of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado, or any other river, may offer the most direct and practicable water-communication across the continent, for the purposes of commerce."

When Lewis and Clark set off on their journey of exploration and discovery capitalism was young. The industrial revolution had barely begun, and the brutal exploitation of human labor, on which it would expand and mature, was new to the world. Two centuries later, capitalism is long past its apogee and its predatory nature is a hindrance to further progress. Whatever capitalism contributed to human progress in the past, today it threatens the very survival of the Earth and everything on it.

President Bush's high-sounding words about "the spirit of discovery" aside, what "purpose of commerce," what "potential of vast new territory" did he have in mind when he spoke on Jan. 14? What interests would benefit from such ambitious ventures to the moon and beyond? The most obvious are the profit interests of the high-tech sector of the capitalist economy. Other factors include military dominance and control of raw materials.

The high-tech contractors of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) also tend to dominate the U.S. arms industry. Lockheed Martin Corp., Boeing Co. and Northrop Grumman Corp. are three large companies hoping to profit from lucrative NASA and Pentagon contracts, according to the British news service Reuters.

Developments in space technology also enhance U.S. strategic advantages in earthly conflicts over markets and raw materials. These are intertwined in a revival and expansion of the 1980s Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars"). "The Pentagon expects to spend at least \$50 billion over the next five years to develop and field a multilayered shield against incoming missiles that could deliver nuclear, biological or chemical weapons," Reuters noted.

Last June, *The Telegraph* (U.K.) noted that the U.S. military made "successful use of global positioning satellites (GPS) and other space technology during the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq."

The Telegraph also reported that the National Reconnaissance Office "is to develop a strategy that ensures America's allies, as well as its enemies, never gain access to the same space resources without Washington's permission.... A fleet of spacecraft will be developed, designed to attack and destroy future satellites of enemies and rivals. The rapid-launch 'military space plane'... would also be used as a mobile 'bodyguard' for U.S. space installations. It would be the first 'space plane' in history with a directly military function."

There is another aspect to the space program. As outlandish as it may seem, apparently there is already competition for control of the moon's raw materials. The moon is believed to be rich in the helium 3 isotope, a potential energy source. "Gerald Kulcinski of the Fusion Technology Institute at the University of Wisconsin at Madison estimated the moon's helium 3 would have a cash value of perhaps \$4 billion a ton in terms of its energy equivalent in oil. Scientists reckon there are about 1 million tons of helium 3 on the moon...." (Reuters)

Thus, it is not surprising that GlobalSecurity.org director John Pike concluded that the U.S.'s aim is "to beat the Chinese to the moon." China's regime has officially stated that its goal is to reach the moon. Major advances in China's technology and space flights make China a potentially formidable competitor.

True, President Bush said nothing about militarizing the moon or of exploiting its mineral resources for "commercial purposes." He spoke only of using certain of those resources as aids in propelling spacecraft further out into the solar system, much as Lewis and Clark used the resources they found along their route to sustain themselves on their journey from St. Louis to the Pacific Coast. Yet, who would doubt that President Bush envisioned a time when the moon, like Louisiana before it, will be used for "commercial purposes"?

The Louisiana Purchase opened a continent and cleared the way for the development of modern capitalism, thereby moving us forward toward a time when a higher form of civilization—socialism—would become possible. Today capitalism is overripe for replacement. It is a hindrance to progress and a threat to human survival. The extension of capitalist competition into space poses a grave danger to the Earth and all that is on it.

[Diane Secor contributed to this editorial.]

A De Leon Editorial

Property And Property



Socialism will protect personal property by making productive property the collective and democratically operated possession of society.

It Won't Happen

(Daily People, May 4, 1908)

"Editor *The People*:

"Under the socialist régime, will inheritance of property be permitted? And if so, won't it lead sooner or later to a comparatively few individuals possessing most of the wealth of the community?"

C.S."

No, it won't.

In the first place, as to whether inheritance of property will be allowed under socialism, no one yet knows, and no one cares. The question is just as immaterial now as it would have been, at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, to ask whether the president's term would be four years or six. The main question, freedom from England, had first to be settled. That done, the minor things, presidents' terms among them, could be taken up and decided according to the necessity of the times and the wisdom of the legislators, then the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia. The main question today is freedom from the capitalist class. That question settled, the minor matters, as the inheritance of property, can be met and dealt with by the Constitutional Convention of the Socialist Republic as it sees fit. When that convention meets, it may, conceivably, decree to abolish inheritance; and it may not. Today there seems to be no clear reason why it should, and the chances are it will not. That is as far as one can say for the present.

But even assuming, then, that the inheritance of property will still continue under socialism, it will not, can not lead to the possession by a few of the bulk of the community's wealth. And here a distinction must be drawn between property, and property.

Today anything that a man owns, whether a rocking chair or a silk mill, a silver spoon or a coal mine, is his private property, and he can do with it as he likes. He can sit in the rocking chair or not, or open the silk mill or not, just as he chooses; he can throw away the silver spoon if the whim seizes him, or blow up the coal mine. No one can interfere with him—they are his property. But the chair and the spoon concern only his individual life and comfort; the mill and the mine affect the life and comfort of the nation. They are part of the nation's wealth-producing machinery; they are necessary to the prosperity and civilization of the country and its inhabitants. They, differently from the spoon and chair, affect the life of thousands; yet, the same as the chair and the spoon, one man owns them.

This is what socialism brands as an iniquity—this possession by one man of the wealth-sources of nations. This sort of private property, private property in the national instruments of production, is what socialism demands the abolition of—and will see that its demand is carried out. But that does not mean that socialism would abolish also the man's private ownership of his chair and his teaspoon, the goods which he alone uses, and which confer on him no arbitrary powers over the lives of others. These are not wealth-sources, they are not concerned in production. He can exploit no one by retaining them. Society

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what is socialism?

Socialism is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, mines, railroads, land and all other instruments of production. Socialism means production 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.

Under socialism, all authority will originate from the workers, integrally united in Socialist Industrial Unions. In each workplace, the rank and file will elect whatever 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-industrial congress will plan and coordinate production in all areas of the economy. All persons elected to any post in the socialist government, from the lowest to the highest level, will be directly accountable to the rank and file. They will be subject to removal at any time that a majority of those who elected them decide it is necessary.

Such a system would make possible the fullest democracy and freedom. It would be a society based on the most primary freedom—economic freedom.

For individuals, socialism means an end to economic insecurity and exploitation. It means workers cease to be commodities bought and sold on the labor market and forced to work as appendages to tools owned by someone else. It means a chance to develop all individual capacities and potentials within a free community of free individuals.

Socialism does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a state bureaucracy as in the former Soviet Union or China, with the working class oppressed by a new bureaucratic class. It does not mean a closed party-run system without democratic rights. It does not mean "nationalization," or "labor-management boards," or state capitalism of any kind. It means a complete end to all capitalist social relations.

To win the struggle for socialist freedom requires enormous efforts of organizational and educational work. It requires building a political party of socialism to contest the power of the capitalist class on the political field and to educate the majority of workers about the need for socialism. It requires building Socialist Industrial Union organizations to unite all workers in a classconscious industrial force and to prepare them to take, hold and operate the tools of production.

You are needed in the ranks of Socialists fighting for a better world. Find out more about the program and work of the Socialist Labor Party and join us to help make the promise of socialism a reality.

Our Annual Tribute to The Paris Commune of 1871

On March 18, 1871, the workers of Paris, France, attempted for the first time in modern history to construct a classless society. Their effort was in response to the terrible conditions imposed upon them by capitalist exploitation. It was precipitated by their masters' attempt to take possession of the artillery that the workers themselves had purchased for their National Guard.

French capitalism had just been defeated in the Franco-Prussian War. The war was initiated by the French emperor Napoleon III in a desperate effort to save his throne through war fever. It was welcomed by Prussia's "Iron Chancellor," Otto von Bismarck, who saw in a Prussian victory a chauvinistic opportunity to create the German Empire. In short, the Prussian junkers and capitalists defeated the armies of French capitalism.

The collapse of the French Empire was followed by the proclamation of a republic by the workers of Paris. But representatives of the propertied class usurped power. With the approval of their Prussian peers and conquerors, the French capitalists then turned on the workers of Paris. The workers' resistance to the capitalists' attempt to disarm them resulted in the proclamation of the Commune.

Karl Marx called the Paris Commune "a workingmen's government...the bold champion of the emancipation of labor, emphatically international." But it survived for less than three months. On May 28, 1871, the last of the Commune's defenders were crushed by superior numbers, following a betrayal that allowed the reaction's troops to enter the city.

During its brief life, however, the Commune organized the workers for the management of their workshops. Crime was literally ended, for the criminals fled Paris with the capitalists, their



"Vive la Commune" was drawn by the British Socialist artist, Walter Crane, for the *Commonweal* in 1888. Originally, it bore the inscription, lettered by Crane: "An English Tribute to the French Commune, Dedicated to the Workers of Both Countries."

Crane was long associated with William Morris in agitating for socialism, and was a foe of the reformers and compromisers. He regarded socialism as "the hope of the world," and grasped the essence of Marx in perceiving the underlying social and economic forces that make for a fundamental social change. These forces, he said, "may be, perhaps, temporarily diverted, but never defied or defeated."

Crane gave freely of his talent and time to the socialist cause. Among other things, he executed the distinguished charters that are still issued by the Socialist Labor Party to its sections.

social kinsmen. The separation of church and state was decreed. Paris ceased to be the play-

ground of exploiters, domestic and foreign. Universal suffrage was instituted. The standing army and the police were abolished. Public service was done at workmen's wages. The educational institutions were opened to the people. Science itself was freed from the fetters imposed upon it by class prejudice and governmental force. All functionaries held their positions by election, were held responsible and were subject to recall.

Capitalism has lied that the Commune held power by terror. Actually, it formally abolished the guillotine. The terror of the Commune was the revenge the capitalists took when they reconquered the workers by military power and betrayal.

Men, women and children, as prisoners, were shot down in cold blood. A notorious militarist arbitrarily picked prisoners from lines for execution, long after the fighting was over. More than 10,000 Communards were killed in their last resistance. By June 1872, the formal "trials" of prisoners (after the main butchery was over) brought death to 270 more and other punishments (various forms of imprisonment, transportation, etc.) to more than 13,000 additional men, women and children.

The hatred shown the French workers by their French masters had no parallel in modern European history to that time. Even the German conquerors had never seen anything like it. And no wonder! National differences among capitalists don't submerge class similarities. As Benjamin Disraeli said, the workers are a nation apart from the capitalists.

The Socialist Labor Party honors the workers of the Paris Commune on this 133rd anniversary of their pioneering effort to build a better society. And it draws Marxian lessons from their experience to be used in attaining the better society they shed their blood to build.

Anna Quindlan 'Wants Rain Without Thunder...'

By Michael James

Where would we be without Marx and the understanding of this society that the Marxian method provides us? We would be totally lost, just like *Newsweek* editorialist Anna Quindlen. Her commentaries, entitled "The Last Word," often appear on the very last page of the magazine. She typically despairs over various ills of our nation but, without Marx and Marxism, she can shed no light on these societal malignancies and she can offer no remedy.

For example, in the issue of last June 3, she laments federal cuts for libraries and the resulting closings, layoffs, shortened hours and canceled library programs. She contrasts the gutting of libraries with Bush's tax cuts for the rich and concludes that the Bush administration is "bogus." She then chastises the American people for responding with anomie rather than outrage. Well, one of the reasons for widespread anomie is that Anna Quindlen and other corporate bewilders in the corporate media fail to point to capitalism as the root problem and totally reject socialism as a solution. Therefore, readers are left with no insight about the true nature of social ills and no way out. Reading her column leaves one with a feeling of despair and hopelessness.

In the Aug. 11 *Newsweek*, Ms. Quindlen writes about the struggles of transsexual Jenny Boylan to be her true self in the face of prejudice. She calls for more love and tolerance in our society. She fails to recognize the material reality that tolerance can come easier when people are not bitter or angry or afraid about downsizing or outsourcing or joblessness or homelessness or poverty. She fails to observe that people who are victimized or denied by a system they cannot even name are often looking for scapegoats and targets. Anna Quindlen will not name the sys-

tem that uses racism and bigotry to its economic advantage. She does not know that Aldous Huxley described capitalism as "organized lovelessness."

In the Sept. 8 issue she comes as close as she can to the truth. She writes, "There is still a chasm between rich and poor..." She does not acknowledge that capitalism requires this chasm and can never resolve it. She then observes that "Environmental concerns have a habit of giving way to the profit motive." She seems to harbor the absurd notion that pollution and environmental degradation can be stopped or even controlled without abolishing capitalism. Perhaps she wants to believe that ecology and capitalism are compatible so that she will not have to face the need to radically alter our society. But Frederick Douglass said, "If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters..."

She reminds readers in the issue of last Oct. 20 that our society is "Still needing the F word." She is referring to feminism and the fact that American women still lack equality even 40 years after the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. Indeed, capitalism has turned back the tide of progress on the feminist movement, the civil rights movement, the labor movement, the peace movement and the ecology movement.

In the *Newsweek* of Dec. 1 she decries "A New Kind of Poverty," a poverty that pulls down entire families and people with one or even two jobs. She correctly observes that "In America we console ourselves with the bootstrap myth, that anyone can rise, even those who work two jobs and

still have to visit food pantries to feed their families." She concludes that "it's morally wrong to prosper through the casual exploitation of those who make your prosperity possible."

She goes part way. She teases. She appears to criticize capitalism, but is careful never to use the word itself. Where is the logic? She would have the very system which creates poverty solve it. How can a system that methodically and ruthlessly sets out to impoverish workers ever reverse this reality? That would simply be bad for business.

Finally, in the issue of Dec. 15, Ms. Quindlen chastises America for "hyperconsumerism" and "knee-jerk acquisition." She says that America has "stuff fatigue" so that "Our homes have become landfills." She is right. The environmental group Greenpeace says that America is 5 percent of the world's population but we consume 40 percent of the world's resources. But she identifies the symptom while refusing to name the disease. Capitalism, with the aid of mass advertising, creates this hyperconsumerism. Along with polluting the Earth, exploiting the working class and waging war on other nations, promoting consumer gluttony is just good business.

The point here is that a corporate and mainstream editorialist or commentator such as Anna Quindlen can only mystify. She cannot enlighten. Henry David Thoreau said, "There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root." Ms. Quindlen can flail away at our social ills but, without Marx and the promise of socialism, she dares not go to the root of the problem. It is the SLP and *The People* that have the courage and vision to strike at the root. It is the SLP and *The People* that reveals to working-class readers the solution to our suffering.

...Blame Capitalism

(Continued from page 1)

formance in December:

"RUSSERT: The night you took the country to war, March 17th, you said this: 'Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised.'

"BUSH: Right.

"RUSSERT: That apparently is not the case.

"BUSH: Correct."

One would think that if Bush's seemingly clumsy attempts to defend the invasion of Iraq went to basic principles his Democratic rivals would be unrelenting in their criticism, but that has not been the case. The presumed front-runner for the Democratic nod, U.S. Sen. John Kerry, has expressed no principled opposition to the war. Not surprisingly, Kerry's Democratic rivals, most notably Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich, have criticized his stance on the war. On Feb. 8, for example, Kucinich said:

"Sen. Kerry voted for the war. Senator Kerry supports the occupation. Sen. Kerry supports sending another 40,000 troops to Iraq. I'm wondering if the people of this country are ready to trade a Republican war for a Democratic war, because that's exactly where we're headed right now."

Well, not quite that, Mr. Kucinich, not quite that.

The United States is a capitalist country. It is that regardless of which of the two major capitalist political parties controls the White House or Congress.

Capitalism is a predatory social system. The capitalist class and its political parties couldn't care less if the government of Iraq (or any other country) is democratic or antidemocratic. Its government will "wheel and deal" with any foreign tyrant if its purposes are served. It had no qualms about supplying Saddam Hussein with

weapons when it backed Iraq in its war against Iran in the 1980s. That may seem inconsistent or hypocritical to some, but it was not. Supporting or opposing foreign governments has nothing to do with political principles or ideologies and everything to do with the material and profit interests of America's capitalist ruling class.

Capitalism needs foreign markets; it needs foreign sources of raw materials for its industries; it needs large supplies of cheap labor; and it needs strategic control over those markets, supplies of cheap labor and sources of raw materials. Without these things it would choke and collapse. Getting and securing them is the fundamental "principle" at work. How they are gotten and secured is a secondary consideration. Those are questions of strategy and tactics, and it is the development and implementation of that strategy and the tactics needed to carry it out that is the source of the controversy over the Bush administration's presumed miscues on Iraq and Saddam Hussein's supposed cache of weapons of mass destruction. The ruling class and the government that serves its interests have no scruples either in pursuing or defending their interests. As Daniel De Leon said:

"The capitalist class will wreck a railroad, scuttle a steamer, or fire a building to achieve its ends. It will shoot down, it will murder and kill to advance the price of its commodities. It will declare war in order to dispose of its goods. Nothing, not even what it now considers the most sacred, is allowed to stand in its way.

Whatever menaces it is ruthlessly swept aside. No compunction being shown in the matter of expansion [imperialism], none will be or is shown in the matter of defense. The only thing that threatens capitalist domination is the growth of the Socialist Labor Party throughout the world, and in order to defeat the party, capitalism will resort to any means."

The question American workers need to pursue is not if the war on Iraq was "just" or "unjust." It is not a question of whether the Bush administration was misled to overestimate the Iraqi "threat," or even if it knew the truth and simply lied to distract the American working class and to disarm opposition to the war. The danger is that the American working class will be misled again into believing that their interest in peace and prosperity can be served by supporting the Republican Party and the Bush administration's bid for reelection or the Democratic Party and its bid to take over the executive branch of the capitalist government.

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

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...Biomonitoring

(Continued from page 3)

decades ago. Researchers suspect it may still be in use in Mexico and other Latin American countries.

One need not present an epic catalog of the poisons found in the human body. The poisoning should not come as a surprise. "The roots of capitalism are literally watered with the blood of the proletariat," De Leon said. "The fields of production—mills, shops, railroad beds, yards—are strewn with the limbs and fallen bodies of workingmen. Capitalist 'progress' is built upon the skulls and crossbones of its working-class victims."

De Leon was addressing the murder and mayhem in the workplaces. But the poisoning of the environment stems from the same causes. Safer workplaces reduce capitalist profits. So too does a cleaner environment. Profit is the driving force of capitalist production. Thus the lives and health of the working class are sacrificed on the altar of profit.

Biomonitoring may more precisely measure capitalism's poisoning of workers, but it won't stop that poisoning. The capitalist class and its political and bureaucratic lackeys control regulatory agencies like the EPA. They are more concerned with protecting profits than the environment or the lives and health of the working class.

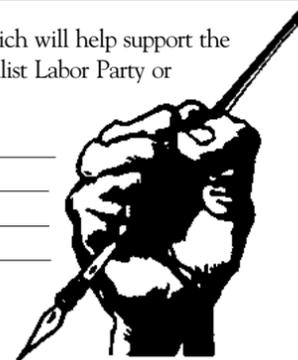
Socialism will build progress on a new foundation because the useful producers will democratically run the economy on behalf of its owners, all of society. Then the cost of safe workplaces and a clean environment will not be considered a drain on the profits of a small class of social parasites. They will be considered a necessary—and desirable—factor in producing the goods and services people need and want.

The People's Press Security Fund

This is my contribution of \$ _____ for *The People's* Press Security Fund, which will help support the SLP's official journal. (Please make checks/money orders payable to the Socialist Labor Party or *The People* and mail to P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218.)

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... Impaired by OSHA

(Continued from page 1)

porate murderers having gotten by once repeated the offense with additional deaths, and in all but a few cases with repeated impunity!

•“Since 1990, the agency has quietly downgraded 202 fatality cases from ‘willful’ to ‘unclassified,’ a vague term favored by defense lawyers in part because it virtually forecloses the possibility of prosecution.”

•Over two decades, in 17 states, District of Columbia and three territories there was no record of prosecutions of willful violations responsible for the death of 423 workers.

•Explosive disasters from petrochemical plants have caused numerous deaths nationwide over the past decade in Belpre, Ohio; Anacortes, Wash.; and Delaware City while OSHA shrank from pursuing charges.

•Of the 2,197 willful deaths, a paltry \$106 million in OSHA fines and a total of fewer than 30 years in jail were levied, 20 of which were for one felony.

•Only 404 of the 83,559 citations for safety violations during 2003 were labeled “willful.”

Under federal law willful violations of workers’ safety leading to injury or death are legally

misdemeanors rather than felonies, a fact that militates against OSHA’s pursuit of violators. In this regard retired OSHA inspector Paul Bakewell referred to the resistance exerted upon him in pursuing violators, noting that criminal charges were very time consuming while the pressure from the top OSHA bureaucrats was for high quotas. “The honest to God truth is that it’s just going to slow you down. They want numbers,” he stated, “lots of inspections, and it will hurt you to do one of these cases.”

Indeed, John Henshaw, OSHA’s administrator, reminiscent of the pilloried Soviet bureaucrats who sought validation in contrived numbers, likes to point to the increase in inspections—3,000 more than in 2000, and 9,000 violations that are more serious. But few of these go to prosecution and that’s the rub.

The case of Chicago OSHA administrator John J. McCann was cited as symptomatic. In the 1980s, Reagan-appointed bureaucrats rebuked him in seeking criminal prosecution of willful violators. “They were all thrown out,” he stated. “We wanted to make an example of those few people who do so much harm to society for their own personal gain,” he observed. Instead of being rewarded for his vigilance, he was transferred so many times that he ended up living in a tent to avoid moving his family.

Jeff Brooks, a 16-year OSHA inspector who, in speaking of the job-related deaths, articulated the real code OSHA follows: “It can’t just be willful, it has to be obscenely willful. If they didn’t purposely with malice seek to kill this person, then you don’t prosecute.” This waffling ultimately caused OSHA to bend to capitalist pressure and downgrade the term “willful” to “unclassified.”

The reluctance of federal prosecutors to take on carefully prepared and documented cases only to declare them “misdemeanors” has proliferated and inhibited the process of judicial pros-

ecution and sends a clear message to the capitalist class that workers can be killed in job-related deaths with impunity. The six-month jail term originally levied in 1970, when OSHA was enacted, was the maximum sentence, half the term levied for anyone harassing a wild burro on federal lands! Obviously, the asses in Congress are more protective of their own breed.

The fact is that OSHA is a vulnerable ploy advanced by the political state to protect capitalist interests while beguiling the working class with the notion that workplace safety is assured. It is an agency subordinate to the Office of the Solicitor under the Department of Labor and its horde of 500 lawyers. The solicitor in turn is a political appointee who is subordinate to the secretary of labor, a position politically subservient to the capitalist class.

The solicitor under Clinton, Thomas Williamson Jr., referred to his role as a “choke point control” to protect the political flanks of the secretary. “You start accusing people of crimes and they get acquitted, you’re going to destroy the credibility of the agency.” Is this a new concept in jurisprudence—or capitalist justice as usual?

To measure the answer, New Jersey Sen. Jon S. Corzine wants to raise the prison penalty for safety violations from six months to a paltry 10 years. Even this proposal faces stiff resistance judging from Randel K. Johnson’s reaction. This vice president for labor issues at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce declared, “Obviously we’re not going to support the expansion of criminal penalties.” Obviously, such penalties would be inconsonant with the profit motive that propels the murderous engine of capitalism wherein workers’ safety is always sacrificed if it means slowing production or spending for safety measures that could reduce profits.

The ever-compliant OSHA bureaucrat John Henshaw virtually seconded Johnson in piously declaring “that our job is not to rack up the individual statistics that some people like to see. Our job is to correct the workplace.” That can only mean more of the same.

CALIFORNIA

Section San Francisco will hold the following discussion meetings. For more information please call 408-280-7266 or e-mail slpsfba@netscape.net.

Mountain View

Discussion Meeting—Saturday, April 24, from 1:30–5 p.m., at the Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin St. (between Church & Mercy sts., near downtown). Moderator: Bruce Cozzini.

Oakland

Discussion Meetings—Saturday, March 13 and Saturday April 17. Both meetings will be held from 4:30–6:30 p.m. at the Rockridge Branch Library, 2nd floor community room, 5366 College St. (corner of College & Manila sts.). Moderator: Frank Prince.

San Francisco

Discussion Meeting—Saturday, April 24, from 1:30–4 p.m., at the San Francisco Main Public Library, ground floor conference room, Grove & Larkin sts. Moderator: Robert Bills.

Saratoga

Discussion Meeting—Saturday, March 27, from 11:30–2 p.m., at the Saratoga Public Library, 13650 Saratoga Ave. (exit Hwy. 85 at Saratoga Ave. and proceed toward the city of Saratoga). Moderator: Bruce Cozzini.

OREGON

Portland

Discussion Meetings—Section Portland holds discussion meetings every second Saturday of the month. Meetings are usually held at the Central Library, but the exact time varies. For more information please call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit our Web site at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>.

TEXAS

Houston

Discussion Meeting—Section Houston will hold a discussion meeting on Monday, March 8, 7 p.m., at the Montrose Branch Public Library, 4100 Montrose, Houston. Topic: “Trade Unionism vs. Industrial Unionism: How to Build a Real Working-Class Union.” For more information call 281-424-1040, e-mail houstonslp@frys.com or visit the section’s Web site at <http://houstonslp.tripod.com>.

Funds

(Dec. 13, 2003—Feb. 6, 2004)

Press Security Fund

Anonymous \$500; Joan Davis \$400; Glenn Schelin \$276; \$200 each Chris Dobreff, Doug Irving for SLP of Canada, Roy K. Nelson, Section Cleveland (in memory of Conrad Gutermuth); Walter Leibfritz \$183.32; Anonym-mous \$112; Anonymous \$100.01; \$100 each Edward J. Madejczk (in memory of James C. Horvath), J. Thadieu Harris III, Ron Harner; Daniel Deneff \$90; Section Cook Co., Ill., \$86.32; John Houser \$78; Harvey Fuller \$50; Jim McHugh \$40; William Barry \$35; Jim & Nancy Kniskern \$32; \$30 each Herbert Joyce, John Hagerty; \$25 each David Carowitz, Howard Hecht, John S. & Rosemary Gale, Lee F. Ortenstein, Ph.D., Peter Teeuwissen, R. Collins, Robert Ormsby.

\$20 each Joe Allbritten, Joe Randell, Lawrence Hackett, Patrick McElhaney, Richard Woodward; George E. Gray \$16; \$15 each Diane Lorraine Poole, Ed & Pat Killian; T.

... De Leon

(Continued from page 4)

could have no interest in depriving him of them. Hence he will be allowed to keep them, just as much his private property under socialism as they were under capitalism. Nay, more, socialism will multiply an hundredfold each man’s power of acquiring, and his surety of retaining, this sort of private property.

For the same reason that socialism will not abolish private ownership of household and personal goods, namely, because these are not engines of national production, and confer no exploiting powers, it may well come to pass that socialism will not abolish inheritance in these things. In the other things, the machinery of production, they being no more subject to private ownership, of course, inheritance of them falls to the ground. And as it is not through one’s personal property, but through his ownership of the means of production, that one works himself into “most of the wealth of the community,” the inheritance which socialism may allow can never lead to the situation suggested.

No, it won’t happen.

McGregor \$12.06; Marshall G. Soura \$12; \$10 each Dagfinn Sjoen, Harry E. Gibson, Joe Barsch, Matthew Rinaldi; \$6 each Donna Meyer, John & Mary Brlas; \$5 each Richard Wilson, Vincent Avila; Earl Shimp \$3; Paul D. Lawrence \$2.50; Brian Blanchard \$2.20; George Gaylord \$1.

Total: \$3,558.41

SLP Sustainer Fund

\$300 each Karl Heck, Bernard Bortnick; Robert Burns \$150; Section Cook Co., Ill. (\$120): \$60 each A. Bikar, D.Vollmer; \$120; Carl C. Miller Jr. \$175; Section Wayne Co., Mich., \$110; \$100 each Lois Reynolds, Chris Dobreff; \$50 each Michael J. Preston, Donald Rogers; Section San Francisco Bay Area: Bill Kelley \$40; Archie Sim \$25; \$20 each George E. Gray, Steve Littleton, Jill Campbell; Reynold R. Elkins \$12.

Total: \$1,592.00

SLP Leaflet Fund

Michael J. Preston \$50; Richard Wilson \$15; \$5 each Joseph J. Frank, Patrick McElhaney.

Total: \$75.00

Daniel De Leon Sesquicentennial Fund

Walter Vojnov \$100; Hubert L. Fultz \$25; Valery Zaytsev \$20; \$10 each Richard Mack, Mark B. Koral; Tom Herzog \$5.

Total: \$170.00

SLP Emergency Fund

R. Hofem \$20.00 (Total)

Genevieve Gunderson Memorial Fund

Paul D. Lawrence \$20.00 (Total)

The People’s Christmas Box

Nick York \$100; \$50 each Donna Meyer, J. Blessington, Robert Hofem; Manuel Luevano \$25; Marshall G. Soura \$12.

Total: \$287.00

The People’s Annual Thanksgiving Fund

Gerald Lucas \$200; Dr. L. Miles Raisig \$100; Karl M. Zwicker \$60; Albert Mitch \$50; William H. Nace \$35; \$25 each Louise Radley, Phillip Colligan, Steve Druk; \$20 each Sophia Carevich, Troy Phipps; James Whiteside \$15; Jake Cipris \$10.

Total: \$585.00

Socialist Labor Party

Financial Summary

(December 2003)

Bank Balance (Nov. 30)	\$ 54,774.39
Expenses (December)	13,652.00
Income (December)*	240,252.97
Bank Balance (Dec. 31)	281,375.36
Surplus for 2003	194,731.41

*Includes Goldberg bequest (\$233,793.33)

China's Dictators Embrace Private Ownership of the Means of Life

By Paul D. Lawrence

China's dictators have decided to amend China's constitution. The amendment states that "private property obtained legally shall not be violated."

Not surprisingly, this prompted some in the press to take a swipe at Karl Marx. *The Age of Australia*, for instance, had this choice bit of information for its readers:

"China has formally acknowledged the end of its 50-year attempt to build communism by tabling [sic] an amendment to the constitution to protect private property—which Karl Marx wanted abolished." (Dec. 24)

Fact is, however, that Karl Marx never called for the abolition of private property. Daniel De Leon put it this way:

"Socialism does not, as is still believed by many of its adversaries, take the field against 'private property'; what it does take the field against is 'private property in the machinery necessary for production and distribution.' It takes the field against that, not as an adversary of 'private property,' but, on the contrary, as an upholder of the right to private property, which the present capitalist system, with its 'private ownership in the machinery necessary for production and distribution,' shockingly violates.

"Socialism argues that the product of human exertion belongs to those who so exert themselves; that theirs is the right to such product or property; and that, today, owing to the 'private ownership of the machinery necessary for such production,' the capitalist, or idle class despoils the working class, i.e., robs the working class of its property.

"Socialism, accordingly, aims at overthrowing the present system of 'private property in the machinery necessary to production,' and at substituting that with common or collective ownership, for the very purpose of securing to the workers their now violated proprietary rights in the product of their labor." (March 18, 1899)

This is not the place to show how capitalist property is wealth produced by workers but stolen from them. The fact should, however, be noted.

China's amendment will tinker with the mechanism of that theft. It continues China's long march away from bureaucratic state despotism. For China's workers, it makes little difference. They had been wage slaves, exploited under state-owned property. They will remain wage slaves, exploited under capitalist-owned private property.

The amendment can, however, provide some valuable lessons for workers the world over, particularly in the advanced capitalist countries.

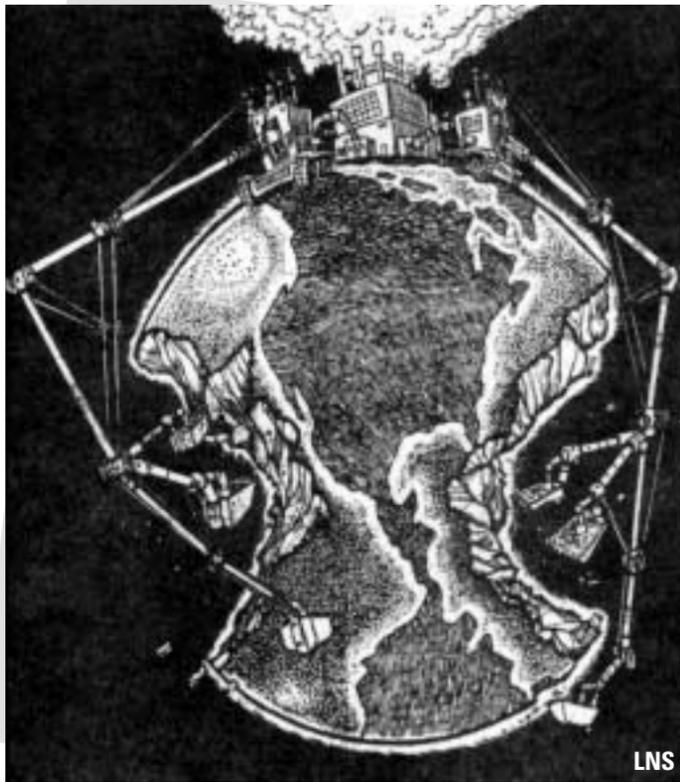
The Associated Press reported: "In part the change is symbolic, bringing the constitution up to date with China's market-driven reality. But it will also likely strengthen the rule of law in a business environment where many common transactions go on without legal structure or regulation."

The Associated Press likely didn't know it, but it has confirmed one of the key concepts of the materialist conception of history. Marx wrote: "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will." These are the "relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production." (Marx wrote that about 150 years ago when "men" could refer to "human beings" in general, not just males.)

Marx continued: "The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness."

By amending China's constitution, the ruling bureaucrats are bringing the legal superstructure into harmony with the relations of production, the underlying economic realities.

The materialist conception of history, however, is not an abstract, dry-as-dust intellectual theory. It is dynamic and explains the origins of social revolutions. Marx noted that "the material productive forces of society come into conflict" with "the property relations" of production. Property relations then fetter productive forces. "Then begins an era of social revolution."



class must act upon its knowledge. It must organize itself as a class.

The needed organization is twofold. On the political field, the working class needs to capture the political state. Then it must destroy that oppressive apparatus which exists to support capitalist ownership of private property. On the economic field, the working class needs to take, hold and operate all the industries of the land. It will thus transform them into democratically controlled socialized property.

... Safeway Strike

(Continued from page 1)

noted, "it can be said that a boycott was in place before the conference and that sympathetic workers didn't need 500 union leaders to suggest one."

To date Safeway has reportedly lost at least \$500 million in sales as a result of the strike, but the multibillion-dollar Safeway empire is showing no signs of lowering the guns of its concessions drive as a result.

The People stands with the workers in their struggle against the lockout and the intransigent demands of the company. But the weaknesses of the tactics of the union leaders must be pointed out. The union leaders could have proposed a nationwide or statewide strike against Safeway. Either would have been a step in the right direction.

But the existing unions only go so far in support of the workers they "organize." They will not threaten the existence of the capitalist enterprises that are steamrolling workers everywhere. They have nothing—no strategy or goal—to erect in their place. Moreover,

union leaders in general have some very feathered nests that are dependent upon continuing the status quo. They must stop any fight before it seriously affects the profit interests of the company they "fight," or risk pushing the company into a failure that could cost duespayers their jobs and the union leaders their feathered nests.

A "union" that accepts capitalism is thus compromised from the start and can never develop a strategy or implement tactics that can protect, much less advance, workers' interests. It can only act as the rear guard to a retreating army.

If workers wish to be free of the vicious circle of battling to improve or defend their economic conditions one day only to find them growing worse the next, the tactic that their unions must adopt is that of the "general lockout" of the capitalist class, not the strike or the boycott.

The tactic of organizing and uniting the entire working class along industrial lines—for the *taking, holding and operating* of the means of production in the interests of the whole working class—is the tactic workers need on the economic field today. Along with the tactic of uniting workers as a class politically to capture and dismantle the political state, that tactic embraces the goal of *abolishing* capitalism—not bargaining with its ruling class for a little less misery—and erecting an economic democracy in its place.

Of course, grocery and other workers throughout the capitalist world have little choice but to continue to wage strikes today—until they build the Socialist Industrial Unions and revolutionary political organizations they need to conduct that general lockout of the capitalist class and establish the economic democracy of socialism.

But as workers wage strikes, they and the unions they are part of should seek to carry on the struggle on the widest possible terms and to take advantage of every opportunity to educate the working class on the need to build its own democratic economic and political organizations with the goal of a socialist reconstruction of society.

But the "new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society." In the United States and other advanced capitalist countries, the *material* conditions for the next stage of social evolution are ripe, if not overripe.

De Leon observed: "The mills, mines, factories, railroads, shops—from top to bottom, all the plants of industry and of useful service are now superintended and run by proletarians, by wage slaves." The capitalist class plays no useful role in production. But it does own as private property the socially operated means of production. Vampire-like, it exploits the useful producers. By virtue of its ownership, it steals from the working class the far greater share of the wealth created by workers' collective labor.

Private ownership and exploitation cause the social and economic problems facing modern society. Property relations are fettering the economic relations, the productive forces. A revolution is in order.

The working class already operates the economy. But it does so in behalf of the capitalist class, not in behalf of the useful producers. Workers operating the economy are the key to socialist revolution. But, as De Leon noted, "The socialist republic is no predestined inevitable development."

"The socialist republic depends," he continued, "not upon material conditions only; it depends upon these—plus clearness of vision to assist the evolutionary process. Nor was the agency of intellect needful at any previous stage of social evolution in the class struggle to the extent that it is needful at this, the culminating one of all."

In short, the working class needs to become classconscious. It must become aware that the capitalist class exploits it. It must realize that properly organized it has the power to replace capitalism with socialism. Then the working