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HMO Exploits Katrina Victims To Weaken Strike

There were not many of them, probably less than a dozen, and they weren't there very long. There could have been more of them, perhaps thousands, but two things have worked to prevent it. One is that capitalists are not looking to hire many workers these days, and those that could hire enough to make even a small dent in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina often do their hiring farther from home than the farthest flung evacuee from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. The other is the unions, or what pass for unions, which swapped the class struggle for "good relations" with "corporate America" long, long ago—so long ago that the number of people who might remember when they at least gave lip-service to the class struggle must be fewer than the dozen we have in mind.

The dozen or so people we have in mind were among the tens of thousands of working-class men and women that Hurricane Katrina scattered far and wide across the country in search of safety, shelter and succor. They happened to end up in the San Francisco Bay Area, destitute, stripped of their possessions and undoubtedly feeling more than a little desperate.

Some workers on strike against three San Francisco hospitals do not believe that the dozen or so evacuees knew about the strike. "My heart goes out to them. They're suffering. We're suffering." That's how one of the 800 workers on strike at three San Francisco hospitals put it. "They're using them because it's convenient," she told a reporter from the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

"They" is Sutter Health, a Sacramento-based outfit describing itself as "a family of not-for-profit hospitals and physician organizations that share resources and expertise to advance health care quality."

There are, however, some things that Sutter doesn't like to share. One is information, the other money. So, it was not too surprising that a spokesperson for one of Sutter's three San Francisco hospitals tried to make it appear that the "family" was just trying to lend a helping hand to a few of Katrina's hapless victims. "We learned they were Katrina victims through word of mouth," he said. "Our staff is hearing what an ordeal they've been through."

The spokesperson did not say whose "mouth" the "family" heard it from. It wasn't Huffmaster Inc., even though its website posts the following helpful message:

"If you have been displaced or lost your job due to Katrina's devastation, we invite you to click on the employment link below and apply for one of the many jobs we have available."

No, it likely was one of two other strike-

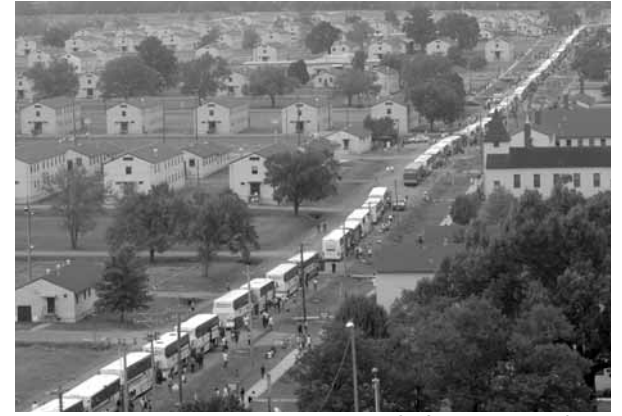
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Gulf Coast 'Reconstruction' Still Lacks Unified Plan

The public record is now crystal clear. This summer, hundreds of thousands of poor and working poor in New Orleans and across southern Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama were deserted by authorities at all levels in their worst time of need to face the fury of Hurricane Katrina. Weeks later when Hurricane Rita blew ashore, hundreds of thousands of mostly working-class residents of Louisiana and Texas suffered somewhat less catastrophic effects thanks to the only marginally less criminal "planning" by the officials of capitalist government. Over 1,300 Gulf Coast hurricane victims paid for official incompetence with their lives.

When the going got rough during one of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history, the tough-talking, office-holding adherents of "the market" as the panacea for society's problems had precious little to offer the victims of Katrina for almost a week—and only chaotic assistance since. Their rabid aversion to any meaningful social planning that might even incidentally restrict the freedom of their capitalist-class sponsors made the double whammy of hurricanes Katrina and Rita far worse than might have been the case if the workers themselves collectively owned the economy and democratically operated it for the benefit of all.

To be sure, as *The Washington Post* reported on Sept. 15, President Bush "vowed from the heart of the Hurricane Katrina disaster zone...to



U.S. Government Photo

Hundreds of buses disgorge thousands of Hurricane Katrina evacuees at Fort Chaffee, Ark., National Guard Post. Up to a million displaced citizens are still waiting for a reconstruction plan.

rebuild [New Orleans] and the rest of the Gulf Coast with 'one of the largest reconstruction efforts the world has ever seen.'

But Bush has—more than a month later—offered little in the way of concrete plans or schedules. He has merely promised a cornucopia of "free enterprise" potions and conservative elixirs to address the vast problem of reconstructing the Gulf Coast's cities and towns and the lives of several hundred thousand residents torn asunder in the tragedy.

In fact, his potions pale in comparison to the task. Grants of \$5,000 were promised to help

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A Greater Shame Than Hurricane Katrina Response

By Michael James

The Village Voice is America's largest "alternative" weekly newspaper. The Sept. 7-13 issue carries a large photo of a New Orleans evacuee sitting on a curb on a bridge, holding her head in her hands in despair, her worldly belongings in a supermarket shopping cart beside her. The caption reads "American Shame."

The story that accompanies the cover photo is entitled "My Flood of Tears: Shame for My City, Shame for My Country." The writer, Anya Kamenetz, grew up in New Orleans: "The people who have suffered the worst, the people who died for a lack of basic compassion, are my neighbors." She correctly identifies the contextual forces that set the stage for Katrina: "being poor, being black, having no other options, no way out...." She identifies the wide range of emotions she experienced as the disaster unfolded as "fear, rage, anxiety and grief." Then she concludes: "I am ashamed to be an American."

It is indeed shameful: the suffering, the death, the neglect, the calculated government cost

reductions that guaranteed the levees would eventually give way and permit the poor to be swallowed. Rescue efforts, forced by circumstances, served as capitalist-class public relations and propaganda campaigns, designed to obscure the reality of decades of neglect, inequality and injustice.

Americans should be ashamed. However, there is something even more shameful than the economic and logistical abandonment of the New Orleans poor. The truly shameful thing about America is the lack of widespread revolutionary classconsciousness. Our corporate, criminal class enriches itself at home and abroad, diverting social wealth away from schools, libraries, health care and levees to pay for war, while the working class slumbers in a deep political sleep. The working class continues to believe that capitalism can be the foundation for a just, humane and democratic society. The working class, told by corporate pundits that socialism is dead, has no vision of an alternative to capitalism. A servile

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'Democratic Prerogatives... May Strangle Capitalism'

By Michael James

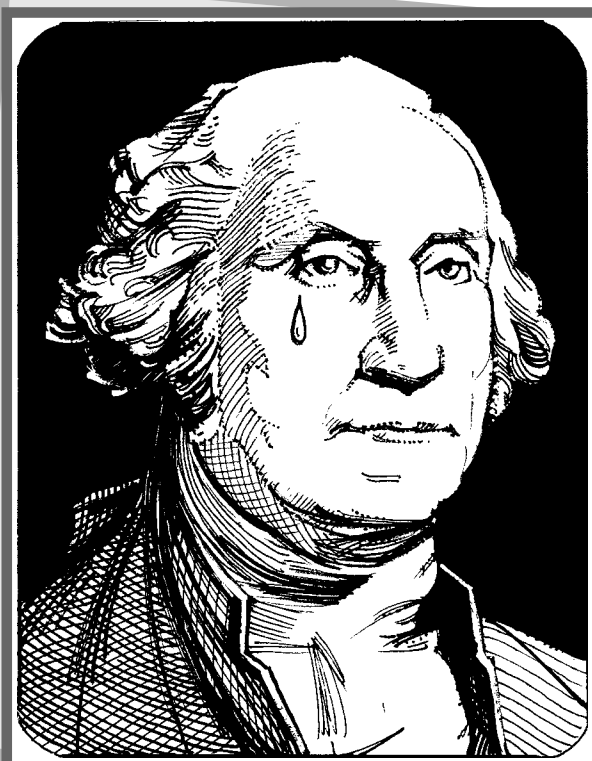
The Oct. 3 issue of *Newsweek* has an editorial with a candid and intriguing title: "Capitalism Vs. Democracy." The article did double-duty when it also appeared in the Sept. 28 issue of *The Washington Post*. It is not often that two such corporate rags as *Newsweek* and the *Post* both to mention or discuss capitalism. Corporate ideology just smugly assumes the legitimacy of capitalism.

The two articles, being identical, naturally had the same author—Robert J. Samuelson, who admitted "the uneasy relationship between capitalism and democracy." He conceded that there are "deep conflicts" between the two, and actually cautioned readers against too much democracy: "If democratic prerogatives are overused, they may strangle capitalism."

Exactly. In other words, real democracy is bad for business. This is why capitalist America perpetuates the illusion of democracy. Genuine democracy would be a material and economic democracy, with all citizens having access to the social wealth of society, such as education, health care, secure and meaningful employment, and housing. Look "democracy" up in *Webster's* and you will see that "equality" is always part of the definition. In reality, however, "inequality" is probably the word

that best defines capitalist America.

Samuelson, as a corporate propagandist, did an astonishing thing. He revealed the truth. He confessed, "Capitalism...and democracy need each other" because democracy "cushions capi-



AB CAP for The People

talism's injustices and, thereby, anchors public support."

Well, there it is. Capitalism needs the illusion of democracy to conceal the criminality of an economic system designed to enrich the few at the expense of society and the environment.

Corporate news and entertainment, government spokespersons and public school curricula all maintain this illusion of democracy. It is dredged up in talk of the Founding Fathers, the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, the right to vote, entrepreneurship, and other star-spangled, flag-waving, chamber-of-commerce freedoms which really don't have much meaning in a society chronically plagued by poverty, crime, inequality, injustice and war.

Samuelson revealed some truths but he was wrong in saying that capitalism and democracy need each other. Capitalism needs the illusion of democracy as a veneer of legitimacy and respectability. However, democracy does not need capitalism. Democracy is much more compatible with a genuine, classless, socialist society. It is similar to the fact that capitalists need workers but workers do not need capitalists.

The real point for working-class readers is that capitalism and democracy are not the same things. Capitalism has taken democracy hostage, using it as a shield, much like a criminal who takes a hostage and hides behind that hostage.

Anyone who claims to be in favor of democracy should wake up to the fact that democracy in America is a hostage of capitalism. Fight for democracy. Join the SLP and help create a sane, democratic, socialist society.

'Associates' or Workers?

By Michael Wenskunas

A letter to the editor that appeared in one of our local newspapers recently adds to an ongoing exchange between Wal-Mart friends and foes. I suppose it's part of the larger United Food and Commercial Workers' effort to "organize" Wal-Mart "associates." The writer of this particular letter stated that she is not a "worker" but an "associate." I can only wonder what in her mind the difference is. When she leaves for her shift, does she say, "Bye, I'm going to associate now"? Does she tell people where she "associates" as opposed to where she works? She seems to be a victim in the effort to demon-ize, confuse and divide workers through reframing the language used to describe our wage-slave condition. I also see this in a local group that calls itself the "young professionals network." I suppose it's another tactic of stratifying and misleading workers to keep them divided and deluded into thinking they are something other than workers.

It's almost mind boggling to think that all the blood, sweat and lives that have gone into everything ever produced through "work" now appears to have been done by



"associating," at least in the Wal-Mart dictionary.

While the strategy of playing word games strips workers of their identity and enables companies like Wal-Mart to increase their profits, the reality remains: work is work, and it is *workers* who do it, regardless of the label put on them.

Socialists must continue and intensify their efforts to remove the illusions that divide workers.

directory

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Truth Also a Victim Of Hurricane Katrina

By Ken Boettcher

Truth was another victim of Hurricane Katrina. The capitalist news media were full of lurid reports of rapes, murders and other violence in the storm's wake, ostensibly committed by folks involved in looting, many of whom had black faces. The resultant hysteria served to justify a military response to the crisis—a response that may have far-reaching consequences.

Turns out that most of the reports were either exaggerations or completely untrue, and news sources—from the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* to *The New York Times*—have found it necessary to publicly acknowledge the inaccuracy of their initial reports, but, of course, without the front-page placement or sensationalized headlines they gave to their original reports.

There is no question that widespread looting occurred after Katrina. With no help on the way, but with hundreds of thousands forced out of their homes, lacking clean water, food and many other necessities, hundreds broke into local stores to forage for the necessities of life, sometimes with the help of police. Some desperate people took more than necessities, raising the ire of those who value property over human life.

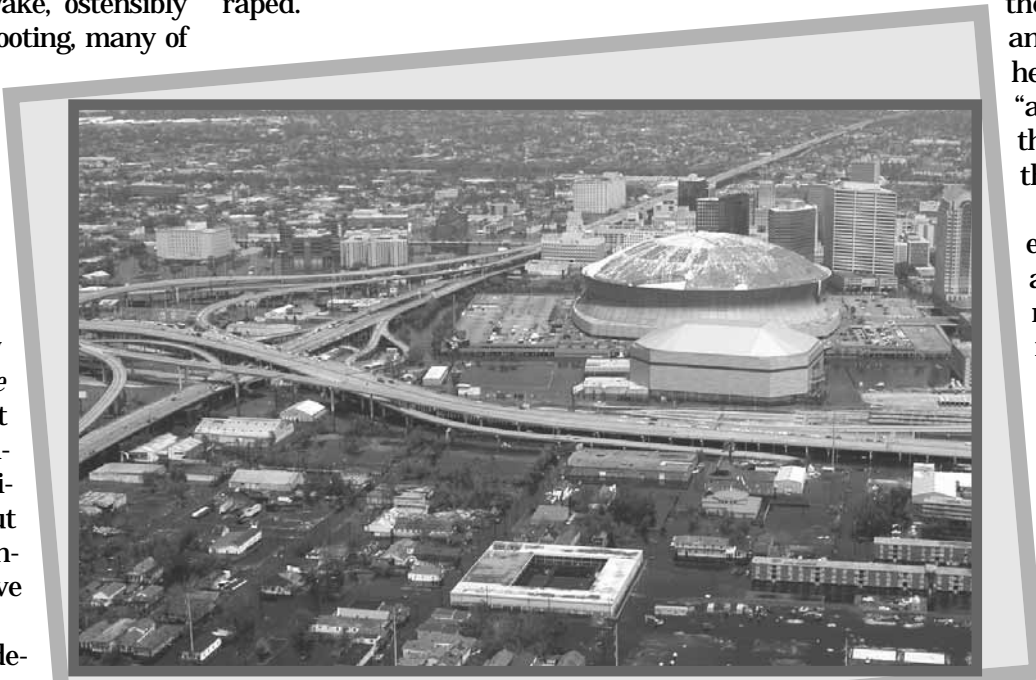
The looting provided an irresistible starting point for many among the capitalist media. Accustomed as they are to using racism to help divide workers and sensationalism to sell their wares—and both to divert attention from the failures of capitalism—many news outlets ran with virtually every horror story they heard, often without attribution or fact checking.

As *The Times-Picayune* observed after first contributing to the hysteria, "Following days of internationally reported killings, rapes and gang violence inside the [Super] Dome," a doctor from FEMA "came prepared for a grisly scene: He brought a refrigerated 18-wheeler and three doctors to process bodies."

"I've got a report of 200 bodies in the Dome," the doctor said, according to Louisiana National Guard Col. Thomas Beron, who managed those living in the Dome. But Beron pointed out "the real total was six." "Of those," Beron said, according to *The Times-Picayune*, "four died of natural causes, one overdosed and another jumped to his death in an apparent suicide."

New Orleans Police Chief Eddie Compass fed the hysteria. On Sept. 4, *The New York Times* quoted him on conditions at the convention center. "Tourists are walking around there,"

Compass said, "and as soon as these individuals see them, they're being preyed upon. They are beating, they are raping them in the streets." He told Oprah Winfrey that babies were being raped.



U.S. Government Photo

The New Orleans Superdome, where several thousand victims took refuge. Hundred of thousands of innocent victims were defamed by the scandalous media coverage following Hurricane Katrina.

Weeks later, when the media began publishing a few articles of contrition regarding their shameful performance in Katrina's wake, Compass was interviewed again by *The New York Times*. When the *Times* asked him about his reports of rapes and murders, he admitted, "We have no official reports to document any murder. Not one official report of rape or sexual assault." Compass' act of contrition was to resign, which he did shortly after his confession in the *Times*. Mayor Nagin, who may have instigated Compass' resignation to protect his own political hide, is still on the job—although he told his own set of stories, including asserting to Winfrey that the crowds descended to an "almost animalistic state."

As *The Times-Picayune* embarrassingly observed on Sept. 26, "Four weeks after the storm, few of the widely reported atrocities have been backed with evidence. The piles of bodies never materialized, and soldiers, police officers and rescue personnel on the front lines say that although anarchy reigned at times and people suffered unimaginable indignities, most of the worst crimes reported at the time never happened."

... Shame

(Continued from page 1)

and collaborative working class, instead of building socialism, may allow degenerate American capitalism to bring about irreparable catastrophe such as environmental ruin, world war or corporate/theocratic fascism. This is the real shame of America.

"Even during this deluge," Kamenetz noted, "signifiers of New Orleans class structure have stayed intact." Indeed, it takes more than a flood to alter class relations. It takes class struggle. It takes agitation, education and organization. It takes revolution.


Capitalism discarded the poor of New Orleans a long time ago. We owe them dignity and belonging. They deserve a socialist society that gives them full access to social wealth such as health care, education, safe housing and meaningful employment. Kamenetz should heed the old worker adage: "Don't mourn, organize."

The capitalist news media not only defamed the overwhelming majority who did not participate in any violence. The wild, irresponsible stories they spread were also the cause of many of the delays in relief, as aid workers and shipments were halted and helicopters grounded for fear of the "animalistic" crowds. More victims that were innocent suffered further as a result.

These fraudulent stories provided justification for state and federal authorities to order the militarization of the region and virtual martial law across the Gulf, wasting valuable time on largely useless "law and order" operations when search-and-rescue operations should have been the first order of the day. Democratic Gov. Kathleen Blanco seemed particularly bloodthirsty as she fed the media frenzy, observing after putting in a request for 40,000 troops, "They have M-16s and they're locked and loaded...These troops know how to shoot and kill, and they are more than willing to do so if necessary, and I expect they will."

The Bush administration seized the opportunity to suggest that future national disasters might call for further and more immediate use of military force. President Bush hinted that his administration would like to see changes in the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which prohibits active-duty military forces from engaging in domestic law enforcement. The military's Northern Command announced that it is developing a proposal for an active-duty domestic force that could be rapidly deployed in case of "disasters." Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld is pushing for even more widespread use of such a martial force "to better address threats from terrorists and drug traffickers, as well as natural disasters."

The truth about the victims of Katrina has been victimized itself. It has been hijacked by those amongst the ruling class who wish to further circumscribe our civil rights and liberties to protect the capitalist system of exploitation that makes that tiny minority class the beneficiary of the robbery it perpetrates daily on the working-class majority.



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A PAGE FROM WORKING-CLASS HISTORY

Across the 'Bloody Chasm'...

We conclude our celebration of the 1905 founding of the original Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) by reproducing two speeches delivered on the third day of the founding convention by Eugene V. Debs and Daniel De Leon.

These two speeches, as De Leon expressed it, were delivered across a "bloody chasm" in what ultimately proved to be a futile attempt at reconciliation and to bring unity to the socialist movement.

For more than a decade before the IWW's founding convention, De Leon and the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) had fought diligently to instill the labor movement with the principle of the class struggle. In 1896, the SLP had endorsed the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance (ST&LA), and thereafter waged a constant battle with the antisocialist and procapitalist—and, hence, antilabor—"unions." The founding principles of the original IWW were a vindication of the SLP-ST&LA stance, and, as shown by his speech following Debs at the convention, De Leon was prepared to do almost anything short of compromising that fundamental principle to heal old wounds.

During the early years of his political activities, in the 1890s, Debs was guilty of repeating some of the malicious anti-SLP slanders of the day. In later years, however, he more than once criticized his own associates in the corrupt Socialist Party (SP) for their spiteful and baseless attacks on De Leon and the SLP. His respect for the SLP—a respect that rendered his own acceptance of SP reformism contradictory and incongruous—was evidenced by the following comment made in an article printed in *Appeal to Reason*, April 20, 1912, apropos of the slander that the SLP was dead:

"It is foolish to say that the Socialist Labor Party is dead. It is not dead, and for my part I do not want to see it die....Many of my early lessons in economics were taught me by that little 'bunch of fanatics,' and I am not the least ashamed to admit it....I can never forget that little band of valiant comrades—frenzied fanatics if you please, but still of the stuff out of which revolutions are made. For years they were a mere handful, and yet they fought as if they had legions behind them. Staunchly they upheld the red banner in the face of an indifferent or hostile world—and this, years before some of those who now scoff at them had shed their bourgeois politics. There are not many of them, but few as they are, they have the backbone to stand alone. There are no trimmers or traders among them."

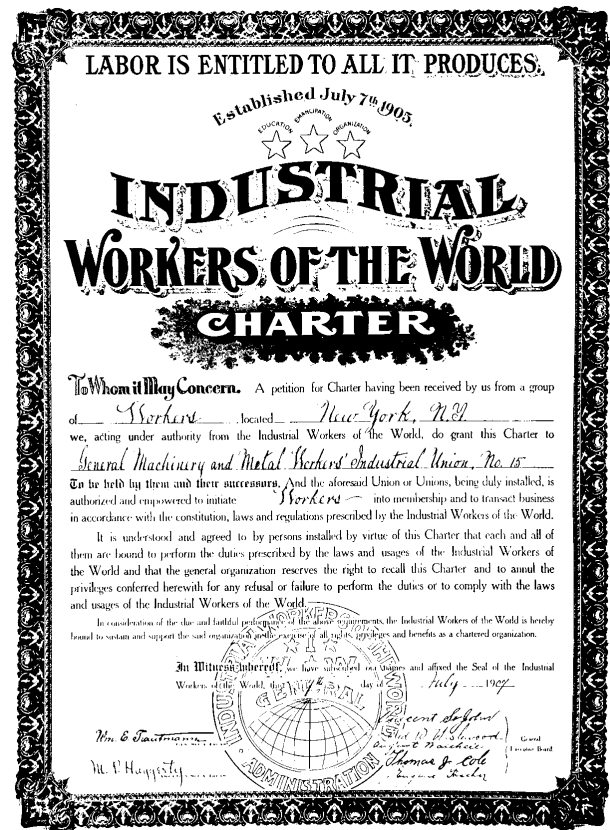
Debs achieved national prominence in 1894 when, as the leader of the American Railway Union in the Great Northern Railway strike, he was sentenced to six months in jail for violating a court injunction. Debs reputedly studied Marx while in jail and claimed to be a Socialist when he emerged. The evidence seems conclusive that he was a long way from digesting Marx, however, for shortly after he regained his freedom he campaigned for the petty capitalist reformer and Democratic-Populist presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan! When asked, at a meeting in Lynn, Mass., Oct. 26, 1897, how he could square his socialist claims with his support of Bryan, Debs replied:

"It is perfectly consistent for a Socialist to support Bryan. Such men as Bryan will bring Socialism on, while the SLP will not."

At that time, Debs was leading a movement to establish socialism by colonizing a state in the West! De Leon and the SLP criticized this scheme as anti-Marxist and visionary. Yet, the

record shows that this exposure was made in such a way as not to impugn either the honesty or good intentions of Debs. Indeed, in an article in *The People*, June 27, 1897, De Leon, after reviewing the several attempts the SLP had made to show Debs the error of his unscientific schemes, said:

"With warm esteem for the good inten-



tions of Mr. Debs, but fully appreciative of the harm that more failures will do, we earnestly warn the proletariat of America once more not to embark in this new chimera [the Debs scheme for colonizing a state]; not to yield, out of love for the good intentions of Mr. Debs, greater respect to his Judgment than it deserves; to hew close to the line of the principle of the class struggle, never once allowing the delusion to seize it that the Rockefellers will ever aid in its deliverance, however 'orthodox' this warning may sound; and to remember that...the American proletariat [may] come some day to reject Socialism, having, to his sorrow, been taken in with the counterfeit articles that Utopianism, 'unfettered by facts,' had made him invest in."

This is the way De Leon wrote and spoke of Debs in the early years of Debs' utopian activities. Sometimes, as in a speech at Wells Memorial Hall in Boston, Nov. 12, 1897 (*The People*, December 19, 1897), De Leon ridiculed Debs' claims for the alleged success of his "social democracy" and said of Debs that he "is a gentleman of extraordinary imagination." That is about as close as De Leon ever came to being "spiteful," "cantankerous" and "abusive," as is so frequently charged by his detractors.

At Boston, De Leon summed up the SLP attitude towards social democracy in these words: "What tells are the arguments that leave lasting impression. Phrases about sufferings that all know all about, denunciations of conditions that all recognize, unaccompanied by that scientific presentation of the causes, are barren, they do not point out the right path, and are lightly forgotten; and when such speeches are interlarded with points and arguments that insinuate economic errors, their effect for good is still more transient. The masses of our people will not stir except for the revolutionary cause, and that needs the cannon ball of science; not blank cartridges. Our attitude, consequently, need not be one of fear toward the 'social democracy.'" From populism and colonization, Debs next

shifted to the more orthodox brand of radical reformism. Together with the Milwaukee politician, Victor Berger and former SLP members in the East, he helped to launch the Social Democratic Party (later the Socialist Party) as a national organization. Yet, such was the inconsistency of the man that, five years later, in 1905, his proletarian instincts once more asserted themselves, and while remaining in the SP he became an active agitator for the original IWW. In other words, in 1905 Debs accepted, substantially, the position of the SLP on the mission and role of the unions.

In his speech at the founding convention of the IWW, reproduced here, Debs denounced pure and simple unionism as being "not only in the way of progress, but...positively reactionary, a thing that is but an auxiliary of the capitalist class." And he declared frankly that he believed that the theory of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, which was endorsed by the SLP, "is right" and that its principles "are sound." He was critical only of the ST&LA's propaganda methods. Then, turning to De Leon, whom he addressed as "comrade," he said:

"We have not been the best of friends in the past, but the whirligig of time brings about some wonderful changes. I find myself breaking away from some men I have been in very close touch with, and getting in close touch with some men from whom I have been very widely separated."

By the latter reference, of course, he meant De Leon and all who stood with De Leon in the fight against the reformers and "labor leaders" of the period.

To emphasize the mendacity of De Leon's detractors, it should be added that De Leon was happy and eager to close the book on the past. Of "Brother Debs," he told the convention, "a few days ago...we shook hands over the bloody chasm." Later, with obvious reference to Debs, he said that whoever took the position that Debs had taken "will find nothing but fraternal greeting from me as an individual, and from the organization which I represent here...."

A few months after the IWW convention, Debs came to New York for a series of meetings in behalf of the new organization. He shared the platform with De Leon on two occasions. One of those speeches was before an audience at Grand Central Palace. A stenographer recorded that speech and, together with an essay by De Leon, the SLP published it in a pamphlet on industrial unionism.

Debs' Grand Central Palace speech constitutes an endorsement of SLP principles and its program—and by implication a repudiation of the reformist craft union-supporting Socialist Party. However, Debs remained a member of the SP. Later, as the IWW got into rough water, his revolutionary IWW ardor seemed to wane. Even before 1908, when the IWW fell to the anarchists, Debs had ceased to agitate its principles. That year, although he had the reputation of being a "revolutionist" in the reformist SP, he accepted the SP's nomination for president.

Thus the man who, in 1905, denounced craft unionism as "positively reactionary" and "an auxiliary of the capitalist class," became, in 1908, the standard-bearer for a party that urged its members to "join the union of their craft," and that otherwise kowtowed to the corrupt and capitalist-minded labor fakers.

De Leon and the SLP fought hard to keep the IWW on its original course. They failed, but they never abandoned or compromised the principled ground on which they waged that fight. To

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'Without Solidarity Nothing Is Possible'

Eugene V. Debs being called by the convention said:

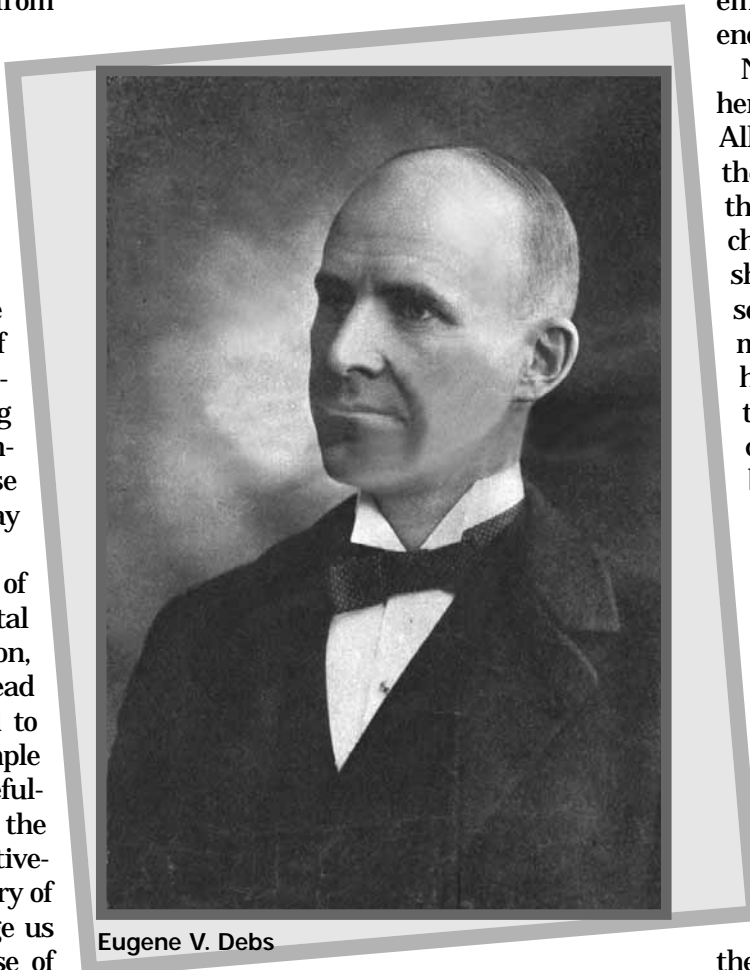
Fellow Delegates and Comrades: As the preliminaries in organizing the convention have been disposed of, we will get down to the real work before this body. We are here to perform a task so great that it appeals to our best thought, our united energies, and will enlist our most loyal support; a task in the presence of which weak men might falter and despair, but from which it is impossible to shrink without betraying the working class. (Applause.)

I am much impressed by this proletarian gathering. I realize that I stand in the presence of those who in the past have fought, are fighting, and will continue to fight the battles of the working class economically and politically (applause), until the capitalist system is overthrown and the working class are emancipated from all of the degrading thralldom of the ages. (Applause). In this great struggle the working class are often defeated, but never vanquished. Even the defeats, if we are wise enough to profit by them, but hasten the day of the final victory.

In taking a survey of the industrial field of to-day, we are at once impressed with the total inadequacy of working class organization, with the lack of solidarity, with the widespread demoralization we see, and we are bound to conclude that the old form of pure and simple unionism has long since outgrown its usefulness (applause); that it is now not only in the way of progress, but that it has become positively reactionary, a thing that is but an auxiliary of the capitalist class. (Applause). They charge us with being assembled here for the purpose of disrupting the union movement. It is already disrupted, and if it were not disrupted we would not behold the spectacle here in this very city of a white policeman guarding a black scab, and a black policeman guarding a white scab (applause), while the trade unions stand by with their hands in their pockets wondering what is the matter with union labor in America. We are here to-day for the purpose of uniting the working class, for the purpose of eliminating that form of unionism which is responsible for the conditions as they exist to-day.

The trades union movement is to-day under

the control of the capitalist class. It is preaching capitalist economics. It is serving capitalist purposes. Proof of it, positive and overwhelming, appears on every hand. All of the important strikes during the past two or three years have been lost. The great strike of the textile workers at Fall River, that proved so disastrous to those who engaged in it; the strike of the subway employes in the City of New York, where under



Eugene V. Debs

the present form of organization the local leaders repudiated the national leaders, the national leaders repudiated the local leaders and were in alliance with the capitalist class to crush their own followers; the strike of the stockyard's employes here in Chicago; the strike of the teamsters now in progress—all, all of them bear testimony to the fact that the pure and simple form of unionism has fulfilled its mission, whatever that may have been, and that the time has come for it to go. (Great applause.)

The American Federation of Labor has numbers, but the capitalist class do not fear the American Federation of Labor; quite the contrary. The capitalist papers here in this very city at this very time are championing the cause of pure and simple unionism. Since this convention met there has been nothing in these papers but a series of misrepresentations. (Applause). If we had met instead in the interest of the American Federation of Labor these papers, these capitalist papers, would have had their columns filled with articles commending the work that is being done here. There is certainly something wrong with that form of unionism which has its chief support in the press that represents capitalism; something wrong in that form of unionism whose leaders are the lieutenants of capitalism; something wrong with that form of unionism that forms an alliance with such a capitalist combination as the Civic Federation, whose sole purpose it is to chloroform the working class while the capitalist class go through their pockets. (Applause). There are those who believe that this form of unionism can be changed from within. They are very greatly mistaken. We might as well have remained in the Republican and Democratic parties and have expected to effect certain changes from within, instead of withdrawing from those parties and organizing a party that represented the exploited working class. (Applause). There is but one way to effect this great change, and that is for the workingman to sever his relations with the American

Federation and join the union that proposes upon the economic field to represent his class (applause), and we are here to-day for the purpose of organizing that union. I believe that we are capable of profiting by the experiences of the past. I believe it is possible for the delegates here assembled to form a great, sound, economic organization of the working class based upon the class struggle, that shall be broad enough to embrace every honest worker, yet narrow enough to exclude every fakir. (Applause.)

Now, let me say to those delegates who are here representing the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, that I have not in the past agreed with their tactics. I concede that their theory is right, that their principles are sound; I admit and cheerfully admit the honesty of their membership. (Applause). But there must certainly be something wrong with their tactics or their methods of propaganda if in these years they have not developed a larger membership than they have to their credit. Let me say in this connection, I am not of those who scorn you because of your small numbers. I have been taught by experience that numbers do not represent strength. (Applause). I will concede that the capitalist class do not fear the American Federation of Labor because of their numbers. Let me add that the capitalist class do not fear your Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance. The one are too numerous and the other are not sufficiently numerous. The American Federation of Labor is not sound in its economics. The Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance is sound in its economics, but in my judgment it does not appeal to the American working class in

the right spirit. (Applause). Upon my lips there has never been a sneer for the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance on account of the smallness of its numbers. I have been quite capable of applauding the pluck, of admiring the courage of the members of the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance, for though few in numbers, they stay by their colors. (Applause). I wish, if I can, to point out what I conceive to be the error in their method of propaganda. Speaking of the members as I have met them, it seems to me that they are too prone to look upon a man as a fakir who happens to disagree with them. (Applause). Now, I think there is no delegate in this convention who is more set against the real fakir than I am. But I believe it is possible for a workingman who has been the victim of fakirism to become so alert, to so strain his vision looking for the fakir that he sees the fakir where the fakir is not. (Applause). I would have you understand that I am opposed to the fakir, and I am also opposed to the fanatic. (Applause). And fanaticism is as fatal to the development of the working class movement as is fakirism. (Applause). Admitting that the principle is sound, that the theory of your organization is right—and I concede both—what good avails it, what real purpose is accomplished if you cannot develop strength sufficient to carry out the declared purpose of your organization?

Now, I believe that there is a middle ground that can be occupied without the slightest concession of principle. I believe it is possible for such an organization as the Western Federation of Miners to be brought into harmonious relation with the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance. I believe it is possible that that element of the organizations represented here have the conviction, born of experience, observation and study, that the time has come to organize a new union, and I believe it is possible for these elements to mingle, to combine here, and to at least begin the work of forming a great economic or revolutionary organization of the working class so sorely needed in the struggle for their emancipation. (Applause). The supreme need of the hour, as the

(Continued on page 10)

... 'Bloody Chasm'

(Continued from page 4)

this day, De Leon and the SLP are either vilified or ignored by "historians" and other literati, which, in the nature of things, may be taken as a tribute and a compliment. As for Debs, in 1990 he was done the dishonor of being inducted into capitalism's "Labor Hall of Fame" (read infamy), with the following inscription:

"Labor leader, radical, Socialist, presidential candidate, Eugene Victor Debs was a home-grown American original. He formed the American Railway Union, led the Pullman strike of the 1890's in which he was jailed, and emerged a dedicated Socialist. An idealistic, impassioned fighter for economic and social justice, he was brilliant, eloquent and eminently human. As a 'radical' [note the quotation marks] he fought for women's suffrage, workmen's compensation, pensions and social security—all commonplace today. Five times the Socialist candidate for president, his last campaign was run from federal prison where he garnered almost a million votes."

Debs would have been appalled.

There is much to be learned from the careers of the two men whose IWW convention speeches we reproduce here.

'The Giant Labor...Lies Fettered By the Lieutenants of Capitalism'

Daniel De Leon being called by the convention said:

Fellow Delegates: From the time the Manifesto was issued, it was clear to me that the mission of the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance was about to be done. The eloquent speech we just heard proves it. When I came to Chicago to this convention I came absolutely without any private ax to grind or any private grudge to gratify. In fact, during my whole activity in the labor movement I have had but one foe—and I think that my worst enemy will not deny my statement—and that foe is the capitalist class. (Applause). Not a line that I have ever written, either on the political or the economic line, but was guided by that star, proceeding from the principle of the class struggle; proceeding from the conviction that the emancipation of the working class not only must be their own work, but—what is of infinitely more importance—is possible. In having this convention come together here, we, of the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance, indulge in the vainglorious belief that we have contributed our share; and Brother Debs will, I think—I am sure of it—admit that our literature has contributed towards that end. (Applause). I am not going to enter into a discussion or speak of that one feature which he said was the bad feature of the Alliance. I shall simply make the prophecy to him and to you, that, standing now where the Alliance stood, he will also become what the foe says I was—a fanatic; that as he sees the thing clearer to-day than he saw it when the American Railway Union was organized, he will find it clearer also who the foes of the labor movement are. I shall not go into that. All I wish to say, all I wish to go on record as saying, is this: I can imagine nothing more weak, more pitiable from a man's standpoint than to aspire at an ideal that is unrealizable, and I have overhauled my position again and again answering this question: "Is this problem that you have undertaken as one of so many—is it a problem that is solvable?" And I have concluded that IT IS. (Applause). I drew a line, and on the other side of that line I placed the fakir and those men who assume and who deny that the working class can emancipate themselves, and who consequently propose to follow their own interests to the best of their ability and opportunity.

When three years ago the miners' strike took place, it was, as far as I was concerned individually, an epoch in my existence. Before that I was certain that the emancipation of the working class could not come but through them; I was also certain that it was a possibility; but I did not know how far removed the land beyond them might lie. I knew that Columbus upon strictly scientific ground said: "The world being round, if I travel westward I must strike land." But he knew not how long he would have to travel before he struck land. His scientific premises could not involve information also upon that subject; and as he traveled—you know the story, how the weak and the uninformed fell over him and called him names, and how he had to deceive them by telling them to keep on and keep on; and had land lain a few days further west, America would not have been discovered on the 12th of October, 1492. The question for me, the really important question, the question of immediate importance, was, "How far west does the land lie? How far away is the day when the working class will not only have sufficient information not to be humbugged, but when their hearts will beat with that sound impulse under which they will dare stand upon their feet and claim that they as citizens of the twentieth century are entitled to all that they produce and not a single cent less? How far does

that lie?" And that coal miners' strike gave me information upon that question. When that strike was in progress for eight months, had this organization that we hope will be launched here in Chicago been in existence, the revolution would have been accomplished in 1903. The workingman's pulse beat high. The class instinct was there; the revolutionary spirit was there; but the army of labor, like the Czar's army, which also consists of workingmen, was captained by the lieutenants of the capitalist class. (Applause). We then called Mitchell a fakir, and I am glad that there are those to-day in this convention who found fault with me then, but who will agree with me to-day that he was one. (Applause.)

Out of this body, out of this convention, a new economic organization or union will rise, and whether the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance was premature, whether indeed it had this or that or the other defect, it is unnecessary for me here to go into; I could also go into some other organizations that started, and have to-day even fewer members. But the times are ripe. General information is extended, and during this process of pounding one another we have both learned; both sides have learned, and I hope and believe that this convention will bring together those who will plant themselves squarely upon the class struggle and will recognize the fact that the political expression of labor is but the shadow of the economic organization. (Applause). I believe—I know—that he who will not vote right will do everything else wrong. But I also believe and I know that there is nothing more silly than Right without Might to back it up. (Applause). And the ballot box, though it is a civilized method of discussion, though it is powerful in its way as a historic development, that ballot is the weakest of things, is the hugest fraud on earth if it is not backed by the Might to enforce it. (Applause). Do our bourgeois capitalist rulers proceed upon a different principle? Look at their law libraries. I do not believe the law books in those libraries are bound in calf or sheepskin by accident. How innocent those books look. The sheepskin in which they are bound is an emblem of innocence, of the weakness of the law without Might to enforce it. And they gather their Might in their way; we gather it in our way; and the Might of the revolutionary Socialist ballot consists in the thorough industrial organization of the productive workers, organized in such a way that when that ballot is cast the capitalist class may know that behind it is the Might to enforce it. (Applause). I have myself stated again and again, in writing and by word of mouth, that the capitalist class is the one that counts the ballots, and consequently it is absurd to expect that their election inspectors will count us in (applause)—as absurd as it would be for the Japanese in Manchuria to expect that the Russian soldiers would pull the triggers for the Japanese masters. I recognize that, but no conclusion of importance can flow from one fact. All safe conclusions flow from a number of facts that have to be considered together. The capitalist class may monkey with the ballot all they like, but for the same reason that a man can monkey with a thermometer without ever changing the temperature, a handful of capitalists may do their ballot-monkeying, but they cannot change the political temperature. You can put a piece of ice to the quicksilver in a thermometer in the heat of summer, and that quicksilver will sink below zero, will sink to a Dakotan coldness; that does not change the temperature. You may in winter put a burning coal to the quicksilver and raise it to summer heat, but that does not make it summer. The capitalist may count us out. He may lower this thermometer of the ballot, but he

cannot change the temperature. His election inspectors will tell him how the situation stands; he will know how that vote is; he will know the makeup and all of it; he will understand the nature of our organization—and that brings me right smack against a question, the question that I would like to have infinitely more time to handle than I shall consume in this hall. But I shall condense.

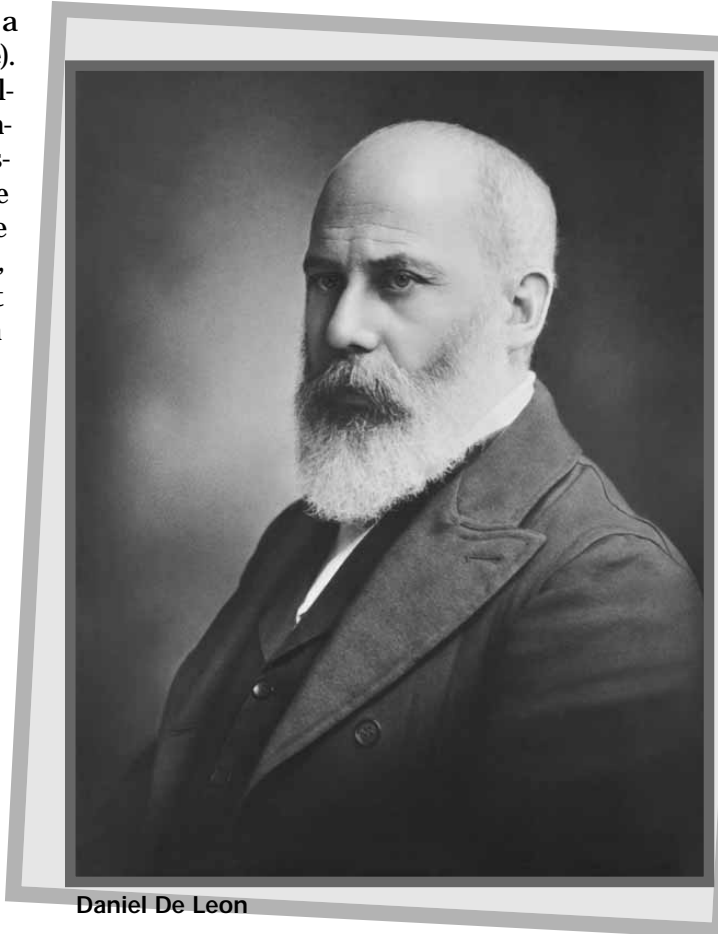
When speaking to Brother Debs a few days ago, when we shook hands over the bloody chasm (laughter), I said to him that I greatly admired the spirit of a certain sentence uttered by him, though not the application of it. I shall leave aside the application of it so as to remove friction. The substance of his sentence was: "We are here in America under special American conditions, and we must have our own expression of the American labor movement." Admirable. There is an instinct both among the foes and the unwise friends of the movement to hold America down to the European level. I was there last year, at the Amsterdam Congress, and I can assure you that I pitied from the bottom of my heart the men whom I considered Socialists, because, Socialists though they are, they are under feudal conditions and they are worn out with feudal issues. Their efforts are neutralized; they cannot have a movement such as we can have in America, where capitalism is full-grown, where head and shoulders it is above all other nations of the world, where, not only economically but politically and socially, we have the most advanced capitalism in existence; no longer England, but America, has that distinction. (Applause). Now, then, the American capitalist class is a different thing from the European capitalist class. The European capitalist class is feudal. I was reading quite recently a Social Democratic article from Germany in which the writer correctly stated that the capitalist class is feudalized, "Verjunkt," and the feature of feudalism is to develop one virtue, and that virtue is valor. Take for instance this half crazy, half crippled emperor of Germany, he has all the vices of the catalog except one, and that vice which he has not is cowardice. He is a brave man. That is the one virtue that feudalism develops. So that the Social Democracy of Germany—and when I say Germany I mean the whole of Europe, because they are so intimately dovetailed that none of the European states can go it alone—when the Social Democracy of Germany shall have reached five millions, that emperor will with a handful of men attempt to overthrow it. He will fail. Blood will flow, workingmen's blood and ruler's blood. In other words, a physical conflict is inevitable; inevitable on account of that psychology that has developed, from the material conditions of that rule, the spirit of the European capitalist class, namely, bravery. On the other hand, do we find that spirit in the rulers of America? Have our rulers been brought up in the cradle of feudalism? Have they reached their position through any act of bravery? Have songs of bravery been the songs that rocked their cradles? No; they came to their position of rulers by putting sand into your sugar, by putting water into your molasses, by putting shoddy into your clothes, by fraudulent failures, by fraudulent fires. In other words, they have reached their position through fraud, through swindle. Now, the swindler is a coward. (Applause). Being a coward, the swindler will swagger like a bully when the adversary is weak. What do we see the capitalist class do in America to-day? It has one set of workingmen in one body, and with the other it is clubbing them, shooting them down with gatling guns. It is simply a result, not of any bravery in the capitalist class, but of the weak condition of the

Giant Labor, which lies fettered by the lieutenants of capitalism. (Applause). When the capitalist class finds out what is going on in our organization, when it finds that we are well organized, when its lieutenants and its inspectors report to it the actual vote that you will cast, however little they may register in the official returns, when they report the facts, the capitalist ruler I believe will not dare to fight; the capitalist ruler will tremble in his stolen boots and be grateful to be given a chance to earn an honest living. (Applause). But they will never yield unless they realize that behind that ballot lies an organized movement, well organized, well disciplined and entirely awakened to the present condition; namely, with the industrial trades all in one organization, so that one workingman will not scab it upon another. Then in case of a strike in one place the locomotive engineers will not transport the militia, and union men, so-called, will not, as recently happened in Colorado, carry union cards in their pockets while they were aiming their guns at the miners on strike. When the capitalists know that their labor lieutenants can no longer protect them, the latter will find that their occupation, like Othello's, will be gone; the capitalists will realize that there is MIGHT behind the RIGHT of the ballot, and they will bow to the truth. But should they be stupid enough not to bow, we will then be ready and able to take up the conflict. And on this point—and that is the significant position of the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance—

if I were to be asked: What difference would you point out, more basic than any other, between the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance and any other of the numerous economic organizations that are started with good purposes? I should say this:

That the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance stated what it was there for, and stated it frankly. It has proceeded upon the principle that you cannot conceal your purpose from the enemy. The enemy's instincts will tell them what you are after, whether you hide it or not. But if you hide your policy, if you hide your aims, if you conceal what you mean to do, then, while you cannot deceive the enemy—he will be as strongly against you as if you stated clearly what you

wanted—you will deprive yourself of the support of the organizations that would stand behind you if they knew what you wanted. (Applause). The Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance was the first labor organization in this country, since the early labor organizations who also began soundly, that frankly and fully stated to the working class of America that they had to capture the public powers. Their belief is this: That you could



Daniel De Leon

not first take the men into the union under the false pretense that you were going to raise their wages, and afterwards indoctrinate them. No, you had to indoctrinate them first, and then bring them in. If the S. T. & L. A. has made any mistakes at all, it would be to imagine ten years ago that there were then enough such men in existence to join our ranks.

But I must close. The heat is oppressive; I have never been on good terms with the heat. Moreover, I agree with Brother Debs that this is not the occasion for speech-making, and that we have an arduous work to perform. Nevertheless, I recognize the courtesy of those who have called upon me after Brother Debs's speech, and I wish here solemnly to state that whoever

stands frankly and openly with his face turned against the capitalist class, whoever stands in such a way that his associates are not different from his purpose, whoever breaks with the foe and puts himself, to use a populist expression, "in the middle of the road"—that man will find nothing but fraternal greeting from me as an individual, and from the organization which I represent here, and which I hope will vanish the same as the A. L. U. and other mixed organizations will vanish when this convention adjourns. (Applause.)

I wish to close with what I began with. The Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance, the same as the Socialist Labor Party, has but one ideal. The ideal is the overthrow of the capitalist class. We recognize that men may have made mistakes. We know we make them ourselves, and we are going, just as soon as the mistakes are rectified, to turn a new leaf and look at the future rather than at the past. The men of the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance stand upon the elevation of nineteen centuries of civilization. We stand upon the enlightened interest of the individual. We know that our sons and daughters must marry other men's sons and daughters. We want the future improvement for our descendants, and he who wants to improve the conditions of his own sons and daughters must perforce want improved conditions for the sons and daughters of all other people. Consequently, we realize the necessity of united work. We realize the necessity of a united organized movement of the working class, and with our eyes steady upon that goal we have fought in the past and will be found fighting in the future. Ten years ago Mr. Gompers said—and you remember that passage that Brother Trautmann read to-day, where Gompers brings into such magnificent juxtaposition the S. T. & L. A. and the great Debs's strike—it makes us fraternal already—Gompers said: "I know the S. L. P. men. I know what they are aiming at, but when that day comes they will find me with a gun to fight them." And my answer was then in *The People*, as it is now on the floor of this convention: "Yes, Gompers; we know we shall find you there, unmasked; but you will not on that day find the S. L. P. men a small body; you will find the American working class arrayed against you—against you along with the rest of the capitalist class, whom you in fact represent." (Applause.)

255075100 years ago

Automation and Material Interests

(*Weekly People*, Nov. 5, 1955)

The testimony of capitalist spokesmen and labor leaders before the joint congressional subcommittee studying the social and economic effects of automation shows that they do not differ greatly on the subject. The capitalist spokesmen tend to pooh-pooh the idea that automation constitutes a technological revolution, while the union leaders are emphatic upon the point, asserting that automation is new, revolutionary and decidedly disrupting in its effects. But both groups of witnesses accept the idea that automation under capitalist auspices is a pretty wonderful thing and that it holds great potentialities for improved conditions for the workers. The only reservation of the union leaders seems to be that they believe "business and government" should assume some share of the costs and responsibility for the changeover. As James Carey, president of the CIO Electrical Workers, told the committee:

"It is morally and economically wrong to expect the working people of America to bear the entire burden."

Viewpoints of individuals may deviate from those of the group to which they belong, may be influenced by moral conviction and a vision resulting from greater understanding. But viewpoints of groups are invariably shaped by material interests. This will be found to be true of the labor fakers' viewpoint on the subject of automation. The con-

tinuation of capitalism is the *sine qua non*—the indispensable condition—of the labor faker, or labor merchandising, business. Automation is an evolutionary development in the tool and production technique. And, since it is occurring while capitalism still holds sway, the labor fakers cannot do aught but accept the tragic consequences to the workers.

The situation is one not welcomed by the union leaders. For one thing, most of them are now convinced that it means they will lose duespayers, hence power and prestige. But they are determined to save what can be saved and to entrench themselves—as, for example, John L. Lewis has entrenched himself despite the large-scale displacement of coal miners by new mining techniques and machines. Their problem, therefore, is to allay the fears and trepidations of the rank and file, and to convince this rank and file that they (the union leaders) are "doing something" when what they are really doing, apart from agitating for innocuous reforms, is diverting the workers from the real solution to their problem.

Labor's viewpoint is also shaped by material interests. The hitch is that, whereas capitalists and labor fakers are clear on how their material interests are served, the majority of workers are not classconscious, hence are blinded by ignorance. It is the task of socialism to remedy this, to show the workers that their material class interests require the abolition of capitalism and all its works. Once

enlightened on this score labor will organize to perform its historic mission—and automation will cease to be a threat and will become a blessing.

255075100 years ago

[Venezuela and U.S. Imperialism]

(*Weekly People*, Nov. 4, 1905)

The testimony of Gen. [Francis V.] Greene, that his asphalt trust was engaged in creating revolutions against President [Cipriano] Castro of Venezuela, in order to promote its interests in that country, appears astounding at first blush; but there is nothing unusual about it: revolutions with economic motives are not without historic precedent, as the United States can amply testify. Had George III encouraged American manufacture, commerce, banking and land tenure, instead of attempting to limit the 13 colonies to agriculture, all in the interest of English capitalism, there would have been no necessity for creating a revolution against him.

As it was, the free and untrammelled development of the colonies compelled his exit. He had to go. The only trouble with Gen. Greene is that Castro is not George III, thanks to the present political and economic condition of Venezuela, which tells for and not against Castro.

U.S. Leads the World —In Mental Illness

By Paul D. Lawrence

The United States likely ranks first in the world in the rate of mental illnesses, according to a yet incomplete study. Within the past year, 25 percent of Americans met the criteria for having a mental illness. One-quarter of them had an illness so severe that it disrupted daily functioning.

The problem is far worse than that. The survey excluded schizophrenics, who likely suffer the most severe mental illness. Many are hospitalized; others are homeless and walk around talking aloud to themselves.

Less than half who need treatment get it, and what that half gets is generally inadequate. Barriers to treatment include inadequate health care or insurance and the still lingering stigma of "mental illness."

Effective treatments for many disorders exist. However, many sufferers fail to seek professional help. "You wouldn't rely on your priest for treatment if you had breast cancer," said Thomas Insel, chief of the National Institute of Mental Health, which is funding the study. "Why would you go to your priest for a major depressive disorder? These are real medical and brain disorders, and they need to be treated that way."

In a way, these statistics are not surprising. The United States is the world's foremost capitalist nation. Capitalism is an insane system. Therefore, there should be many mental illnesses. The increase in mental illness in China as that nation moves to capitalism suggests that this logic is not far-fetched.

An explanation is, however, not quite so simple. It requires some consideration of the dynamics of mental illness. Tinsel's reference to "brain disorders" is likely not 100 percent correct. Nature and nurture both play roles.

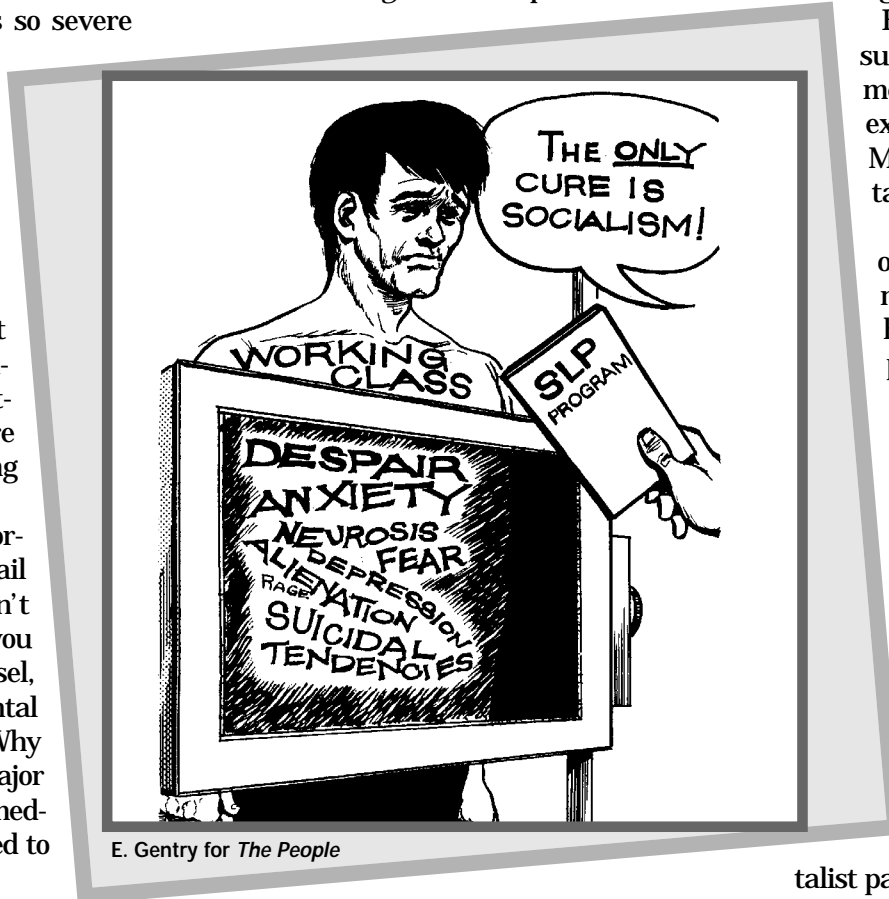
The staff of the Mayo Clinic notes that depression, for example, may spring from purely biological factors. It may also come from stresses in life, such as the death of a loved one or, we might add, loss of a job or an overbearing boss.

"We don't yet know if the underlying neurochemical aspects of these two depressive reactions are the same," the Mayo clinic staff continues. "In other words, one person may have a mental illness because of their nature—their genetic vulnerabilities, their neurochemical functioning. And another person may have a mental illness because of nurture—an environmental cause that perhaps then alters their neurochemistry. Most of the time, however, it's probably a complex interaction of both nature and nurture."

Another case would be alcoholism. Alcoholics have a biological inability to metabolize alcohol as efficiently as the nonalcoholic does. That eventually leads to uncontrolled drinking unless the disorder is successfully treated. Yet, a person

unable to metabolize alcohol growing up in a society that discourages or forbids alcohol, such as Saudi Arabia or, in the United States, Utah, would not likely develop alcoholism.

Cultural factors may be extremely significant. *The Washington Post* reported:



E. Gentry for *The People*

"Patients with schizophrenia, a disease characterized by hallucinations and disorganized thinking, recover sooner and function better in poor countries with strong extended family ties than in the United States, two long-running studies by the World Health Organization have shown."

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels noted "the practical absence of the family among proletarians." As in many cases, they foresaw tendencies that would grow to maturity with the ripening of capitalism. Single parenthood, divorce, relocation of family members to other parts of the country, often due to economic necessity, have left little of the traditional family that might give support.

The biological model *has* made advances in the treatment of mental illness, in particular the development of medications that can alter the way the brain functions and better, if not cure, the condition. The medical model is quite popular with the pharmaceutical industry, as TV ads for Prozac demonstrate.

That model is also popular with health care insurers. "Insurance companies found that paying for pills was cheaper and simpler than paying therapists to address the interpersonal causes of suffering—especially because general physicians could write most of the prescriptions," *The Washington Post* reported.

The *Post* also noted factors that are more

benign in the acceptance of the medical model. "Patient advocates realized that defining mental illnesses as brain diseases reduced the stigma attached to depression and psychoses—a patient could hardly be blamed for having an organic disease."

Biological factors are important, as the successful treatment of many disorders by medications proves. To focus on them exclusively, however, is incorrect, as the Mayo Clinic noted. Moreover, it lets capitalism off the hook.

Economic insecurity—unemployment or the threat of it, wages inadequate to meet expenses that force some workers to hold two or even three jobs, unrelenting pressure to work faster and produce more—cause many working-class people to become mentally ill, perhaps aided by biological propensities. The news itself provides enough to push others over the brink. Wars and the threats of war for the sake of capitalist interests, environmental pollution and global warming are not happy thoughts, nor is the impossibility of doing much about them as long as capitalism lasts. To workers who are not classconscious these problems seem intractable, even insurmountable. Low turnout for elections indicates despair with the capi-

talist parties, if not with capitalism itself.

The sanity of socialism can replace the insanity of capitalism, with salutary effects for the useful producers. Instead of being driven harder to produce more wealth for the exploiters and receive a relatively—and perhaps now even absolutely—diminishing share of that wealth, the useful producers will receive the full social value of their labor.

Ample provision will be made for rearing children and supporting the elderly and those unable to engage in production. Economic security will be supplemented by the elimination of the other baneful effects of capitalism, such as mentioned above.

Where biological factors alone cause mental illness, humane care will replace the inhumanity of capitalism. Homeless schizophrenics will not be in the asylums of the streets. Research, unfettered by the profit motive, will produce better drugs and perhaps even determine the source of the biological causes of illness before symptoms emerge. In disorders like alcoholism, those susceptible to the disorder could receive education and counseling to discourage them from beginning to drink. If this sounds too good to be true, it isn't. All that is necessary is for workers to organize their power politically and economically to replace capitalism and establish socialism. The mental illnesses caused or aggravated by capitalism will disappear with the madness of capitalism itself.

Abolition of Poverty

By Daniel De Leon

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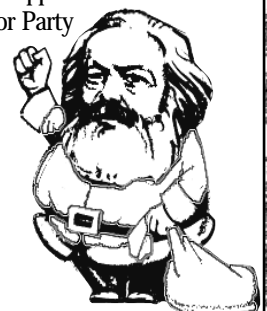
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New Orleans Undermined By Engineering Failures

"A Region so exposed to the furious Assaults of Tempest is to be avoided, as the very worst of all...."

—Leone Batisti Alberti, *Ten Books on Architecture*, 1485

By B.B.

Whether capitalism can fix the engineering failures that brought catastrophe upon New Orleans remains to be seen, but if its past performance is any indication of the future, there is every reason to doubt success. Indeed, two centuries of "fixing" have undermined nature's defenses against tidal flooding so that today the Mississippi River is elevated above the city as it passes through to the gulf, while all but the oldest sections of the city lie below sea level and below Lake Ponchartrain. The whole city is sinking inches per decade because of saturation.

The Mississippi River has an unusual estuary into the Gulf of Mexico. It does not spill into a bay but into an extensive marshland where the waters of the river diffuse into many small shallow streamlets. This posed a challenge to develop a port where ocean and coastal vessels could moor or dock. Eventually, canals cut into the marshes could accommodate sea-going vessels. The relative high points in the surrounding marsh became the site of New Orleans.

This unlikely location for a city established in the early part of the 18th century was impelled against all reason by the early development of capitalism and the need to control the resources carried back and forth by the great river systems of North America. "Although early travelers realized the irrationality of building a port on shifting mud in an area regularly ravaged by storms and disease, the opportunities to make money overrode all objections." It remains, in the words of one observer, an "inevitable city on an impossible." (*The New York Times*, Aug. 31)

Natural levees of silt deposited by the Mississippi River partially protected the original city. Then slaves, followed by immigrant labor, built temporary earthen levees to protect the city against flooding. Ironically, the impoverished working-class descendants of those early African slaves are now among those who have suffered the most from Hurricane Katrina.

Following the devastation, calls to rebuild resounded from numerous quarters, usually embellished with allusions to the hype about how great New Orleans was. Besides a few streets where tourism was centered, the city, like many other American cities, was shabby and slum-ridden, but good enough for wage slaves.

There are compelling capitalist reasons for wanting to rebuild the ravaged city, none of which have to do with culture or nostalgia. For one, the sprawling oil and chemical industries need an exploitable supply of labor power. For

another, a horde of contractors, homebuilders, hotel owners, casino interests and real estate developers are "chomping at the bit" for lucre. Despite the potential of pestilence, chemical contamination, sinking land, mold, vermin and weakened levees, not to mention future hurricanes and issues of basic infrastructure, the potential for profit is enormous.

and meteorologists had warned of the dire consequences of hurricanes of high intensity for decades, using New Orleans as the perennial case study.

Meteorologist Bob Sheets, former director of the National Hurricane Center, stated that some local officials pooh-poohed the risks. His simulations showed how Lake Ponchartrain and adjacent waters "could swamp the platterlike city, wedged between a great river and a broad lake...." The risk obviously in New Orleans was greater than in any other community."

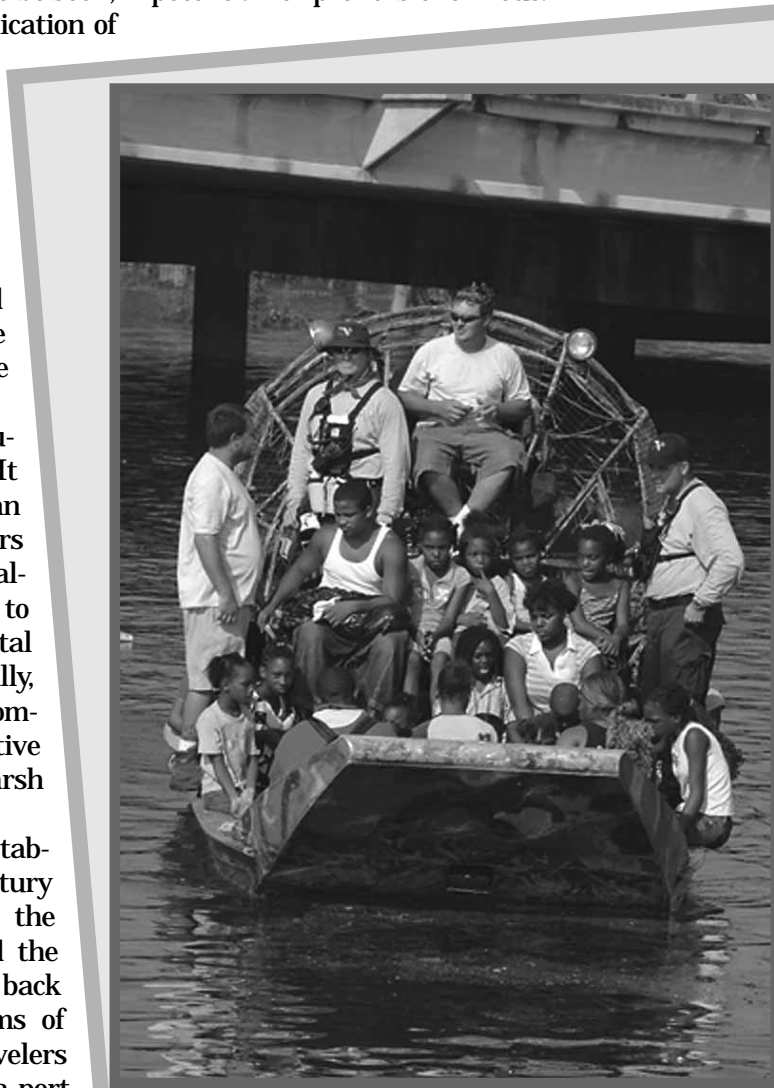
During the Hurricane Andrew threat, despite numerous prior evacuation drills with city officials, and even with specific evacuation advisories from the center, "Essentially they [officials] did nothing," Dr. Sheets noted. "The conventions and other business went on."

There's the rub! The irresponsibility of the capitalist system dwarfs Nero's fiddling while Rome burned. The problem in New Orleans reveals the malaise affecting the entire country, one that cannot be solved with more civil engineering works. Such a profound social problem requires ending the economic system that has degenerated into a massive death machine and unfit to manage its own industrial apparatus.

This raises the question of how socialism will address such natural threats. Surely, socialist society will inherit a capitalist world, a world that had been subservient to the profit motive. It will inherit the environmental degradation that has made New Orleans vulnerable and caused the global warming suspected of increasing the fury and intensity of recent hurricanes. It

will inherit the warped way technology has been used, the wasteful suburban growth and strangulating highway systems, the immense buildings that serve sprawling commercial and government bureaucracies, and the slums and bad housing of the working class. The list goes on to infect every aspect of life.

Change the principle and the rest will take care of itself such that, with the establishment of socialism's principles of production for use, democratic industrial government and the end of exploitation of the working class through the wages system, a new social infrastructure will form the foundation for an exclusive focus on the well-being of all of society. That is socialism's promise. It awaits an aroused working class organized to put an end to the insane capitalist system.



FEMA

Flood victims in New Orleans are evacuated after the levees broke and inundated much of the city.

Free enterprise is eager to descend onto the hundreds of billions of insurance and federal funds that will be used to rebuild, accompanied, no doubt, by strains of angelic piety. In consideration that the delta and adjoining coastal areas contain not only the world's busiest seaport complexes, but also sprawling petrochemical complexes, the very lifeblood of industrial capitalism, New Orleans and coastal Louisiana must be rebuilt and repopulated.

To protect capitalist investment, the Army Corps of Engineers has long been employed to erect a vast contrived network of dams, 350 miles of levees, walls, spillways, channels, pumping stations and other structures. But the chaos of conflicting material interests of various capitalists, plus the corporate mentality of refusing to spend on infrastructure in order to demonstrate to investors a profitable bottom line, have often undermined the state's efforts to protect overall capitalist assets. Thus Alfred C. Naomi, a senior project manager for the corps in New Orleans, indicated that the flood control system was an outdated mess. "This storm was much greater than protection we were authorized to provide."

Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, commander of the corps, soft-pedaled capitalist parsimoniousness in stating that costs and protection levels were a "complex process involving the intersection of a lot of people from the local, state and national level." As Adam Hughes of OMB Watch noted, however, political and bureaucratic resistance was "a classic example of what underfunding infrastructure can do." Meanwhile, scientists

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An address by Daniel De Leon

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in memoriam

JOHN DOUGLAS IRVING

John Douglas Irving, national secretary of the Socialist Labor Party of Canada, died July 19, several hours after the pontoon-equipped Cessna he was attempting to put down on a small lake near Ottawa flipped over and became half submerged in shallow waters. Rescuers told the *Ottawa Sun* that Irving survived the crash but was unconscious when pulled out of the aircraft. A helicopter rushed Irving to the Ottawa hospital where he died.

The cause of the accident that took Irving's life could not be determined immediately and the Canadian Transportation Board was investigating. Irving was an expert pilot with more than

60 years of flying experience.

Irving was an enthusiastic sportsman throughout his life, and despite his 86 years remained "an avid skier, flyer, golfer and fisherman who didn't let his age get in the way of his having fun," the *Sun* reported.

"He was really a fun-going guy, and anybody that knew Doug knew him as a gentleman" said Irving's older brother and SLP comrade, "Ted" Irving.

"Doug" Irving joined the Canadian SLP in 1939 as a 19- or 20-year-old youth. Doug and Ted, together with several other brothers, later established the Alexander Metals firm in Ottawa, but neither Doug nor his older brother

ever lost sight of their working-class origins. Doug Irving became national secretary of the Canadian SLP in 1983 when poor health forced his predecessor, George Cameron, to step aside.

Apart from his brother Ted, Irving is survived by his wife, Betty, their children, Carrie and Gerry, granddaughter, Julia, and brothers Bob, Bill, George and Harold. The SLP of America and *The People* extend their heartfelt condolences to the entire Irving family.

*

NOTICE: The National Office and post office box of the SLP of Canada are closed temporarily pending the election of a new national secretary. In the meantime, party members and others having SLP business to transact are urged to contact the National Office of the SLP of America. Please see the directory on page 2 for mailing and email addresses.

... 'Without Solidarity'

(Continued from page 5)

speaker who preceded me so clearly expressed it in his carefully and clearly thought address—the supreme need of the hour is a sound, revolutionary working class organization. (Applause). And while I am not foolish enough to imagine that we can complete this great work in a single convention of a few days' duration, I do believe it is possible for us to initiate this work, to begin it in a way for the greatest promise, with the assurance that its work will be completed in a way that will appeal with increasing force to the working class of the country. I am satisfied that the great body of the working class in this country are prepared for just such an organization. (Applause). I know, their leaders know, that if this convention is successful their doom is sealed. (Applause). They can already see the handwriting upon the wall, and so they are seeking by all of the power at their command to discredit this convention, and in alliance with the cohorts of capitalism they are doing what they can to defeat this convention. It may fail in its mission, for they may continue to misrepresent, deceive and betray the working class and keep them in the clutches of their capitalist masters and exploiters. (Applause). They are hoping that we will fail to get together. They are hoping, as they have already expressed it, that this convention will consist of a prolonged wrangle; that such is our feeling and relations toward each other that it will be impossible for us to agree upon any vital proposition; that we will fight each other upon every point, and that when we have concluded our labors we will leave things in a worse condition than they were before. If we are true to ourselves we will undeceive those gentlemen. We will give them to understand that we are animated by motives too lofty for them in their baseness and sordidness to comprehend. (Applause). We will give them to understand that the motive here is not to use unionism as a means of serving the capitalist class, but that the motives of the men and women assembled here is to serve the working class by so organizing that class as to make their organization the promise of the coming triumph upon the economic field and the political field and the ultimate emancipation of the working class. (Applause).

Let me say that I agree with Comrade De Leon upon one very vital point at least. (Applause). We have not been the best of friends in the past (laughter), but the whirligig of time brings about some wonderful changes. I find myself breaking away from some men I have been in very close touch with, and getting in close touch with some men from whom I have been very widely separated. (Applause). But no matter. I have long since made up my mind to pursue the straight line as I see it. A man is not worthy, in my judgment, to enlist in the services of the working class unless he has the moral stamina, if need be, to break asunder all per-

sonal relations to serve that class as he understands his duty to that class. (Applause). I have not the slightest feeling against those who in the past have seen fit to call me a fakir. (Laughter). I can afford to wait. I have waited, and I now stand ready to take by the hand every man, every woman that comes here, totally regardless of past affiliations, whose purpose it is to organize the working class upon the economic field, to launch that economic organization that shall be the expression of the economic conditions as they exist to-day; that organization for which the working class are prepared; that organization which we shall at least begin before we have ended our labors, unless we shall prove false to the object for which we have assembled here.

Now, I am not going to take the time to undertake to outline the form of this organization. Nor should I undertake to tax your patience by attempting to elaborate the plan of organization. But let me suggest, in a few words, that to accomplish its purpose this organization must not only be based upon the class struggle, but must express the economic condition of this time. We must have one organization that embraces the workers in every department of industrial activity. It must express the class struggle. It must recognize the class lines. It must of course be class-conscious. It must be totally uncompromising. (Applause). It must be an organization of the rank and file. (Applause). It must be so organized and so guided as to appeal to the intelligence of the workers of the country everywhere. And if we succeed, as I believe we will, in forming such an organization, its success is a foregone conclusion. I have already said the working class are ready for it. There are multiplied thousands in readiness to join it, waiting only to see if the organization is rightly grounded and properly formed; and this done there will be no trouble about its development, and its development will take proper form and expand to its true proportions. If this work is properly begun, it will mean in time, and not a long time at that, a single union upon the economic field. It will mean more than that; it will mean a single party upon the political field (great applause); the one the economic expression, the other the political expression of the working class; the two halves that represent the organic whole of the labor movement.

Now, let me say in closing, comrades—and I have tried to condense, not wishing to tax your patience or to take the time of others, for I believe that in such conventions as this it is more important that we shall perform than that we shall make speeches—let me say in closing that you and I and all of us who are here to enlist in the service of the working class need to have faith in each other (applause), not the faith born of ignorance and stupidity, but the enlightened faith of self-interest. We are in precisely the same position; we depend absolutely upon each

other. We must get close together and stand shoulder to shoulder. (Applause). We know that without solidarity nothing is possible, that with it nothing is impossible. And so we must dispel the petty prejudices that are born of the differences of the past, and I am of those who believe that, if we get together in the true working class spirit, most of these differences will disappear, and if those of us who have differed in the past are willing to accord to each other that degree of conciliation that we ourselves feel that we are entitled to, that we will forget these differences, we will approach all of the problems that confront us, with our intelligence combined, acting together in concert, all animated by the same high resolve to form that great union, so necessary to the working class, without which their condition remains as it is, and with which, when made practical and vitalized and renewed, the working class is permeated with the conquering spirit of the class struggle, and as if by magic the entire movement is vitalized, and side by side and shoulder to shoulder in a class-conscious phalanx we move forward to certain and complete victory. (Applause.)

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Robert Bills
Acting Editor

...Katrina Victims

(Continued from page 1)

breaking outfits—Modern Industrial Services, Inc. and Healthcare Consulting & Staff Services—that specialize in helping “families” such as Sutter break strikes by offering a chance to those that other “families” toss out to make room for new technology and swollen profits, but who the unions can’t quite manage to organize. The Service Employees International Union and its United Healthcare Workers-West affiliate are so helpless to stop them that they recently filed a lawsuit charging these two companies and Sutter with violating a California law that prohibits the hiring of “professional strikebreakers.”

The dozen or so evacuees were taken on as “janitorial staff and nurses assistants,” according to the *Chronicle*, were paid \$8 or \$9 less an hour than those on strike, according to the unions, and were gone by Sept. 19, according to local TV station KRON. Where they went and what has become of them we do not know, and neither the newspaper, the union nor the TV station had anything to say about that. However, it appears that there is no shortage of evacuees, not only from Katrina and other natural disasters, but from the shutdowns, layoffs and other socially transmitted displacers of humanity that are as much spinoffs of capitalism as floods are of hurricanes.

In short, capitalism is a catastrophe—a social catastrophe—that has uprooted and displaced, not thousands, not tens or even hundreds of thousands, as Hurricane Katrina, but millions of workers across the land. Worse, it does not come and go with the seasons. Capitalism is a year ’round catastrophe, an ongoing, never-renting assault on the working class. It is a catastrophe too late to prevent entirely, but not too late to undo some of the damage it has done and to stop it before it does too much more.

The only power great enough to stop it cold is the working class, and the only force working to alert the working class to its power is the SLP and *The People*. But the ability of the SLP and *The People* to deliver the message of Socialist Industrial Unionism largely depends on the financial support of the SLP’s friends and supporters. If you count yourself among them, please use the coupon on page 8 to contribute to *The People’s* annual Christmas Box Fund.

...‘Reconstruction’

(Continued from page 1)

the unemployed find jobs—with labor markets already saturated nationwide and employment opportunities virtually nonexistent in the affected areas. A voucher program for students was promised, including money for religious schools, along with temporary housing and a “Gulf Opportunity Zone” that would grant new and existing businesses tax breaks, loans—and exemptions from prevailing wage and environmental regulations.

But Bush offered no plan of action then or now to facilitate coordination between the affected states, municipalities and the federal government; not even any deadline for such action has been suggested.

As an article entitled “Lack of Cohesion Bedevils Recovery” in *The Washington Post* observed a few days later, “With little guidance from federal and state governments—and no single person or entity in charge of the overall operation—cities and counties have been left on their own to find survivors homes, schools, jobs and health care.” “A patchwork of policies has resulted,” the *Post* continued, “causing relief agencies to sometimes work at cross-purposes.”

“In Mississippi,” the *Post* noted, “people waiting for promised housing in the form of mobile homes or trailers found themselves in a Catch-22 situation: Even as local officials said they were waiting for FEMA to provide the shelters, officials at the federal agency said they were waiting for local officials to provide the right locations.”

Many of the locations were too far away from any hope of jobs for the survivors anyway. That is the same reason many survivors refused to relocate to cruise ships along the coast—an arrangement FEMA spent \$200 million on before realizing it wasn’t going to work. Thousands of berths went empty, and many of those that weren’t empty were filled with relief workers.

By the end of September, an Associated Press article entitled “Rebuilding: Lots of Ideas, Little Focus” reported that political leaders were “taking their first steps—in many directions” toward rebuilding New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region. But the steps they took were still—a full month after the disaster began—reflective of the anarchy inherent in capitalist production and government and the revulsion of its beneficiaries for any kind of social planning. It’s as if capitalism’s officials hope that if they take long enough the problem might disappear by itself.

While the majority of residents—now evacuees—are members of the social majority, the

working class, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin formed a task force in September to come up with a plan for rebuilding—a task force that includes nothing but local capitalist-class luminaries. Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco convened her own panel of state luminaries from the same class, some of whom are also on Nagin’s panel. The New Orleans City Council, miffed that it was partially excluded from the mayor’s panel, empaneled its own panel—unnamed as of this writing but certain to include more members and sycophants of the wealthy capitalist class. President Bush announced that he, too, was at long last “considering how best to coordinate the recovery efforts.”

The proliferation of post-Katrina and Rita task forces and blue-ribbon panels might be comedic if it were not so truly tragic. The problems of the survivors will not disappear by themselves. And they aren’t likely to be helped if those doing the “planning” are themselves part of the problem.



Think how much better the working-class majority might have fared if they democratically controlled the allocation of society’s resources and their own labor power. There would have been no poverty to be revealed by the floods; no racial disparities, either. The racial myths and stereotypes upon which racism feeds would dissolve under a system of social cooperation without capitalism’s ruling class, which requires such tools to help keep workers divided and weak.

Moreover, who could think that with democratic control of the full product of their collective labor power, the workers would have been so foolish as to have failed to bolster New Orleans’ levees, or not to have in place a well-rehearsed plan for evacuation and rehabilitation should Mother Nature overwhelm all their well-reasoned plans?

With no profit motive to deter them, with plentiful natural resources and human labor power available, what reason is there to believe that the workers of the Gulf Coast would fail to make the Gulf Coast as prepared for natural disaster as the technology of today makes possible?

Only the chaotic, profit-motivated, morally and economically bankrupt capitalist system stands in their way. Speed the day when the working class finally realizes its latent power and organizes to sweep capitalism and its catastrophic social effects away, and replace it with the democratic republic of labor.

—K.B.

ACTIVITIES

CALIFORNIA

Discussion Meetings—For more information call 408-280-7266 or email slpsfba@netscape.net.

OHIO

Columbus: **Discussion Meeting**—Section Cleveland will hold a discussion meeting on Sunday, Nov. 13, 1–3 p.m., Carnegie Library, Meeting Room 1, Grant and Oak streets. For more information call 440-237-7933.

Independence: **Discussion Meetings**—Section Cleveland will hold discussion meetings on Sunday, Nov. 27, and on Sunday, Dec. 11, 1–3 p.m., Independence Public Library, 6361 Selig Dr., (off Rt. 21 [Brecksville Rd.] between Chestnut and Hillside). For more information call 440-237-7933.

OREGON

Portland: **Discussion Meetings**—Section Portland will hold the following discussion meetings from 10 a.m.–12 noon at the Portland Main Library, SW Yamhill & 10th: Saturday, Nov. 2, two book reviews, *White-Collar Sweatshops* and *Death of a Salesman*; and Saturday, Dec. 17, “Marx’s Theory of Alienation.” For more information call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit the section’s website at <http://slp.pdx.home.mindspring.com>.

Funds

(Aug. 13–Oct. 14)

New Publications Fund

Irene Schelin \$250; \$100 each Gerald M. Lucas, Reynold Elkins; Frank Cline \$50; Paul Lawrence \$40; \$20 each Helena Stevens, Robert H. Hatch; Roberta Diamond \$8.
Total: \$588.00

Press Security Fund

Irene Schelin \$250; Chris Dobreff \$150; \$100 each Helen Deneff, Earl Prochaska; Harvey Fuller \$60; \$50 each Ron Harner, Robert Ormsby, E.T. Jasiewicz; John S. & Rosemary Gale \$30; George E. Gray \$26; Richard Mack \$20; \$15 each Marshall G. Soura, Fred Didomenico, Frank Cline; Mr. T. McGregor \$16.19; David Bartle \$10.20; \$10 each Lisa Toth, Harry Gibson, Eileen Hamilton; Thomas R. Dooley \$6.
Total: \$993.39

Prisoner Subscription Fund

Ron Harner \$31; Earl Prochaska \$25; Eddie Casarez \$15; Chester Hensley \$5.
Total: \$76.00

SLP Leaflet Fund

John Lambase \$10. (Total)

SLP Sustainer Fund

Joan Davis \$800; Bernard Bortnick \$300; Chris Dobreff \$200; Robert P. Burns “In memory of John Gappa” \$160; Robert P. Burns “In memory of Frank & Margaret Racheck” \$160; Lois Reynolds \$100; Richard Aiken “In memory of John W. Aiken” \$45; \$30 each Steve Littleton, Jill Campbell; Archie Sim \$25;

\$20 each Paul Lawrence, Michael Wenskunas, George E. Gray, Section San Francisco Bay Area; Bill Kelley; George Gaylord \$1.
Total: \$1,931.00

Socialist Labor Party

Financial Summary

Bank balance (July 31)	.....	\$189,083.73
Expenses (Aug.-Sept.)	.....	26,945.10
Income (Aug.-Sept.)	.....	9,499.95
Bank balance (Sept. 30)	.....	\$171,638.58
Deficit for 2005	.....	\$ 41,475.48

NIGERIEN FAMINE

'We Let the Market Determine the Price'

By Paul D. Lawrence

Nearly 2 million people in Niger have received food from international relief agencies since the worst of last summer's famine, according to the United Nations' World Food Program. "Even so...a good harvest will only supply a short-term bump from the long-term structural food scarcity that the people of Niger face every year," the U.N.'s News Service said in a statement posted to the Web on Sept. 30. Avoiding future famines, it claimed, requires fixing "long-term structural issues by working with farmers to help them develop irrigation projects and learn new agricultural techniques."

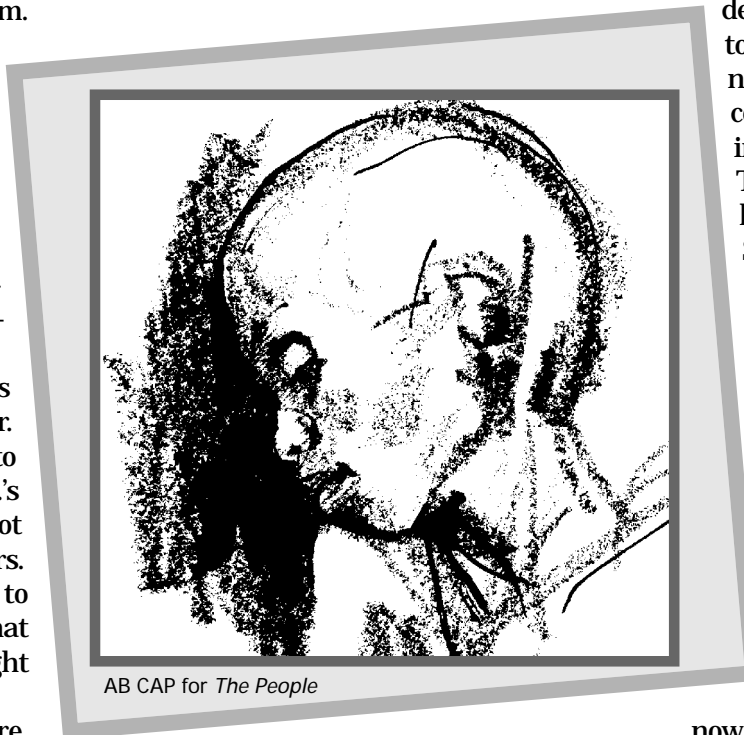
In short, drought and a plague of locusts were not the real causes of the famine in Niger. "Structural issues" did as much or more to cause it than nature. Contrary to the U.N.'s assessment, however, those structures are not the agricultural techniques of Niger's farmers. It takes social, economic and political factors to create famine. Indeed, there is evidence that there was no food shortage, even at the height of the famine.

"The usual contributors to famine elsewhere, like war, dictatorship or crackpot economic theories, are notably absent," *The New York Times* editorialized. "Niger's government is democratically elected and President Mamadou Tandja's orthodox budget-balancing and market-opening policies are regularly praised by Western leaders and international lenders."

More than 3 million Nigeriens who faced and still may face starvation might disagree about what constitutes "crackpot economic theories." "Longer term economic policies may be working against a solution, according to some observers," *The Washington Post* reported on Aug. 17. "In 1993, the government scrapped price controls at the urging of the World Bank and stopped heavy-handed interventions in grain markets by an import-export agency."

"In a country adopting free-market policies," the *Post* also reported: "the suffering caused by a poor harvest has been dramatically compounded by a surge in food prices and, many people here suspect, profiteering by a burgeon-

ing community of traders, who in recent years have been freed from government price controls and other mechanisms that once balanced market forces."



AB CAP for *The People*

"Today, market stalls in Maradi, a major trading center of Niger, are piled high with food for the few who can afford it, while elsewhere in the same city thousands of starving and desperate people jostle for scarce relief supplies," the *Times* observed in its notorious editorial.

A free-market economy is a capitalist economy, something both the *Times* and the *Post* neglect to mention. It is driven by the compulsion to make profits, at whatever cost, and it tramples underfoot anything that stands in its way. The Nigerien famine showed capitalism at its worse.

The *Post* told the story of 30-year-old Rachida Abdou. She sold all three of her dresses for \$6 and set out, with her emaciated children, on a five-day-long journey to Maradi. There she found food. After bus fare and having her son seen at a clinic, she had \$2 left. She used that to purchase six pounds of millet that used to cost \$1.50. After consuming that, she remained in Maradi, unsuccessfully begging for food, with

her son continuing to waste away.

The availability of food—for those who could afford to pay—indicates that the crisis in Niger was not just the workings of supply and demand, but also of out-and-out profiteering to take advantage of human suffering and need. The elimination of government price controls and other mechanisms was an immense aid to that unspeakable enterprise. The U.N. World Food Program said prices had shot up because of such profiteering. Some traders raised prices because they expected aid groups would buy grain locally.

Yet government spokesman Ben Omar Mohamed could say, "We let the market determine the price." He admitted "traders are making money because the demand is very high."

In addition, the introduction of Western bourgeois political "democracy" is eroding traditional values that might have provided relief in the past. Niger is a largely Muslim nation. In Islam the rich have a religious duty to help care for the poor. But "there is nothing like generosity now," Imam Malan Hassane told the *Post*. "Selfishness is gaining ground." He maintained that humanitarian groups would not need to intervene if Nigeriens were more willing to feed one another.

Unfortunately, the Nigerien people can do relatively little to improve their circumstances. The country has nowhere near the level of economic development necessary for socialism. Any indigenous attempt to reverse the free-market policies responsible for the famine would be met with the full power of imperialist finance capital, and possibly a convenient coup d'état to establish a new "democratic" pro-Western regime.

The plight of the Nigerien people, however, is one more reason that U.S. workers need to carry out their own socialist revolution. Socialism would not only improve the lot of the useful producers in societies where it has been established. It would also allow undeveloped economies to develop rapidly with the comradely assistance of the socialist societies.

The Dangers of Megafarming

By B.G.

Large-scale agribusiness has steadily come to dominate farming in the United States, pushing out the small family farmers and even the larger independent farmers, all of whom have trouble competing against large capitalistic agriculture. But isn't this just the law of progress, awarding profits to the innovative capitalist and making more and cheaper food available to the rest of us? Not so fast!

Unless you have never seen a megahog farm or a megadairy farm or a megabeef farm, you will not be able to envision the great dangers from pollution to the environment, infection, stench or accidental release of millions of gallons of liquefied manure into the landscape that these farms often present.

Not long ago, it was the custom on some of these beef farms to grind up dead cattle and add their remains to the cattle feed to cheapen the cost of food for the animals, without any examination as to how or why those cattle had died. This practice eventually produced mad cow disease, making the beef deadly to humans.

Large-scale agribusiness has come to dominate the dairy region of upstate New York, forcing small farmers to sell out or go bust. One of

these megadairy farms is the Marks Farm in Lewis County, near the village of Lowville. They have 4,000 milk cows and store their liquefied manure in a reservoir held in by earthen walls. By Aug. 11 of this year, the reservoir held 3 million gallons of this offal. The next day, the reservoir burst, sending most of the flowing manure into the Black River, a recreational and fishing area and a water source for the local villages along the river. Tens of thousands of fish died from lack of oxygen and the e-coli ruined the river water for human use.

These industrial farms are often forced on local communities despite their objections. When a community in New York State has complained of an industrial hog or cattle farm moving in, the State Department of Agriculture and Markets invariably uses the state's Right to Farm Law to sue or threaten to sue the community and to force the area to accept an unwanted, malodorous, and often risky and polluting mega-agribusiness to their local community.

Does this make sense? To capitalism it makes ultimate sense—and profits. To humanity at large, it often means disaster.

The so-called "ownership society" that our current U.S. president talks so much about is

presently owned by the capitalists and their political lackeys who are more concerned with their own welfare than that of the people at large who are too often fooled into thinking that we actually have a truly democratic society. It must be our task to bring power to the powerless, to struggle for a truly equitable society that preserves well-being for all and that halts the degradation of our environment.

KARL MARX: The Man

By Paul Lafargue

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