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Nathan Karp Dies

Nathan Karp, a former national secretary of the Socialist Labor Party whose frequent contributions to these columns made his name familiar to every regular reader of *The People*, died on April 22.

In a general letter to the membership of the SLP on April 25, the national secretary wrote:

"It is with an aching heart and a shaking hand that I write to inform you that Comrade Nathan Karp has died. The end came on Saturday, April 22, three days short of his 85th birthday. The immediate cause of death was a massive heart attack.

"If there are words to express the depth of my sorrow and the sense of loss that I am feeling at this moment they completely elude me. I have searched for them for hours and have concluded that it is useless to go on trying. Every SLP man and woman who knew Comrade Karp will appreciate this feeling—this utter incapacity to give ex-

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Nathan Karp at work on the SLP's archives in 1990.

'Hot' U.S. Economy No Boon to Workers

The federal government released its April employment report on May 5. Headlines and newscasts in the major media cheered its contents on May 6. *The New York Times* trumpeted the news that morning: "U.S. Jobless Rate Declines to 3.9%; Lowest Since 1970."

"There was little evidence in the employment numbers...that the nine-year-old expansion, the longest period of growth in America's history, might be weakening," the *Times* said.

The way media cheerleaders touted the April employment figures, one might get the idea that the overwhelming majority in U.S. society must be just as excited about the numbers as they were. But it's a safe bet that these puff pieces for capitalism turned up precious few workers who because of such figures are jumping for joy. Despite all the chest-beating by capitalism's defenders, things are not easy for millions of workers.

Even at 3.9 percent unemployment, the Bureau of Labor Statistics still officially classifies nearly 10 million workers as unemployed. In addition, over 3 million workers who need and want full-time work are stuck in part-time jobs, and 1.2 million more are classified as "marginally attached." The government does not count these workers as unemployed, even though most of them need and want jobs. That represents a massive amount of human suffering.

According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), a growing number of the new jobs we hear so much about pay poverty-level wages—wages so low that a full-time worker cannot lift a family of four above the federal poverty line.

Median real wages declined between 1973 and 1996, the EPI said. Although real wages have risen somewhat since

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1997, the median real wage for U.S. workers today is still below what it was in 1973 when the decline began.

"The typical married-couple family worked 247 more hours (over six weeks) per year in 1996 than in 1989, despite an 8 percent growth in the economy's productive capacity over the same period," an EPI press release said. The same EPI source observes that, "Jobs have grown more insecure in the 1990s as the share of workers in 'long-term jobs' (those lasting at least 10 years) fell from 41 percent in 1979 to 35.4 percent in 1996, with the worst deterioration having taken place since the late 1980s."

That is the real story about the state of the economy as far as workers are concerned. Yet this is the same economy that within just a week or two after the May release of Labor Department

data was being described as perhaps too "hot" for its own good.

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan was at press time expected to ratchet up interest rates again, to slow investment and thus employment. At 3.9 percent, Greenspan considers unemployment too low to be healthy for the capitalist system. Mr. Greenspan knows that supply and demand figure into the price of a commodity, and that the labor power of workers is a commodity like any other. He knows that if there are too few unemployed, wages will rise and profits must fall.

Indeed, with what Karl Marx called the "reserve army" of unemployed labor reported to be at its lowest levels in a generation, there is not much room for further economic expansion without sparking a cutthroat competition

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'Justice for Janitors' Goals: Were They Set High Enough?

By Ken Boettcher

As the last issue of *The People* went to press, the Service Employees International Union was working to expand its Los Angeles strike of 8,500 members of Local 1877 to SEIU locals in several other major U.S. cities. Now, weeks later, the SEIU's so-called Justice for Janitors 2000 Campaign is coming to a close as several of those strikes, including the one in Los Angeles, have ended in what the union has trumpeted as "victories."

In city after city, new labor agreements between the janitors and the building maintenance contractors who are their employers provide wage increases and, in some cases, benefit improvements.

But are these increases really "victories"?

There is no question that the workers deserve victories. They labor under often adverse conditions at hard work usually considered demeaning in existing society. In many cases, they fought long and hard to become part of a union. They courageously voted to go on strike despite the increased hardships involved,

and then conducted themselves with courage and honor when they were out on the picket lines. When the new labor contracts expire three years from now, however, most will still be making less than \$10 an hour. They will still be struggling to make ends meet and still suffering because that is about all that \$10 an hour can guarantee these days. That is enough to put these "victories" into perspective and show how hollow they are for the janitors.

For the SEIU officialdom, however, there is no doubt that the new contracts constitute victories. After all, the stated goal of the Justice for Janitors 2000 campaign was simply "to improve wages and working conditions in the janitorial industry," as one SEIU Web document put it. The union met that goal—and by meeting it locked the janitors into near-starvation-level wages for the life of the new contracts.

Indeed, a primary *unstated* goal of any business union was also met—that being to prove to the employers that the SEIU can still deliver labor peace at not too high a price. As a report on the SEIU's Web site about the Los An-

geles strike put it, "The three-week strike forged new relationships between the janitors' union and many of Los Angeles' top building owners." No wonder. The SEIU labor merchandisers have in this year's negotiations shown that they can deliver the promise of three years of labor peace at a very agreeable price per head—and not just in Los Angeles. Here are the actual figures:

- In downtown Chicago, the strike had barely gotten under way when employers agreed that 5,500 SEIU janitors should receive a pay increase of \$1.10 spread over the three-year life of the new contract.

- In suburban Chicago, where employers resisted for two weeks, 4,500 SEIU janitors will receive family health care coverage and an increase of \$1.35 per hour over three years. Three long, hard years from now they will reach the glorious wage of \$8.00 per hour.

- Fifteen thousand New York City SEIU members who work for residential building service contractors will receive pay increases of 3.5 percent per year over three years, improved health

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Legacy of Colonialism Must Be Buried by Socialism

By B.B.

Consider the current turmoil among such former colonies of European capitalism as Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Angola, Uganda, Congo, Pakistan and India, etc. Consider the AIDS epidemic sweeping Africa, the starvation and the poverty that are debilitating scores of "Third World" countries. It is a world immersed in misery, and much of that misery is the direct legacy of five centuries of colonial rule by European capital.

The notion popularly propagated is that with the end of colonial military occupation and direct political rule in Africa, Asia and elsewhere, free nations have emerged to pick up where they left off centuries ago, just as though colonial subjugation had never existed. Stephen Slemon, a professor of English at the University of Alberta, writing in *The Dallas Morning News*

of March 11, challenged this view.

The occasion for Slemon's article was Portugal's quiet departure from Macau on Dec. 20, 1999, and the tiny enclave's return to Chinese control after 442 years of Portuguese occupation. Portugal's departure from the last piece of Asian real estate physically occupied and directly administered by a European country ostensibly signaled the end of European colonial domination of Asia.

Prof. Slemon took exception to this view on several counts, among them the scars left behind by "colonialism's devastation of indigenous populations across the globe, especially in Australasia and the Americas." But no formerly colonial country can be excepted.

Prof. Slemon asserted that the political map would be different today had indigenous populations been successful in resisting colonial rule. Had Europe's former con-

trol of 80 percent of the world's land mass been averted, "the assumption that profit-taking should dominate almost every facet of contemporary social life might not be so easily maintained" in the emerging countries of Africa, Asia and elsewhere around the globe.

In summing up, Slemon noted that a United Nations survey found "that of the 4.4 billion people in developing countries, three-fifths are without basic sanitation, one-third without safe drinking water, one-quarter without adequate housing, and one-fifth beyond the reach of health services. We cannot know what these numbers would look like had the European empires never happened. But it is hard to imagine that they could possibly look worse."

Apart from a reference to Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, having coined the phrase "neocolonialism" to describe the

continuation of Western imperialism through economic domination, Prof. Slemon fails to underscore the continuation of capitalist imperialism. He naively calls for "genuine economic redistribution across the global village," which will "require radical changes in participation and decision making."

Imperialist domination continues through the control of the economic and political life of countries throughout the "Third World" by Western corporations and financial institutions. It will indeed require "radical changes in participation and decision making" to free those countries from the ongoing economic and cultural rape that brings nothing to the emerging countries but misery and devastation. Revolutionary changes are needed—not the changes that topple and swap one gang of militarist thugs for another, as has happened in so many cases, but changes that will emancipate the oppressed masses of Asia, Africa and Latin America from capitalism itself.

If the emerging countries of the former colonial world are to resolve their problems free from the interference and exploitation of capitalist imperialism, that interference and exploitation must be dealt with at its source. That implies a socialist reconstruction of the industrialized nations, and particularly of the United States. That change can only be the one advocated in the pages of *The People*. Only a Socialist Industrial Union government, democratically based and in full control of the phenomenal industrial and agricultural capacity of America, can end imperialism and offer the comprehensive help and support the previously dominated countries need to extract themselves from the legacy of capitalist colonialism and imperialism.

Letters to the People

The Death of Amadou Diallo (1)

Thank you very much for your thoughtful discussion of issues which make this terroristic murder of an immigrant worker of African descent such a painful and stark indication of the time in which we must live.

Thandabantu Iverson
Indiana University
Northwest Labor Studies

The Death of Amadou Diallo (2)

I believe in capitalism, albeit capitalism where everybody has the chance of being a capitalist no matter your race or ethnic background. Unfortunately, police states have never and will never operate this way. It certainly would seem from our most recent events (this incident and the Cuban boy) that we are now approaching the status of just that, a police state. I am in a quandry as to what to hope and pray for, much less what to do. Disturbing, deeply disturbing to me.

Name Withheld

Elián's Tormentors

The vociferous Cuban-American community in Miami are remnants of the capitalist class of Cuba during the Batista regime. I have learned from friends who lived and worked in "Little Havana" in Miami what happened when Fidel Castro began his campaign for power. They turned whatever assets they could lay their hands on into jewelry (the easiest and most convenient way of carrying anything valuable out of the country). Established in this country, they became flag-waving American patriots and egged on by the cold war campaign they spewed their hatred of the dictator who had deprived them of their property. None of these people nor the Miami politicians care a hoot whether the child, Elián, belongs with the Miami relatives or his father. They are just making hay and spilling invectives because maybe, just maybe, if they can cause Castro's downfall they could, once more, assume their roles as exploiters of the workers of Cuba.

Louis Lipcon
Mountain View, Calif.

Elián and Politics

Given the facts, most workers could have arrived at the correct solution within five minutes. Unfortunately, however, capitalist politics doesn't allow for the

simplicity of common sense. The local political power of the anti-Castro faction in Miami must be weighed, the politicians in Washington must decide what side of the fence to ride and the White House must examine what to do in view of our relations with Castro. Questions concerning the judgment of those who granted temporary custody of the boy to fanatic anti-Castro activists, or why the media allowed the rights of a father to be equated with the rights of a great uncle living in another country, may be amusing to ponder and, doubtless, will give rise to many poorly written books. But the most significant lesson to be learned from this sorry episode is the way capitalism will be handling many types of civil and non-civil disobedience in the future. Attorney General Reno was afraid of another Waco. But the fear was that if Washington doesn't act with enough force and conviction, the probability of having to face more such situations increases. Washington need not worry on that score. Capitalism will create many more opportunities in the future. And this is just the type of response we should expect from capitalism. Candidates Bush and Gore promptly voiced their disappointment of the use of force. Well spoken, by people not yet charged with the responsibility of slowing the decay of our outdated system.

Jeff Chern
Plano, Tex.

Commune of 1871

I was going to let my subscription lapse, but was pleasantly surprised by the articles on the Commune of 1871. [March issue] I had read little bits about it before, but hadn't run across much of the story until you printed it. *Thank you!* I don't consider myself a Socialist, but I do like reading your paper.

Lucky Jean
Cave Junction, Ore.

Disillusioned World Federalist

Fifty years ago this month I joined World Federalists. Their slogan was World Peace Through World Law! Very idealistic, huh? The only trouble has been the following: They presume "world law" to be based on capitalist world or global law that profits capitalists around the world, and this will bring "world peace"!?!?

Of course, we already have this "law" in operation, and the world has never been in more turmoil or more doomed to devastation, if not extinction! The Battle of Seattle gave me hope, and the young people today may yet free themselves.

Lester Saefke
Minneapolis, Minn.

Pinochet

Your March 2000 issue is the best ever, especially Diane Secor's article on Pinochet. It seems to be a good rule of thumb that any enemy of mankind is a friend of the U.S.A.

Nick Poluhoff
Jersey City, N.J.

Our Pleasure

Thank you for continuing to send us this fine publication.

P. Thompson Lee
Periodicals Manager
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About Letters

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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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Health Care 'Safety Net' Crumbling in California

By Bruce Cozzini

"Open door" health providers, hospitals and clinics that accept patients regardless of their ability to pay, are on the verge of collapse in California. As the health care of last resort for millions of working-class families, their demise means the end of one of the "safety nets" that capitalism has made available to workers to maintain social stability. But as medical care has increasingly been treated as a commodity, these facilities, along with the rest of the health care system, are becoming too expensive for workers to afford.

An April 30 editorial in the *San Jose Mercury News* notes that more and more workers, particularly in California, are not covered by health insurance by their employers. More than 7 million Californians do not have health insurance. "The vast majority are in families with at least one employed worker; two-thirds are poor or near poverty; they are predominantly young, and mostly minority," the *Mercury News* said.

Even with the booming high-tech economy, most job growth is in fields with relatively low wages and few benefits. Workers in these jobs make too much to be eligible for Medi-Cal health benefits, but too little to pay for health insurance. For such workers nonprofit and public health care facilities are the only option.

The currently fashionable capitalist doctrine of expecting the "marketplace" to solve the health care problem works particularly poorly here because, as the *Mercury News* points out, "...The law of supply and demand works only when the people with the demand for a service also have the money to pay for it." In fact, the "marketplace" has served to siphon off patients covered by state Medi-Cal and federal money to managed-care providers, leaving the "open door" providers with the uninsured and the Medi-Cal patients with chronic illnesses and needing special services, and with no subsidies that used to pay for their care.

Increasingly, medical centers in poor communities or neighborhoods are being forced to close. One such case is the planned closing in May of the Alviso Health Center in Alviso, an isolated, mostly Latino section of San Jose on the southern margin of the San Francisco Bay.

According to an April 28 news report in

the same newspaper, the clinic serves about 3,000 patients a year, many uninsured, some eligible for Medi-Cal or Medicare. Run by the nonprofit Gardner Family Health Network and partly subsidized by Santa Clara County, the clinic is about \$1 million in debt, and closing the clinic will save the corporation about \$500,000. The \$700,000 yearly cost of running the clinic cannot be sustained when, as noted by Gardner CEO Reymundo Espinoza, almost half of the patients are uninsured. To make things worse, in the last two years, the number of uninsured patients served by Alviso and the other five Gardner clinics has increased by 14 percent while the number of patients covered by Medicare and Medi-Cal has declined by about 19 percent.

Patients were stunned by the news. They like the clinic because of its convenience and personal touch. Many patients bring homemade tamales and home-grown vegetables to "pay" for the health care they typically cannot afford. For some, like a mother of five mentioned in the *Mercury News* report, transportation will be a problem. With no car, she and her family face a lengthy bus trip across town to the nearest clinic that will serve them. Some patients felt betrayed by news of the shutdown. As one woman said, "Why didn't we have a meeting about this? We could have started a petition to keep the clinic open. There's no justice!"

Clinic workers were also saddened but not surprised by news of the shutdown. Most of the 16 health care workers should be reassigned to other clinics, but as many



LNS/cpf

as five may be laid off.

Another poor, largely Latino community, Watsonville, had to sell its hospital that had been running as a nonprofit community hospital for 103 years to a for-profit company in 1998. In the years before the sale the hospital had gone through rounds of layoffs and budget-cutting that were attributed to reductions in reimbursement rates from insurance companies and government health care programs. In the process of the sale, the company, Community Health Systems (CHS), assured the community that the poor would continue to be served. Now, less than two years later, as reported by the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* on April 27, the new owners find them-

selves in a similar situation, cutting staff by 20 to 25 workers.

The cuts are not the result of too many staff. In fact, nurses and others with the hospital have complained privately about short staffing. According to Barry Schneider, the hospital's CEO, the hospital is losing business because of delays in recruiting physicians for specialty referrals, and because income in some service areas has fallen short of projected revenues. "Spending and staffing were planned according to certain goals," a hospital spokesperson said. "If we don't meet those goals, we have to reduce the staffing and level of spending to the real volumes."

Conspicuously absent from the report is any mention of how the cuts will affect service to the community. It can readily be surmised that CHS is finding that there is little money to be made in a small and relatively poor community and is protecting its profits at the expense of workers.

The *San Jose Mercury News* editorial correctly observes that the current system of subsidized care is insufficient to begin with and is subject to being siphoned off by managed-care HMOs. It also notes that incentives offered to employers to provide insurance have not worked and that tax credits suggested by presidential candidates wouldn't come close to the costs of good insurance. "Universal health coverage has proven to be a political impossibility," it concluded. Inconsistently, it then followed its conclusion with its own wish list of futile reforms.

In fact, it is a political and economic impossibility to provide the level of health care that workers at all economic levels require as long as health care is a commodity that must be sold for a profit in the capitalist marketplace. As long as protecting the interests of drug companies, HMOs, for-profit hospitals and other "health care" organizations is the goal, the health and well-being of workers will suffer.

New York Data Shows Increased Poverty Among Educated Workers

By B.G.

We hear much about the booming economy and the good times Americans are having now that the wealth is supposedly being spread around. Unfortunately for that view, an analysis of census data for New York City is revealing a steep rise in poverty rates among even stable and well-educated families.

On April 19, the nonprofit Community Service Society released its report on the trend toward growing poverty levels among families with children in New York City. In comparing the years 1996-1998 with the most favorable years for "prosperity" in the late 1980s, the poverty trend for these families was upward, or 32.3 percent compared with 29.3 percent for the 1980s.

Along with the growing gap between rich and poor, the survey revealed some additional trends. Higher education was no insulation against poverty. There was a rise in poverty rates of 10.6 percent for families whose heads had some college education. For families headed by a college graduate, the rate of poverty increased by 4 percent.

Even broken families and welfare families seemed to fare somewhat better in the statistics than intact, two-parent working families. For families with one worker present, poverty rose by 8.2 percent, while it fell 6.9 percent for families with no worker present. But for a two-parent family, poverty rose by 6.7 percentage points while it declined by 5.1 percentage points for families with a woman as head.

For those who are working regularly, the jobs are often in the low-wage category of \$6-\$8 an hour—scarcely enough to

support a family.

Mark Levitan, the author of the Community Service Society study, saw the emergence of a "new poor" as those with more education—a group long thought to be insulated against poverty—slipped onto the treadmill of insecurity and low-paying jobs.

Marcia Van Wagner, chief economist for New York State Comptroller H. Carl McCall, noted, "At the low end, you have lots of jobs and declining real income. At the high end, you have not that many jobs, but increases in inflation-adjusted earnings." The highest rewards therefore go to the very few who have the best paying jobs.

The Fiscal Policy Institute had caught this trend in New York City in a study released last year. There was an increase of 60 percent in working poor families in New York in the 1990s, whereas nationwide the increase was 24 percent. This disparity cannot be blamed on a low-paid immigration population, for the percentage of immigrants in New York City is about the same as in the United States as a whole.

What is happening is really no news at all to knowledgeable Socialists. A decline in living standards for college-trained workers and other "professionals" is inevitable under capitalism. It is inevitable for the reason that the labor power of a college-trained worker is as much a commodity to be bought and sold on the labor market as that of any other worker. As the supply of college-trained workers increases in relation to capitalism's demand for them, their price—their wages or salaries—will be forced down. The effects of this trend have already been felt among

doctors, nurses and other highly trained professionals. "The interests of the 'white collar' class are identical with the interests of the manual proletariat in shops," Daniel De Leon once observed. "The circumstance that the 'white collar' division of the proletariat 'imagine they will some day draw big salaries' does not draw any economic class difference between them and the 'collarless' proletariat. Among the latter also there are those who 'imagine' miracles and live in a fool's paradise. The identical economic process, that disenchant the latter and schools it in classconsciousness, will render the same service to the former."

Wherever you have capitalism you have an inequitable society. A few rise to the top, but many more must be kept at the bottom to make businesses more "profitable" and to support those on the top rungs of society. Occasionally, well-meaning organizations come out with these statistical studies that reveal the precarious, treadmill existence of large sectors of working-class society. These studies merely reiterate what Socialists have been saying all along, that our capitalist society is unjust. Mark Levitan commented on his study. "The problem is, we are telling people to climb out of poverty on a downward-moving escalator." True enough, but neither Levitan nor his study offers any solution. Socialism does. It is time to scrap the outmoded "downward-moving escalator" and exchange it for the upward-moving escalator of economic justice, equality and socialist economic democracy.

the People

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Yucca Mountain

Add the voice of the Western Shoshone Nation to those raised against the opening of the proposed federal facility for the "long term" storage of high-level nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain, Nev. For the Shoshones, whose struggle against the plan was recently highlighted in *The New York Times*, the mountain itself and the land around it are sacred.

But that's not the only reason the Shoshones are against the plan. "The Shoshones say," reports the *Times*, "they are opposed to the transportation of the nation's nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain—from 80 sites in 43 states—not only to protect the land, but also because such a transport is inherently dangerous. "That transport would put 50 million people in contact with the most toxic poison," said a Shoshone spokesman. "I think they should keep the waste where they made it," he continued. "Why move it on trucks, risking accidents and airborne particles?"

The Shoshones have a point. But then so do the people who live near existing temporary waste sites who don't want the horrible stuff anywhere near them either.

Fifty-five years into the nuclear age U.S. capitalism still has no way of safely disposing of the growing mountain of nuclear waste generated annually. The only "solutions" to the problem of nuclear waste this social system has been able to come up with—dumping or storing it—are merely a continuation of the problem.

In either case what will exist at the end of a few decades is sure to resemble the environmental catastrophes that already exist or are waiting to unfold at major radioactive waste dump sites that have long been full. Transporting nuclear wastes through the densely populated ar-

reas that lie along many of the proposed routes has its own set of unspeakably horrific risks.

This is the best capitalism can do: substitute one set of risks for another, while its privately owned industries and services keep pouring out more of their radioactive poisons and other profit-motivated toxic byproducts—including high-level wastes from nuclear weapons production and research and nuclear power plants, for which there is today not even a single open dump site.

The problem of nuclear waste is not one that capitalism is able to solve. Efforts to do so under this system above all else attest to the truth of the socialist contention that every time capitalism "solves" a problem it creates a new one. It will take a fundamentally different type of social and economic system to address the problem rationally—a socialist society, freed from what Marx once referred to as "the furies of private interest" that now control technology and its uses.

In a sane society, in which the welfare of the population would be paramount, there would be no conflicts over the development and use of nuclear processes or materials. There would be and could be no debates over whether or not nuclear wastes are a menace, or where, when and how to dispose of them safely. Any doubts related to those questions would be resolved in favor of the health and safety of the populace.

Capitalism, however, does not make for a sane society. The growing nuclear waste problem and the serious threat it poses should provide the working class with one more incentive—and a powerful one—to hasten the abolition of capitalism.

—K.B.

25 50 75 100 years ago

The ILGWU Is Big Business

(Weekly People, June 3, 1950)

Reports in the capitalist press on the golden jubilee convention of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, AFL, echoed the investment bankers' realization...that labor fakerism is big business.

Some \$250,000 of the dues paid by the union's 423,000 members was earmarked for the celebration of the jubilee convention, which opened in Atlantic City on May 23. This sum, the *New York World-Telegram and Sun* pointed out, is larger than the yearly incomes of many unions, but to the ILGWU "it is a drop in the bucket."

The international union collects \$2,500,000 yearly in per capita dues. It has \$15 million in general funds and \$9 million in real estate. Its vacation fund totals \$44 million, and its various health, welfare and retirement funds total an estimated \$80 million. Other millions are held by the international's locals and joint boards. A proposed severance-pay fund, financed by employer contributions as a means of preventing garment manufacturers from reorganizing their businesses when profits go down, is expected to add more millions to the union's "kitty." In addition, the union is training new organizers and officers for a recruiting drive aimed at the 100,000 unorganized garment workers who are potential duespayers.

The ILGWU held its first convention in

1900. It was then a so-called socialist union. Members were required to pledge "to elevate the moral and material condition of the working class." David Dubinsky, the union's present president, and a large number of other ILGWU leaders, were active members of the Socialist Party.

The "New Deal" and the Wagner Act squeezed all the "socialism" out of the ILGWU and converted it to the acceptance of capitalism. They also converted the garment manufacturers to unionism. The manufacturers found out that the union was the one stabilizing force in a cutthroat business. The manufacturers' acceptance of unionism (after decades of fighting it) regulated competition and secured the union's cooperation in disciplining the workers.

Today, the garment manufacturers are the greatest defenders of the ILGWU. And they should be! If they prove to be inefficient in the exploitation of their workers the union steps in and shows them how to get more production from fewer workers.

Shanghaiing

(The People, June 17, 1900)

That philanthropic institution, the Pennsylvania Railroad, has adopted a new method of securing labor, a method worthy of the old press-gang system by which England formerly recruited her naval and military service.

(Continued on page 6)

A De Leon Editorial

Why the SLP Dropped Reforms

It realized that reforms were props of capitalism, as witness Theodore Roosevelt's use of the SLP's castoff reform planks in his 1912 "Bull Moose" party platform.

Thanks for the Reminder

(Daily People, Aug. 27, 1912)

The New York Times of the 12th of this month announces that "many planks of the Bull Moose platform are only a paraphrase of pledges of the Socialist Labor Party of 1896."

The *Times* deserves thanks for the discovery and reminder.

1896 was the last presidential year in which the SLP held a national convention clogged, hampered and otherwise fettered by the navel string of the curiosity named the Socialistic Labor Party. The fact manifested itself in the long list of "immediate demands"—a regular "appendix" to the anatomy of the party, and fit only to produce appendicitis—a political inflammation that is now afflicting the Socialist Party. The navel string being cut at the 1900 National Convention of the SLP, the "appendix" was removed and thrown into the political garbage can.

Whatever else a political party of bona fide socialism may be compelled to do in other countries, where the economic and political clime is different from ours—in America the program of a party of bona fide socialism has no concern with aught but the abolition of wage slavery. Here capitalism is confronted with socialism, no practical vestige of feudalism being left between the two, and to be removed by the latter. In such a country as America, "immediate demands" or "reforms" are a source of unqualified, and of double danger to the socialist movement.

In the first place, the "reforms" are a danger in that they operate as bait. A bait-recruited body may be useful in many, especially financial, ways to the holders of the other end of the line; to the socialist movement such a body is mainly injurious. It is a center from which radiates not one of the virtues that the social revolution requires for its triumph. The thing is a gelatinous bulk—big in mass,

spineless in energy.

In the second place, such "reforms" in an American socialist program are a danger to the movement in that the reforms demanded—they being used as props, and the props belonging to bourgeois society—some of them, even all, may at any time be pulled away by the foe, and the structure reared upon them must then collapse.

It is at its own peril that the social revolutionary movement of America will take a single "plank" that fits in bourgeois society. Insofar as such a plank is good, it needs no entry in the socialist program. Socialism is impliedly a safeguard to all the great achievements of the civilizations that precede it. All such "planks" are self-understood. Insofar as such "planks" are not self-understood they are harmful, in that they are props to prop up the ills of the bourgeois social system.

Conscious of all this, the SLP made in 1900 the politico-surgical operation that cut off and cast off the "immediate demands," and today the party stands forth with a program that proclaims both the economics and the sociology of the great pending revolution—the abolition of wage slavery, and also of the social structure of the same, the political state—a proclamation not a note of which is muffled by any "immediate demands," or aught else that can be stolen by the bourgeois foe.

By recalling the fact that Roosevelt merely paraphrased the SLP reform demands of 1896, the *Times* underscores the deep gulf that separates the SLP of 1896 from the SLP of 1912; and the paper simultaneously underscores the shortness of the bridge that bridges the Roosevelt party and the Socialist Party—Bullmoosia and Kangarusia.*

*"Bullmoosia" refers to Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive, or "Bull Moose," Party, which used the bull moose as its emblem. Roosevelt had

(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.

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.

The SLP's Break With Reform

June 2000 is the 100th anniversary of the Socialist Labor Party's formal decision to break completely with reform politics and to adopt a national platform calling for the summary end of capitalism. That decision was reached at the Party's 10th National Convention, held in New York City, June 2-8, 1900. The anniversary marks one of the most important events in the history of the American socialist movement.

The SLP's 'Immediate Demands'

The SLP platform in effect before 1900 was a revolutionary platform. Originally adopted at the Seventh National Convention in 1889, and reaffirmed with only minor modifications by the Eighth and Ninth National Conventions in 1893 and 1896, respectively, it was based on the class struggle and called upon the workers to organize on a classconscious basis to "put a summary end to that barbarous [class] struggle by the abolition of classes," to restore "the land and all the means of production, transportation and distribution to the people as a collective body," and to substitute "the cooperative commonwealth for the present state of planless production, industrial war and social disorder..."

But appended to this demand for the "summary" ending of capitalism were a number of resolutions or "immediate demands" that, in the words of Daniel De Leon at the 1900 convention, "notified the freaks and capitalists through what doors they could get into our citadel and knock us out."

The SLP platform of 1896, which is reprinted below, had almost as many reform planks as the so-called Socialist, Communist and other reform parties have in their platforms of today. However, even the SLP of 1896 was far ahead of the sincere members of the reformist parties of today. The SLP of 1896 recognized the class struggle and acted according to its logic. It accepted Marxism, and applied



Daniel De Leon

Marxian principles to the developing social scene. It was in process of developing out of its embryonic stage into the stage required by the revolutionary needs of the working class.

The delegates to the 10th National Convention of the SLP knew that they had met for the transaction of extraordinary business. In his opening address, National Secretary Henry Kuhn declared:

"We have now come to the time when we must cut our lines clear and sharp...if we are going to make any progress at all..."

De Leon, as chairman of the opening session, repeated the warning that important business was ahead. "The Socialist Labor Party," he said, "is not simply four years older than it was four years ago; it is fully 40 years older. During the last four years [since the 1896 convention], not only from within but from without, a logical evolution has taken place, revolutionary in



Henry Kuhn

many features. Political parties...are not things of air. They develop as everything else of that nature. During the last four years, on the outside, economic and political developments have gone on in a way that clears the field in America as it clears it in no other country under the sun..."

These developments had gone on in obedience to the economic development of capitalism, continued De Leon, and they were reflected in the evolution that had occurred within the SLP between 1896 and 1900. That evolution led to a sharpening of the distinction between reform and revolution and clarified the issues facing the American working class.

Break With the Labor Fakers

At its 1896 convention, the SLP had formally endorsed the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance (ST&LA). This endorsement, as Kuhn reminded the delegates to

the 1900 convention, was equivalent "to a declaration of war to the knife" against the labor fakers of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Knights of Labor (KofL). The reason for the endorsement was given in the 1896 convention's resolution endorsing the ST&LA. "The policy of 'propitiating' the leaders of these organizations has been tried long enough by the progressive movement," the convention declared, "and is to a great extent responsible for the power which these leaders have wielded in the protection of capitalism and the selling out of the workers." The resolution added: "No organization of labor can accomplish anything for the workers that does not proceed from the principle that an irrepressible conflict rages between the capitalist class and the working class, a conflict that can only be settled by the total overthrow of the former and the establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth."

The SLP's decision to endorse the ST&LA was more than a declaration of war against the labor fakers of the AFL and KofL. It was also a smoking out of the anti-Socialists within the SLP.

The anti-Socialists were the later creators of the so-called Socialist Party. When in the SLP they were also organized in and around the Volkszeitung Corporation, the publisher of a German-language newspaper that fought the Marxian development of the SLP. This *Volkszeitung* element had an interest in the preservation of the capitalist unions and of capitalism.

The SLP's declaration of war against the AFL, and its movement away from the idea of reform, endangered the economic interests of the *Volkszeitung* and the members of the paper's corporation. The corporation's controlling members depended upon their contacts with the AFL unions and with various social organizations, sick-benefit societies, etc., for their incomes. Some held jobs in AFL unions; others of the legal fraternity depended upon fees from unions.

The Anti-Socialists Smoked Out

The 1896 act of endorsing the ST&LA, which was carried by a convention vote of 71 to 6, brought this situation to a head. Following the presidential election of 1896, the opponents of the ST&LA inaugurated a policy of keeping the party in turmoil in an attempt to force it to reverse its stand on unionism. From 1896 to 1899, the *Volkszeitung* Corporation fought the declared policy of the SLP, in defiance of its own constitutional requirement that it must support the "principles and tactics" of the SLP. The *Volkszeitung* Corporation tried to capture the SLP's National Executive Committee and to return the party to its policy of tolerating the AFL and of trying to "bore from within the unions" with the intention of capturing them. Direct assaults on the party's stand on unionism were soon followed by direct assaults on Marxian economics.

Failing in all this, the corporation used physical force in July 1899 in an unsuccessful attempt to take over the offices of the party and *The People*. And, failing in this, the corporation attempted to "fire" De Leon as editor of *The People*. This attempt was rebuffed by the party and the capitalist courts, to which the *Volkszeitung* Corporation appealed. The 1900 National Convention of the SLP followed soon after the party's victory over the disrupters.

(In 1909, long after the anti-Socialists had flocked out of the SLP, and when they were comfortably ensconced as the leaders of the so-called Socialist Party, the *Volkszeitung* stated: "Yes; the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* went so far in its defense of the American Federation of Labor that it accepted the risk of a split in the socialist movement in America in order to prevent a split in the trade union movement of the land, and to keep up the American Federa-

The 1896 SLP National Platform

When the Socialist Labor Party held its 10th National Convention 100 years ago this month it adopted a National Platform that was identical to the one it had adopted at its Ninth National Convention in 1896 in every respect but one. The exception was the deletion of 21 Resolutions, or "immediate demands," that had been appended to the 1896 platform. It was a major decision that marked the SLP's final break with reformism and its emergence as an uncompromising party of revolutionary socialism. Here we reprint the 1896 platform in its entirety. Just above will be found a brief account of how the SLP came to the decision that it reached in June 1900.

Adopted by the 9th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party of America, July 4-10, 1896.

The Socialist Labor Party of the United States, in Convention assembled, reasserts the inalienable right of all men to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

With the founders of the American republic we hold that the purpose of government is to secure every citizen in the enjoyment of this right; but in the light of our social conditions we hold, furthermore, that no such right can be exercised under a system of economic inequality, essentially destructive of life, of liberty and of happiness.

With the founders of this republic we hold that the true theory of politics is that the machinery of government must be owned and controlled by the whole people;

but in the light of our industrial development we hold, furthermore, that the true theory of economics is that the machinery of production must likewise belong to the people in common.

To the obvious fact that our despotic system of economics is the direct opposite of our democratic system of politics, can plainly be traced the existence of a privileged class, the corruption of government by that class, the alienation of public property, public franchises and public functions to that class, and the abject dependence of the mightiest of nations upon that class.

Again, through the perversion of democracy to the ends of plutocracy, labor is robbed of the wealth which it alone produces, is denied the means of self-employment, and, by compulsory idleness in wage slavery, is even deprived of the necessities of life.

Human power and natural forces are thus wasted, that the plutocracy may rule.

Ignorance and misery, with all their concomitant evils, are perpetuated, that the people may be kept in bondage.

Science and invention are diverted from their humane purpose to the enslavement of women and children.

Against such a system the Socialist Labor Party once more enters its protest. Once more it reiterates its fundamental declaration that private property in the natural sources of production and in the instruments of labor is the obvious cause of all economic servitude and political dependence.

The time is fast coming, however, when, in the natural course of social evolution, this system, through the destructive action of its failures and crises on the one hand, and the constructive tendencies of its trusts and other capitalistic combinations on the other hand, shall have worked out its own downfall.

We, therefore, call upon the wage workers of the United States, and upon all other honest citizens, to organize under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party into a class-conscious body, aware of its rights and determined to conquer them by taking possession of the public powers; so that, held together by an indomitable spirit of solidarity under the most trying conditions of the present class struggle, we may put a summary end to that barbarous struggle by the abolition of classes, the restoration of the land and of all the means of production, transportation and distribution to the people as a collective body, and the substitution of the Co-operative Commonwealth for the present state of planless production, industrial war and social disorder; a commonwealth in which every worker shall have the free exercise and full benefit of his faculties, multiplied by all the modern factors of civilization.

RESOLUTIONS.

With a view to immediate improvement in the condition of labor we present the following demands:

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued on page 7)

... 'Hot' U.S. Economy

(Continued from page 1)

among capitalists seeking to buy up what's left on the labor market.

That competition among the capitalist consumers of labor power does much to explain Greenspan's concern over so-called wage inflation and his recurrent threats to increase interest rates on borrowed capital. *The Wall Street Journal* has even worried that Greenspan might wait too long before using monetary policy to hold the price of labor power in check.

"The price for such a miscalculation would be huge," the *Journal* said of his possibly acting too late. "It would mean that interest rates would have to go higher to snuff out inflation than if the Fed had stepped in sooner. A recession, not just moderated growth, might be needed to bring prices back in line."

The theory is that by increasing the price of money by boosting interest rates capitalists in need of capital will be less inclined to borrow to increase production, which, in turn, will dampen the demand for labor power, relieve some of the strain on the labor supply and thereby hold down the price of labor power.

The alternative that concerns *The Wall Street Journal* and other bourgeois analysts is that unrestrained continued expansion encouraged by low interest rates on borrowed capital would not only drain the labor market, push wages up and thereby press profits down, but also flood other markets with commodities having too few buyers. The result would not be the "recession" that the *Journal* seems willing to accept, but a full-fledged capitalist crisis of depression-level proportions.

Workers need none of this economy, hot or cold, "boom" or recession. There is only one real hope that workers can enjoy a life of economic security and abundance, of health, leisure and greater freedom than the world has ever known. That hope lies in their own understanding of the need for, and in their own efforts to build, a new social and economic system—a system in which the means of production will be the common property of all the people, operated not for profit but for human needs, under the democratic administration of the workers themselves.

The logic of workers organizing

to build such a system—a socialist system—grows more compelling by the day. But for socialism to be built, the facts and logic supporting the case for socialism must be disseminated ever wider among the working class. The necessary first step is education. If you, the reader, share our conclusion that socialism is the only solution to the problems afflicting the working class, you can be a part of that solution by helping to get the message of the Socialist Labor Party into more workers' hands.

—Ken Boettcher

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... Justice for Janitors 2000

(Continued from page 1)

and pension benefits and a training fund that will help them gain access to the Internet.

•In Los Angeles, Local 1877 members who work in suburban areas will receive a \$1.50 per hour increase over three years (in addition to health benefits and a 40-cent-an-hour raise they got in January). Downtown workers will receive an increase of \$1.90 per hour over three years. Both groups received a one-time \$500 bonus that won't begin to cover the wages they lost during the strike. The highest paid among them will have soared to the incredible heights of \$9.80 per hour three years from now.

•In Cleveland, SEIU janitors will receive 22–25 percent pay increases over three years, about

the same as in Los Angeles.

•Portland SEIU janitors, according to the SEIU's Web site, "secured" a citywide master contract with Portland building service contractors and won "significant pay increases." Significant to whom, one wonders?

•The SEIU strike in San Diego ended shortly before this issue of *The People* went to press, with an increase of 50 cents per hour in the first year of a three-year contract, 40 cents per hour in the second, and \$171 per month toward health insurance in the third. Even with these increases, in 2003 janitors in downtown San Diego will be earning only \$7.90 per hour.

The workers, of course, deserve every penny of these increases and more. They deserve, Socialists

say, the economic abundance and security that all workers deserve—something that requires the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism for them to get. What they got was, of course, nowhere near what they deserve.

What they got was what they can expect from a business union like the SEIU. Because it accepts the capitalist system of exploitation, it, like other such unions, cannot challenge capitalism. The SEIU, like other unions that support wage exploitation, merely want to horse trade with capitalists to keep their bureaucrats in the privileged positions to which they are accustomed. The labor power of the workers is the "horse" they trade.

... 100 Years Ago

(Continued from page 4)

Recently some trouble arose near Trenton, N.J., between the track laborers—mostly Italians—and the company. The men went on strike. The matter was kept out of the papers and was kept as quiet as possible. The officers of the road in New York were instructed to quietly gather as many unemployed as they could (but no Italians) on the representation that they were to go to

work in "Jersey." Some 80 men, secured by one officer on this understanding, were put on a train at Jersey City, and the car doors were locked.

On reaching the scene of the trouble, the men learned of the strike and at once refused to go to work. Threats and cajoleries having no effect, the company left them to shift for themselves while it endeavored to come to terms with the strikers. This exhibition

of solidarity on the part of the strikers came as a surprise to the company. The railroad officials' maxim: "In times of trouble, mix the nationalities" received a knockout blow.

For the past six months the capitalist press, Democratic and Republican, has been lauding to the skies the relief fund, the pension department and other "beneficial" schemes of the company. It can now add one more:

"The Pennsylvania Railroad Company, Department of Shanghaiing."

...the SLP Dropped Reform

(Continued from page 4)

split with the Republican Party, set up his own party and had himself nominated for president in 1912. His Bull Moose platform not only mimicked the SLP's platform of 1896, it provoked a howl from the reformist Socialist Party, which accused Roosevelt of "stealing its thunder." "Kangarusia"

refers to that element of the Socialist Party that belonged to the SLP until 1899. That element had tried unsuccessfully to take over the SLP by usurping the authority and attempting to depose the party's duly elected national officers. The term came from the kangaroo courts of the old West, which, though they had no real au-

thority under the law, dispensed "justice." The kangaroos of 1899 failed in their attempt to overthrow the SLP's national officers, but they succeeded in splitting the socialist movement. The minority of SLP members who followed them merged with Eugene V. Debs' Social Democratic Party to form the Socialist Party in 1901.

activities

Activities notices must be received by the Monday preceding the third Wednesday of the month.

OREGON

Portland

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ings every second Saturday of the month. Meetings are usually held at the Central Library, but the exact time varies. For more information please call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit our Web site at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>. The general public is invited.



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... Break With Reform

(Continued from page 5)

tion of Labor as the united body of American unionism.”)

10th National Convention

The 10th National Convention of the SLP in June 1900 met to deal with this situation and with the larger requirements of the social scene on the eve of the 20th century. By casting the reform planks out of its platform, the SLP proclaimed that there is but one social choice for the American working class: the choice between capitalism and socialism. The SLP has proclaimed this fact, with absolutely no concession to reformistic qualifications, for 100 years. So far the workers, as a mass, have not responded to the party's urging that they choose socialism. Instead, they have followed the lure of reforms offered by the reformist parties and the two major parties of capitalism. The result has been that the workers have been trapped into the acceptance of capitalism. Capitalism has “rewarded” them with continued and accelerated exploitation, two world wars, the continuing threat of a third, environmental degradation and “booms” that have brought only temporary relief from the hardships suffered during capitalism's “normal” periods and “depressions.”

By the standards of the would-

be reformers of capitalism, the SLP's policy of calling for socialism now has been a failure. The upholders of this viewpoint are heirs to the Socialist Party that was formed by the Volkszeitung elements of the SLP. These elements took as their “heritage” from the SLP the “boring from within” tactics discarded in 1896 and the reform planks junked in 1900. And they have since splintered off into a plethora of groups and organizations that have done as much or more to inhibit the growth of the socialist movement than capitalism's straightforward opposition to socialism.

In his opening address to the 10th National Convention of the SLP, National Secretary Kuhn voiced the determination of the loyal members when he declared: “The only safety lies, on the one hand, in the sharpest enunciation of our position on the proletarian class struggle, which will repel nondesigning elements of the middle class [that is, “do-gooders” who thought that they were Socialists], and, on the other hand, in constitutional provisions that will enable us to get rid, in short order, of a designing element that will come in undeterred by any declaration of ours for the purpose of ‘boring from within.’”

Its decision to drop all reform planks from the National Plat-

form of the SLP was important enough to make the party's 10th National Convention a turning point in working-class history. The line between reform and revolution was sharply marked by the act of getting rid of the reform planks. The *Daily People* was to supply daily proof of the wisdom of that act, and of the lack of wisdom in holding on to “immediate demands” in an age that called for revolution. It was to serve as the rallying point for a band of Socialists whose work is still being carried on by the present members of the Socialist Labor Party. And it was to be the vehicle for the launching of a new and great development in the science of socialism, the idea of Socialist Industrial Unionism as “the battering-ram with which to pound down the fortress of capitalism and the successor of the capitalist social structure itself.”

The SLP continues to reject the idea of reforming capitalism. It continues to follow the example of the revolutionists of 1776 who discovered, after trying “immediate demands,” that they could satisfy their social and economic wants only by instituting a new government, “laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”

... 1896 National Platform

(Continued from page 5)

1. Reduction of the hours of labor in proportion to the progress of production.

2. The United States to obtain possession of the mines, railroads, canals, telegraphs, telephones and all other means of public transportation and communication; the employees to operate the same co-operatively under control of the Federal government and to elect their own superior officers, but no employees shall be discharged for political reasons.

3. The municipalities to obtain possession of the local railroads, ferries, water works, gas works, electric plants and all industries requiring municipal franchises; the employees to operate the same co-operatively, under control of the municipal administration, and to elect their own superior officers, but no employees shall be discharged for political reasons.

4. The public lands to be declared inalienable. Revocation of all land grants to corporations or individuals, the conditions of which have not been complied with.

5. The United States to have the exclusive right to issue money.

6. Congressional legislation providing for the scientific management of forests and waterways, and prohibiting the waste of the natural resources of the country.

7. Inventions to be free to all; the inventors to be remunerated by the nation.

8. Progressive income tax and tax on inheritances; the smaller incomes to be exempt.

9. School education of all children under fourteen years of age to be compulsory, gratuitous and

accessible to all by public assistance in meals, clothing, books, etc., where necessary.

10. Repeal of all pauper, tramp, conspiracy and sumptuary laws. Unabridged right of combination.

11. Prohibition of the employment of children of school age and the employment of female labor in occupations detrimental to health or morality. Abolition of the convict labor contract system.

12. Employment of the unemployed by the public authorities (county, city, state and nation).

13. All wages to be paid in lawful money of the United States. Equalization of women's wages with those of men where equal service is performed.

14. Laws for the protection of life and limb in all occupations, and an efficient employers' liability law.

15. The people to have the right to propose laws and to vote upon all measures of importance, according to the referendum principle.

16. Abolition of the veto power of the Executive (national, state and municipal), wherever it exists.

17. Abolition of the United States Senate and all upper legislative chambers.

18. Municipal self-government.

19. Direct vote and secret ballots in all elections. Universal and equal right of suffrage without regard to color, creed or sex. Election days to be legal holidays. The principle of proportional representation to be introduced.

20. All public officers to be subject to recall by their respective constituencies.

21. Uniform civil and criminal law throughout the United States.

Administration of justice to be free of charge. Abolition of capital punishment.

Socialist Education Fund

The following contributions to the Socialist Education Fund were received after our May issue went to press. The additional contributions bring the proceeds to \$26,123.61.

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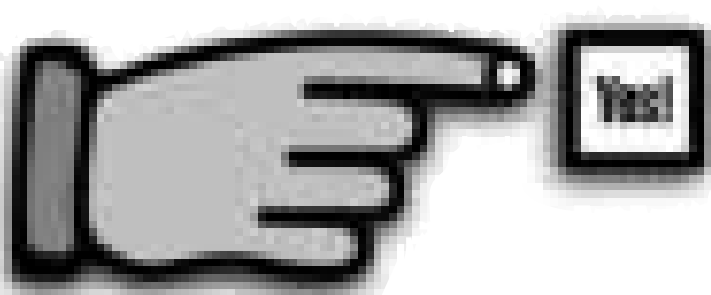
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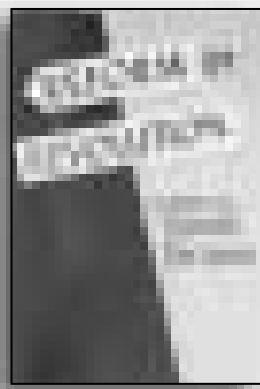
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End U.S. Navy's Target Practice on Vieques!

By Ken Boettcher

The Socialist Labor Party stands in unequivocal support of the demand of the people of Vieques and Puerto Rico for an immediate cessation to the bombing of Vieques by the U.S. Navy and an end to six decades of environmental ruination and politico-economic domination by the U.S. Navy.

Protesters effectively shut down the Navy's nearly 60-year-old firing range in April 1999, occupying it after a civilian security guard was killed by stray bombs. Last month, federal agents removed 224 protesters who had camped there over the last year. The Navy resumed bombing with dummy bombs on May 8—only three days after its roundup—despite reports that several demonstrators were still on the range.

Legally, the Navy has the right to resume bombing. A document agreeing to let the Navy resume limited training with dummy bombs was signed on Jan. 31 by President Clinton and Puerto Rico Gov. Pedro Rossello. The agreement also stipulates that a vote will be held—sometime between August 2000 and February 2002—allowing residents of Vieques to decide whether the Navy should leave by 2003.

But what is legal and what is right are not infrequently different things—something that was attested to on Feb. 21 when the largest demonstrations in Puerto Rico's

history brought as many as 150,000 people into the street to protest the Clinton-Rossello agreement. The 9,300 residents of Vieques and many of their fellow Puerto Ricans are understandably tired of ruling-class laws and agreements that continue the long-standing degradation of their tiny but beautiful island.

Dr. Neftalí García, a Puerto Rican environmentalist, in his work "Historical and



www.vieques-island.com

Natural Consequences of the U.S. Navy Presence in Vieques," reports that the Navy's practices have produced serious destruction of the island's "mangroves, lagoons, beaches, coconut groves and other natural resources."

This destruction is described in further detail by Rafael Cruz Pérez, a chemical engineer who studied the environmental effects of the artillery practice conducted in Vieques. Cruz, in a 1988 article for *Dimensión*, the magazine of the Association of Engineers and Surveyors of Puerto Rico, compared the bombing zone to a "battle-

field during the First World War, where the ground and a great part of the vegetation have been reduced to dust." Cruz notes that the area is filled with toxic waste from explosives and heavy metals used in ammunition and other ordnance and scrap metals used for target practice. Some of the tanks and other heavy equipment retired after the Persian Gulf War—including those with depleted uranium armor—have

reportedly been used as targets. Unexploded live bombs are no rare find on the range. Particulate air pollution and ground water contamination from the Navy's toxic wastes have been detected even in the third of the island to which civilians are restricted, and are taking a toxic toll on the people of Vieques. According to an article in *Civil Rights Journal* by Bernice Powell Jackson of the United Church for Christ, "The people of Vieques seem to have a much higher rate of cancer than...the people in Puerto Rico, only 18 miles away. Some studies seem to have shown a rate at

least 27 percent higher..."

The Navy's initial expropriation of two-thirds of the island led to the destruction of agriculture on the island. Unemployment routinely runs as high as 70 percent on an island that even transnational capital largely avoids. Not many companies have sought investments on an island that has for nearly 60 years typically undergone 220 days of bombardment every year. Despite promises of U.S. aid, there is still no high school or hospital on the island.

The Navy insists that it cannot do without the firing range, which affords it the opportunity of conducting simultaneous air, land and sea operations with live munitions. If that is true it only demonstrates that its interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the people of Vieques.

Indeed, any institution that depends for its survival on its ability to destroy is anti-social in character and ought to be dismantled. Ostensibly, the armed forces of the United States exist to defend the country—including the "Commonwealth" of Puerto Rico—against foreign invasion and, these days, to keep the peace wherever it is threatened.

Fact is, however, that militarism and militarist institutions, such as the U.S. Navy, are not meant to maintain the peace and defend freedom. They are meant to protect and defend the material interests that U.S. capitalism has in every nook and cranny of the globe. And as the ongoing pulverization of Vieques shows, the military will not hesitate to destroy lands that supposedly enjoy their protection if that is what is needed to fulfill their real mission of preparedness to defend the interests of their paymasters, the rapacious U.S. ruling class.

Puerto Rico and Vieques have "enjoyed" the "protection" of the U.S. Navy since they were stolen from their former Spanish colonial masters more than 100 years ago. In truth, however, the Navy and all militarist institutions of the political state are the greatest threat to the peace and security of the Puerto Rican working class and, for that matter, the working class of the United States itself.

The people of Vieques deserve an end to this atrocity committed upon them and their island, and they and tens of thousands of other Puerto Ricans are demanding an end to it. The Socialist Labor Party wholeheartedly sympathizes with that demand, but calls upon its working class to raise its sights and to take aim at what should be their target—the war-inciting capitalist system.

Resolution on Puerto Rico

Adopted by the 42nd National Convention (1995) of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

The Puerto Rican working class has been subject to decades of unrestrained plundering and imperialist exploitation by American capitalism. The colony has long suffered the humiliations of vassalage. Today over 85 percent of its economy is owned and controlled by U.S. banks and corporations. Aside from its continuing importance as a source of cheap labor power and as a market for U.S. goods, discoveries over the last two decades of copper, nickel and oil reserves valued in the billions have fortified U.S. imperialist determination to maintain a tight grip on the island.

Militarily, Puerto Rico serves U.S. capitalism as an important link in continued U.S. control over access to the Panama Canal; as a base of operations that facili-

tates U.S. military intervention in the Caribbean region and that intimidates other countries in the region; as a control center for naval activities and defense of the U.S. merchant marine and coastline; and as a location for military training and the testing of U.S. weaponry. U.S. military presence on the island amounts to a vast occupation force whose influence pervades Puerto Rican society. Politically, the U.S. ruling class has sought to frustrate and dilute what it sees as the aspirations of the Puerto Rican people for self-determination with the ploy of "commonwealth" status and proposals for statehood that would merely produce a different form of U.S. capitalist control of the Puerto Rican economy and likely intensify the exploitation of an already suffering Puerto Rican working class.

The oppressive character of U.S. domi-

nation is evident in the misery and poverty of the Puerto Rican people. Mass unemployment and low wages have put a majority of the population under the official poverty line. Squalor and wretchedness reveal themselves everywhere in the country save for U.S. capitalism's citadels of trade, tourism and militarism. Therefore let this convention reaffirm: (1) That the SLP gives its unqualified support to the right of the Puerto Rican people to independence, and (2) That the common class enemy of both the American and Puerto Rican working classes is the capitalist class of the United States and of every other nation, and (3) That the working class of the United States is urged to support the right of Puerto Ricans to national independence by opposing any attempt by the government of the United States to retard or combat their aspirations to self-determination.

...Nathan Karp Dies

(Continued from page 1)

pression to emotions so deeply embedded in my being that they reduce all words to hollow and meaningless echoes."

Nat Karp was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on April 25, 1915. His mother, Sara, was a worker at the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist factory in 1911, but fortuitously escaped the disastrous fire that took the lives of more than 200 young women that year. She and her husband, Daniel, were both members of the SLP.

Nat Karp was a clothing cutter by trade and for many years a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. He joined the SLP in 1935, and within a few years was elected to the Subcommittee of the party's National Executive Committee.

He was the SLP's candidate for United States senator from New York in 1952, for

governor of New York in 1953 and for mayor of New York City in 1954.

In 1963, he appeared before a Senate subcommittee to defend the "equal time" provision of the Federal Communications Act. His articles in defense of the provision were printed by *TV Guide* and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

The membership of the SLP elected Karp as national secretary in 1969 to fill out the unexpired term of his predecessor. He was elected to a full term of four years in 1972 and to a second term in 1976. In 1980, he was elected financial secretary.

He was the author of several SLP publications, including *Unionism: Fraudulent or Genuine* and *Crises in America: a Revolution Overdue, The SLP and the Unions* and *Early Efforts at Socialist Unity*. After retiring from SLP office in 1983, he remained

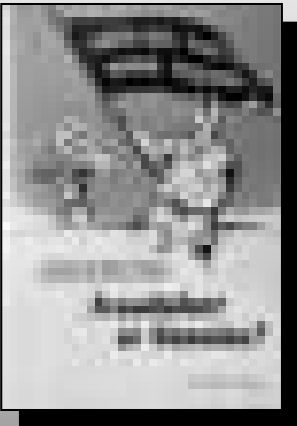
with the headquarters staff and was a frequent contributor of articles to *The People*.

Karp is survived by his wife and comrade of 63 years, Anne Karp, their daughter Diane, two sons, Alan and Stanley, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The SLP will hold a memorial meeting to celebrate the life and achievements of Nathan Karp in the A.J. Toppers Room on the 21st floor of the Oakland Marriott City Center Hotel starting at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 4. Readers of *The People* and all friends and supporters of the SLP are cordially invited to attend.

Readers who cannot attend the meeting may wish to contribute to the Nathan Karp Memorial Fund by using the coupon on page 6.

The People will pay its final tribute to Comrade Karp in our July issue.



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