



the People

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SLP Successes And Failures

Many hundreds of people from around the world visit the SLP's Web site every month. Some who discover the site write to compliment us on the number and variety of documents posted there, and a few e-mail a question or two. One recent inquirer asked us to tell him about "the successes and failures of the Socialist Party," to which we replied:

"We cannot speak for the Socialist Party, but we can tell you something about the Socialist Labor Party. It is the oldest party of socialism in the country and the third oldest of all its political parties. Only the Democratic Party and the Republican Party go back earlier in the country's history. The SLP can also lay claim to being the oldest Marxist party in the world.

"The SLP's failures are probably obvious. We have failed to convince a majority of workers that socialism is the path to permanent peace and economic security, despite all the wars, recurring depressions and other problems (pollution, racism, crime, corruption, etc.) created by capitalism. We have also failed to overcome the antidemocratic election laws created by the Democratic and Republican politicians to monopolize and undermine what is supposed to be a 'free ballot.' We have failed to protect the public airwaves from being monopolized by a shrinking number of huge capitalist corporations, and therefore failed to prevent those monopolies from muzzling free speech and using the public airwaves to convince people that capitalism is good for them. We have experienced lots of failures; but even our failures point up the truth of our criticisms of capitalism and the social evils it creates.

"As to our successes: We would have to say that it is our survival in such a hostile atmosphere, for despite everything the capitalist class, its professors and politicians have tried to do to stifle the SLP we have survived and defended the fundamental principles of the labor and socialist movement for more than a century. Through thick and thin, and despite every attack and effort to destroy us by misrepresenting what socialism is, the SLP and its official newspaper, *The People*, continue to educate workers about the class struggle, about the antisocial character of the profit system, about how capitalism creates the conditions that inevitably lead to poverty and unemployment, imperialism and war, and all the other social evils that make life so difficult for millions upon millions of people, not only here in our own country but all over the world.

"We are gratified by that success, but we are not satisfied with it, and that's why we will go on fighting for what we know to be right and decent. Someday capitalism will force the working class to wake up to those social evils and to the inescapable conclusion that capitalism is at the root of them. Someday

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CAPITALISM THREATENS OUR SURVIVAL

Nuclear Arms Race Being Globalized

The greatest threats to human survival today are global warming and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, or at least the capacity to produce them.

That almost certainly would be the prevailing opinion among those who are reasonably informed. Nonetheless, it is not quite accurate. The greatest threat to human survival is the source of these universally (or almost universally) recognized threats.

The source is capitalism, and we believe that many more people understand this than are willing to acknowledge it by working for its overthrow. The primary reason for that, of course, is that they reject the socialist alternative, either because they have been misled into thinking that socialism is something that it is not, or because they simply lack faith in the capacity of the human race to conduct the affairs of the country and the world. Unfortunately for all of us, however, they lack a viable alternative: Hence the unfortunate waste of much talent and effort on exposing the deleterious effects of "corporate greed," etc., and on urging the servant (the state) to regulate its master (the ruling class).

The Bush administration has made it clear that it is not concerned with global warming. It takes no special insight to understand why. The sources of the "greenhouse gases" at the root of that threat are industries and products that are owned and controlled by a rapacious capitalist class. The political state that Mr. Bush heads up is nothing

if not "a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie," as Karl Marx described it in the *Communist Manifesto*. This and only this can explain why President Bush has sought to debunk the threat and, as it now appears, to sweep his own administration's findings under the rug. (See editorial, page 4)

Nuclear proliferation is another matter.

Since the end of the cold war, American capitalism has been the world's only military superpower. Its ability to enforce its will or its whim wherever it sees fit has been demonstrated three times in recent years, in the Balkans, in Afghanistan and in Iraq. And no one seriously believes that it would not have succeeded in Somalia if the stakes had been as high as in Iraq. But the spread of nuclear technology, and with it the capacity to produce nuclear weapons, means more to American capitalism than such trifling concerns as human survival.

Nuclear proliferation poses a threat to American capitalism's ability to go where it wants when it wants to export its commodities, to gain access to raw materials to feed its industries, to export finance capital, and to coerce or bribe foreign ruling classes and their governments to do U.S. capitalism's bidding.

President Bush says he is worried about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. He has pointed his fin-

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Unemployment Grows While Politicians Posture

By Paul D. Lawrence

An emergency room surgeon who applied a Band-Aid to a severed major artery and prescribed aspirin for the pain would face a malpractice suit and lose her or his license. Yet Band-Aids and aspirin are the best the growing number of jobless workers can expect from capitalist politicians. That's about all the "Unemployment Compensation Amendments of 2003" amount to.

The amendments extend unemployment payments through December for some workers. They sailed through both houses of Congress in May despite some grumbling before the final decision was taken. They passed the House on May 22 by a vote of 409-19 and the Senate by "unanimous consent" on May 23, and the president signed them into law on May 28.

Members of the Democratic wing of the capitalist political party took the lead in urging an extension of emergency unemployment payments for at least 2.8 million jobless workers whose payments were scheduled to expire at the end of May. According to one estimate, nearly 4 million workers would have exhausted unemployment payments by the end of the year if that program had not been extended. The average

weekly payment under that program is \$249, which is less than the official (and understated) poverty-level income for a family of three.

And what about the other 1.2 million workers whose eligibility for unemployment compensation is running out? The answer, as reported by the Associated Press on May 24, is that, "About 1 million people who have used up all their state and federal aid won't get extra help under the plan."

Members of the Republican branch of the capitalist party generally opposed extending emergency payments. Although an overwhelming majority of them grudgingly voted for the amendments, some bared their souls before the final votes were taken.

According to Wally Herger, chairman of a House Ways and Means Subcommittee, "unemployment benefits can actually discourage work." (Herger is paid more than \$2,800 a week for his services to the capitalist class.) A spokesman for Republican Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert says that, "The best thing for folks who are unemployed is a job." Undoubtedly. But where will those jobs come from? President Bush's recently enacted multibillion-dollar tax cuts for rich capi-

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'Free Trade' And Steel

I received an inquiry about the SLP from a steelworker in Oklahoma. He found us on the Web but didn't download *The People* or anything else. He wanted additional information and said he had been a Socialist for a long time. He asked me if I knew what had been happening in the steel industry, attributing the layoffs and bankruptcies to free trade agreements and, by implication, NAFTA. He asked me if we were Marxist and I told him we were, and gave him a very brief description of the SLP and what our goal was.

B.B.
via email

Reply—"Steelworker" is wrong about free trade agreements being at the bottom of the steel industry's woes. Overcapacity relative to markets is the immediate cause, and that, obviously, is rooted in the "market system" itself. Trade agreements are like levees and dikes. They are used to keep water out or to let it in, but they have nothing to do with how much water there is in the stream or how high it might rise. Steel is plentiful, hence it is cheap. As a result, the American product cannot compete on the global market and domestic markets are being flooded with the foreign product.

Steel capitalists complain about cheap foreign products being "dumped" on the market. That got them a sympathetic hearing with the Bush administration, which imposed some sort of barrier against foreign steel in March. But the number of politicians concerned more with the interests of the capitalists who consume steel than with those who produce it—almost certainly a majority—may have to override that soon. In April, for example, the following item appeared on the Web:

"STEEL IMPORTS FOR MARCH 2003
INCREASED 31 PERCENT FROM
FEBRUARY 2003

"April 29, 2003

"Newly released preliminary government figures covering steel imports for the month of March 2003 show that steel imports increased 31 percent from February 2003 levels."

That's enough to show that domestic consumers of foreign-produced steel like the lower prices.

And over the weekend this item showed up on the Net:

"Saturday, May 3, 2003 at 09:00 JST

"GENEVA—A World Trade Organization (WTO) panel probing complaints from European Union, Japan and six other countries on steel import curbs imposed by the United States has issued a final ruling that the U.S. move, in force since March last year, violates WTO trade rules, trade sources said Friday.

"The sources said the WTO dispute settlement panel sent a final report on its findings to the parties involved in the dispute on Friday, setting the stage for another round of adjudication at the WTO Appellate Body. The panel's decision, however, is likely to stand as the WTO Appellate Body rarely overturns the basic conclusions reached by a dispute settlement panel. (*Kyodo News*)"

This shows that the "flood waters" are beating against the U.S. "levee."

How this will play itself out remains to be seen, particularly when the interests of the steel industry are weighed against the export interests of other capitalists who need access to E.U., Japanese and other markets.

Nestlé Attacks Workers, Sweetens Profits

By Paul D. Lawrence

In a commentary written for the *Los Angeles Times*, one Stuart Appelbaum assails Nestlé USA for "corporate greed." He is particularly incensed at its closing its Fulton, N.Y., chocolate factory, which has been in operation since 1898. The sole reason for closure was to save on payments into the workers' pension fund. The average age of the workers being 52, the sooner Nestlé closed the plant, the more it would save.

Appelbaum also cites other instances of Nestlé taking "the low road"—replacing skilled workers with machinery at some plants, closing others, abandoning areas of its "core competency," and moving into a different line by acquiring Ralston Purina, the pet-food maker.

None of this should come as a surprise to anyone acquainted with how capitalism operates. But Appelbaum is unfamiliar with that. He is president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union and a vice president of the AFL-CIO. In other words, Appelbaum is a labor lieutenant of the capitalist class. He has made a career of concealing the fact of the class struggle and preaching that capital and labor are partners.

He is particularly angry because "the Fulton workers had the lowest absentee rate, the best safety record and highest efficiency rate within their division." In other words, the union had kept its end of the bargain. It provided a disciplined, organized, docile labor force for Nestlé to exploit. But Nestlé reneged, and its actions are making Appelbaum's job difficult.

Appelbaum praises Al Gore's language of "class warfare" that some "New Democrats" have criticized. After all, he needs some militant-sounding rhetoric to disguise the bankruptcy of procapitalist unionism. But "class warfare" is not the word, at least not now. There is, of course, a class struggle going on between the capitalists and the workers they exploit. But it's hardly at the intensity of warfare, and the struggle is pretty one-sided, thanks to the likes of Appelbaum.

The labor lieutenants of capitalism bamboozle workers by praising certain procapitalist politicians like Gore as "friends of labor" and squander millions of dollars raised from their members on promoting the careers of such friends of capitalism.

They have unionized only 13.5 percent of the nonagricultural labor force. And they have divided them into separate units and use the

contract, with its standard no-strike clause, to prevent workers from effectively acting as one in their own interests.

Daniel De Leon observed, "The mission of unionism is not to act as rear-guard to an army defeated, seasoned in defeat, habituated



to defeat, and fit only for defeat," although it is doubtful today's unions could ever be considered a rear guard.

De Leon continued: "The mission of unionism is to organize and drill the working class for final victory—to 'take and hold' the machinery of production, which means the administration of the country." That means organizing all workers, industry by industry, into an integral whole. It means educating workers about the facts of exploitation, for example, that corporate profits come from the unpaid labor of workers. It means explaining that private ownership of productive property is an anomaly when the means of production are operated by the collective, socialized labor of the working class. It means preaching that, on the political field, workers need neither Republican nor Democratic "friends of labor," but their own political party that demands the destruction of capitalism, not its continuation.

Do You Belong?

Do you know what the SLP stands for? Do you understand the class struggle and why the SLP calls for an end of capitalism and of its system of wage labor? Do you understand why the SLP does not advocate reforms of capitalism, and why it calls upon workers to organize Socialist Industrial Unions?

If you have been reading *The People* steadily for a year or more, if you have read the literature recommended for beginning Socialists, and if you agree with the SLP's call for the political and economic unity of the working class, you may qualify for membership in the SLP. And if you qualify to be a member you probably should be a member.

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

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Joblessness stalks North Texas workers

By B.B.

Unemployment continues to grow in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, where 105,000 jobs have been lost over the past three years. The only significant sector of the economy hiring these days is the so-called defense industry, where science, technology and human labor are squandered wholesale.

The technology sector continues to founder, with massive job losses affecting between 30,000-40,000 workers. American Airlines, after cutting 3,000 workers from its payroll in the last year, plans to hand out pink slips to another 7,100 unionized workers. Despite the airline's bankruptcy ploy and the subsequent concessions wrung from the three unions "representing" flight attendants, pilots and mechanics, their employment remains tenuous.

The largest 100 companies in the Dallas-Fort Worth area currently employ 428,740 workers, according to the *Dallas Morning News*. That number suggests a loss of almost 5,000 jobs over the year.

Dallas-based Greyhound Lines cut 200 employees, and the expectation is for more layoffs to come. "People just aren't traveling as much as they used to," a spokesperson declared. "We are not getting hit to the extent the airlines are, but we are still feeling the bruises of Sept. 11."

Notwithstanding all this, Jeff Kaye, who heads a local job recruiting firm, expressed restrained optimism. "So you had a bad economy, you had the dot-com crash, you had Sept. 11, you had massive layoffs and you never got worse than 6 percent? We've had the worst stock market since the Great Depression. The statistics are staggering. Yet we never went worse than a 6 percent unemployment rate."

But such government percentages tend to obscure the reality of the human misery unemployment causes, and they frequently disguise its extent. Even the coy Mr. Kaye admitted that many unemployed workers eventually stop looking for jobs and drop out of the "labor pool" completely.

Unemployed workers are dropping out of the

labor market in growing numbers, but they also persist longer in their search for work before giving up hope. Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc., the Chicago-based "outplacement" firm, has measured the current average period required to find work these days. It now takes those who succeed in locating new jobs an average of 4.2 months to find them, as opposed to 2.3 months in 2001. This is the longest search time in the 17-year history of the company's record keeping. What little savings unemployed workers have, if any, quickly vanishes in two months, much less four. In the interim what happens to sustenance for the family, or to car and mortgage payments?

economic slump is in the "defense" industry. Fort Worth-based Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., for example, is hiring because it got the government contracts for the F-35 "Joint Strike Fighter."

"Thus far, the Defense Department has committed \$22.9 billion for the construction of 22 F-35s," the May issue of *Popular Mechanics* reported. "The Air Force and Marines will each get five flying aircraft, the Navy four. The remaining eight will be nonflying versions for various testing programs. The Pentagon estimates it will eventually need as many as 3,000 F-35s, at a total cost of \$200 billion...."

No wonder, then, that Lockheed Martin has hired 3,400 workers over the past year, bringing their wage slave count to 15,400. Considering the massive destruction of Iraq and the military equipment, weaponry and ammunition expended in that debacle, replenishment could well be part of the economic "stimulus" President Bush hopes will enhance his chances for reelection in next year's presidential election campaign. That type of economic stimulus for North Texas, and possibly for the whole nation, only underlines the destructive and antisocial character of capitalism.

Unemployment is inherent in capitalism. The system's contradictions make full employment impossible, even when the stimulus is war or the preparation for war. Marx and Engels succinctly summed up the underlying cause in the *Communist Manifesto*: "For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production...."

Large cooperative bodies of workers socially operate those modern productive forces, but they are privately owned by a small class of industrial autocrats. This is one of the fundamental contradictions of the system. That contradiction between social or collective production and private ownership can only be eliminated by bringing the means of production and distribution under democratic social control and collective ownership by society.



E. Gentry for *The People*

The answer is hinted by the "good news": Anonymous "experts" speculate that the current business slump is ending and that jobs will emerge at the end of the year, a mere six months away. Cheery news indeed! How is this to come about we may ask?

One partial exception from the general eco-

25 50 75 100 years ago

War, Peace—and Stock Gambling

(*Weekly People*, Aug. 8, 1953)

The *New York Times*, July 28, described the stock market fluctuations in reaction to the different phases of the Korean war as "both traditional and logical." It added that it was not peace as such, nor war as such, that sent tremors through the market, "but the transition from one to the other."

As evidence, the *Times* cited the "pretty bad

time" the market went through in April when the news showed that prospects were increasing for a resumption of full-scale armistice negotiations in Korea. As further evidence, it cited the fact that the previous "pretty bad time" for the market was in November 1950, "when we learned for the first time that the Chinese has entered the war, thus vastly increasing its potential dimensions and its life expectancy."

The most recent "pretty bad time" was a result of the prospect of a truce. The earlier "pretty bad time" was the result of the prospect of a costlier war. In contrast, the market reaction to the actual truce, on July 29, was slight, because the truce had been anticipated and discounted.

It all sounds rather abstract, and that's the way it was intended to sound. The fact is, though, that the "abstract" readjustments, both those anticipated and those that hit the market suddenly, were the product of the concrete profit potentialities of the particular situations. A realization of this fact removes the phenomena of price rises and falls on the stock and commodity markets from the realm of natural law to that of social mechanics.

Stock market profits and losses are made and suffered by human beings who speculate

on death and destruction or gamble on the temporary absence of war.

Viewed in these terms, the speculation is indefensible. Hence the attempt of the defenders of capitalism to place the market fluctuations in the realm of natural law. The worker-victims of war can't do anything about natural laws, but they can do something about the mechanics of society. They can change those mechanics. They can outlaw war, end exploitation and abolish poverty and insecurity by reconstructing society on a socialist basis. And they will—once they realize that profits are squeezed from their blood and marrow through their toil and their death!

Reform or Revolution

An address by Daniel De Leon

De Leon makes clear why reform may be logical at one stage of social development, while at another it may be the worst criminal nonsense.

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Bush & Global Warming

It is said that Nero fiddled while Rome burned in 64 A.D. The Bush administration, defending the material interests of big coal, oil and auto capital and other segments of the capitalist class, is doing even worse while the crisis of global warming continues to gather intensity.

Incredibly, though some scientists are reportedly wondering if our planet isn't approaching a global warming "meltdown," the Bush administration is still trying to deny that the crisis even exists. It recently proved exactly how far it would go to continue denying the crisis.

At press time, the release of an Environmental Protection Agency report on the state of the environment was imminent. Documents leaked to *The New York Times* showed that, as the British publication *The Guardian* put it on June 20, before okaying its publication "White House officials...cut details about the sudden increase in global warming over the past decade compared with the past 1,000 years and inserted information from a report that questions this conclusion...which was partly financed by the American Petroleum Institute."

One memo circulated among staff within the agency in April said the report "no longer accurately represents scientific consensus on climate change."

The People is no arbiter of scientific validity. Neither is the Socialist Labor Party. But when even the bureaucracy of the misnamed Environmental Protection Agency acknowledges publicly that "scientific consensus on climate change" is that the crisis exists and that auto and industrial emissions are at least partly to blame, it is no doubt beyond time to act.

The EPA has since its establishment proven that it is primarily window dressing—an underfunded, toothless agency intended to promote the *idea* that something is being done about the massive rape of our environment and poisoning of our air, water and land by the profit mongers of "free enterprise." The service it provides in so doing is that of fending off demands that more must be done—or even more to the point, demands that an economy that routinely produces such poisoning should be scrapped altogether.

In 2002 the EPA finally suggested, much to the chagrin of Bush, that "human activity" might be at least partly responsible for the phenomenon. This year the administration is apparently taking no chances, editing out any passages it thinks offensive to the interests of its capitalist benefactors before the report is published.

Denying the problem or its cause at this late date should mark this administration for exactly what it is—the unabashed and criminal toady of those who wish to continue raping and poisoning the environment for profit no matter what it means for the future of the planet.

According to *The Guardian*, "Up to six degrees of warming is now predicted for the next 100 years by United Nations scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), if nothing is done about emissions of greenhouse gases, principally carbon dioxide, the chief cause of global warming." Bristol University researchers in England recently reported that their studies of the Permian geological period "show that six degrees of global warming was enough to wipe out 95 percent of the species which were alive on Earth...250 million years ago." Species diversity did not reach what it was before the cataclysm for another 100 million years.

Some scientists now worry that rising temperatures may cause a "runaway greenhouse effect" that cannot be stopped. In this worst-case scenario the polar ice caps and even Arctic tundra melt, oxidizing organic matter previously frozen in the ice, and releasing vast amounts of carbon dioxide and another greenhouse gas, methane.

Industrial and other emissions of greenhouse gases are not being significantly cut because emission controls diminish profits. Take away the profit motive in capitalist production and replace it with socialist production for human needs and wants and such controls become not only possible, but desirable. While capitalism reigns on Earth, the chance exists that the profit mongers will simply keep on fiddling until it is too late. Join the Socialist Labor Party and the fight for a future under a democratic socialist economy capable of halting and eventually reversing the damage done to the planet and all its inhabitants by the voracious capitalist system. —K.B.



From the standpoint of a higher economic form of society, private ownership of the globe by single individuals will appear quite as absurd as private ownership of one man by another. Even a whole society, a nation, or even all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the globe. They are only its possessors, its usufructuaries, and, like *boni patres familias*, they must hand it down to succeeding generations in an improved condition.

—Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III

A De Leon Editorial

The Effects Of Imperialism



Imperialism has evil effects. But imperialism is a product of capitalism. Hence, its evil effects are caused by capitalism.

A Real Anti-Imperialist

(*Daily People*, Oct. 24, 1900)

"It is clearly the interest of all wage earners to oppose imperialism, root and branch, and if they have any doubt on the subject, let them consider the cotton operatives of Egypt."

Mr. Crosby,* of the anti-imperialistic league, has issued a small leaflet in which the above appears. The arguments in it are drawn mostly from the cotton industry of Egypt, and Crosby points out the fact that the prevailing wage is about 12¢ a day. The industry is unimportant, because the absence of coal makes it impossible to carry manufacturing on at a profit. The abundance of coal in and near the Philippines would change this aspect of affairs, and our mills and factories would migrate thither.

While these statements are undoubtedly true, the most important fact of all is overlooked. The waiting millions of Asia and of the Pacific Islands are as nothing compared with the development of the machine and the organization of industry. We shall admit that they are a menace at the present time, but they are a menace, not through their numbers, not because they differ from us in face, in language and dress, but because they are a new field of labor power. They can be used only by the present capitalist system. The embryonic capitalist of 100 years ago was no more humane and no more patriotic than his descendant of today. He was just as eager for profits, and just as unscrupulous in obtaining them. He did not obtain them in the same measure, because the state of industry would not permit it. He would have exploited the Asiatic, but he had not the means. It is only when, through the development of machinery and the organization of industry, the capitalist is forced constantly to cut his own throat that he reaches out and employs the "barbarian."

Then again there is another element that Crosby overlooks, or else is not honest enough to admit. That is the fact that the only "pauper labor" in the world today is the machine. It varies alone in its increasing power. It gives to its possessor ever greater control. It also inflicts upon those who must have access to it, but who do not own it, misery such as no period in the world's history ever witnessed in a like measure. These combined facts: the necessity of access to virgin fields of labor and the tendency of machinery and organization at home to drive down the price of labor are responsible for the movement that Crosby tries to cry down.

(Continued on page 7)

what is socialism?

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

Under socialism, all authority will originate from the workers, integrally united in Socialist Industrial Unions. In each workplace, the rank and file will elect whatever committees or representatives are needed to facilitate production. Within each shop or office division of a plant, the rank and file will participate directly in formulating and implementing all plans necessary for efficient operations.

Besides electing all necessary shop officers, the workers will also elect representatives to a local and national council of their industry or service—and to a central congress representing all the industries and services. This all-industrial congress will plan and coordinate production in all areas of the economy. All persons elected to any post in the socialist government, from the lowest to the highest level, will be directly accountable to the rank and file. They will be subject to removal at any time that a majority of those who elected them decide it is necessary.

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

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

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

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

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

WHERE WE DIFFER

The SLP vs. the ISO

How do you differentiate yourselves from the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Workers World Party or the International Socialist Organization?

bliv1013@...

Reply—Sent *What's the Difference?*

Fair enough. Most of the explanation was very excellent and just what I asked for and I thank you for that. At the same time, I am still having a hard time differentiating between you and the ISO. You both seem to say the same thing.

bliv1013@...

Reply—Thank you for your e-mail....We think you could have made our job easier if you had explained what the ISO has to say that made it difficult for you to distinguish it from the SLP. A visit to the ISO's Web site took us to "Where We Stand," and from that several points of difference caught our eye.

The ISO supports "trade unions," and presumably trade unionism. The SLP advocates industrial unionism. Trade unions organize by trade or occupation, thereby keeping workers divided, whereas industrial unions organize workers by industries, thereby uniting them regardless of occupation. The difference is important, because how the working class organizes on the economic field will be decisive in determining how the struggle for socialism will be conducted and how the new society will be organized. In addition, while the ISO sees "trade unions as essential to the fight for workers' economic and political rights" (under capitalism, we assume), it fails to identify any role for these economic organizations of the working class in carrying out the change from capitalism to socialism.

The SLP believes that if the working class cannot be organized economically it cannot be organized at all. What is it, after all, that defines and distinguishes the working class from the ruling class if it isn't its relationship to the means of production and distribution? The economic organization of the working class is essential to any movement for socialism. Without that organization socialism would be impossible to achieve.

This omission is not an accidental oversight. It is deliberate and flows out of the Leninist (and Trotskyist) view that workers cannot rise above "trade union consciousness." In other words, in the Leninist-Trotskyist scheme of things the working class is incapable of achieving classconsciousness. Accordingly, it must be led to socialism by a political party. Marx rejected this idea before Lenin came up with it, and for that matter so did the SLP.

The ISO says, "The structures of the present government—the Congress, the army, the police and the judiciary—cannot be taken over and used by the working class." It says that these structures of the government "are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers." In place of these structures it proposes "an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based on councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia."

The SLP says that the political state itself, not simply the different forms it might take or structures it might adopt, is an instrument of class rule and must be abolished. The political state is based on territory, on geographic demarcations—cities, counties, states, nations—whereas socialism is based on industrial demarcations.

A "workers' state" composed of "workers' councils" is a contradiction in terms. Workers are not

workers because of where they live—in this city or in that state—but because of their working. Councils of workers drawn from Pittsburgh or Los Angeles, Pennsylvania or California, would not be a difference in kind from a Congress of lawyers, or even much of a difference in form. The difference between a capitalist state and a "workers' state" is one of semantics only. At best it posits a state in which workers or their representatives would substitute for capitalists and their representatives in conducting an institution that presupposes classes and a ruling class's need for an instrument to oppress a ruled class.

A society divided into classes is not socialism, and a society without classes has no need of the instruments of class oppression. Apart from that, the picture conjured up by this formulation of a ruled class of workers ruling over a rul-

question. Socialism means the abolition of classes—of two groups of people, one of which owns and controls the means of wealth production and distribution, and one of which owns nothing but their ability to perform productive and otherwise socially useful labor—and with the abolition of classes any need for the state, i.e., the instrument by which class rule is enforced. Socialism, as Engels expressed it, is to be an administration of things. The things to be administered are the products and services that flow out of the industries, and the administrators will be the useful producers democratically organized to carry on production and the delivery of goods and services.

The ISO says, "To achieve socialism, the most militant workers must be organized into a revolutionary party to provide leadership and organization." The SLP understands the need for a political party, but its view of that party's role is fundamentally different from the Leninist-Trotskyist theory of a "vanguard party" to lead the working class to socialism. Indeed, no political party can lead the workers to socialism. The workers must make a conscious decision to organize themselves to achieve the socialist goal.

Socialism, as Marx said, must be the classconscious act of the working class itself. The role of the party now, as the SLP sees it, is to stimulate classconsciousness and to urge the working class to organize itself into all-embracing industrial unions capable of taking control of the industries and services and operating them on a socialist basis. A political party without the economic organization of the working class to back it up cannot achieve socialism, or anything else, unless it is to stir the workers up and to leave them defenseless in face of the police and military power of the state. Even the largest political party, one that achieved an overwhelming majority of popular support at the polls or otherwise, would not have the power to enforce the will of that majority.

No ruling class abandons its power and meekly steps aside just because a majority of people say that they should. That requires force. What force does the ISO's "revolutionary socialist party...political leadership and [political] organization" offer to oppose "the structures of the present government...the army, the police..."? Is it the "workers' militia," and if it is, how will that militia be organized, disciplined and trained under the noses of "the structures of the present government...the army, the police..."? And even if these militias could be organized into forces capable of taking on the armies and the police without being squashed in their infancy, how would their success place the instruments of production in the hands of the working class? It wouldn't.

The ISO is right where it says, "Although workers create society's wealth, they have no control over its production and distribution." It is right where it states, "A socialist society can only be built when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and democratically plan its production and distribution according to human needs instead of profit." But how does the ISO propose that the workers organize themselves to "collectively seize control of that wealth and democratically plan its production and distribution according to human needs"? That is precisely the question Socialist Industrial Unionism addresses, and answers, but which the ISO ignores.

We hope this helps you to recognize some of the differences between the SLP and ISO.



ing class of capitalist owners is ludicrous. Why would workers in political power continue to tolerate capitalists in economic power, and how could the workers' political power maintain itself as long as the capitalist class retained its economic power over them? It's pure nonsense.

What gives the state its power is the economic power of the ruling class, which enables it to provide its political instrument with the weapons needed to arm its police and its armies. A "workers' state" would not have that power if the industries remained under capitalist control, and if they did not remain under capitalist control—if the capitalist class was stripped of its capital—that class would disappear. Capitalists are not capitalists because they bear the title, but because they own and control capital. Strip them of that and they become powerless. With their disappearance the need for a political state in any form would also disappear. What would not disappear, however, is the need for some new form of organization—for something truly different in kind—to administer the economy. The ISO has no such difference of kind in mind with its "workers' state," whereas the SLP's Socialist Industrial Union program fits the bill exactly. It is that union of industries organized on a socialist basis that will be the government—the administration of things—under socialism.

The SLP stands with Marx and Engels on this

... Arms Race

(Continued from page 1)

ger at Iran and North Korea, the two countries he included with Iraq in his "axis of evil" speech to Congress last year. WMDs topped the list of reasons he gave for invading Iraq.

The president and his aides claimed Iraq had WMDs in abundance, but none have been found since the war. While Mr. Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld insist such weapons are buried somewhere beneath Iraq's abundance of desert sand and are sure to be found, critics are saying that the administration was either badly informed or that it deliberately manufactured an excuse to justify the war. Even Congress—the same Congress that renounced its responsibilities under the Constitution to give Mr. Bush the go-ahead to do as he pleased with Iraq—is looking into the possibility that he deliberately misled the country or that he was himself misled by faulty intelligence. Regardless, President Bush is now rattling his saber in the direction of Iran and North Korea.

There are nearly 22,000 known nuclear weapons in the world today, according to the Center for Defense Information. Most are in the hands of the United States (10,656) and Russia (10,000), with the balance scattered among five or six other countries.

The CDI's nuclear weapons count assumes that Israel has about 200 such weapons, but it lists nothing for Iran or North Korea. North Korea has boasted its ability to create nuclear weapons and Iran either has or soon will have the same capacity.

Even one nuclear weapon is too many, of course, but why should the world concern itself with what Iran or North Korea might develop, or with the threat posed by India and Pakistan when their nuclear stockpiles are minuscule compared to those of the U.S. and Russia? The answers given most often are that the U.S. can be trusted, that if it is imperialist its imperialism is benign, that it represents democracy and freedom, and that what Americans want above all else is to be liked. If the answers sound silly and self-deceiving it is only because they are.

Capitalism is anything but benign, and while it may seek to hide its rapacity behind a paternalistic smile it subscribes to the Leo Durocher theory that "nice guys finish last" in the competitive world. And if anything the world of globalized capitalism is becoming increasingly competitive.

Indeed, on June 18, after the International Atomic Energy Agency issued a report on the growth of Iran's nuclear industry and its concerns that Iran may be on the verge of producing nuclear weapons, President Bush said: "The international community must come together to make it clear to Iran that we will not tolerate construction of a nuclear weapon." What the president forgot to add, however, is that the United States has exempted itself from any such restriction. Indeed, it has been widely reported that the U.S. is giving serious thought to developing so-called low yield nuclear weapons for strategic purposes. As *Popular Science* reported in June:

"Two options for the new nuclear arsenal are under consideration. Both are based on the idea that a nuclear weapon directed at the earth would unleash powerful shock waves that, like an earthquake, would rip apart even solid rock, shredding their way to the most deeply embedded enemy. One choice is to upgrade an existing atomic bomb, such as the B61-11,...

"The other possible choice is more radical: to design an entirely new weapon called a mini-nuke,.... While the idea has been around for several decades, the mini-nuke got a boost in the recently completed Nuclear Posture Review, the first Defense Department analysis of U.S. nuclear capacities in 10 years...."

These "mini-nukes" would serve to counteract the capacity of potential adversaries to conceal their own weapons in impenetrable bunkers impervious to conventional "bunker busters." Ostensibly they are intended to defuse the capacity of "rogue states" to conceal and protect WMDs and to evade America's overwhelming military strength by posing a plausible nuclear threat to

discourage a U.S. attack.

But not everyone believes that the Bush administration's interest in developing new nuclear weapons stems from a "benign" interest in keeping the world safe against the designs of maniacal terrorists or the ambitions of petty tyrants. While the U.S. unquestionably is the world's military superpower, its economic domination is threatened by emerging competitors such as China and the European Union. As the historian Eric Hobsbawm summed it up in *The Guardian* in June:

"...The collapse of the Soviet Union left the U.S. as the only superpower. The sudden emergence of a ruthless, antagonistic flaunting of U.S. power is hard to understand, all the more so since it fits neither with long-tested imperial policies nor the interests of the U.S. economy. But patently a public assertion of global supremacy by military force is what is in the minds of the people at present dominating policy making in Washington."

Why Mr. Hobsbawm finds it hard to understand is itself hard to understand, particularly when he adds that, "with the exception of its superiority in hi-tech weaponry, the U.S. is relying on diminishing assets. Its economy forms a diminishing share of the global economy, vulnerable in the short as well as long run."

The U.S. war on Iraq, Hobsbawm continued, was not all about oil. "Iraq...happened to have oil," he said, "but the war was really an exercise in showing international power."

Hobsbawm also expressed dismay that "U.S. policy weakens all the alternative arrangements, formal and informal, for keeping order," as if American capitalism was not primarily interested in maintaining its dominant position within those "arrangements," or without them if necessary.

In Hobsbawm's opinion, "Bush's existing international policy is not a particularly rational one for U.S. imperial interests—and certainly not for the interests of U.S. capitalism. Hence the divisions of opinion within the U.S. government."

There is plenty here that betrays the sad naiveté we referred to at the outset. Nonetheless, it is sufficient to give all thinking people something to mull over. It suggests that American capitalism is losing its grip as the world's dominant economic power, and it is determined to save itself or to take us all down with it. That may not appear "rational" to those who may think that capitalism cares about being rational. What capitalism needs is markets and sources of raw materials. What it needs is strategic advantage to maintain its access to these things indispensable to its survival. What is not rational is to believe anything else.

To repeat: The greatest threat to the world today is neither environmental destruction nor nuclear proliferation. These can be stopped, reversed and eliminated, but only if society is reconstituted on an entirely new and (we'll say it) *rational* foundation—*socialism*.

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CALIFORNIA

OAKLAND

Discussion Meeting—Section San Francisco will hold a discussion meeting on Saturday, July 19, from 4-6:30 p.m., at the Rockridge Public Library, 5366 College St. (corner of College & Manila Sts.), Oakland. Moderator: F. Prince. For more information please call 408-280-7266.

OHIO

Cleveland

Slavic Village Harvest Festival—Readers and their friends are invited to visit Section Cleveland's literature stand at the Slavic Village Harvest Festival, Fleet Ave and East 57th, Cleveland, on Saturday, Aug. 23, from 1-9 p.m., and on Sunday, Aug. 24, from 12 noon to 9 p.m.

Columbus

Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings at the Columbus Main Library, 96 S. Grant (at Oak Street), Columbus, on Sunday, July 13 (Conference Room 1), and on Sunday, Aug. 17 (Conference Room 2). Meetings begin at 1 p.m. For more information please call 440-237-7933.

Independence

Discussion Meetings—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings at the Days Inn, 5555 Brecksville Rd., (just south of R17-Granger Rd.), Independence, on Sunday, July 27, and on Sunday, Aug. 31. Meetings begin at 1:30 p.m. Light refreshments served. For more information please call 440-237-7933.

OREGON

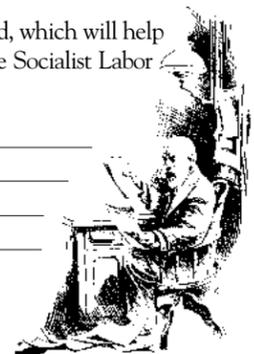
Portland

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

TEXAS

Houston

Discussion Meetings—Section Houston holds discussion meetings the last Saturday of the month at the Houston Public Library, Franklin Branch, 6440 W. Belfort, southwest Houston. The time of the meetings varies. Those interested please call 281-838-0008, e-mail houstonslp@ev1.net or visit the section's Web site at <http://houstonslp.tripod.com>.



...SLP Successes

(Continued from page 1)

capitalism will wake workers up to the fact that socialism is the only solution to those problems. The SLP will be here and ready for them when they do."

Well, we hope that the SLP will be here. We are working hard to make sure it is. But nothing is certain in this uncertain world of capitalism, and work as we may we know that our efforts alone are not enough. We need the help of everyone who understands the program and principles of the SLP, including their financial help.

The SLP is still struggling to overcome a financial crisis that our readers and supporters have been combating for many months. Publication of this issue of *The People* is evidence of how successful that struggle has been to now. But we are far from being out of the woods. Please use the coupon on page 6 to show that you are still in the fight.

...Unemployment

(Continued from page 1)

talists is unlikely to create many of them.

Capitalists invest in expanding productive capacity when they believe doing so provides an opportunity for making profits through the exploitation of wage labor. Yet in April U.S. industry was operating at only 74.4 percent of capacity, the lowest level since June 1983. With that much idle capacity capitalists are not too likely to invest their windfall in expanding productive capacity. Moreover, when they do smell an opportunity for profits, their investments will be in labor-displacing technology that will increase profits by intensifying the exploitation of the working class.

In May 9.0 million workers were unemployed and the unemployment rate moved up to 6.1 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). That's the highest number of unemployed workers in almost 10 years, and the first time the unemployment rate has reached 6.1 percent since July 1994. Moreover, the real situation for workers is far grimmer than even these figures indicate. Since March 2001 more than 4 million adults have dropped out of the labor force, as capitalist statisticians put it. That means they are neither employed nor "actively" looking for work. While a handful may have won lottery jackpots, most have stopped looking for work because they are convinced no jobs exist. That is not an unreasonable conviction. As of April, there were 2.2 million fewer manufacturing jobs than there had been 33 months earlier.

In fact, the BLS actually publishes a statistic indicating workers "not in the labor force" but who "want a job now." In April, there were 4.42 million such workers. Adding those to the number of the officially unemployed, the number of jobless workers rose to at least 13.2 million, and the actual unemployment rate was at least 8.7 percent. Moreover, there are millions more working only part time who want full-time work.

In short, U.S. capitalism is again in the throes of one of its periodic "crises of overproduction." Because of exploitation, workers receive in wages only a fraction of the value they create. They cannot buy back all the commodities they have produced. Despite the extravagant consumption of capitalists, waste, exports, the expense of maintaining the political state and investment in new production, markets periodically become glutted, inventories balloon, production is cut back and unemployment soars as capitalism slumps into another economic crisis.

Capitalist politicians have no solutions. Their job is to maintain capitalism, the very cause of the problems.

The only genuine alternative is socialism. When the economy is socially owned and production is democratically planned and managed by the useful producers to meet social needs there will be no more exploitation—the producers will receive the full social value of what they produce. The "crises of overproduction" and unemployment will disappear along with capitalism.

FUNDS

(April 5–June 20)

Daniel De Leon Sesquicentennial Fund

Joan Davis \$1,200; \$1,000 each Joseph B. McCabe, Kay Lewis (In memory of Grace Hamilton); \$500 each Anonymous, Irene Schelin, Jack Radov, Section Cleveland; Anonymous \$315; Ruth Hall \$200; Bernard M. Presser \$139.50; Section Cook County, Ill., \$115.64; Daniel Worcester \$107; \$100 each Dale Birum (In memory of Joseph C. Toth), George & Gloria Grove Olman (In memory of Grace Hamilton), George S. Taylor, Jane Grove Martin (In memory of Grace Hamilton), Marie Grove (In memory of Grace Hamilton), Raymond Solomon, Roy K. Nelson, Michael Preston; Marjorie Mills \$84; \$80 each Andrew Northall, Jim Plant; \$50 each Anonymous (In memory of John R. Aiken), D.G. Mackintosh, Harvey K. Fuller, Phyllis Emerson, Ron Harner, Walter Vojnov (In memory of Grace May Hamilton); Paul D. Lawrence \$44.

\$30 each Brian McGray (In memory of Grace Hamilton), Daniel Brian Lazarus, Frank Burdua, Robert Jensen; Aune Gustafson \$28; George E. Gray \$26; \$25 each John & Mary Brlas (In memory of Comrade Arla A. Albaugh), Rafael Falcón, Rosemary Gale; Severino Majkus \$23.40; \$20 each Chris Camacho, O.K. Rutschman, Thomas Harvey; Tanner Zahrt \$18; Richard Wilson \$16.50; \$15 each Harry Buskirk, Maurice Greb, R.E. Wolf, Steve Littleton; Marshall G. Soura \$12; Robert & Mandarsita Brothers \$11; \$10 each Carl Ringo, Charles Gerhard, Eric Eisenstein, Harry Gibson, Henry Coretz, Jim Buffaloe, Richard Mack, Robert Erlitz, Robert M. Garavel, Steve Coffey; Sid Rasmussen \$8.50; D. Borowsky \$8; Thomas C. McEvoy \$7; \$5 each Joseph Bellon, Kenneth Frisbie, Ralph Rieder, Sylvia Kuzminski, Werner Louderback.

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SLP Sustainer Fund

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Total: \$1,826.00

Press Security Fund

Joseph L. Bregni \$200; \$100 each Nick York (In memory of my sister, Mrs. Helen Nicholas), Smoly Fink; Socialist Labor Party of Canada \$85.60; Matthew Rinaldi \$25; Raymond Solomon \$15; F. Beedle \$10.

Total: \$535.60

SLP Emergency Fund

R.E. Langh \$25; R. Hofem \$20.

Total: \$45.00

Socialist Labor Party

Financial Summary

(April-May 2003)

Bank Balance (March 31)	\$87,506.82
Expenses (April-May)	19,849.46
Income (April-May)	12,489.03
Bank Balances (May 31)	80,146.39
Deficit 2003 (as of May 31)	1,081.48

...The Pledge

(Continued from page 8)

Constitution, they did not invoke God to make things work. They set up a system of laws that they considered best suited for the times. And they wisely established an amendment clause, not thinking their work would last for all time, thus providing the basis for a peaceful and legal transition to a new system. Workers need to assert their right to do so and emulate the Founders in regarding religion as a private, not a political, concern.

Earth Day vs. May Day:
Two Views of the Future
 By Robert Bills
 8 pages—50¢ (postpaid)
New York Labor News • P.O. Box 218
Mountain View, CA • 94042-0218

...De Leon Editorial

(Continued from page 4)

While he cries it down, he defends its cause. He would hold off an inevitable result, and, like the cringing, fawning, governing class with which he affiliates, he would still use the results of capitalism, and would so restrict them that many more, and much more tyrannous masters would be given to the working class. It may not be amiss to express the machine question in theological language. The machine is unlike man. It was not "conceived in sin." It "fell" because of the company into whose hands it was placed. Its "redemption" can only be accomplished by taking it out of those hands, and placing it in the hands of the people who use the machine.

Crosby overlooks all the real points in the

matter, and he tries to argue onto safe ground by holding up a few of the effects of "expansion." Those effects of expansion are only the effects of capitalism, and in order to do away with them, it is necessary to do away with capitalism. That is the mission of the Socialist Labor Party, and Crosby is miles from the conflict when he joins in the anti-imperialistic kite flying.

*Ernest Howard Crosby (1856–1907) was a reformer and president of the Anti-Imperialist League of New York. The leaflet quoted by De Leon was reprinted from the October 1900 issue of the *American Federationist*, where it appeared under the title of "Imperialism and Labor." Crosby also was an ardent admirer and biographer of Leo Tolstoy, the Russian pacifist and author of *War and Peace*.

Slavery in Brazil

By B.G.

It will come as a shock to many to learn that slavery is still being widely practiced in one of the countries of the Americas despite the fact that it was abolished by that country in 1888. Although Brazil was tardy in joining the anti-slavery movement in the Western Hemisphere, its abolition of that social blight in 1888 has proven to be no hindrance to the capitalists within its borders who have found ready means, right down to today, to flout a law that interferes with their profits.

Owners of mines, ranches and logging operations have continued to profit by luring poor, trusting and usually illiterate peasants into employment with promises of high wages and favorable benefits. Once the recruits are at the workplace, the owners refuse to abide by their financial promises and keep the workers as forced laborers, carefully guarded by hired gunmen. The workers, without adequate means to pay for their upkeep, food and housing, become victims of ongoing debts that they cannot repay.

Reporter Larry Rohter noted a report by the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil "that at any given moment at least 25,000 Brazilian workers are held in debt slavery, most of them in remote areas of the Amazon jungle." (*The New York Times*, March 14)

Eduardo Vorandas, the federal prosecutor who currently has a number of ranchers under prosecution for slavery, has said, "Slavery remains a severe social and economic problem in this country, the result of pitiful people without food or land being duped by false promises and of government policies that have not made the eradication of servitude a priority." (*The New York Times*, March 14)

Laws intended to be beneficial to these workers have in the past been flouted by the business interests. The government, in a number of instances, has been successful in forcing these criminal capitalists to pay back wages to their



Catholic Worker/CPF/LNS

enslaved workers, but it has been far less successful in prosecuting court cases against them. Original charges often languish because of lack of interest by prosecutors or because judges who favor business interests make the cases disappear.

Brazil's previous president, Fernando Hen-

rique Cardoso, began his term of office in 1995 by announcing "a national effort to truly comply with the law" abolishing slavery. More than 5,000 of these enslaved workers were freed in the following seven years. But apathetic inspectors, prosecutors and judges made the ongoing process difficult, as did determined ranch owners

who simply recruited and enslaved newer workers after their other slaves had been freed by the government.

Brazil's new president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who was a former labor leader, has now determined to seek a constitutional amendment that would permit the government to seize slave-employing businesses and all their assets and award them to the former enslaved workers.

President da Silva knows that in the past the errant capitalists could bribe officials from the lowest inspector or cop all the way up the political ladder to mayors and members of Congress. Perhaps he can get his new law through Congress, despite the fact that the money that once greased the hands of politicians will undoubtedly be gushing forth to them again from greedy capitalists who do not want government or anyone else interfering with their business interests.

Even if the law does go into effect, there predictably will be a struggle in the future between a well-meaning president and the capitalist interests that will be seeking their own benefit and not that of their workers.

In this 21st century that there would still be slave labor anywhere in a supposedly advanced country just emphasizes the criminal nature of capitalism. Its unending and insatiable drive for profits continue to take precedence over any impulse toward humanitarianism on the part of a beneficent political leader.

The Pledge and the Founders

By Paul D. Lawrence

The constitutionality of the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is headed to the Supreme Court. It is remarkable there is any controversy for the U.S. Constitution is clear. Its sole reference to a god occurs in Article VII, viz., "in the year of our Lord," that is, in the date. An alternative date, "and of the Independence of the United States of America," is provided. In short, if the Founders intended to found a Christian nation, they kept their intent secret.

Religion is referred to elsewhere in the Constitution. In Article VI it is written that "no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any office or public Trust under the United States." When the Constitution was written, almost, if not all, states in Europe had established religions. Those who did not belong to the established church were subject to numerous political disabilities, from outright persecution to being barred from any position in government—from presumably dogcatcher to king. The framers of the Constitution said this was not to happen in the United States. Officeholders and government employees could hold any faith or none, and it was none of the government's business.

The better known First Amendment provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." Like the no-religious-test provision, this established political neutrality in respect to religion. The government is neither to foster religion nor discourage it; the government is to leave religion alone and allow people to practice religion as they, not the government,

see fit. Likewise, religion should leave government alone and not urge the adoption of policies justifiable only on the basis of religious tenets.

Why did the Founders so act? One answer is provided by James Madison, who is considered the Father of the Constitution and shepherded the Bill of Rights through the First Congress.

'...if the Founders intended to found a Christian nation, they kept their intent secret.'

He wrote: "Ecclesiastical establishments tend to great ignorance and corruption, all of which facilitate the execution of mischievous projects."

By and large, using the word "God" is a religious utterance. The absence of "God" in the Constitution, along with Article VI and the First Amendment, indicates the Founders intended to keep God out of politics.

Unfortunately, the erosion of this laudable principle began almost at once. Washington added "so help me God" to his oath of office although those words are *not* in the Constitution. "In God We Trust" first appeared on currency in 1864. It had

been suggested in 1861 when many thought the Union could not trust in its armies to defeat the Confederate traitors. The words appeared off and on until 1955, when Congress mandated they be placed on all currency. Congress added "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 and adopted "In God We Trust" as the official U.S. motto in 1956.

In other words, "God" crept into official political utterances in times of uncertainty and distress—at the beginning of the Republic when it was uncertain such an undertaking could succeed, during the Civil War and during the Cold War. U.S. Rep. Calvin Dooley (D-Calif.) states that the ruling that the words "under God" are unconstitutional "comes at a particularly bad time. Our nation needs to band together around a common set of values and beliefs now more than ever."

Marx's famous youthful observation on religion needs to be quoted in context: "Religious distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and also the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people." We need note that opium was then widely used medicinally as a painkiller.

Dragging God into politics solves none of the problems facing the working class. As a political analgesic, it masks the need for workers' class-consciousness and self-organization to abolish the outmoded capitalist system and establish socialism. When the Founders established the

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