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The Virginia Tech Tragedy

By Ken Boettcher

Within a week of the terrible events of April 16, Virginia Tech university's women's track and field team participated in the Atlantic Coast Conference's outdoor track and field event at College Park, Md.

"The women's track and field athletes wore ribbons on their uniforms," according to the Roanoke *Times*, "and wrote '33' (for the families) or '32' on their arms, legs or hands."

The numbers, of course, were meant as a tribute to the 32 students and faculty members who died on the VT campus on April 16. The students who marked their limbs with the number 33 obviously did not intend it as a tribute to the young man who killed the other 32 before taking his own life, but they clearly meant to include him (and his family) among the victims from that fateful day.

Socialists do not pretend to have all the answers with respect to the workings of the human mind. However, we believe the students who marked themselves with the number 33 instinctively displayed more than their own compassion for all those who died and all the families that must live on with the memory. They also displayed at least a glint of insight into the full scope of the tragedy.

The young man who took the lives of all 33 who died that terrible day also was a victim, but a victim of what? Was it simply that he "fell through the cracks" of a broken mental health system, or does the explanation for such an irrational act go deeper?

A Marxist analysis of capitalist society makes clear that class-divided society conditions the behavior of all who live in it. Problems of "interpersonal relations" and loneliness, difficulties surrounding sex relations, the pressure to conform to the expectations of peers—in short, the problem of establishing meaningful and fulfilling relationships with other people—pervade American social life and culture. That much is evident from reports that many teenagers suffer from loneliness and suicidal feelings, in the emergence and growth of the psychiatric profession, in people joining religious and other cults out of need for companionship, and in the general social atmosphere so often described as a "cold, cruel world."

In short, capitalism creates conditions that promote stultified and barren human relationships. The "personal problem" of feeling alienated from other people is in reality a social problem—the capitalist system and the culture it engenders foster a *generalized* alienation among *all* human beings.

Such relationships tend to be superficial and one-dimensional. People tend to treat each other as objects. Relationships are based less on shared interests than on what one person can "get out of" the other. Femi-

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War Will Continue Despite Democratic 'Opposition'

Although President Bush has vetoed a multibillion-dollar "supplemental" spending bill for continuing the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq until at least July 2008, it is unlikely that the wars will end anytime soon.

Congress passed HR 1591, the "U.S. Troop Readiness, Veteran's Care, Katrina Recovery and Iraq Accountability Act," in April. The Senate gave its approval by a vote of 51 to 46 on April 26. The House adopted the measure in a 218 to 208 vote earlier in the month. The margins were far short of the two-thirds vote needed to overcome the anticipated veto.

A few days before he formally rejected it, however, Bush expressed confidence that Congress would eventually come around to his way of thinking. Speaking on April 30, one day before vetoing the bill and two days before he was expected to meet with congressional leaders to work out a compromise, Bush said:

"I look forward to working with members of both parties to get a bill that doesn't set artificial timetables and doesn't micromanage and gets the money to our troops. I believe there's a lot of Democrats that understand that we need to get the money to the troops as soon as possible."

Bush wants to spend more than \$100 billion to continue the wars. As on April 30, he occasionally refers to this as "funding the troops," as if the funds were intended to bulk up the scanty pay envelopes of the rank-and-file men and women who are doing the fighting and the dying.

Fact is, though, that the \$100 billion he is after is not meant to "fund the troops." Much of it is meant to pay capitalist manufacturers of weapons and other war materiel to produce more of the same stuff. It is meant to replace everything from helicopters to humvees so the troops can keep on fighting, killing, maiming and dying. It is meant to bulk up capitalist war profits before the war market dries up.

The funds the rejected measure would have provided included multimillion and multibillion dollar outlays for all sorts of military equipment. Had Bush chosen to sign it, the measure would have provided the Army with \$619.7 million for "aircraft procurement." Those funds, and all other appropriations for weapons, equipment and other war materiel, would be available until Sept. 30, 2009.

Apart from aircraft, the measure allotted the Army nearly \$112 million for missiles, more than \$3.4 billion for "weapons and tracked

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Supreme Court Upholds Ban on Abortion Procedure

By Donna Bills

On April 18 the Supreme Court upheld a federal ban on so-called partial birth abortion, making it the first federal ban on an abortion procedure since the 1973 landmark ruling *Roe v. Wade* that gave women the constitutional right to choose. The court's ruling encompassed another first—it disregarded women's health.

The ban was narrowly upheld by the court's 5-4 decision, which many hold resulted from President Bush's appointment of conservative justices and the retirement of former justice Sandra Day O'Connor. However, there have been numerous attempts—some successful—to chip away at women's right to a safe and legal abortion since 1973.

The 1976 Hyde Amendment, for example, prohibits federally funded abortions except in cases of incest, rape or when a woman's life is in danger. A number of "human life amendments" have also been introduced in Congress since *Roe*; one introduced in 1981 attempted to criminalize abortion by declaring a fetus is a person with full legal rights from the moment of conception. In 1992 the

Supreme Court, in *Planned Parenthood in Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, upheld a woman's right to an abortion but allowed states to impose a 24-hour wait period, parental notification in the case of minors, informed consent and other limitations.

More recently, in 2003, the Republican-dominated Congress passed the Federal Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act, which President George W. Bush subsequently signed into law. This law prohibits a second trimester abortion procedure, intact dilation and evacuation (also called intact dilation and extraction), except when the mother's life is in danger. Planned Parenthood Federation of America and others immediately challenged the law on the premise that it failed to protect a woman's health and that the procedure is medically necessary.

Both the 8th and 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld these challenges based on the Supreme Court's earlier 2000 decision in *Stenberg v. Carhart*. That decision had struck down a restrictive state abortion statute that did not

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Individualism on the Rise Among Students

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

—Marx

By Michael James

The Associated Press recently reported results of a study led by Jean Tweage, a professor of psychology at the University of San Diego. The study, according to the AP, found an “alarming rise in narcissism [and] self-centeredness” among American college students.

According to one of Tweage’s associates, W. Keith Campbell of the University of Georgia, self-centeredness or narcissism, may have benefits in some competitive situations, but “can also have very negative consequences for society, including the breakdown of close relationships with others.”

A recent issue of *U.S. News & World Report* reported on the same study. It said many of today’s young people “are more narcissistic than their parents—dangerously so...” The study, it added, reinforced similar findings written into Tweage’s book, *Generation Me*, published last year. Tweage, according to the article, found that “the burst of self-love” she found among many students, had “likely side effects of depression, anxiety and cynicism.”

What is narcissism? We all know the ancient Greek myth of Narcissus who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water and upon death was transformed into the lovely flower narcissus. But narcissism is not pretty. The American Psychiatric Association identifies nine symptoms: 1) grandiosity, 2) a need for admiration, 3) lack of empathy for others, 4) preoccupation with fantasies of power or brilliance, 5) a feeling of being special or unique, 6) a sense of entitlement such as an expectation of favorable treatment, 7) exploitation of others as in using others for selfish ends, 8) arrogance, and 9) envy of others who achieve or accomplish. The AP adds that narcissists “react aggressively to criticism and favor self-promotion over helping others.”

What causes narcissism? Well, *U.S. News & World Report* blames “the rise in individualism” because “individualism may cause people to not value close relationships.” True enough! A March/April article in *Mother Jones* magazine finds that America has now passed from “individualism to hyperindividualism,” so that “we left behind hundreds of thousands of years of human community for the excitement, and the isolation, of making something of ourselves.” *Mother Jones* says another result of hyperindividualism is that “the public realm—things like parks and schools and Social Security, the last reminders of the com-

munities from which we came—is under steady and increasing attack.” The article cites “study after study” showing Americans “spending less time with friends and family, either working longer hours, or hunched over their computers at night.” One result is that “the number of people saying they have no one to discuss important matters with has nearly tripled.” The *Mother Jones* conclusion: “we have a surplus of individualism and a deficit of companionship...”

Bourgeois writers who labor for bourgeois magazines are sometimes partially correct. Narcissism is indeed a terrible sickness. They are correct to say that narcissism is rooted in the extreme individualism prized by our society. And they are correct to complain that America is lacking in companionship and community. Remember the famous hierarchy of human needs outlined by psychologist Abraham Maslow? Just a glance at his hierarchy confirms that humans must first have belonging before we can have esteem. American individualism, therefore, is shallow and flimsy, a poor substitute for the deep esteem and individual actualization that can come only through belonging and true community.

What is true community? Psychiatrist M. Scott Peck writes in his book, *The Different Drum: Community-Making and Peace*, that “through community lies the salvation of the world. Nothing is more important.” He admits that, as a child, he was “trained in the precepts of rugged individualism” and he sees that “most of us have never had an experience of true community.” The reason, of course, is that capitalism is systemically antisocial and violent. Yet he never identifies cap-

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...Court Upholds Ban

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protect a woman’s health. In addition, the 2003 law’s language was found to be unclear and its restriction could be interpreted to apply to other abortion procedures.

Last November the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear arguments that challenged the 2003 law. On April 18 the high court rendered its ruling, thus reversing its 2000 stance. Writing for the majority, Justice Anthony Kennedy stated: “Respondents have not demonstrated that the Act, as a facial matter, is void for vagueness, or that it imposes an undue burden on a woman’s right to abortion based on its overbreadth or lack of a health exemption.” Ominously, Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia felt compelled to add that “*Roe v. Wade*...has no basis in the Constitution.”

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who many consider a liberal voice on the bench, vigorously dissented from the majority ruling and wrote, “For the first time since *Roe*, the court blesses a prohibition with no exception safeguarding a woman’s health.” She added, “Today’s decision is alarming. It refuses to take *Casey* and *Stenberg* seriously. It tolerates, indeed applauds, federal intervention to ban nationwide a procedure found necessary and proper in certain cases by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.”

Reaction to the court’s ruling was swift. Eve Gartner, Planned Parenthood’s director of litigation and law who presented arguments to the Supreme Court, declared, “Today the court took away an important option for doctors who seek to provide the best and safest care to their patients. This ruling tells women that politicians, not doctors, will make their health care decisions for them.”

Christian Coalition of America’s president, Roberta Combs, avowed, “It is just a matter of time before the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 will also be struck down by the court.”

Predictably, Democratic presidential candidates Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama opposed the ruling, while Republican presidential candidates John McCain and Rudolph Giuliani supported it. In a taste of what’s to come, *San Jose Mercury News* columnist Sue Hutchison urged women to vote for can-

didates who support a woman’s right to choose.

Indeed, the court’s ruling reflects the Bush administration and other’s successful efforts to hit deeply at *Roe v. Wade* and does not uphold the “sanctity of life,” as Bush hypocritically expressed himself following the decision.

The alarming significance of the high court’s ruling is this: it allows the political state to intervene in what should solely be a private medical decision between a woman and her doctor; it disregards the health of a woman; it demonstrates the vulnerability of *Roe v. Wade* and invites additional restrictions on the law.

The Socialist Labor Party upholds a woman’s right to choose a safe and legal abortion, recognizing it as essential in fighting sexual oppression and gaining social control over her life. However, working-class men and women cannot look to politicians or the political state to safeguard this right, as many erroneously do.

The vulnerability and ongoing emasculation of *Roe v. Wade* is proof that neither politicians nor the political state can securely protect this right, or any constitutional right, for its citizens. The fight to secure a woman’s right to choose must be part of a different kind of struggle, a class-conscious struggle by America’s working class to wrest economic and political control of society away from the capitalist class, its politicians and its political state and into the collective hands of working people.

By collectively owning and democratically operating the nation’s economy and its institutions, working people will have finally achieved full social control over their lives and capitalism with its exploitation of wage labor and its oppressive state apparatus will have ended.

Log on to www.slp.org/slp_states.htm to read the Socialist Labor Party’s full position on the abortion question.

Banned Procedure Is Rarely Used

The medical procedure that the U.S. Supreme Court banned in April—intact dilation and evacuation, which abortion opponents call partial birth abortion—is rarely used. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, a respected organization devoted to advancing reproductive and sexual health, reported that in 2000, its last census, less than one quarter of one percent of all abortions performed that year used intact dilation and evacuation.

The Supreme Court allowed that exceptions to the new restrictions imposed by its ruling may be granted on a case-by-case basis. For readily apparent reasons, however, this is of little practical use for those working-class women whose reproductive health is at stake.

The court did not ban other medical procedures used in the second trimester, such as the more commonly performed dilation and evacuation, though some fear that the ruling is broad enough to open the door to restrictions on these other procedures through future litigation.

—D.G.B.

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The End of Antibiotics?

By Bruce Cozzini

It is no surprise when the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) caves in to the interests of a drug company; when the interests of agribusiness are added in, it is a foregone conclusion. Despite warnings that the approval of a new antibiotic for use in cattle will likely lead to development of resistant strains of bacteria affecting humans, the FDA appears on the verge of overruling many of its own scientists and the recommendations of other medical and scientific experts and approving the use of cefquinome for treatment of a bovine pulmonary disease. In this decision, the profits of the drug's manufacturer and cattle-raising agribusiness take precedence over human health.

According to *The Washington Post*, cefquinome "belongs to a class of highly potent antibiotics that are among medicine's last defenses against several serious human infections." None of these, the fourth generation cephalosporins, have so far been approved for use in animals in the United States. The American Medical Association and several other health groups have warned the FDA that use of cefquinome in animals would lead to development of "superbugs" resistant to fourth generation cephalosporins as well as older antibiotics.

Although the FDA's advisory board, taking the above facts into consideration, voted last fall to reject the request by InterVet Inc. to market use of cefquinome for cattle, it now appears that the FDA will approve the drug this spring.

The basis for this decision will be Guidance for Industry #152, a regulatory ruling that requires that a drug "may be approvable if, after evaluating all supporting information, FDA can conclude that there is a reasonable certainty of no harm to human health when the drug is approved under specific use restrictions."

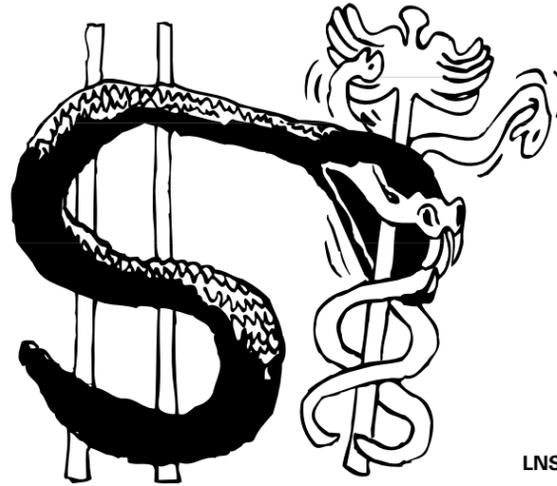
This translates to an "innocent until proven guilty" criterion for drug approval. As Edward Belongia, an epidemiologist at the Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation in Wisconsin, notes, "The industry says that 'until you show us a direct link to human mortality from the use of these drugs in animals, we don't think you should preclude their use.'" "But," he asks, "do we really want to drive more resistance genes into the human population? It's easy to open the barn door, but it's hard to close the door once it's open."

As an example of the consequences of such actions, the *Post* article cites the experience with the fluoroquinolones Baytril and SaraFlox. In the mid-1990s, the FDA overrode the objections of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and approved use of these drugs for poultry. Soon doctors began to find patients with fluoroquinolone-resistant strains of campylobacter, a bacterium that causes a serious diarrheal disease. It was not until 2005 that both drugs were pulled, but by then fluoroquinolone resistance had become even more common.

As the *Post* observes: "Microbes are constantly mutating, and some of those mutations happen to

confer immunity to one drug or another. Exacerbating the problem, bacteria constantly exchange bits of DNA with each other, spreading that resistance." Accordingly, responsible physicians prescribe antibiotics judiciously, to avoid the development of drug resistance.

So far the fourth generation cephalosporins have been only sparingly used in the United States. One has just been designated as the only drug applicable for treatment of a gonorrhea "superbug," replacing fluoroquinolones, which



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were the drug of choice before drug resistance rendered them all but useless. Note: until recently Cipro, a fluoroquinolone, was a principal defense against anthrax (of the 2001 bioterror scare).

Statements from InterVet claim that European use of fourth generation cephalosporins over the last decade have had no adverse effects. But *E. coli* in pigs and other animals in Spain and Britain show high levels of cephalosporin resistance. Also fourth generation cephalosporin resistance has appeared in human patients in Europe.

What makes the approval of their use in cattle even more absurd as well as injurious is that they are not really necessary. As the *Post* notes, "more than a dozen medicines are already on the market for the respiratory syndrome, and all are still effective." In addition, antibiotics in general would not

be needed if animals were not raised in filthy, crowded and stressful conditions.

According to a statement on "The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act of 2007," posted to the website of the Union of Concerned Scientists, scientific evidence shows that "routine feeding of antibiotics to farm animals that are not sick promotes development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria that can be transferred to people, making it harder to treat bacterial infections in humans. Antibiotic feed additives are used to promote slightly faster growth and to compensate for crowded, stressful and often unsanitary animal husbandry conditions. The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that 70 percent of antibiotics and related drugs used in the United States are given as feed additives to chicken, hogs and beef cattle; such use occurs without a prescription." (Emphasis added.)

When antibiotics became available shortly after World War II, the most fearsome diseases became treatable, tuberculosis, bacterial pneumonia, staphylococcus, streptococcus, even plague and anthrax if caught in time. Infections following surgery and childbirth were no longer to be feared. But with indiscriminate use of antibiotics, over time many strains of bacteria developed with resistance to one generation of antibiotic after another. Highly drug-resistant strains of TB, staphylococcus and gonorrhea have been reported recently that respond to only a few new drugs. How soon till we are back to the bad old days without antibiotics when people died from what we now consider routine illnesses?

Expectations that government agencies will look out for public welfare are in the long run foolish. As part of the capitalist political state, their job is to protect capitalist interests, which is to say, the profits of capitalist enterprise as a whole. In a socialist system of production for use rather than profit, we would simply end the animal husbandry practices that now encourage indiscriminate antibiotic use, and reserve antibiotics for necessary therapeutic uses.

... Individualism

(Continued from page 2)

italism as the enemy of community and he never identifies socialism as true community.

Dr. Peck, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Mother Jones* and the AP are all mentally imprisoned by bourgeois ideology. They do not see that American individualism serves a clear political purpose. Corporate commentators and psychological mystifiers can only point to problems. Without Marxism they have no depth and no solutions. Without Marxism the analysis quickly reaches a dead end. We are taken halfway and then abandoned. We are not told, for example, that individualism is a thoroughly bourgeois phenomenon that serves capitalism very well.

Bourgeois individualism is a singular, desperate and competitive search for esteem and security frantically carried out in the absence of authentic community and belonging. It is a pathological individualism, rooted in alienation and lack of classconsciousness. How can we be authentic individuals when we have been denied awareness of our real community, our class identity? How can we truly be developed individuals when we do not know that it is we who create all wealth? How can we be highly actualized persons when we do not know that our historic purpose is to create socialism? The point is that the cultural emphasis on individualism serves capitalism by dividing the working class. Our very human need for solidarity and collectivity is thwarted. "I" replaces "we."

All workers, whether their labor is intellectual or physical, whether they are male or female, black or white, young or old, gay or straight, com-

pete to endear themselves to their employer. A cultural emphasis on individualism persuades us to turn away from collective remedies such as "agitate, educate, organize" or "rise with your class, not out of it." Instead, we are told to "pull yourself up by your own bootstraps" or "be all that you can be" or "get rich quick." Individualism is an antisocial ethos that serves a clear ideological purpose by destroying working-class identity and solidarity. Extreme or rugged individualism is perhaps one of the reasons that Frederick Engels, in a Feb. 8, 1890, letter, wrote that "America is so purely bourgeois."



The American brand of individualism is one more capitalist lie. It is a trick, an illusion, and a cheap, shiny, vulgar, fraudulent tease. We must first be liberated from wage slavery, from the profit motive, from war, from poverty and from class exploitation and class struggle before we can truly develop ourselves, express ourselves and be ourselves. We must first liberate production and distribution from the parasitic ruling class so that we all may have access to social wealth. We must abolish capitalism. We must build socialism. Then every person will belong. Then every person will be free to individually develop. Marx wrote that socialism means "the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human) being."

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Texas City Reports

On March 23, 2005, a violent explosion ripped through British Petroleum's petrochemical plant at Texas City, Texas. The blast killed 15 workers and injured 180 other people, many of them residents of nearby communities. The plant was badly damaged, of course, but so were working-class homes in the surrounding community up to three-quarters of a mile away. An emergency shelter-in-place order was issued that kept 43,000 people indoors until toxic fumes subsided.

Two years and two massive blue-ribbon panel reports later we know a great deal about what happened at Texas City, what didn't happen that should have happened and the why of both.

Following the incident, the federal U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) investigated BP's safety performance at Texas City, the role played by its management in England and the effectiveness of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) vis-à-vis the petrochemical industry. In August 2005 the CSB issued an "urgent safety recommendation" that BP convene its own "independent" panel to examine its "corporate safety management systems, safety culture and oversight of its North American refineries."

BP embraced the CSB's proposal and formed the BP U.S. Refineries Independent Safety Review Panel, chaired by former secretary of state James Baker III. What better way to create the impression that something was being done while nothing really was?

BP's Baker Panel issued a massive report on Jan. 16. Among other things, the report said, "BP has not provided effective process safety leadership" and "has not adequately established process safety as a core value." It found "Instances of a lack of operating discipline, toleration of serious deviations from safe operating practices and apparent complacency toward serious process safety risks existed at each of [BP's] U.S. refineries." Further, "BP did not effectively incorporate process safety in management decision making. BP tended to have a short-term focus...and its decentralized management system and entrepreneurial culture delegated substantial discretion to U.S. refinery plant managers without clearly defining process safety expectations, responsibilities or accountabilities." The report's milquetoast recommendations asked that the company address these and other concerns and "involve the relevant stakeholders to develop a positive, trusting and open process safety culture."

For its part, OSHA's Process Safety Management Standard ostensibly began implementation in 1992. All requirements of its program were to be in place by May 26, 1997. But the program was a joke. As the CSB's report, released on March 27, observed, "In the years prior to the [Texas City] incident OSHA...did not identify the likelihood for a catastrophic incident, nor did OSHA prioritize planned inspections of the refinery to enforce process safety regulations, despite warning signs. After this incident OSHA uncovered 301 egregious willful violations...Prior to OSHA issuing citations, the refinery had two additional serious incidents. Despite the large number of major violations...and these two additional serious incidents in 2005, OSHA did not conduct a comprehensive inspection of any of the other 29 process units at the Texas City refinery." So much for the utility to workers of window-dressing reform agencies like OSHA.

"Despite numerous previous fatalities at the Texas City refinery (23 deaths in the 30 years prior to the 2005 disaster) and many hazardous material releases," it said, "BP did not take effective steps to stem the growing risk of a catastrophic event."

"Cost-cutting and failure to invest in the 1990s by Amoco [the previous owner] and then BP left the Texas City refinery vulnerable to a catastrophe. BP targeted budget cuts of 25 percent in 1999 and another 25 percent in 2005, even though much of the refinery's infrastructure and process equipment were in disrepair. Also, operator training and staffing were downsized."

Most revealing of all, however, was what the CSB called "indefinable fatigue factors."

"On the day of the incident," for example, "the Day Board Operator was likely fatigued, experiencing both acute sleep loss and cumulative sleep debt. He had worked 12-hour shifts for 29 consecutive days and generally slept five to six hours per 24-hour period, although he reported feeling most rested with seven hours of sleep per night. The Night Lead Operator, who filled the tower from the satellite control room, worked 33 consecutive days, from February 18–March 23, 2005. The Day Lead Operator—who was training two new operators, dealing with contractors, and working to get a replacement part to finish the ISOM turnaround work—had been on duty for 37 consecutive days, from February 14 until March 23, 2005. Finally, another experienced outside operator, who was helping the Day Lead Operator, worked 31 consecutive days, February 21–March 23, 2005. All of these individuals were working 12-hour shifts."

The CSB report, like BP's own report, ended with a long list of mere recommendations for better safety performance by the company and better regulation by OSHA, and more investigations into and reports on conditions in the petrochemical industry. However, CSB has no enforcement authority and OSHA, the agency that ostensibly has that authority, has proven itself utterly ineffectual.

In our opinion, it did not take two years and two blue-ribbon panels to discover that overwork and ruthless exploitation was a recipe for disaster. A blue-collar committee of onsite workers organized democratically to operate the facility safely could and would have prevented the explosion of March 2005. But that would be socialism, and of course we all know that socialism cannot do things as efficiently as "private enterprise," correct? We don't think so. We think it is just the reverse: Workers will be safe only when they control the processes of production themselves, in the only meaningful way that can truly be accomplished—with the abolition of profit-motivated capitalism and the advent of the industrial democracy of socialism.

—K.B.

A De Leon Editorial

Philippines-Iraq

The United States occupied the Philippines for half a century after the Spanish-American War. Sectarian squabbles over power and wealth played a part in prolonging the occupation. While the parallel is not perfect, similar quarrels in today's Iraq could be used to justify the U.S. occupation of that country for years to come.



The Issue of Philippine Independence

(Daily People, Feb. 7, 1913)

"Not until the Philippine people are unmistakably ready for self-government should the trusteeship of the American government cease"—so said President Taft at the annual banquet of the Ohio Society at Washington on the 29th of last month.

What, in the mind of those for whom the president spoke, is the test of "unmistakable capacity for self-government," on the part of the Philippine people?

On the part of most people the test of the capacity for self-government is the existence of a government capable to keep order. If that test is applied to the Philippine people their capacity is amply proven. Their form of government is better than that of Austria; their parliaments are more orderly; their chosen officials compare favorably with most of our own. What then is missing?

Let us push aside the veil of "unmistakably ready for self-government" with which the soon-to-be-got-rid-of president seeks to veil the issue of Philippine independence.

When the Filipinos rose against the galling colonial yoke of Spain they made the identical experience that the Spanish-American colonists made when they took up arms, fully 75 years before, against the identical power. The papal hierarchy, which they had hitherto considered the guardian, at least a guardian of morality and virtue, threw off its mask; stepped forth in its true character as a political organization, ally of and shield for tyranny; and fulminated its anathemas against the "rebels" who dared to raise shrewd steel against the utterly corrupt crown of Spain. In Spanish America, the effect of the papal conduct was that, from Mexico down to Chile and Argentina, the Vatican at Rome and the Escorial at Madrid were put into one sack, and treated alike. In the Philippine Islands, the shock of the discovery of the political and tyrannical essence of the papal hierarchy carried the "rebels" further. They not only put Madrid and Rome into one sack, but they set up their own pope—Aglipa.

By the time—May 1, 1898—when, despite the prayers of the Spanish friars, Adm. Dewey smote the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, the independence of the Philippine Islands was, as Rep. Jones of Virginia expressed it a few weeks ago in the House of Representatives, "virtual-

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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. It means a classless society that guarantees full democratic rights for all workers.

Socialism does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a closed party-run system without democratic rights. Those things are the very opposite of socialism.

"Socialism," as the American Socialist Daniel De Leon defined it, "is that social system under which the necessities of production are owned, controlled and administered by the people, for the people, and under which, accordingly, the cause of political and economic despotism having been abolished, class rule is at end. That is socialism, nothing short of that." And we might add, nothing more than that! Remember: If it does not fit this description, it is not socialism—no matter who says different. Those who claim that socialism existed and failed in places like Russia and China simply do not know the facts.

Socialism will be a society in which the things we need to live, work and control our own lives—the industries, services and natural resources—are collectively owned by all the people, and in which the democratic organization of the people within the industries and services is the government. Socialism means that government of the people, for the people and by the people will become a reality for the first time.

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, to end poverty, racism, sexism, environmental disaster and to avert the still potent threat of a catastrophic nuclear war. 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.

SOCIALIST PRETENSES GONE—

Israeli Kibbutzim Now Big Business

By B.B.

Of course, there is no socialism possible in one city or section of the country, and not in the rest. A country divided against itself cannot stand. For that reason he who talks "socialist colony" talks nonsense.

—Daniel De Leon

On Feb. 26 *The Boston Globe* carried an article by Matthew Kalman under the double heading of "Capitalism in the Kibbutz: Many Israeli Collectives Shunning System on Financial Equality." Less than a week later, the *San Francisco Chronicle* carried essentially the same article, but with some differences. The *Chronicle* published its version under the double heading of "A Radical Experiment at Israel's First Kibbutz: Its Egalitarian Socialists Vote in Free-Market Capitalism." The author was the same, but where the *Globe* identified him as a "Globe Correspondent" the *Chronicle* placed him with the "Chronicle Foreign Service."

Whoever Mr. Kalman may be, his story about the kibbutzim abandoning "socialism" and going capitalist hardly qualifies as news, unless it is news of the stale variety of that particular commodity. Whatever the original kibbutzniks may have aspired to, the kibbutzim long ago devolved into capitalist concerns, complete with the production of commodities for sale and profit on the capitalist market and the exploitation of wage labor that makes sale for profit possible.

The first kibbutz, referred to in the *Chronicle's* headline and the focus of Kalman's article, is Degania Aleph, which was established in 1910 near the Sea of Galilee in what was a part of the Ottoman Empire but today is in the north of Israel. The origins of the kibbutzim movement are not entirely clear. Some believe it was launched purely as a "back to the soil" movement among the Jews who had festered in feudal Europe for thousands of years and who were forbidden to own agricultural land and driven to pursue narrow occupations within ghettos. In the years prior to WWI, Eastern European Jews aimed to escape the ghetto, its occupational stigma, discrimination and periodic pogroms visited upon them by Christians with the connivance of despotic rulers. In this period of imperialist conflict and rising nationalism, the movement was fueled by the Zionist ideal of a return to the seat of the Jewish religion, the land of Israel, then a part of the Ottoman Empire in Palestine. To this feverish impulse was added a stew peppered with socialist ideas of egalitarianism, the end of exploitation and the wages system, democratic consensus and other concepts borrowed piecemeal from socialism for selective inclusion.

Another theory is that the kibbutz movement was influenced by the ideas of Ber Borochov (1881–1917), a Zionist ideologue, who believed a nationalist Jewish state was needed so that a larger proportion of the Jewish people could become peasants and proletarians. He considered this a prerequisite to revolution. However, as Zionism, or Jewish nationalism, developed its own schisms, and as these resulted in the formation of rival political parties, the kibbutzim tended to become one-party societies. Conformity of kibbutzim members was insured in most cases by the careful screening to which applicants to a kibbutz were subjected. Applicants who were accepted gave up all private property, other than clothing and personal items, and put themselves at the disposal of the group. Economic dependence, therefore, became an obvious factor in the kibbutzniks' conformity. But once having arrived in Palestine material conditions imposed their own harsh terms upon the inexperienced "back to the soilers."

No institution did more to nourish "socialist" illusions in Israel than the kibbutzim, or what were originally communal agricultural settlements. The kibbutzim are still managed democratically by their members, or kibbutzniks, which

is to say questions involving policy decisions, investments, administrative personnel, etc., are decided at general membership meetings.

Nevertheless, the kibbutzim are not and never were institutions of socialist democracy. They have always operated in a capitalist commodity-producing economy. The prices they receive for their output are determined by the capitalist market. When they decide to expand or improve their production techniques they are dependent on creditors who, like bankers and other lenders the world over, impose "conditions."

The kibbutzim never were the "successful" concerns many of their admirers believed them to be. Many fell deep into debt to their creditors or to the government. They might not have survived as long as they did if not for subsidies from Zionist groups outside of Israel.

Kibbutzniks never accounted for more than a fraction of Israel's population and their numbers have been in decline for years. "The total population of the country's kibbutzim peaked at 124,000 in 1994 and has since fallen to 115,000; as a proportion of the growing Israeli population, kibbutz residents have fallen from 4.2 percent in 1952 to 1.7 percent in 2004," according to Kalman.

The failure of the kibbutzim to sustain themselves as agricultural-producing units has led to their branching out into food processing and light industry. In spite of the headlines given to his article, Kalman is well aware of this. As he reported:

"Realizing that the kibbutz could not be sustained by agriculture alone, Degania built its first factory in 1967. Today, its diamond-tipped machine-tool manufacturing plant, Toolgal, provides 70 percent of the kibbutz's revenues...."

In operating small plants and factories, the kibbutzim have had to seek labor in nearby towns. Such workers are hired and exploited in the same ways workers are hired and exploited by capitalist-owned factories. Indeed, Kibbutz Industry Association Ltd. was established in the 1960s precisely to pull the kibbutzim back from the brink of complete bankruptcy. As *Israeli Business Today* reported in December 1991:

"Both the search for quick relief from heavy debts and the need to find partners in order to stay competitive are forcing kibbutz industries to reorganize. In what might be called the kibbutzim's second industrial revolution, these companies are seeking a separation—in management, bookkeeping and personnel—from the kibbutz milieu that nurtured, but ultimately threatened to smother

them. The steps are being dictated by creditor banks, who joined the kibbutzim and government in a major debt cancellation and rescheduling program...."

Similar but more detailed information posted at *kompass.com*, a Danish website, shows how far removed the kibbutzim are from anything that even vaguely resembles socialism.

"The extent of the Kibbutz Industries is significant, with factories producing metal and electronics, plastic and rubber, processed food, optics and glass, textile and leather, medicine and chemicals, wood and furniture, office supplies, quarries and building materials, toys, jewelry, paper and printing. Although the kibbutz movement constitutes only 1.5 percent of the Israeli population, its share in Israel industry amounts to 8.6 percent in sales, 10.0 percent in export, 6.6 percent in investments and 8.0 percent in industrial employment.

"Last year total sale was \$5.51 billion, including exports in excess of \$3.1 billion. The leading branches of Kibbutz Industry are plastic and rubber (44 percent of total sales), metal (12.9 percent of total sales), and food (17 percent of total sales). The Kibbutz Industries export 57 percent of their production. The leading exporters are plastic, rubber and food.

"The Kibbutz Industries Association (KIA) is a voluntary organization established in 1964. It represents over 130,000 people and about 300 industrial enterprises from all the kibbutz movements."

And according to another Internet source, the Jewish Virtual Library, "there is no limitation on hired—even imported—labor," and kibbutzniks now "make up only 40 percent of the kibbutz industries' workforce."

Whatever the aspirations and ideals of the early kibbutzniks may have been, the development of Israel into a full-fledged capitalist state and economy have all but put the kibbutz on them.

Mr. Kalman's article, rather than illustrating anything about the viability of socialism, demonstrates once again the impossibility of incrementally growing socialism by bits and pieces. Indeed, what has happened, and continues to be transformed, is the socialization of production within the framework of capitalism. What the modern world demands is the freeing of socialized production from the incumbent weight of private ownership of the means of social production. This can only be accomplished by the organized might of the working class determined to seize, hold and operate modern industry in behalf of society.

... Virginia Tech Tragedy

(Continued from page 1)

nists have long noted one aspect of this—the treatment of women as sex objects, a factor that in turn contributes to alienation and antagonism between the sexes.

Competition compounds this tendency—it is unable to provide opportunities for all workers to satisfy their material needs. It pushes workers

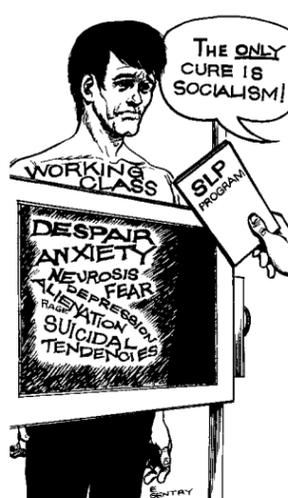
to compete with each other for the limited opportunities that do exist. This, too, is reflected culturally. Young people in particular are heavily subjected to the idea that the way to "get ahead" is to "beat the other guy." The concept is drilled into everyone's head in the schools, the media, sports and so on.

As Marx noted, "Competition makes individuals, not only the bour-

geoisie, but still more the workers, mutually hostile." This hostility in turn adds to the protective barriers of distrust that people erect among themselves.

Daniel De Leon once wrote that "It is a recognized fact that...capitalism is a system of gross materialism, brutal, cynical and murderous." "Its god is mammon," said De Leon, "and its ideal is self. It destroys the finer attributes of many and gives rise to an atmosphere in which morality counts for little and in which human life is lightly held." "If the individual member of society would succeed," De Leon continued, "he must adapt himself to his environment, and in such an environment, what can one expect?"

Terrible events such as occurred on April 16 are bound to recur until their underlying social causes are adequately addressed. Indeed, what happened on that day was a recurrence. It remains for a collectively owned and democratically administered socialist society whose object of productive activity is human needs and wants to permanently deliver us from the hell into which we are all born under capitalism.



...War Will Continue

(Continued from page 1)

vehicles," \$681.5 million for ammunition and over \$11 billion for "other procurement."

The Navy stood to receive about \$1.1 billion for "aircraft procurement," nearly \$160 million for ammunition, including ammunition for the Marines, and almost \$749 million for "other procurement." The Marines, a subdivision of the Navy, would have been allowed "an additional amount" of more than \$2.2 billion for unspecified uses.

These numbers, it should be remembered, are "supplemental" additions to the annual appropriations made for the military.

Bush's Objections

Bush, however, objected to the "benchmark" and "timetable" features of the bill that would have set certain requirements for the Iraqi government to meet and a "timetable" by which most U.S. forces would have to be "redeployed" out of Iraq. On April 27 the *Congressional Quarterly* carried an article summarizing those objections:

"The language most objectionable to Bush and Republicans in the current bill is a timetable for troop withdrawal that includes a 'goal' for withdrawing most U.S. troops from Iraq not later than March 2008. That timetable is tied to the Iraqi government

meeting certain benchmarks, such as reining in sectarian militias and equitably distributing oil revenue.

"If Bush certifies that the Iraqis have met them, the redeployment would not begin until Oct. 1. If they have not been met, the pullout would begin July 1. In both cases, troops would need to be withdrawn—with some exceptions—within 180 days." (Emphasis added.)

Democratic 'Opposition'

Although most Democratic candidates for their party's 2008 presidential nomination have come out against the war, they have been characteristically vague about how they might end it. Speaking in Las Vegas on April 30, for example, John Edwards, former U.S. senator and the Democratic vice presidential candidate in 2004, said that Congress should continue to pass legislation for ending the war until President Bush is forced to cave in. Referring to Bush's pledge to veto the measure adopted in April, Edwards said:

"If he vetoes it and if we don't have enough votes to override the veto, then we need to submit another bill to him with a timetable for withdrawal and continue to do that until he's forced to start withdrawing troops from Iraq."

This and similar statements by Edwards' rivals for the Democratic nomination aside, the fact is that even the measure that they supported and Bush rejected provided for a continuation of the wars—specifically in Iraq—into the indefinite future.

The 'Loopholes'

Nonetheless, President Bush was probably right about the Democrats. He was fully aware that regardless of their talk about "timetables" and "benchmarks," the ill-fated funding bill contained a clinker that could keep tens of thousands of troops in Iraq indefinitely and open the door for even more, possibly after Bush's successor as president is installed in January 2009.

Historian Gareth Porter referred to these provisions of HR 1591 as "large loopholes that would apparently allow U.S. troops to continue carrying out military operations in Iraq's Sunni heartland indefinitely." (*Asia Times*, April 27) Although he did not quote them directly, the "loopholes" to which he and other critics have referred appeared in Section 1904 of the measure, as follows:

"After the conclusion of the redeployment specified...the Secretary of Defense may not deploy or maintain members of the Armed Forces in Iraq for any purpose other than the following:

"(1) Protecting American diplomatic facilities and American citizens, including members of the United States Armed Forces.

"(2) Serving in roles consistent with cus-

tomary diplomatic positions.

"(3) Engaging in targeted special actions limited in duration and scope to killing or capturing members of al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations with global reach.

"(4) Training and equipping members of the Iraqi Security Forces."

These provisions had been carried over from an earlier version of the bill. Referring to that earlier version in March, Eric Leaver of the Institute for Policy Studies wrote: "The language in Section 1904...potentially leaves 40-60,000 troops in Iraq."

'A Democratic Sellout'?

In an article posted to the Antiwar.com website on April 30, Jeremy Scahill and Tom Engelhardt referred to these provisions as "A Democratic Sellout..." In a separate article posted to the same website, Scahill quoted from a *New York Times* article reporting that some "Lawmakers said they expect that Congress and Mr. Bush would eventually agree on a spending measure without the specific timetable." From this Scahill concluded that "the appearance of a fierce debate" between Congress and the president over the funding bill "has largely been a show with a predictable outcome."

That assessment almost certainly is correct, but why would anyone be surprised by it? The Democratic Party is no more a peace party than the Republican Party. On the contrary, the Democratic Party is as much a war party as the Republican Party because both parties uphold the cause of war. Only the Socialist Labor Party truly represents lasting peace, for only the Socialist Labor Party has a program for uprooting the war-breeding capitalist system and laying a foundation for the cooperation and democratic collectivism essential to establishing and maintaining peace.

...De Leon

(Continued from page 4)

ly accomplished, hardly anything remained of Spanish rule or the Philippines but Manila"—with the captain general, appointed at Madrid, and the archbishop of Manila, appointed at Rome, as the dual head of Spanish oppression, driven into a corner. Not only was Spain cast off, but virtually Rome also. The Aglipayans were in virtual control.

The American conquest confirmed the revolution, as to Spain; as to Rome, however, the American conquest gave Rome a new lease of life.

Once in possession of the United States, the Philippine Islands came under control of the government at Washington. There being no Aglipayan issue in the United States, the political emissaries of Rome had the field all to themselves in Washington, with the consequence that the yoke of Rome, which had virtually been slipped by the Filipinos, was clapped back upon their necks: The "friar lands" so-called, which, if they belonged to any religious body, belonged to Aglipayans, were paid for out of the U.S. Treasury to Roman priests, in the huge sum of over \$4 million; the sum of nearly half a million dollars was paid by the U.S. Treasury to the Roman bishop of Manila for "damages" done to church property that belonged mainly to Aglipayans, and so forth and so on. Through Washington the Aglipayan church was discountenanced and despoiled, and the Roman church endowed and encouraged. It goes without saying that the power of the Roman hierarchy in the Philippine Islands depends today almost wholly upon the support that it receives from the United States by reason of its being located in an American dependency; it goes without saying that Philippine dependence upon the United States is a condition precedent for the continuance of the tax-levying supremacy of Rome on the islands. Finally, it goes without saying that not until the Philippine people have unmistakably cast off "the Aglipayan heresy" and returned to Rome will they be considered to be "unmistakably ready for self-government" in the opinion of the ultramontane element whose spokesman President Taft is.

And that is, today, at the bottom of the issue of Philippine independence.

directory

UNITED STATES

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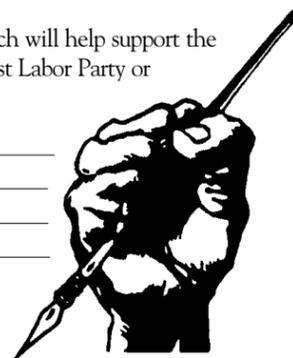
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War Threat Raised Profits

(*Weekly People*, May 18, 1957)

The Suez Canal crisis brought about two "brushfire" wars, Israel's blitzkrieg on Egyptian territory and Britain's and France's direct attack on Egypt. The crisis also resulted in what came close to being a Russian ultimatum, the granting of war power to President Eisenhower (closer still to an ultimatum), and the prospect of total war and total annihilation. In addition, the crisis (a result of Secretary of State Dulles' brink-of-war and stumblebum diplomacy) threatened Western Europe and Britain with an economic crisis.

But if the Suez Canal crisis had results that menaced all mankind it also had results that greatly benefited certain U.S., British and Dutch capitalists.

Shell Oil Co.'s profits went up 18 percent for the quarter of a year in which the crisis was at its height. Standard Oil of California's profits went up some 12 percent. Socony Mobile Co.'s went up 13 percent. Texas Co.'s went up 23.5 percent. And, among others, Standard Oil of Ohio's went up 20 percent. All told, the oil industry's profits rose by 17.9 percent. Some 7.8 percent of the rise might be attributed to a general business increase, but at least 10.1 percent of the increased profits of the oil industry was directly due to the crisis that might have plunged the world into nuclear war.

That's how capitalism works. War and the threat of war mean profits for capitalists.

What Is Management?

(*Weekly People*, June 1, 1957)

There is a theory abroad that "management" represents a power independent of the capitalist owners. This is nonsense, and the recent spate of stockholder meetings clearly showed. In line with the current capitalist propaganda line that ours is a "people's capitalism," several of the larger corporations made a special effort to attract and entertain the small stockholders, and in some cases these small stockholders took issue with the "management." When votes were taken on the issues raised the results were ridiculously lopsided, with a few thousand or a few hundred thousand votes supporting the small stockholder and 50 or 60 million, or more, supporting "management."

The owners of the 50 or 60 million votes—the real capitalist masters—weren't even there. They were voted by proxies who in most cases were the corporation officials themselves.

The truth is that "management" is an obfuscating term for *capitalist*. Indeed, in most cases the top executives of corporations are heavy capitalist stockholders. In any case, despite the talk of a "managerial revolution," they are the agents of capitalist owners. This is the reason they are usually paid enormous salaries with the full approval and consent of the big stockholders. As John J. Raskob, a director and heavy stockholder of General Motors, once explained: "The idea [of paying executive bonuses] was that the brains of the corporations should have its bread buttered on the same side as the stockholders." This is the reason why, last year, GM paid its president, Harlow H. Curtice, a salary of \$201,100 plus a bonus of \$495,000! The bonus, interestingly, consisted of 1,531 shares of GM stock, worth \$69,737, and cash of \$425,263, "just about enough [said *Business Week*] to handle the 86 percent tax on the combination."

ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco: Discussion Meetings—For information call 408-280-7266 or email slpsfba@net-scape.net.

OHIO

Columbus: Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, May 6, and Sunday, June 10, 1-3 p.m., at Carnegie Library, Grant & Oak streets. For information call 440-237-7933.

Independence: Discussion Meetings—

Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, May 20, 1-3 p.m., at Independence Public Library, 6361 Selig Dr. (off Rt. 21 between Chestnut & Hillside) and on Sunday, June 24, 1-3 p.m., at Days Inn, 5555 Brecksville Rd. (just south of R17-Granger Rd.). For information call 440-237-7933.

OREGON

Portland: Discussion Meetings—Section Portland will hold discussion meetings at Portland Main Library, SW Yamhill & 10th, from 10 a.m.-12 noon, as follows: Saturday, May 19, Topic: "Big Business and the Media Monopoly" and Saturday, June 2, Topic: "A discussion of Einstein's essay 'Why Socialism?'" For more information call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit the section's website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>.

letters to the People

Vietnam and Iraq

I liked your article, "Oil Stakes Too High for U.S. Withdrawal From Iraq," that appeared in *The People* of January-February as well as your response to Walter K. Bagnick's letter ("Vietnam and Iraq," *The People*, March-April). The main reason for the Vietnam War was resources. In addition to oil in that region, there were other suspected overland resources (such as bauxite and uranium) in Southeast Asia that interested U.S. leaders in this region. For instance, one Vietnam veteran, who was stationed at the Vietnam-Laos border during this war, told me that he and his colleagues would stumble across some minerals in this area. In his opinion he felt that the official reason of "war against communism" rang hollow since the main reasons for the Vietnam War was an attempt at securing crucial and strategic mineral resources, just as the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are to secure resources such as oil under the guise of waging "war against terror."

Stephen B. Isabirye
Flagstaff, Ariz.

Milton Friedman

Thanks for the recent article [January-February issue] mentioning Milton Friedman.

Whenever I saw him on TV it took much to restrain myself from throwing a shoe at the screen. I regarded him as the "Ed Wynn" of economists—"the perfect fool." My designation may not have been that far off, as I now read in a book by Michael Hudson: "All this [the postwar exploitation by U.S. capitalism of WWII allies along with Germany and Japan] was moving in just the opposite direction from what Jacob Viner, Cordell Hull and other early idealistic postwar planners had anticipated. In retrospect they look like 'useful fools' who failed to perceive who actually benefits from ostensibly cosmopolitan liberalism. In this regard, today's [2002] laissez-faire and monetarist orthodoxy may be said to play the academic role of useful foolishness as far as U.S. diplomacy has been concerned. Reviewing the 1945 rhetoric about how postwar society would be structured, one finds idealistic claims emanating from the United States with regard to how open world trade would promote economic development. But this has not materialized." (*Super Imperialism*, 2nd ed., 2002, p. 25)

I'm sure Mr. Friedman, along with such groups as "The Cato Institute," would fit in well with this group.

Lee Maternowski
Elk Grove Village, Ill.

Funds

(Feb. 17-April 20)

Press Forward Fund

Marie Z. Simmons \$5,000; Chris Dobreff \$200; Roy K. Nelson \$100; Thomas A. Tendler \$45; Francis Graham \$30; Joe Randell \$10.
Total: \$5,385.00

Press Security Fund

Anonymous \$500; Irene F. Schelin \$250; Alex Iwasa \$225; \$200 each Chris Dobreff, Gerald Lucas, Joan M. Davis; John & Mary Brlas \$106; \$100 each Anonymous, Helen Deneff, Keith Wood (In memory of John Quinn), Reynold R. Elkins, Tony Marsella, Walter Vojnov; Tanner Zahrt \$78; \$75 each H. Fuller, Robert Ormsby; \$50 each Bill Bonte, Donald L. Scott, Gloria Grove Olman, James J. Schiller, John S. & Rosemary Gale, Richard Ernstein, William E. Tucker; \$40 each Anonymous, Bob Bastian, George Frenoy Jr., James Cline, John Hagerty, Lloyd A. Wright; Rubinoff Brunson \$35; Section Cook Co., Ill., \$31.28; Joe Groelke \$30; \$25 each Bruce Vild, F. Cline, John M. Lambase, Joseph C. Massimino, Karl M. Behn, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Leibfritz, Paul Bakulski, Robert Varone; Sol Berman \$22; \$20 each Bernard Bortnick, Ed Light, James A. Barr, James G. McHugh, John H. Dinse, Josephine Burdua, L. Bryant, Lisa Toth, Phillip Colligan, R.E. Edgar, Severino Majkus, Sid Rasmussen, William O'Mahoney. T. McGregor \$18.64; \$15 each Dr. Angelo D'Angelo, Edward Killian, Gilbert Dewart, Jim Lehner, Leonard Kitts; \$10 each Bruce Abraham, Camille Symons, Charles W. Turner, Diane Brodick, Doug Smiley, Eugene J. Pacharis, Harry E. Gibson, Joe Randell, Lloyd H. Davis, Marshall G. Soura, Matthew Rinaldi, Newman McDonald, Paul L. Wolf, Richard Mack, William Dobbins II, William Feely, William Prinz; Donald F. Cuddihee Sr. \$8; \$7 each Milton A. Poulos, Robert F. Jensen; Marvin Grove \$6.45; \$6 each Jan Reiner, Mandarsita & Robert Brothers; \$5 each Andrew Valladares, Gunnar Skollingsberg, L. Lela, Michael K. Brooks, Roger Hudson, Steve Druk, Steve Kellerman; Joseph Bellon \$4; Wells Bain \$3; Anonymous \$1.
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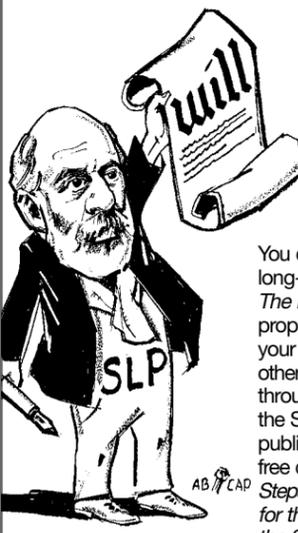
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Total: \$2,155.00

Socialist Labor Party

Financial Summary

Bank balance (Jan. 31) \$77,111.75
Expenses (Feb.-March) 18,127.04
Income (Feb.-March) 14,171.28
Bank balance (March 31) \$73,155.99
Deficit for 2007 \$5,632.25



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The Human Cost Of the War in Iraq

By Jim Plant

No one knows how many Iraqi civilians have died since the invasion began in 2003, but few dispute that the number reaches well into the tens of thousands and some believe into the hundreds of thousands. The lowest estimates generally come from official sources of the U.S., British or Iraqi governments and the highest from nongovernmental agencies and study groups. The truth may lie somewhere between the lowest and the highest estimates. Whatever the actual number is, however, the Iraqi people are paying a terrible price to satisfy the imperialist ambitions of the invaders.

Last October the *Lancet*, a highly regarded British medical journal, published a peer-review survey conducted in Iraq by the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health of Baltimore and the Al Mustansiriyah University of Baghdad. The study concluded that 655,000 more Iraqis had died since the 2003 invasion began than would be expected during a similar length of time under prewar conditions.

The U.S. and British governments rejected these findings. George Bush said, "I don't consider it a credible report. Neither does Gen. Casey [the U.S. general in command in Iraq at the time] and neither do Iraqi officials. I do know a lot of innocent people have died, and that troubles me and it grieves me....No question, it's violent, but this report is one—they put it out before, it was pretty well—the methodology was pretty well discredited."

The British government took a similar position. "A spokesman for Tony Blair said the figure is not one they believe anywhere near accurate," *Medical News Today* reported on Oct. 12. The same report said Bush "cited the Iraqi government, which puts the extra death toll at around 40,000." Indeed, the Iraqi government said that the death toll reported by the *Lancet* was "inflated" and "far from the truth."

The earlier report to which Bush referred was published by the *Lancet* in October 2004. That report, according to the U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS), "used a cluster sample survey of households in Iraq to develop an estimate of 8,000 to 194,000 civilian casualties due to violent deaths since the start of the war."

"This report has come under some criticism for its methodology, with an argument that some of the casualties could have resulted from the long-term negative health effects of the Saddam Hussein era," the CRS added. "In addition, British Foreign Minister [Jack] Straw has written a formal Ministerial Response rejecting the findings of the *Lancet* report on the grounds that the data analyzed were inadequate."

The second *Lancet* study, as summarized by the CRS, "increased the number of clusters surveyed from 33 to 47 clusters and reported an estimate of between 426,369 and 793,663 Iraqi civilian deaths from violent causes since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom." The CRS added that the second report also "sparked some controversy" and cited two opposing views.

"Robert Blendon, director of the Harvard Program on Public Opinion and Health and Social Policy, defended the study in an interview with *The New York Times*, saying that interviewing urban dwellers chosen at random was 'the best of what you can expect in a war zone.' However, Stephen Moore, a consultant for Gorton Moore International, objected more strongly to the methods used by the researchers, commenting in the *Wall Street Journal* that the *Lancet* article lacked some of the hallmarks of good research: a small margin of error, a record of the demographics of

the respondents (so that one can be sure one has captured fair representation of an entire population), and a large number of cluster points."

Now it develops that at least some officials in the British government may not have been as certain about the supposed inaccuracy of the *Lancet's* report as its public statements implied. This came to light in March of this year after the British Broadcasting Corp.'s World Service obtained internal government documents under the British freedom of information act.



Herder for The People

According to the Associated Press, the BBC found that Roy Anderson, chief scientific adviser to the British Defense Ministry, described the methods used in the *Lancet* study as "robust" and "close to best practice." A memo from Anderson's office said that the chief scientist "recommends caution in publicly criticizing the study." "In another document," the AP added, "a government official said 'the survey methodology used here cannot be rubbished, it is a tried and tested way of measuring mortality in conflict zones.'"

Learning that the "Labor" government of Tony Blair ignored the scientific advice of its own experts and did its best to discredit the survey's findings should come as no surprise. After all, this is the same government, which, in the run-up to the Iraq invasion, dishonestly claimed that Iraq had "weapons of mass destruction," with Blair even claiming to know that those weapons could be readied for use within 45 minutes.

The exact number of Iraqi fatalities since the invasion began will never be known, but we can be reasonably confident that the *Lancet* figure is nearer the truth than the Iraqi government's sufficiently horrendous figure of 40,000. Moreover, the numbers have increased every single day since the *Lancet* study and there is still no sign of an end to the slaughter.

Regardless of what the actual number of deaths may be since the war began, it is clear that all official totals, whether from the United States, Britain or Iraq, are woefully understated. Last November, for example, a *New York Times* article reported that the United Nations had found "More Iraqi civilians were killed in October than in any other month since the American invasion in 2003...." A few paragraphs later, the *Times* added:

"A dangerous trend has surfaced: Sixty-five percent of all deaths in Baghdad were categorized as unidentified corpses, the signature of militias, who kidnap, kill and throw away bodies at a rate that now outstrips the slaughter inflicted by suicide bombers."

After noting that the Iraqi government had criticized the U.N.'s findings for the month of October, the *Times* added:

"But the U.N. stands by the count, which tallies unclaimed bodies from Iraq's approximately six morgues and from death certificates—required for burial and inheritance procedures. If anything, the numbers are low. Figures from hospitals come from the Ministry of Health, which counts deaths only on the day of the attack. *Victims who die a day later are not count-*

ed." (Emphasis added.)

To the fatalities directly attributable to the war must be added the vast number of people—men, women and children—maimed or badly injured by the violence. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have had to flee the country as refugees, mostly to Syria and Jordan, and many others are destitute, having lost their homes and livelihood.

The suffering of the tortured at Abu Ghraib, and the ongoing torture in the prisons of the Iraqi government and by the various militias should not be forgotten, nor should the numerous rapes and murders of Iraqi women at the hands of "coalition" soldiers. Death squads, including many composed of policemen, killing dozens and even hundreds every day, have been directly responsible for a large number of casualties and fatalities and have brought the country to the verge of an all-out sectarian civil war. With Iraq's infrastructure also in ruins, the outlook for the Iraqi people seems very bleak indeed.

On top of Iraqi deaths and injuries are the thousands of U.S. and other "coalition" military fatalities and injuries. Compounding the crime, thousands of wounded and maimed often have to put up with substandard accommodation and medical treatment. Soldiers, drawn almost exclusively from the working class, are expendable. The badly wounded are no longer of any use to the military, become an inconvenient embarrassment and an irritating source of ongoing expense to the ruling class and its political state.

Apart from returning service personnel with very obvious and devastating physical and emotional injuries, many thousands have and will continue to return, seemingly fit and well, but brutalized, traumatized and mentally scarred by their experiences.

This is the balance sheet of suffering and distress resulting thus far from capitalism's imperialist military adventure in Iraq, which was carried out under the ironic name of "Operation Iraqi Freedom!"

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