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## HEALTH INSURANCE

### A Leach On Society

By B.G.

The insurance "industry" produces nothing. It is a leach on society, nothing more and nothing less. Its foundation is fear and insecurity, two social byproducts that capitalism creates in abundance. Capitalism virtually guarantees the insurance business the opportunity to suck the life out of workers who, despite working hard all their lives, are left with precious little for retirement and their declining years. What makes that possible is the wages system, under which workers are exploited of most of what they produce, then left vulnerable and "easy pickings" for charlatans of all sorts, clerical and lay. The insurance racket (and that's not too strong a term for it) is nothing but a form of legalized blackmail. The most inhumane and repulsive branch of insurance banditry is "health insurance."

Capitalism undermines and destroys our health in a thousand ways. Workers are subjected to occupational illnesses and diseases—not to mention job-related threats to life and limb—just to make a living. They are compelled to consume hundreds of chemicals, not only in the foods they eat but also from the clothing they wear, the cosmetics and toiletries they use, the water they drink, even the air they breathe.

The American health insurance system is no exception to our characterization of the insurance business generally. The very essence of its existence is to make profits for itself. Accordingly, it should come as no surprise that health insurers are finding more and more reasons to cancel health insurance for people who get sick too often.

Indeed, from 2000 to 2005, the total number of people with private health insurance in the United States fell by one percent. One reason for this is that the companies are very careful whom they insure. Those who get sick too often, or who need costly surgery or continuing health care, will soon find their health insurance abruptly canceled. The greatest profit to the industry comes from insuring healthy people.

Employers constantly complain that health insurance for their workers is becoming a financial burden for them when, in truth, it costs them nothing. It costs them nothing because they pay for it out of the surplus value workers produce but for which they do not receive an equivalent in wages. Capitalists who pay wages too small to allow workers to pay their own way are merely grumbling that they cannot keep all that they steal. Accordingly, they seek to lessen the drain on their profits by shifting even more

(Continued on page 5)

## Battlefield Losses Pale Against Industrial Carnage

While the capitalist media occupy workers' minds with the depravities of politicians, and debate how to get the most advantage from an immoral war against Iraq, precious little is being said or done about conditions for workers here at home.

Capitalism does not merely promote carnage abroad in defense of the material interests of the capitalist class. It promotes carnage on the industrial field here at home, and it has done so for a very long time.

Ninety-five years ago, Daniel De Leon characterized the capitalist class as a "cannibal class" that "undermines the health and life of the workingman." "The roots of capitalism," he added, "are literally watered with the blood of the proletariat. Capitalist 'progress' is built upon the skulls and crossbones of its working-class victims."

Was De Leon speaking of a passing phase of capitalism, or an inherent characteristic of the system still evident today? Judge for yourself.

In 2005, for example, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 4.2 million "total recordable cases" of injury and illness at U.S. workplaces, 1.2 million of which involved "days away from work." In the same year the BLS's National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries reported "a total of

5,702 fatal work injuries...recorded in the United States."

Some point to such statistics to contend that job safety and health is improving. In 2003, for example, there were 4.4 million "total recordable cases" of injury and illness, 1.3 million of which involved "days away from work." But the BLS's National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries that year reported "A total of 5,559 fatal work injuries," fewer than in 2005.

In fact, rates of death, injury and illness on the job have always fluctuated according to the volume of production and overall employment. But the government's figures are hardly a reliable indicator of the real extent—or rate—of carnage in capitalist industry in any period.

Some industries are exempt from record-keeping. Employers are not required to record all illnesses. And all BLS figures are based on reports from capitalist enterprises themselves—the proverbial fox guarding the chicken coop scenario. According to the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, a union-sponsored educational foundation, "The extent of occupational illness and injury is much greater than government statistics indicate. Some researchers suspect that

(Continued on page 6)

## Cuts at Ford a Sign of the Times for U.S. Workers

By Ken Boettcher

Ford Motor Co. announced plans in September to both accelerate the timing of and add to its previously announced job cuts and plant closings. All totaled, as many as 44,000 jobs at Ford in North America will be cut by the end of next year, and 16 North American plants will be closed by the end of 2012. The cuts will reportedly reduce Ford's North American workforce by more than a third. Buyouts and early retirement will be offered, but if enough workers fail to leave, involuntary cuts will follow. Output will be slashed by 21 percent in the fourth quarter.

The cuts are much deeper than previously announced. Last December the company's plans included cutting 25,000 to 30,000 jobs and closing 10 plants in North America within five years. Those announced cuts were also "much deeper than earlier reports, which initially had Ford closing as few as three assembly plants and cutting...about 7,000 positions," as CNN-Money.com put it at the time.

The company's massive job cuts will bring tragedy to the lives of workers in many Ameri-

can communities where losses are the greatest. Michigan, where many of the plant closings and job cuts will occur, will be particularly hard hit. The state's official unemployment rate is already 7.1 percent.

Wall Street, however, still hasn't seen enough blood. "They've got to get 40 to 50 percent of the [workers] out the door," said Bradley Rubin, an analyst for European banking firm BNP Paribas. "It's just got to be a lot smaller company."

Some blame the company's intensifying problems on the mistakes of Ford executives who, despite intensifying foreign competition, have garnered obscene wealth.

It is true that the company's executives have made decisions that resulted in the company losing ground to other manufacturers. It is also true that Ford execs rake in millions for their role in better fleecing the workers they do not toss into the unemployment line. The compensation package for Ford's new CEO Alan Mulally, for example, reportedly totals \$20.5 million in the first year.

(Continued on page 5)

# Coming Soon: War World

By Michael James

Grab the kids, pack up the car and head for the new amusement park! Make a day of it! What is the theme of this new park? Water slides? Roller coasters? Mickey and Donald? No, believe it or not, the theme is war.

The *Washington Post* carried the story recently with the headline "Army Ponders Amusement Venue, Hotel." It would be a "military theme park" in Virginia where, according to the *Post*, families can "command the latest M-1 tank, feel the rush of a paratrooper freefall, fly a Cobra gunship or defend your B-17 as a waist gunner." The park would include "an entertainment district with bars like the '1st Division Lounge.'" The developer has boasted that the military amusement park would attract "3 million visitors a year, more than Hersheypark in Pennsylvania or Busch Gardens in Williamsburg."

Granted, at this point it is only an idea being studied and debated by Pentagon brass and local officials. But the mere idea is so offensive, tasteless and horrific as to boggle the mind. The very notion reveals the vulgar depravity of capitalism and its militarists. Countless statues, tanks and artillery guns, ceremoniously placed in parks across the country, already glorify capitalist wars waged for profit. Our corporately manufactured "popular culture" further romanticizes militarism and other forms of violence. Now there comes this possibility of a military theme

park to further celebrate the criminal bellicosity of the U.S. ruling class.

Capitalist America is one of the most militaristic and violent nations in human history. The Center for Teaching Peace in Washington, D.C., confirms: "The historical record, according to the Congressional Research Service, shows the United States is one of the most warlike societies on the planet..." This means that the proposed new military amusement park will have unlimited possibilities for attractions, rides and exhibits.

For example, will park goers be able to mimic the joy of picking off Native Americans at Wounded Knee? Will there be an attraction that lets visitors experience the exhilaration of dropping bombs on Vietnamese peasants? Surely children will be able to stroll through a shooting gallery that shows them what all-American fun it was to murder women and babies at Vietnam's My Lai. An attraction devoted to atomic weapons will likely ignore history's conclusion that the bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima were strategically unnecessary, and will instead just focus on how viscerally pretty the flashes and mushroom clouds were. Eager visitors will perhaps be able to compete for prizes in a game designed to see who can be the fastest to bankrupt U.S. schools, libraries and health care programs by diverting wealth and resources into Pentagon projects.

The CIA is certain to have an interactive display which allows families to forever exchange

memories of the fun they had pretending to destroy developing nations that resist American corporate interests: "I planned a coup!" "I gutted their natural resources!" "I used the World Bank to plunge them into debt!" "I assassinated key members of their socialist party!" "I set up sweatshops!" "I unleashed death squads!" One especially educational exhibit might parade the quaint cultures and customs of all the nations of the world that America has invaded, bombed, embargoed or otherwise assaulted. Visitors will want to allow plenty of time for that one! And predatory recruiters will undoubtedly be on hand as working-class park goers, caught up in patriotic war fever, urge their teen sons and daughters to sign up to fight and die in real world ruling-class wars.

So welcome to War World! Spend the day! Cheer on the imperialist adventures of our ruling class! See how third world resistance fighters who were bombed, shot or imprisoned by U.S. military muscle got what was "comin' to 'em"!

Meanwhile, the grim reality of America's bloody military madness continues. The fundamental point is that militarism and war are essential tools that the corporate ruling class uses in pursuit of profit. Capitalism means permanent war. The current cost of the war in Iraq, for example, is \$8 billion per month. That is \$2 billion per week, \$267 million per day, or \$11 million per hour. A sane, socialist society would use the labor and resources now represented by that money for the environment and programs of human uplift such as education, housing and health care.

# Remember Your Three Rs

By Michael James

The three Rs once were the building blocks for the education of American schoolchildren—reading, writing and arithmetic. Now, some are suggesting the addition of a fourth "R" to U.S. pedagogy: "revolver."

The Associated Press reports that recent school shootings in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Colorado have prompted a Wisconsin state legislator to call for arming teachers, principals, administrators "and other school personnel." "To make our schools safe for our students to learn, all options should be on the table," the legislator said.

Our young ones certainly need protection. In spite of the recent spate of school shootings, however, teachers and students generally do not carry guns into the classroom, and it needs no more than a light sprinkling of common sense to accept that more guns in more hands can only lead to more shootings and more deaths, not the other way around. For those in need of statistical support, however, the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence has posted a 112-page "briefing book" to its website with enough statistics to reassure anyone who doubts their own capacity to reach the common sense conclusion.

Citing a "national vital statistics report" published in 2002 by the National Center for Health Statistics (HCSH), the coalition said "guns claimed 28,663 lives in the United States, the majority [16,586] from suicides..." That was for the year 2000, when 10,801 additional deaths were from homicides and 1,276 from "unintentional shootings."

Drawing on the same HCSH report, the coalition said that "3,365 young people ages 19 and under were killed by gunfire—an average of nine each day"—in 2000. From an earlier study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP), the coalition found that "The firearms-related death rate for children under 15 years old in the United States is nearly 12 times higher than that of the other 25 industrialized countries combined." (Our emphasis.) The CDCP study, as cited by the coalition, also found that "Gun violence is the number one killer of African-Americans ages 15-34" and

"the second leading cause of death for Hispanic youth ages 15-24."

Gathering together conclusions from these and other studies, the coalition said it is "four times more likely" that a gun in the home will result "in an unintentional shooting" than be used for self-defense. It is "seven times more likely" that a gun in the home will "be used in a criminal assault or homicide" than for self-defense, and "11 times more likely" that a gun kept at home will "be used to commit or attempt suicide, than to be used in self-defense."

In its "briefing book," the coalition also cited "a study published in the *American Journal of Public Health*," which "found that 20 percent of police officers shot and killed in the past 15 years were killed with their own firearms."

Although these statistics are from six to 10 years old, no one today is suggesting that gun-related violence and deaths are on the decline. Indeed, the "debate" on what to do about it rages on in superficial and absurd fashion. Some, such as the Wisconsin politician, say the answer to gun violence is more guns.

It should be noted that the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence is not itself a research group, but an organization interested in promoting "progressive gun laws." Other concerned persons call for more gun laws, too, but we can only hope to understand the problem and discover its solution by looking at the economic base of

American society.

At the root of U.S. gun violence is our violent economic system. Capitalism allows a small ruling class to own and control production and distribution. It sets one class against the other. It uses war as a tool for accumulating and maximizing profit. It requires exploitation and degradation of the working class. Capitalism alienates the majority of citizens from their own labor, from one another and from true social wealth. Moreover, capitalism is devoted to the ruthless pursuit of profit with absolutely no regard for peace, the natural environment or simple justice.

Every person who is heartbroken and outraged at the murder of schoolchildren must radicalize him or herself and comprehend the violence of the material base that shapes and drives our society. For example, U.S. history confirms that capitalism means constant war or preparedness for war. Those who wring their hands over school shootings should consider the link between U.S. militarism and violence in our streets, homes and schools. Is the U.S. corporate, ruling class not now committing the global equivalent of armed robbery by invading and occupying Iraq? The ruling class daily diverts millions in tax dollars away from programs of social uplift such as health care or education and straight into the bloody coffers of the Pentagon. Is it not obvious that massive military spending and constant war justifies and legitimizes violence?

Militarism, exploitation of the working class, abandonment of the poor and pollution of the

(Continued on page 7)

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# Trucking Industry Barreling Out of Control

By B.B.

Mass transportation is a product of the capitalist era. Before that, our ancestors got around (if they got around at all) on foot, by straddling a donkey, mule or horse, or by riding in a cart, a buggy or a wagon. The only exception that predates the capitalist era is transportation across wide expanses of water, when many of our ancestors traveled as soldiers, sailors or galley slaves.

Capitalism, however, gave rise to the nation-state and roads connecting one end of a country to the other to facilitate commerce, and only incidentally human travel. Commercial coaches, then passenger trains, followed by today's airliners are all products of the capitalist era.

With the invention of the internal combustion engine and the automobile, however, capitalism began to tear down what it had built up. Gone, at least in America, are the trolleys that once crisscrossed, and sometimes connected, our towns and cities. Gone are the passenger trains, except for a few "commuters" in highly congested areas and the badly neglected AMTRAK.

In a sense, we have gone back to the individual travel of our ancestors, but instead of driving buggies drawn by a horse or two we drive in cars powered by engines propelled by a power equal to 200 horses or more. The technology has changed, and so have some of the hazards. We rarely watch for highwaymen, but the tollgates on the approaches to some roads and bridges are reminiscent of the tollgates and tolls that travelers once paid at the point of a sword to cross the fiefdoms of feudal times. Rocks still fall across roadways and a flood will occasionally wash out a bridge. But our modern reversion to individual travel also has brought along new hazards unlike any our ancestors faced, excepting perhaps those of the few of us who can trace their lineage back to the time when Hannibal brought his elephants across the Alps. Today's elephant on the highway is the "big rig," the "18-wheeler," the truck pulling a semi-trailer, and sometimes one or two more trailers hooked on behind—"elephants" locked trunk to tail of such size and in such numbers that they would overawe even the Carthaginian conqueror.

Indeed, nowhere is the absurdity of "free enterprise" more evident than the wrenching and deadly dramas played out on the nation's streets and highways. It's chaos and anarchy, and as such may be viewed as the quintessential buzz of capitalism's ideal: isolated nomads flying to and fro, all compelled to do their "thing" with periodic traffic controls often ignored. Vehicles of all kinds just dumped together, often with horrific conse-

quences—especially when one of those 18-wheeler "big rigs" connects with a passenger car. Such collisions (and others) are dutifully monitored from overhead by low-flying helicopters that radio to survivors below to advise drivers how to avoid the carnage and subsequent traffic tie-ups.



U.S. Department of Transportation

These trucking fatalities were the subject of a series of articles published recently by *The Dallas Morning News*. Texas, the newspaper reported, "consistently leads the nation in fatalities, in part because it has more roadway miles and the second-highest number of registered trucks." The state topped the national list of fatalities in 2003, with 419, but Florida and California were close contenders with 314 and 311 such fatalities respectively. Among the causes cited for fatal accidents were:

- A lack of experienced and competent drivers willing to work for bare bottom wages, unpaid down time, in bad weather, through long hours away from home and harsh delivery schedules;
- The hiring of alcoholics, drug addicts and felons and a failure to verify work histories;
- The hiring of drivers with low English lan-

guage skills who are unable to read signs;

- Employers ignoring drivers' complaints about faulty maintenance of tires, brake pads, air brakes, lugs, hoses, trailer frames, etc.;
- Law enforcement officers overwhelmed by the soaring volume of truck traffic on roads and highways;
- Increased competition facilitated by deregulation and the creation of fly-by-night companies with little regard for the reliability of their truck or their drivers (40,000 go bankrupt annually);
- Companies pressuring drivers to deliver loads at a specific time and something called "just in time" inventory with "trucks as rolling warehouses";
- Paying drivers by the hour rather than by the load, which encourages speeding and fatigue when drivers press themselves to complete a run in time to start another; and
- Drivers distracted by computers and e-mailing devices used to receive instructions and directions while driving.

According to Dallas attorney Frank Branson, trucking companies "treat mutilations and deaths as the cost of doing business." Similarly, when state trooper Randy McDonald ticketed an overweight big rig working for an oil company, the driver gave a message from his boss that he could write all the tickets he wanted and it wouldn't change a thing. The state trooper said he had been around "a long time and they've been saying the same thing for a long time." The article concluded that truck owners broke "safety rules to maximize profits."

Truck accidents have spawned a veritable litigation industry as survivors and families have retained legal counsel to claim punitive damages from trucking companies. As a reaction, companies routinely "falsify records and destroy documents that federal law requires them to keep." The *Morning News* reported Branson as saying that companies spend more time "covering up fault than they do screening drivers and training drivers."

Branson may have had in mind the fatal accident in which a Werner Enterprises truck rear-ended a passenger vehicle because the driver was distracted by an e-mail device mounted on his steering wheel while the truck was moving. The driver of the car burned to death.

Werner, one of the nation's largest truckers, reportedly destroyed the records and logs, then claimed they had been lost. According to one attorney, however, "90 plus percent of drivers were using it [e-mail] while they're driving" in previous cases involving the Werner firm. The *Morning News* also reported on a number of similar cases to demonstrate how trucking companies use obstructionist tactics to prolong court cases and wear down opposing litigants.

All this comes as no surprise to Socialists, who recognize that this system of legalized robbery of the working class is steeped in perpetual misconduct, corruption and crime.

None of this would be possible under socialism, where the profit motive will no longer prevent rational methods from being devised to facilitate travel and the distribution of goods with our comfort and safety the uppermost consideration. We will democratically determine what new and better facilities for mass transportation are constructed and how safer and convenient methods for individual travel are developed. The industrial unions involved in the construction of roads and vehicles of all kinds will democratically determine how best to serve our needs without the insane drive for profit to prod them into foolhardy and dangerous decisions such as those that today jeopardize our safety and well-being every time we step out of the door.



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*A De Leon Editorial*

## An International Plague

*Long before Abu Ghraib, even before My Lai, there was Bud Dahu, where American soldiers slaughtered 900 men, women and children during U.S. capitalism's colonial war in the Philippines. Last March marked the 100th anniversary of the crime—one of many atrocities committed for the sake of power and profit.*



### No Quarter

*(Daily People, July 17, 1908)*

When Adam Smith wrote his chapter on colonies he did not have the benefit of the United States colonial system in the Philippine Islands, and of the effect thereof upon the colonial practices of other and older colonies-holding countries. Spicy would have been the paragraphs that Adam Smith could then have added to his quite interesting chapter on colonies, especially after reading Gen. Leonard Wood's recent advocacy of "no quarter" for colonial insurgents, be they male or female, adults or children.

Colonies are peculiar institutions of capitalist rule. At home, religious tolerance must be prac-

ticed; in a colony the religion of the natives, being different from the standard religions of the "mother country," becomes a pretext to outrage them, and the outrage is committed under the cloak of religion. At home, some semblance of fairness must be preserved towards the worker: in the distant colony the natives are treated with impunity as a conquered race. At home, favorites cannot all be placed in comfortable sinecures: a colony furnishes golden opportunities for soft berths where favorites can make fortunes in a short time. All this, and much more to the same effect, do colonies mean to the capitalist alleged "mother," but more properly "stepmother" countries. And all this

has been practiced before by France, by Spain, by England in their colonies.

But times progress. Of late the barbarian methods of old have been considerably held in check. "Opposition" parties in parliaments, availing themselves of the facilities for gathering news, have had a salutary effect upon the conduct of colonial officers. That meant a reduction of income. At this season Gen. Wood turns up in Europe, apologizes for and justified the "no quarter" conduct of Roosevelt's pets in the Philippines, and thereby gives a new lease of life, or rather promotes to life the worst practices that formerly blackened the records of colonial administration. Quick was the ruling class of Europe to see their opportunity, and seize it. Gen. Wood's words were telegraphed all over and praised. If a republic finds it necessary to give no quarter to native colonial insurgents, why, "no quarter" cannot be found fault with; "no quarter" is democratic, it is republican, it is Christian.

Capitalist rule in America is spreading its poisonous exhalations beyond our own borders. It is infecting Europe. It is becoming an international plague.

255075100 years ago

### Beginning of the End in Hungary

*(Weekly People, Dec. 1, 1956)*

The bureaucratic rulers of Soviet Russia have brought upon themselves the loathing and contempt of untold numbers of their former adherents by their murderous attack on the Hungarian people. But this attack and the subsequent terror should not obscure the implications of the popular demonstrations that set off the revolt.

The overwhelming majority of the demonstrators were Hungarian students who enjoyed a privileged position under the Stalinist regime. Picked from families of workers, peasants and Communist officials, their tuition and living expenses were paid by the government. They were being conditioned for an "elite" role in this ironically named "People's Democracy."

Their demonstrations, which culminated in open revolt on the fateful evening of Oct. 23 (when they were fired on by the hated AVH—the Hungarian Stalinist secret police), certified the popular rejection, not merely for Russian domination, but of the social system misnamed "socialism"

that had been imposed on Hungary by Russian bayonets.

### Stalinists Had Complete Control

For more than 10 years the Communist Party has had carte blanche in Hungary. It has controlled absolutely the newspapers, schools, radio, unions—all the organs for molding the minds of the people, especially of the youth. Its propaganda has been all pervading and incessant. All the words that touch the good side of man's nature—"freedom," "democracy," "socialism," "rights," etc.—have been sown liberally in all the utterances of the communist rulers. All the words that evoke hatred and fear—"fascist," "exploitation," "imperialist," "traitor," "wrecker," etc.—have been used to attack those who opposed the regime.

Yet the overwhelming—and to the Communist despots, the devastating—fact remains that the Hungarian masses have rejected the Communist Party and all it stands for. They have rejected the passive, subservient role in which the bureaucratic despotism, pioneered

and developed in the name of socialism in Soviet Russia, has cast them. The Communist Party of Hungary is itself hopelessly split. Indeed, many of the bravest fighters *against* the Russians and their Hungarian Stalinist supporters were Communists who broke with the party.

One need not seek far for the reason for this colossal failure—a failure that will lead in time to the repudiation of Russian "communism" by the most conditioned people of all, *the Russian workers!* This reason is the rejection long ago by the Bolsheviks of reliance on the workers, on democracy. The Russian Revolution was carried out to the slogan, "All power to the Soviets!" But all power was never really transferred to the Soviets; it was retained rather by the Communist Party. And after the Soviets (which means "councils") ceased to be necessary, they were deprived of a revolutionary role.

### Workers Must Free Themselves

Marxism teaches that the *class interests* of

*(Continued on page 6)*

## 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.

# Texas Leads the Nation In Producing Greenhouse Gases

By B.B.

Texas lost its bragging rights to being the biggest state when Alaska added its star to the flag in January 1959, but keeping a braggart down is hard to do. Texas is back with something else to boast about, if so inclined. The Lone Star state now has the dubious distinction of leading the nation in the burning of global warming fossil fuels.

A report in *The Dallas Morning News* lists the state as number one in the production of greenhouse gases—723.2 million tons of the stuff every year—and it may be in the running for top spot on a global scale.

Already it places seventh in the world, outpacing such other major contenders for the top spot as Canada, the United Kingdom and South Korea. It is far behind China, in the number two spot, and it can never hope to surpass the current title holder, the United States, of which it is just one of 50 parts. However, it is contributing mightily to the defense of the U.S.'s title as the world's leading contributor to global warming.

The private material interests that have arrogated to themselves the prerogative to undermine the global environment and ruin the health of unknown millions couldn't care less about that part of it. They are the strip mine owners; Texas Utilities Mining; various electric power corporations (such as TXU and Houston Lighting and Power, the biggest users of brown coal); trucking and railroad owners; cement manufacturers; the Aluminum Corporation of America and others not favored with an honorable (or is it dishonorable) mention. Collectively, they form a powerful political force for resisting change and whose giant profits emanate from the exploitation of wage labor.

Texas is a leader in the march towards turning our "blue marble" into just another lifeless asteroid, but, as mentioned, it is not a lone crusader in the unworthy cause. Indeed, Texas is not a culprit at all, capitalism is—and the problem is pervasive throughout the system wherever it nestles and settles.

Texas lignite has been mined since the mid-1800s, initially by below ground mining. Greater productivity came with the introduction of giant shovels to gouge directly into surface seams, the technique known as strip mining, with its attendant ruination of the immediate environment to be sure.

From 1890 until 1970, the production of high sulfur Texas lignite was virtually flat, averaging about 2 million short tons annually until coal supplanted natural gas about the mid-1970s. Then a steep rise commenced until production hit about 55 million short tons in 1992, the latest date for which statistical information is available.

Though we have no figures for current coal production in Texas, it is a sure bet that the profits are immensely higher than 16 years ago. This focuses our attention on the broader picture of global warming, the system that produces it and the prospects for change.

Such prospects are reflected in the formation of "Ceres, a coalition of environmentalists and investors; Yale University; and the risk and insurance services of Marsh & McLennan," who have concluded that global warming is a hazard and capitalists should do something about it. They want to hold "sustainable governance forums to give directors an overview of the financial, legal and business investor implications of climate change." (*The New York*

*Times*, Sept. 21)

Corporate capitalist response can be gauged by a report called the Carbon Disclosure Project, which showed that over 80 percent of companies polled provided data revealing that they recognized the hazards but that "fewer than half said they were working to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that cause global warming." (*Times*)

This reluctance brings to mind a recent demand by the Royal Society, Britain's highest scientific association with 1,400 members



counting Newton and Einstein as members, that Exxon Mobile stop putting out misrepresentations about global warming. They charged that the oil giant promoted a "false sense somehow that there is a two-sided debate going on in the scientific community" regarding the basis of climate change. The society further charged that it was "very difficult to reconcile the misrepresentations of climate change science in" documents disseminated by Exxon Mobil with its "claims to be an industry leader." The company spent \$2.9 million sending disinformation to 39 groups "including the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the International Policy Network and

the Center for the Study of Carbon Dioxide and Global Change."

This dissembling posturing is in line with that of other capitalist outfits. Indeed, TXU came out with a full-page propaganda piece on the very day that the *Morning News* published its report on Texas being the top national producer of greenhouse gases. The utility giant claimed it is going to reduce emissions by 20 percent while continuing to burn Texas lignite and while reducing costs to the populations of northern Texas—and it will "benevolently" do it all for families.

Fact is that the capitalist system operates only to increase profits. Private material interests militate against even the most pressing of social needs. Few social needs are greater, few threats more urgent to meet, than the environmental disaster that capitalist-induced global warming almost makes inevitable.

"Almost," we say, because there is a way to stop that disaster from happening. The American working class must organize itself under the banner of the SLP to declare they have had enough of a system that disregards their safety and jeopardizes their very survival for the sake of making money. It must organize itself economically to take, hold and operate

the industries and services of the country democratically. It is the only solution, and it is a good one, because not only will it restore control over our destiny to our own hands—the only safe place for it to be—but also because it will guarantee that our children and their children will live out their lives in a clean and beautiful world.

Capitalism has turned America into the world's leading threat to our survival. The American working class can yet inspire the workers of all countries to unite and put an end to the madness that places property and profit above life itself. First, however, it must set the example that will show the way. Capitalism is lunacy; socialism is sanity; the choice between the two is yours to make.

## ... Ford Cuts a Sign of Times

(Continued from page 1)

But while Ford executives certainly played a role in bringing the present crisis at Ford to a head, this devastating scenario for Ford workers might have occurred even if Ford execs had paid themselves nothing and allowed workers to build better cars, or exploited them even more intensively than they actually did. The simple fact is that the world needs only so many cars and trucks. If sane mass transportation policies and systems were in place it would need far fewer yet. And within this world of finite but still expanding markets for automobiles, worldwide competition is growing.

Under capitalism there must be winners and losers in the automobile industry, as in every other. Ford won in the marketplace for much of its more than 100-year history. So did General Motors, which today finds itself in much the same situation as Ford. Now they are losing, succumbing to competitors here and elsewhere who are more quickly able to get far more out of fewer workers. Would better management make a difference? It might, for a time.

"Better management" under capitalism only

means that workers elsewhere lose, and the "winning" workers are more intensively exploited. Higher productivity with fewer workers can spell capitalist success. But it's ultimately a dead-end road for workers. One of the system's biggest inherent weaknesses is that fewer workers working means fewer workers able to buy the products produced. That's a recipe for an eventual surplus on the market and consequently more job cuts and further layoff crises.

There is only one way to rid society forever of the vicissitudes of the capitalist market that are today wreaking havoc with the lives of Ford and GM workers and the whole working class. Workers must achieve control over the wealth they produce as a class. The economic security and abundance that modern industry could produce for all will result only when the working class as a whole takes possession of the industries and services generations of workers have built—and operates them democratically to serve human needs and wants.

Nothing short of such a revolutionary transformation of society can sufficiently change the increasingly grim situation of U.S. autoworkers—and the U.S. working class as a whole.

# ... Industrial Carnage

(Continued from page 1)

the number of injuries is twice as great as reported, and the number of illnesses may exceed the number reported by a factor of five. *No one really knows.*" (Emphasis in original.)

Whatever the real number and rate of deaths, injuries and illnesses in the nation's factories and services, one conclusion transcends this gray area of "lies, damned lies and statistics," as the British statesman Benjamin Disraeli once wrote.

De Leon's characterization still rings true. The extent of death, injury and illness on the job today still amounts to massive carnage. All the more so now because a century has passed in which capitalist industry could have implemented safeguards and changed processes that could have ended the carnage.



As Dr. Linda Rosenstock, former director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, once put it, "We have tools for prevention here, in the workplace, that sometimes just don't exist for other illnesses." "These are all inherently preventable illnesses and injuries," Rosenstock noted.

Sam Mannan, the head of Texas A&M's Mary K. O'Connor Process Safety Center, once told *U.S. News & World Report*, "Most of safety is not rocket science." "We don't have to research another 100 years," he said, "or even 20 years, to figure out the right way to do things. Why accidents keep happening is because we don't do the things that we know how to do."

The problem is *systemic*. Production *under the terms and conditions laid down by capitalism* cuts against safety at every turn. Capitalists "don't want to stop the equipment" when there are profits to be made. They invest in a lot of relatively cheap insurance and as little maintenance and worker safeguards as possible.

This case against capitalism is no mere allegation, but a fact well established by both history and the daily experiences of workers on the job. Most workers know that, if they were in charge, workplaces could be made safe. They know they are pressured to take shortcuts, ignore safety procedures, neglect repairs,

put off maintenance and so on, for the sake of profits.

Many workers know that government regulatory agencies charged with occupational safety are worthless because they are in league with the capitalists. Inspections rarely happen. According to one industry safety analyst, OSHA's 2002 budget would allow its staff of 2,238 federal and state inspectors to inspect the nation's 8 million workplaces once every 119 years. Inspections that do happen are sometimes legally announced in advance thanks to loopholes written into a general prohibition against notifying capitalists in advance of inspections.

Many workers also know their union leaders are prone to compromise and collaborate with the capitalists and government agencies.

All too many workers, however, are resigned to accepting all of this. All too *few* realize that things *need not* be this way. In *their* collective hands is the power to change things.

Properly organized, workers can take, hold and operate all the industries and services of the land—the entire economy—in their own behalf. With those doing the work in charge of safety, safety will no longer come second. For with capitalism abolished, production won't be carried on for the benefit of a class of vampires that profits from its reckless disregard of workers' lives and health. —K.B.

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## Earth Day and May Day

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By Robert Bills

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Russians brought to Hungary. The Kremlin named the "leaders" who were to lead the Hungarian workers and peasants to the Promised Land. The system was called a "people's democracy" but, like the Russian system, it was a bureaucratic despotism sustained by police state terror. Contempt for the mass of workers became a characteristic of the bureaucratic leaders, and, indeed, it was this contempt that led to the monstrous stupidity of firing on the Budapest demonstrators and setting off the explosion.

Now the Hungarian workers have led the way in rejecting "communism." The question is,

## directory

### UNITED STATES

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Robert Bills  
Acting Editor

## ... 50 Years

(Continued from page 4)

the workers are the wellspring whence flows the forces of socialist freedom. Marxism teaches further that it is the task of a socialist party to arouse the workers to a consciousness of their class interests, to show them how to organize to fulfill these interests. But Lenin, Trotsky, and the rest of the Bolshevik leaders, abandoned Marx's reliance on the workers. We are not concerned here with the overwhelming and complex problems that the proletarian revolution in an economically backward country faced. Unquestionably these problems were enormous, and they seemed to Lenin to justify the expedient policies that, in the name of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," led to the creation of a dictatorship *over* the proletariat. The point is that very early in the life of the Soviet regime the Russian workers were reduced to a negative, subservient role.

By the time the Soviet Army "liberated" Eastern Europe, the communist movement was thoroughly conditioned to the idea that the mass of workers had not to be enlightened, but only to be manipulated. Socialism would be the work of "leaders." It was the duty of the workers to follow the leaders and accept unquestioningly their explanations and rationalizations.

This was the concept of "socialism" that the

have they also rejected the idea of freedom they have hitherto identified with socialism? Only time can supply the answer. Dispatches indicate that the workers are sustaining a remarkable solidarity, and their spirit seems far from crushed by the Russian terror. Nevertheless their movement continues to be negative in character. There is an instinctive groping for democracy, but no one has any idea of how socialist democracy is constructed. Until this idea—an idea that only De Leonism supplies—is grasped, frustration must inevitably dog their efforts.

## The People's PRESS FORWARD FUND

This is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for *The People's* Press Forward 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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# Luxemburg in China?

By Jim Plant

Against a backdrop of fabulous wealth and privilege on the one hand, and dire poverty and superexploitation on the other, an extraordinary event took place in the Chinese city of Wuhan last March. That event was an international conference on Rosa Luxemburg's Thought and Contemporary Value.

The conference, which attracted delegates from the United States, Europe, Japan and South Africa, as well as from China, was "extraordinary" because the ideas and life's work of Rosa Luxemburg were completely antithetical to the theory and practice of the Chinese government and the ruling Communist Party.

Luxemburg—a Polish Marxist who was active in the Polish, Russian and particularly German socialist movements a hundred years ago—stood for the self-emancipation of the working class and the building of a genuine democratic socialist society. She would have been appalled and repelled by the "cult of personality" that surrounded Mao Zedong, by his disastrous "Great Leap Forward" and by the so-called "Cultural

Revolution" that he engineered towards the end of his life. The poverty and exploitation in today's China, coupled with a complete lack of democratic and union rights for China's workers, would have enraged her.

Yet such an international conference could not have taken place without at least a tacit go-ahead from the Chinese government. Why Beijing gave its consent is not immediately apparent, but it might be part of an attempt to convince some gullible supporters outside China, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that somehow the Chinese government and Communist Party are interested in the creation of a socialist society.



It is especially ironic that a conference on Rosa Luxemburg should have taken place in present-day China because Luxemburg was a passionate opponent of the death penalty. Indeed, one of the first articles she penned upon her release from a German prison in 1918 (she had been imprisoned because of her antiwar activity) was a call for the abolition of the death penalty. "Communist"

China leads the world in the number of people executed. Amnesty International estimates that in 2005 at least 1,770 people were executed, but it also states that the real figure could be as many as 8,000.

Until recently, the most common method of execution in China was a bullet in the back of the head. Now it is becoming less messy and more "hi tech" with the introduction of smart "mobile execution chambers," in which prisoners are given a lethal injection. Reportedly, 40 such mobile execution vehicles have been put into service so far.

These ghoulish vehicles put one in mind of the "gas vans" used by the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing units) to murder Jews, Gypsies, Communists and Socialists in Poland and Russia during World War II. They are much more sophisticated, however, and are fitted with closed circuit television. That particular innovation permitted local members of the National People's Congress to witness one recent execution.

The designer of the execution vehicle, Kang Zhongwen, states that the switch from gunshots to injections is a sign that China "promotes human rights now."

George Orwell would have appreciated that remark; it could have come straight from the pages of *1984*.

## 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 a discussion meeting on Sunday, Nov. 26, 1-3 p.m., at the Carnegie Library, Grant and Oak streets. For information call 440-237-7933.

Independence: Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, Nov. 19, and on Sunday, Dec. 17, 1-3 p.m., Independence Public Library, 6361 Selig Dr. (off Rt. 21 between Chestnut & Hillside). For information call 440-237-7933.

### OREGON

Portland: Discussion Meeting—Section Portland will hold a discussion meeting on Saturday, Nov. 11, from 10 a.m.-12 noon, at the Portland Main Library, SW Yamhill & 10th. Topic: "Technology and Job Loss." For more information call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit the section's website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>.

For information about future meetings, visit the section's website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com> or call Sid at 503-226-2881.

# ...Three Rs ...Struggle

(Continued from page 8)

(Continued from page 2)

planet are forms of structural or systemic violence. Violence is so pervasive under capitalism that it is typically minimized and dismissed as simply business as usual. In addition, what of the moral and social superstructure which emerges from the economic base of capitalism? Even the dominant values associated with capitalism, such as status, competition, extreme individualism, dominance over nature, the romanticizing of war and acquisition of consumer goods are antisocial, thereby contributing to violence.

American teachers may carry guns if the Wisconsin legislator has his way. Children will surely ask these teachers, "Why do you have to carry that gun?" Without Marx, teachers have no answers. The fourth "R" must be "REVOLUTION." Therefore, study hard. Learn the fourth "R." History will grade harshly. The test is whether American citizens can develop class-consciousness, discover that capitalism is the root of violence and create a sane, classless, socialist society for our children.

per month while putting in 15-hour shifts.

So, in "communist" China, Xia can spend an amount to establish his polo team that would take a Dongguan factory worker 1,742 years of labor to earn in wages and an iPod worker over 2,500 years!

China never was, because it couldn't be, a socialist or "communist" country. The reason is obvious. Not until now did it have the industrial foundation and the industrial working class to make genuine socialism possible. "Workers of China, unite!" was a meaningless slogan in a nation that had virtually no industrial foundation and a working class that was an insignificant fraction of the population. Now it has both, or enough of both for a genuine socialist movement to emerge and take shape. Without such a movement, China's working class is destined to a new and prolonged era of unremitting and intensified exploitation.

Such a movement is bound to emerge, and when it does it will give shape and direction to the unrest the clash at Dongguan, and many other places, suggests is on the rise.

## ...Health

(Continued from page 1)

of a burden onto their workers by "giving" them the bare minimum in health coverage.

If by "health care crisis" is meant a shortage of the things needed to provide for the health and well-being of all American workers, it is safe to say that the "crisis" is contrived and false. The resources are there, but doled out in ways meant to maximize profits.

If that means that millions of working-class men, women and children must go without, too bad for them—capitalists must have their "pound of flesh."

## Blizzards?

If you find yourself tramping through rain, sleet and snow to get your copy of *The People*:

Wouldn't it be easier to enter a subscription? And one for a friend? Use the subscription coupon on page 2.

## Funds

(Aug. 12-Oct. 20)

### Press Forward Fund

Section Cleveland \$1,000; John & Mary Brlas (In memory of Lazar Petrovich) \$500; Reynold R. Elkins \$210; \$200 each Chris Dobreff, Irene Schelin, John S. & Rosemary Gale, Roy K. Nelson; \$100 each Ken Boettcher, Lois Reynolds; Harvey Fuller \$75; T. McGregor \$53.86; \$50 each Jill Campbell & Steve Littleton, Jim Plant, Marshall G. Soura, Michael Preston, Walter J. Leibfritz; Henry Coretz \$45; Wayne F. Lovett \$31; F. Cline \$27; \$25 each Ben Kraft, Robert Ormsby; \$20 each James Lehner, Sid Fink; \$10 each Daniel Brian Lazarus, Eugene Tagle, George E. Gray, Joe Randell, Richard Mack, Robert & Donna Bills; Stephan Graham \$5.

Total: \$3,346.86

### Prisoner Subscription Fund

Frank Cline \$10.20; Richard Mack \$10; Reynold F. Elkins \$5.

Total: \$25.20

### SLP Leaflet Fund

Michael Wenskunas \$50; \$25 each John Lambase, Mary & John Brlas; Robert P. Burns \$20; T. McGregor \$17.92; Alex Iwasa \$10; Gene Tagle \$7; R.C. Moody \$4; Jeffery Smith \$2.

Total: \$150.92

### Press Security Fund

Chris Dobreff \$200; \$100 each R.E. Wolf, Helen Deneff; \$50 each Ron Harner, Robert Ormsby, John S. & Rosemary Gale; Section Cook County, Ill., \$46.80; Lloyd A. Wright \$35; Ronald J. Ingalsbe \$30; \$25 each Phillip Colligan, Ken Stibler; Marshall G. Soura \$20; Bob & Sita Brothers \$15; \$10 each Richard Mack, Peter King, Keith Ocamp, Harry E. Gibson, Harold Madsen, Earle McGue; Jim Plant \$7; \$5 each Glenn E. Jones, Anthony William Greco.

Total: \$823.80

### SLP Sustainer Fund

Joan Davis \$800; Bernard Bortnick \$325; Robert P. Burns \$320; Chris Dobreff \$200; Lois Reynolds \$100; Jill Campbell & Steve Littleton \$60; Section San Francisco Bay Area: Bill Kelley \$30; Helena Stevens \$30; Michael Wenskunas \$25; George T. Gaylord Jr. \$1.

Total: \$1,891.00

### Socialist Labor Party

#### Financial Summary

Bank balance (July 31)	.....	\$105,549.87
Expenses (Aug.-Sept.)	.....	21,657.02
Income (Aug.-Sept.)	.....	7,221.73
Bank balance (Sept. 30)	.....	\$ 91,114.58
Deficit for 2006	.....	\$ 58,738.68

# Capitalist Profits Behind China's Environmental Crisis

By Diane Secor

Hosting the Summer Olympics in 2008 is said to be a matter of pride and prestige for the leaders of "communist" China, a sign that it has been accepted as an equal by the other industrial nations. Two other Asian nations, Japan and South Korea, have staged a total of four Olympic Games since 1964, but in 1993 the International Olympic Committee rebuffed China's bid to host the summer games in 2000. There were several reasons for the IOC snub. As noted by an Associated Press item on Sept. 15:

"Beijing previously has enacted extraordinary measures to reduce the chances of protest or spruce up the grimy capital's appearance. In 1993, during its failed bid for the 2000 Olympics, Beijing expelled beggars, forced the handicapped to stay at home and closed smokestack industries when IOC inspection teams visited."

In short, China threw up a smoke screen to conceal the capital city's worsening social and environmental problems from IOC eyes, but apparently without success. When China renewed its bid for hosting the 2008 summer games six years ago, it promised a genuine cleanup of the city. The IOC gave in, and since then China has spent huge amounts of money to build the facilities needed to hold the games and accommodate thousands of athletes and other foreign visitors. It has also boasted of making great strides toward turning Beijing from a veritable sewer into a "livable" city, in part by relocating some of the dirtiest factories in and around the capital to outlying areas. Nonetheless, in October 2005, and five years into its "cleanup" program, the European Space Agency dubbed Beijing "the air pollution capital of the world." As reported by the *Guardian* of London:

"Satellite data...revealed that the city is one of the worst environmental victims of China's spectacular economic growth, which has brought with it air pollution levels that are blamed for more than 400,000 premature deaths a year.

"According to the European Space Agency, Beijing and its neighboring northeast Chinese provinces have the planet's worst levels of nitrogen dioxide, which can cause fatal damage to the lungs." (Oct. 3, 2005)

With less than two years before the scheduled start of the summer games in August 2008,

China's leaders are in need of some spectacular progress, or some innovative razzle-dazzle, to make Beijing presentable, to save face and to avoid humiliation. However that may work out, Beijing's environmental and social problems represent only a fraction of similar problems across wide areas of the country.

Indeed, China's quest for foreign capitalist investment has brought the country's environmental crisis to a head. Many parts of the coun-

try, especially the poorer areas whose populations supply cheap labor to factories, have lax environmental standards.

Where pollution laws do exist, fraud and failure to enforce the laws are common. As the director of China's State Environmental Protection Administration, Zhou Shengxian, explained, this is a "conflict between economic growth and environmental protection." (*International Herald Tribune*, Aug. 21) He blames China's environmental disasters on the corruption of local and regional officials who refuse to comply with environmental laws, and has promised to tighten pollution regulations. Zhou's and other PRC governmental agencies have been compelled to act to save entire areas of their country.

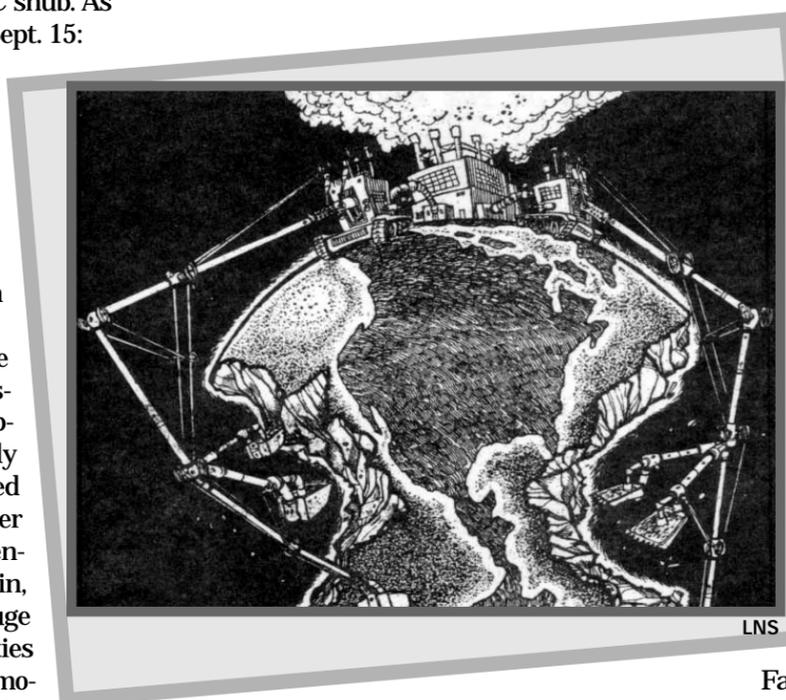
The *International Herald Tribune* reports that "90 percent of waterways" in China's urban areas and "75 percent of lakes" have dangerous levels of toxic substances, and "discharges of sulfur dioxide from power plants and industry increased by 27 percent in the five years to 2005 to reach 25.5 million metric tons." In addition, industrial pollution has endangered substantial amounts of agricultural land.

China's environmental crisis, however, is not a consequence of some corrupt individuals but the direct consequence of a capitalist system's inherent profit motive. For example, when local or regional authorities do shut down the most hazardous factories, factory owners simply relocate their plants and carry on business as usual.

This "business as usual" has been devastating to the residents of Hui County in Gansu Province, to cite one example. On Sept. 12, the Associated Press reported that over 800 people in the county, including more than 300 children less than 14 years old, were victims of lead poisoning. The source of the poisonous emissions was the privately owned Hui County Non-Ferrous Metal Smelting Plant Co. The plant had the legally required antipollution devices installed, but to cut expenses the company did not use the equipment at night. A government spokesperson announced that the company who owns the factory agreed to close down the plant and offer compensation to the lead-poisoned victims, in order to be "cooperating positively with the government."

Faced with the dilemma of keeping capitalists happy while cleaning up its environment for the 2008 Olympics, what is a country to do? According to Xinhua news agency (April 27), the Beijing 2008 Olympics Organizing Committee has hired the prestigious Western public relations company Hill & Knowlton (H&K) to help in "communicating Beijing's Olympic vision" to the international media. H&K comes with "excellent" credentials. According to *Covert Action*, some of H&K's past campaigns include making "sure gasoline taxes were kept low for the American Petroleum Institute," handling "critics of Three Mile Island's near catastrophe," and representing countries known for its human rights abuses such as Turkey, Peru, Egypt and Indonesia.

It remains to be seen how much house cleaning China accomplishes before the 2008 Olympics and how much, if any, the impact will be on capitalist profits. What is certain, however, is that the exploitation of that country's workers and the degradation of its environment will continue until a truly socialist society exists there.



LNS

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The *International Herald Tribune* reports that "90 percent of waterways" in China's urban areas and "75 percent of lakes" have dangerous levels of toxic substances, and "discharges of sulfur dioxide from power plants and industry

# China's Emerging Class Struggle

By Jim Plant

The social and economic contrast between China's burgeoning working class and its emerging capitalist class grows sharper every day, and with it grow the tensions and clashes that are evidence of a sharpening class struggle in the so-called People's Republic.

Xia Yang is one of China's *nouveaux riche*. According to the London *Guardian*, he is also the founder of the Beijing Sunny Times Polo Club.

Polo is an expensive sport to indulge in. Among other things, it involves the keeping of thoroughbred horses. Once known as "the sport of kings," it was a favorite pastime of maharajas and well-healed colonial administrators and military men in British India. Needless to say, it is far beyond the reach of ordinary mortals, and certainly well beyond that of the vast majority

of China's population.

For Xia Yang, however, money is not a problem. He has invested 12 million yuan (about \$1.5 million) in a stable, a clubhouse (built on his own land) and 26 thoroughbred horses. Moreover, he has also flown in Singapore's national polo team coach to teach him and his friends the fine points of the game.

Xia is one of the new breed of rich capitalists who are flourishing in "communist" China, but he declares that "Polo is not about money, it is about being a gentleman." "I really hope that one day I will have the opportunity to play against Prince Charles and the Sultan of Brunei," he said. We would not be surprised if eventually he gets his wish—certainly the three "gentlemen" would feel at home in each other's company.

While Xia can comfortably invest a fortune in

a polo club, Chinese workers have to exist on the most meager of resources. Last summer, for example, a clash occurred in the city of Dongguan between factory workers (producing toys sold by U.S. companies such as Disney, McDonalds, Mattel and Hasbro) and security guards and police. (*International Herald Tribune*, July 28) The workers were protesting their paltry wages and unbearable working conditions.

According to the Paris-based *International Herald Tribune*, the workers put in 11 hours a day, six days a week for 574 yuan (\$72) per month, but in many Chinese factories wage rates are even less. Another example was cited by the British newspaper, the *Mail on Sunday*, which reported that workers in a plant manufacturing Apple Computer's iPods are paid as little as \$50

(Continued on page 7)