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Disobedient Electors In History

By Richard Winger*
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Presidential electors have frequently voted for someone for president or vice president who was different from their own party's nominees. In 1836, these "disobedient electors" actually changed the outcome and deadlocked the Electoral College for vice president.

That year, all 23 Democratic electors from Virginia refused to vote for their own party's vice presidential candidate, Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, because he had lived with an African-American woman and fathered two daughters with her. The Virginia electors voted instead for William Smith of Alabama. As a result, no one received a majority of the Electoral College vote and the Senate had to pick the new vice president (they chose Johnson).

There have been many other instances of electors voting for someone other than their party's nominees:

1. In 1808, six Democratic-Republican electors refused to vote for the party's presidential candidate, James Madison, and instead voted for George Clinton (Clinton was the party's vice presidential nominee).

2. In 1812, three Federalist electors refused to vote for the party's vice presidential candidate, Jared Ingersoll, and instead voted for Elbridge Gerry, who was the Democratic-Republican Party's candidate for vice president.

3. In 1820, one Democratic-Republican elector refused to vote for his party's presidential nominee, James Monroe, and instead voted for John Quincy Adams, who wasn't a candidate.

4. In 1828, seven of Georgia's nine Democratic electors refused to vote for the party's vice presidential candidate, John Calhoun of South Carolina, and instead voted for William Smith, another South Carolinian.

5. In 1832, Pennsylvania's 30 Democratic electors refused to vote for the party's vice presidential candidate, Martin Van Buren, and instead voted for William Wilkins of Pennsylvania.

6. In 1872, 63 of the 66 Democratic electors refused to vote for the party's presidential candidate, Horace Greeley, because he had died on Nov. 29, 1872.

7. In 1896, the Peoples Party and the Democratic Party ran the same presidential candidate (William Jennings Bryan) but different vice presidential candidates. Four of the Peoples Party electors who promised to vote for the Peoples Party

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'Experts' Baffled By Uncertain Economy

Those who make their way in the world by keeping a finger on the erratic pulse of the capitalist system are having a difficult time these days.

Many among them apparently believe that the "longest period of prosperity in history" is about to end. But they seem unable to agree on what is about to begin.

Hence we hear of "dips," "downturns" and "softenings," with an occasional "recession" thrown in by a few who are dismissed as "dramatic" or "alarmist" by the majority of "economists."

What all this indecision and imprecision tells us (again) is that those supposed to have a finger on things probably have as much genuine insight into the workings of the capitalist system as the proverbial "man in the street."

Indeed, one from that fraternity of pulsetakers, whom *The New York Times* has described "as the incoming administration's top thinker on economic matters," earns that distinction because he has been "warning of an imminent economic tightening" for several years.

In short, Lawrence B. Lindsey, hand-picked for the White House post by President Bush himself, earns his reputation as a "top thinker" simply by remembering a school child's lesson: capitalism is a "cyclical" system—or, for those unfamiliar with such jargon, what goes up must come down.

Thus President Bush, whose ability to investigate a thing thoroughly before reaching a conclusion was shown by his choice of Linda Chavez for secre-

tary of labor, and whose capacity to select aids who at least give the appearance of dignified impartiality was shown by his selection of John Ashcroft for attorney general, has, so far at least, shown himself to be consistent. Unless we miss our guess, however, it is a consistency destined to highlight and underscore what Karl Marx meant when he wrote that "on the level plain, simple mounds look like hills; and the imbecile flatness of the present bourgeoisie is to be measured by the altitude of its great intellects."

Of course, all the concern being expressed over the ill-defined "dipping," "cooling" and "tightening" by the pulsetakers and the newly installed Bush administration is not for nothing. It is for something that is near and dear to the hearts of a certain segment of the country's population. That segment is the ruling class, which owns the economy and profits from the exploitation of the labor performed by another and much larger segment of the population—the working class.

What is near and dear to the smaller segment is not the well-being of the larger, but the profits squeezed from the collective hide of the larger working class, particularly over the last 10 years or so-called prosperity.

Pick up almost any newspaper, turn to its "business" section and read all about it. "With or Without a Recession, Profits Are Under Threat," the heading of one *New York Times* headline proclaimed on Jan. 14.

Last month we cited reports that

nearly 500,000 workers have been laid off from their jobs since the middle of last year. New reports of additional layoffs and "temporary furloughs" continue to crop up.



On Jan. 16, for example, Motorola announced plans to eliminate 2,500 workers at a production plant in Harvard, Ill. An indefinite number of "old economy" auto workers at DaimlerChrysler's Jeep Cherokee plant in Kenosha, Wis., are slated to lose their jobs, as are an undisclosed number of "new economy" workers on the payroll of the 3Com Corp. in San Jose, Calif.

Many more instances could be cited—so many, in fact, that *The Industry Standard* suggests that "maybe the media has grown bored with reporting layoffs."

This confession of contempt for the majority and useful segment of the population, combined with the woeful ignorance that capitalism's "top thinkers" continue to display about how their precious system works is precisely what renders the ruling class, its "experts" and its politicians unfit to govern the nation and direct its affairs.

KENTUCKY—

Coal Sludge Buries Town

By Ken Boettcher

A time bomb went off near Inez, Ky., on Oct. 11 last year. It wasn't a time bomb planted by foreign terrorists avenging real or imagined injustice, but one placed by an even more fearful kind of terrorist. It was the work of the worst kind of terrorist—the kind who does their dirty work as a matter of routine—for profit.

The time bomb was a lagoon full of coal-mining sludge covering 72 acres. It contained 2.2 billion gallons of toxic soup—coal particles, dirt, rock, clay and heavy metals like mercury, lead and arsenic. This nightmarish mixture was "impounded" directly above at least two underground coal mines.

When an apparently automated conveyor belt hauling coal out of a nearby mine stopped, a computer operator monitoring it sent workers to investigate. Upon arriving at the scene, workers found the waste lake draining like water from a bathtub. From its main access point, the black liquid roared through concrete seals in abandoned mine shafts and carved out great chunks of landscape at their exit points—the mine entrances.

Two hundred fifty million gallons of toxic coal waste buried parts of Inez and the surrounding area up to eight

feet deep. The spill was more than 20 times the volume of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989.

"As the spill rolled into 100 miles of rivers and streams, clogging water-treatment plants and forcing schools, restaurants, laundries and a power plant to close before dispersing at the Ohio River, Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky...declared a 10-county state of emergency," *The New York Times* reported on Christmas Day.

"State fish and wildlife officials assumed a 'total kill' of fish along the Big Sandy River and some of its tributaries," the Lycos Environment News Service reported on Oct. 18. Cleanup of the mess will continue for months, if not years. Some of the toxins will remain, with unknown effects on public health. According to state and federal officials, the spill ranks as one of the Appalachian mountain region's worst environmental disasters.

The owner of the waste, Martin County Coal Co., a subsidiary of A.T. Massey Coal Co., claims the disaster was caused by "a sudden and unexpected underground mine collapse." Sudden it was. But it should not have been unexpected. As a Sierra Club spokesperson put it: "Coal companies and state and federal regulators have

known for years that coal slurry impoundments pose enormous risks to public safety and our water supplies."

They have, in fact, known for decades.

In 1972 a waste impoundment burst near Laredo, W.Va., disgorging 157 million gallons of coal slurry, burying more than 500 homes and killing 125 people. Even then it had been known for years that the impoundments threatened public safety. As *The People* observed at the time:

"In 1966, the U.S. Geological Survey conducted an investigation into the stability of mine-waste dams in Appalachia....The then secretary of the interior, Stewart Udall, sent a letter warning state and local officials that 26 of the 38 dams [in West Virginia alone] were dangerously unstable."

The Inez spill, a Sierra Club spokesperson declared in November, "makes crystal clear that coal waste impoundments can never be safely sited over or near underground mines."

Many similar time bombs are still ticking. According to a report by Environment News Service, one 1997 study reported that "there are 225 impoundments in [the] Appalachian region that are similar to the Martin

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KENTUCKY COAL WASTE DISASTER—

Why So Little News?

By Ken Boettcher

The Kentucky coal sludge disaster reported in another column happened last October. Does that make it old news? Not really.

The major media were filled for weeks in 1989 with coverage of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, but for weeks the much larger Kentucky disaster went almost unnoticed by the largest news organizations.

Why so little news about the Kentucky sludge spill?

Perhaps because the animal life devastated by the Exxon spill was more visible on the open beaches of Alaska than the frogs, fish, salamanders and other small animal life squelched by coal sludge in the wooded Appalachians.

Perhaps because sludge spills in Appalachia have never been big news.

Perhaps because the news media have become more used to the catastrophic consequences of the profit-motivated



Kentucky Department of Energy Management
Emergency pump sucking sludge from Coldwater Fork into waiting trucks. Note the sludge blanketing the bank.

rape of natural resources by private interests.

More likely, it had to do with the particular economic interests involved.

For tanker spills the "solution" has been double-hulled tankers. Many major oil companies were already on the road to replacing single-hulled with

double-hulled tankers when the *Exxon Valdez* disaster occurred.

Publicizing that spill may have hurt Exxon's image, but it did not adversely affect a whole industry that was, in any case, motivated by purely selfish profit interests to better protect their investment with better oil tankers.

Not so with coal. What "spilled" in Kentucky was not a marketable commodity that the industry needs to protect, but toxic waste to be disposed of in the cheapest possible way.

Toxins from coal sludge are slowly poisoning the nation's water supplies. The same toxins are present in coal ash from power plants. Yet, as an Associated Press report noted last year, "many states treat the waste with no more safeguards than normal garbage."

The Environmental Protection Agency steadfastly refuses to classify either coal sludge or ash as toxic waste. Yet both contain arsenic, lead, mercury and other heavy metals and toxic chemicals that no sane society would want left unprocessed, let alone in landfills near water supplies or in large lakes that can burst dams or mine seals.

Reclassifying coal sludge as toxic would subject the coal industry to cleanup costs for billions of gallons of toxic sludge.

The relative silence surrounding the massive coal sludge spill in Kentucky last year is part of the "natural order" of things under capitalism.

...Sludge Buries Town

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Coal Co. facility that failed...Nationwide, there are 653 such impoundments—241 of which were classified as 'high risk' in the 1997 study."

In the wake of the Inez disaster, the Sierra Club called for "an immediate prohibition on new coal waste impoundments, as well as a 'national commitment' to eliminate all 'high risk' coal impoundments." Moreover, it wants the U.S. Office of Surface Mining (OSM) to reclassify coal sludge as a hazardous waste. For its part, the U.S. Office of Surface Mining (OSM) has announced that it will reassess the safety of coal waste impoundments throughout the Appalachian region to "ensure that all program requirements for impoundments are being effectively implemented, and that maintenance and inventory records of permitted impoundments are up to date."

In short, the OSM promised to do the job it was charged with in the first place. It has dutifully charged the Martin

County Coal Co. with violation of its regulations, and the company has promised to "clean up" its mess. The OSM can no doubt be counted upon to conduct new studies of the problem, but it will not be part of the solution to it. Its whole history points to one conclusion. Likewise the history of every other agency charged with ensuring that safe and healthy procedures are followed in mining and the rest of capitalist industry: Such agencies are primarily window dressing created to give the appearance that "something is being done" to safeguard society from the ravages of the pirate class that privately owns the nation's industries. As agencies of the capitalist-controlled state, they are virtually useless as effective defenses against what Marx once called the "furies of private interest."

The People says the time for study is over. The problem is not just one renegade company. It is not a dozen such renegades. It is an economic system based on production for private profit and competition among cutthroat capitalist produc-

ers, a system geared to produce only "renegades" vis-à-vis the interests of the working-class majority.

It is in the economic interest of mine owners merely to dump the wastes they produce in unstable lagoons. Those wastes could be processed and injected into old mines, or safely disposed of otherwise. But the profit interests of the capitalist class prevent a scientific approach to waste disposal. They take the route least costly and thereby most profitable. Under constant threat of economic competition, those who do not put profits first do not survive in a "free market" ruled by those who do.

The SLP calls upon workers to recognize and act on the need—before more communities and lives are sacrificed on capitalism's altar of profit—to organize themselves politically and industrially to abolish capitalism, its useless agencies and entire political state, and to assume the collective ownership and democratic management of all the nation's industries and services.

NEW YORK—

The Poor & the Lawyers

By B.G.

Those workers who are called "professionals"—doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc.—often do not recognize that they are members of the working class just as much as the so-called blue-collar workers are. Some professionals are well-to-do independent operators, but many others are salaried workers and often are exploited, as are the hospital interns who work exceedingly long hours, and the lawyers employed at huge law factories, euphemistically called law firms.

There is another category of exploited lawyers, and those are lawyers in New York State who agree to represent the poor and who are paid by municipalities to handle family court cases involving child abuse and neglect, delinquency, domestic violence, child custody and foster care placement. Public defenders are also hired in criminal cases. Except for New Jersey, which is even more penurious in recompensing these legal defenders, New York is at the bottom of the pay scale in the whole country for the rate it pays for legal protection for the poor. New York's remuneration for these services is \$40 an hour for court time and \$25 an hour for out-of-court work—a rate that has existed since 1986. Any conscientious lawyer must spend many hours in careful research and

preparation before even entering a court. If he or she is serving one of these poor clients, the pay is never up-front but comes from the municipality only after the fact, meaning that the initial cost must be borne by the lawyer.

Contrast New York's remuneration with the \$90 an hour that a Southern state like Arkansas, where living costs are much cheaper, pays lawyers for the same services. Even Alabama and Louisiana pay these public defenders far more than New York State does.

New York City lawyers are now refusing to take new cases in Manhattan and Brooklyn, for they claim that they are losing, on an average, \$9.75 for each out-of-court hour spent on a case, and are netting only \$6.75 for each in-court hour.

A report by the court administration office notes that private lawyers that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority hires are paid more than \$250 an hour and New York City's Education Construction Fund pays the private lawyers it hires on average \$325 an hour for their legal services. Legal services for the poor are obviously considered of small importance, however.

New York State's chief judge, Judith S. Kaye, has appointed Judge Juanita Bing Newton to work on this problem of legal compensation. Judge Newton found that

there were no lawyers available for about half the days assigned for cases in Manhattan Family Court. Families are thus kept coming back to court until someone can be found to represent them.

Judge Kaye has also proposed \$75 an hour for both in-court and out-of-court work. But nei-

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Do You Belong?

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

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

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

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Nurses Seek Unionization In the Face of Rising Exploitation

By B.B.

Hospitals & Health Networks is a magazine published by the American Hospital Association, an industry group. As with any publication, the AHA's magazine is aimed at its readership, which, in this case, are the managers and administrators of hospitals.

The November issue featured an article that focused on a growth in prounion sentiment among nurses. Its purpose was to offer hospital managers and administrators advice on how to cope with and defuse that sentiment.

The article, "Norma Rae, R.N.," was written by Gloria Shur Bilchik, who was identified as a "free-lance writer based in St. Louis."

"Nurses are finding a voice through unions," Bilchik observed, somewhat superfluously. "They're raising the ante in their relationships with health care institutions," she added in way of grabbing the managerial imagination. Then she popped the question: "Are you paying attention?"

No doubt most who administer and manage hospitals are "paying attention." Those few who may be oblivious to what is going on beneath their overseeing noses probably should be dumped by the corporations and stockholders who count on them to keep the profits rolling in.

However, Bilchik's aim was not to shake a lethargic minority from their reverie; rather, it was to serve up some useful information on how to deal with nurses who may be thinking about forming their own union, or about inviting in an established one.

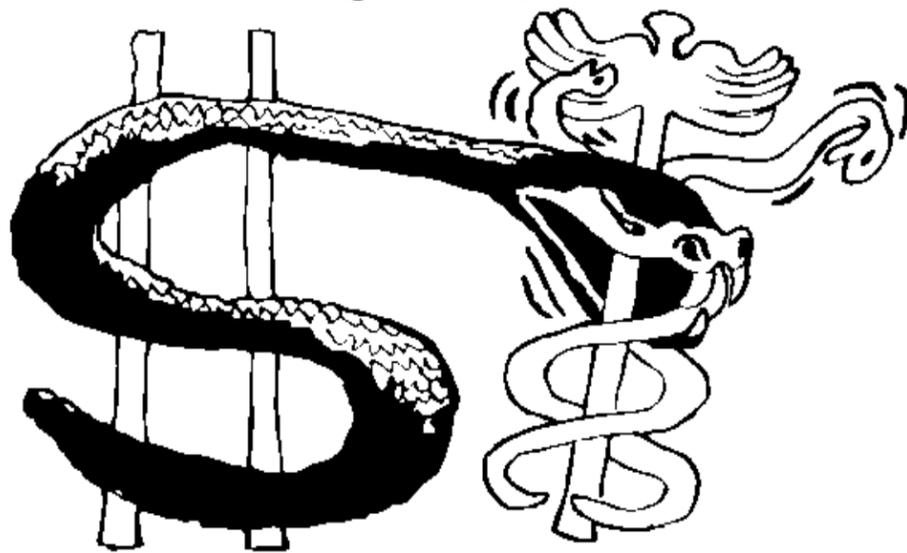
Indeed, her article was built around statements by managers and administrators whose experience at least appeared to qualify them to offer advice to the inexperienced or the inept.

Bilchik cited several individuals whose experience she believed qualified them to offer advice to others in the field.

Mary Wakefield of George Mason University's Center for Health Policy and Ethics said: "Each side faces its own pressures, and nurses are having a tougher time seeing the shared mission."

Attorney John Lynchski of Cohen & Grigsby, a Pittsburgh, Pa., law firm, observed:

"If your hospital is facing an organizing drive, there's a reason for it. Industrywide there's a very large communication, credibility and trust gap between registered



nurses and upper administration. In the past year, I've been involved in five organizing campaigns involving nurses. In every one, it came down to nurses wanting a voice and priority attention paid to their issues."

However, hospital operators aren't the only ones who are concerned by the growth of discontent and militance among the country's 2.6 million nurses, nor were they alone among those that Ms. Bilchik cited in her advice column. The unions that 'represent' about 17 percent of that number are also concerned. They, too, are looking for ways in which to defuse what they also perceive to be a potentially explosive situation. Hence, they are equally eager to find ways to smooth over differences between nurses and their employers. They are looking for new ways to "collaborate" and "cooperate" with the same administrators and managers whose policies have created the problems nurses and other health care workers are increasingly rebelling against. Hence Ms. Bilchik could add United American Nurses union executive director Susan Bianchi-Sand to the experienced authorities hospital managers might look to for advice.

"Nurses are finding their voice through unionization" and will "be more militant if things don't begin to improve on the patient floors," said Ms. Bianchi-Sand.

"They see themselves working in a very hostile environment. They feel respected by the public, but not by their employers."

Indeed, the "pressures" that hospital owners and their bureaucratic administrators face cause the "pressures" that nurses face. As capitalist institutions, hospitals are driven to increase profits, destroy their competitors and gain market share.

Hospital profits, unlike industrial profits, do not depend directly on what workers produce. Unlike the factory, the mill or the mine, where concrete wealth is produced, hospitals do not create wealth. They provide a service. Their profits come from collecting fees that represent preexisting wealth. Whether that preexisting wealth is represented by the wages of workers in need of hospital care, or by the profits of capitalists who find themselves in the same situation, does not concern those who profit from the medical needs of people, regardless of their class status or source of income. Whether those fees are collected directly from those who require their services or indirectly through insurance payments of some sort makes no difference.

Nonetheless, the services that hospitals sell qualify as commodities, and the workers employed by them—whether they are nurses, physicians, ambulance drivers, maintenance, culinary or janitori-

al workers—are exploited. They are robbed of a share of the wealth that society must necessarily devote to the services without which it would be impossible for any complex social system to survive—services such as communications, education, sanitation, transportation, etc.

Under "managed care," the euphemism selected to mask the current system of health care plunder, intolerable strains and hostility have increased as workers across the health care industry engage in a tug-of-war pitting shrinking wages, benefits and increased time against swelling hospital profits. Hence, the needs of capitalist institutions are irreconcilable with those of the working class.

However, this apparently is not the way union spokeswoman Bianchi-Sand sees things. According to Bilchik, Bianchi-Sand declared:

"There are a lot of opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between nurses and administrations. People don't go on strike easily. After all, they're putting their jobs, their paychecks and their families on the line."

This is precisely what hospital owners and their administrators and managers bank on in negotiating sessions and what makes the contractual basis of labor agreements a mockery. Workers' utter dependence on their wages negates all but the pretense of "equality" between employees and their employers at the bargaining table. This is what places Bianchi-Sand and her "union," willy-nilly, into the ranks of labor fakery, for there are no opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between exploiters and exploited.

While a powerful inclination toward collective opposition and unity appears to be growing among nurses and other health care workers, the Service Employees International Union can still claim only 100,000 registered nurses nationally, while United American Nurses of the American Nurses Association claims another 100,000. That total of 200,000 comes to less than 8 percent of the estimated 2.6 million registered nurses nationwide. Nonetheless, 200,000 nurses properly organized could become a powerful force for unity among all workers within the health care industry if that potentially powerful force was grounded on the knowledge of the irreconcilability of the interests of workers and capitalists, the exploited and exploiters.

Rumsfeld's Campaign For National Missile Defense

By Diane Secor

Donald Rumsfeld is President George W. Bush's choice to be secretary of defense. Bush's designee was also secretary of defense during the Ford administration.

Rumsfeld has been a leading advocate of a national missile defense. This NMD system would be designed to shoot down missiles that so-called rogue states might aim at the United States.

However, as a member of the board of directors of Asea Brown Boveri Ltd. (ABB), a multinational engineering firm based in Switzerland, Rumsfeld evidently had no problem selling nuclear reactors to some of those same "rogue states," such as North Korea, or to countries he now names as arming other "rogues" with missile technology.

These days, according to a Reuters report, Rumsfeld "consider[s] the United States increasingly vulnerable to ballistic missile attack from countries including North Korea, Iran and Iraq." (Dec. 29) The Bush designee has also indicated that China and North Korea were among these exporters of missile technology to nations that could target the United States. In 1998, Rumsfeld led a "bipartisan commission" that "concluded that U.S. intelligence had underestimated the threat of missiles that could be tipped with nuclear, chemical or biological warheads" from "rogue states." This, apparently, is Rumsfeld's new-found rationale for

building a new NMD system.

From his position at ABB, however, Rumsfeld apparently did not see China and North Korea as such grave threats to the security of the United States that the company could not sell nuclear technology to those countries. Three years ago, for example, the *Christian Science Monitor* reported:

"With Canadian, Russian and French



companies ahead in the race for contracts, United States firms such as Westinghouse, General Electric and ABB Combustion Engineering Nuclear Systems [were] clamoring for President Clinton to use [the] summit with Chinese leader Jiang Zemin to end a 12-year-old ban on U.S. nuclear-technology sales to Beijing." (Oct. 28, 1997)

More recently, on Dec. 2, the Associated press reported that "ABB said...it had received orders worth \$200 million to deliver equipment and services to two 1,000-megawatt nuclear power stations being built in North Korea under a 1994 agreement" which was brokered by the Clinton administration.

The new Bush administration has pledged to develop the NMD system even though some observers see it as being a

clear violation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia. Russia, China, and even U.S. allies in Europe, are strongly opposed to a U.S. NMD. These nations do not see this NMD as a purely defensive weapon designed to protect the United States from a missile attack from some "rogue" regime. Their fear is that the United States would be in a position to launch a nuclear first strike without facing the risk of retaliation. This, in turn, might cause Russia, China and/or other nations to build missiles that could penetrate the NMD system, triggering a new international arms race.

Then why build a NMD? The answer is profit. According to Reuters, William Hartung of the World Policy Institute "called Rumsfeld's appointment a 'great victory for the Star Wars lobby.' Boeing Co. has a three-year \$2.2 billion contract to tie together the system's main components. Subcontractors include Raytheon Co. on radars and the 'kill vehicle,' TRW Inc. on command and control, and Lockheed Martin Corp. on the initial booster."

As far as the Rumsfelds of the system are concerned, there is no basic contradiction in American corporations selling nuclear technology and reactors to a China or a North Korea, while claiming that exports of nuclear or missile technology to "rogue states" is a terrible danger to the United States. The "solution" is to build a multibillion-dollar missile shield, thereby generating even higher profits for capitalists such as Rumsfeld's friends and associates at ABB.

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Ashcroft's Record

Opposition is building to the nomination of the ultraconservative former U.S. senator, state governor and attorney general from Missouri, John Ashcroft, for the Cabinet position of U.S. attorney general under the incoming Bush administration. But opposition to Ashcroft may well be primarily outside the Senate, which alone is responsible for the vote that will either approve or prevent him from assuming that office.

The question of who occupies the office of U.S. attorney general is an important one. The attorney general is not only the chief federal law enforcer. The holder of that office is also supposed to be the primary protector of the individual and collective rights and liberties guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. The views of any nominee for attorney general on such matters as civil liberties, civil rights, democracy, justice, etc., should therefore be of prime interest to all citizens.

Much to the displeasure of Ashcroft's supporters, files of news clippings, speeches and votes cast by archconservative Ashcroft are readily available. The campaign manager of Missouri's late Gov. Mel Carnahan, Marc Farinella, gathered the information to aid Carnahan's bid to unseat Ashcroft after one term in the U.S. Senate.

Exposing Ashcroft's reactionary record to the light of day worked well for Carnahan—he won the seat despite his death three weeks before the election!

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Farinella's information is available on the Web at www.opposeashcroft.com and at www.pfaw.org, the site of the liberal group People for the American Way, with whom Farinella has shared his files. Documents available there show that:

Ashcroft opposes affirmative action laws and other antidiscrimination programs. He received an honorary degree from and has spoken at Bob Jones University, which is known for its racist policies. As Missouri attorney general and governor, Ashcroft opposed both federally ordered school desegregation and voluntary city-suburb desegregation.

He is the "author and primary promoter of 'charitable choice,' a campaign to turn federal dollars and social programs over to churches and religious organizations that would not have to comply with antidiscrimination requirements or other forms of federal accountability." Ashcroft "supports vouchers to divert tax dollars from public schools to religious schools"

and "backs a constitutional amendment that would allow public schools to subject students to captive audience prayer."

He opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, voted against the proposed Hate Crimes Prevention Act, voted against the proposed Employment Nondiscrimination Act, voted to halt funding for gay community health centers that treated men, women and children with HIV or AIDS, and voted to ban all abortions except those required to prevent the death of the mother or baby—with no exception for victims of rape or incest or for women whose health might be seriously or permanently harmed by a pregnancy. Ashcroft stands against the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision and has proposed federal legislation and a constitutional amendment that could be "invoked to ban common forms of contraception."

He has "introduced legislation to undercut efforts to limit emissions of manmade greenhouse gasses." He voted "to roll back clean water protections and prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from enforcing arsenic standards for drinking water," "to allow chemical companies to avoid compliance with community 'right to know' laws so they would not have to report on emissions of some toxic pollution," "to allow mining companies to dump cyanide and other mining waste on large areas of public lands next to mining sites," "to make it easier for developers to seek to overturn local zoning laws in federal court," and "against additional funding for environmental programs including the Clean Water Action Plan and toxic waste clean-ups at Superfund sites."

It would be illuminating to hear Ashcroft explain how such a record qualifies him to be the nation's chief law enforcement officer—or how that record demonstrates a commitment to the fundamental rights and liberties that are the hallmarks of a democratic society.

But then, in the capitalist United States, the installation of heads of departments and agencies of government is primarily a function of the ruling class. Those nominated to be heads of government departments or agencies are judged qualified or unqualified not on the basis of their dedication to democratic principles or their record of service to the people, but on the basis of their demonstrated dedication to the capitalist state and to the overall interests of the class that owns and controls the economy.

John Ashcroft's record shows a dedication to the most reactionary elements of the ruling class, and a record of service to both those elements and the overall economic interests of that class.

Whether this record will keep him out of the attorney general's office remains to be seen. As Sen. Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-Del.) recently observed with regard to the Ashcroft controversy, the Senate "traditionally" does not oppose its own. As servants of capitalist-class interests themselves, a majority in the Senate may well recognize in Ashcroft the same steadfast devotion to capitalism they themselves evince, and confirm his nomination despite what they may regard as minor differences they have with him on such "trivial" matters as civil rights and liberties and separation of church and state.

—K.B.

A De Leon Editorial

Reform the Exploiter?

It can't be done. The requirement is the establishment of a society in which there will be no exploiters.



Not Morals, But Systems

(Daily People, March 14, 1910)

It is so much easier to fly off at a tangent than to hit the correct path, it is so much less laborious to put forth a little impulsive effort than to submit to the restraint and discipline necessary for the carrying on of a large and effective work, that it is surprising there are not on foot more schemes than there are to convert, humanize, Christianize, what-not-ize the employer—anything but abolish him.

Capitalism is all right, runs the siren song of these humanizers, etc.; it is all right for some to be wealthy and some to be poor, for some to work hard and some to do nothing; only the thing should not be carried to extremes; we should teach the employer to be a Christian, to be less hard on his men.

Precisely such a move was started in Chicago a short time ago, leveled at the head of William C. Thorne, vice president of Montgomery Ward & Co., the big mail-order house, with exploiters running up into the thousands.

And promptly and properly comes Vice President Thorne back with the statement:

"That men—men who have families to support and children to bring up—should be forced to work for \$12 a week is

deplorable. It is impossible to do justice to one's children, to one's wife or to one's self when one's income is only that much. It is hardly possible to live decently on \$12 a week when one has no one but one's self to take care of. But \$12 a week is a wage that thousands upon thousands work for. Hundreds of houses in this city don't pay even that much.

"It is a universal condition and Montgomery Ward & Co. are no more free from it than are other business establishments. The condition holds us in its grip and we must yield to it. It would be suicide with the keen competition prevailing for any business firm to undertake singly to pay its employees more than other firms in the field do."

For frankness this certainly leaves nothing to be desired; also for tellingness. It proves, from the culprit's own mouth, that it is useless to try to reform him; that he must be relentlessly excised, along with the conditions which breed him.

Try to reform the employer, and love's labor's lost; abolish the employing class, and your labor bears fruit. Attempt to change morals under the system, you are trying to sweep back the river; abolish the system, and morals change of themselves. Not morals, but systems, is the point of attack.

255075100 years ago

Do 'We' Commit Atrocities?

(Weekly People, Feb. 3, 1951)

An atrocity, according to the dictionary meaning of the word, is an act that is savagely brutal, or outrageously cruel or wicked.

The first meaning comes well within the recognized definition of war as organized terror. The second meaning is restricted in its application by both sides in any war to the deeds of the "other side."

A Jan. 16 United Press dispatch from Korea may be used to illustrate the semantics (or word juggling) of atrocities.

Gene Symonds, a UP war correspondent, reported his personal observations of the result of the order to American servicemen to "shoot anything that moves."

Some 5,000 Korean refugees had been trudging along a stretch of road examined by Mr. Symonds on Jan. 15. U.S. air observers reported that Chinese soldiers were shedding their clothes and mingling with columns of refugees. The refugees were strafed from the air.

"I didn't see any dead soldiers yesterday," reported Mr. Symonds. "That of course does not mean they were not there. They might have been some of the men I saw who had been shot. They might have been taken away or buried by their comrades. I don't know. This is just one spot on one road in Korea. There are many more I haven't seen."

Of the group of 5,000 refugees, "there were a few dozen dead. Perhaps a few Chinese or Korean Communists were killed." "Blankets and children's clothes, bits of clothing and small tots' articles were strewn along the road in confusion. At one place I saw a tiny red baby cap with something in it in the mud. I didn't see the baby. Some of the refugees were frozen to death, others were ripped to pieces." A mother had been feeding her baby when "death struck from the sky." When Mr. Symonds saw her body, it lay sprawling beside the road leading into

Osan. "One breast was bared to the winter wind and her arms were frozen in the position she last held her baby. Next to her in a snow bank was the baby, swaddled in rags, its frozen face peering out."



"The mother and child were only two of the many refugees killed along the road leading into battered Osan, which American forces captured Monday." The bodies were dragged to the side of the road "so they would not be crushed by advancing American tanks and vehicles."

The American forces' treatment of the Korean refugees was certainly "savagely brutal." It may therefore be described, by dictionary definition, as an atrocity. But, as noted, only the "other side" can be accused of committing atrocities. If the armed forces of the Chinese and North Korean Stalinists had strafed refugees, the U.S. propaganda machine would have shocked the American public with the news of their "outrageously cruel or wicked" conduct. As it is, the propagandists of Russian state despotism have the advantage. U.S. capitalism, if it were forced to explain, would be limited to the explanation that the strafing of the refugees was an act of "military necessity."

A PAGE FROM WORKING-CLASS HISTORY—

British SLP Led Famous Clydebank Singer Strike

Visit the Web site of the Singer Manufacturing Corp. (www.singer-co.com) and you will find that 2001 is the 150th anniversary of the world's largest and best known manufacturer of sewing machines and sewing products. You will find a historical sketch of the company that will tell you that I.M. Singer, in regulation Horatio Alger fashion, started his company at Troy, N. Y., "with borrowed capital of \$40...." You will also find that, "In 1867, Singer became the first multinational industrial company [by] manufacturing sewing machines in Glasgow, Scotland."

What you will not find, however, is one word about the working men and women whose labor built Singer into what it is today, about the conditions under which they labored, or about why 12,000 workers at Singer's mammoth Kilbowie factory at Clydeside near Glasgow finally went on strike nearly 90 years ago, in March 1911.

The Kilbowie Singer strike of 1911 ranks as one of the most important episodes in the history of the labor or socialist movement. It was one of the first to take on a major international corporation. It was conducted along industrial union lines, as distinct from the craft union lines typified in this country by the AFL-CIO and its affiliates. Indeed, it was conducted by the Industrial Workers of Great Britain (IWGB) and the De Leonist Socialist Labor Party of Great Britain. As the Glasgow Labour History Workshop summed it up in its 1987 booklet, *The Singer Strike: Clydebank, 1911*:

"The confrontation itself, we believe, was characterized by remarkable solidarity between the workforce—divisions



The Singer plant in Clydebank, Scotland, as it appeared in 1934.

based on occupation, skill, gender, religion and locality being submerged during the strike. The philosophy of the industrial unionists played a part here. Along with the Socialist Labour Party, they helped to raise levels of class consciousness and were instrumental in organising and directing the escalating struggle. Their call for working class solidarity was encapsulated in their slogan, 'An injury to one is an injury to all.'

As noted in the first selection reprinted in this issue, "Industrial Union Activity at Kilbowie," the SLP of Great Britain was instrumental in establishing the British Advocates of Industrial Unionism, the group that ultimately became the IWGB. It should also be noted that the IWGB was patterned after the original Industrial Workers of the World founded at Chicago in

1905 and that the IWGB, unlike the anarchist element widely associated with the IWW name since 1908, accepted the need for political organization and activity.

Similarly, it should be noted that the SLPGB established along Marxist-De Leonist lines in 1903 has no historical or other connection to the so-called Socialist Labour Party in Britain today. The De Leonist SLPGB went out of existence in the 1960s.

Over the next few months, *The People* will commemorate the anniversary of the Kilbowie strike with a series of reprints from *The Socialist*, which was the official journal of the SLPGB. We begin with two articles from the April 1911 issue that give some background on the IWGB and on conditions at the Singer plant before the historic strike began on March 21, 1911.

—Editor

INDUSTRIAL UNION ACTIVITY AT KILBOWIE.

On the front page of the October, 1905, issue *The Socialist*, appeared the following declaration:—

"I.W.W.

"The following fraternal message has been sent by the Executive to the Industrial Workers of the World:—

"We, the N.E.C. of the Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain, hail with unqualified approval the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World at Chicago, June 27, 1905, and pledge ourselves to work incessantly for the formation and success of the British wing of that movement in place of the British so-called Trade Unions, based as these are on capitalist principles."

The publishers of the Report of the Chicago foundation meeting of the I.W.W. state, quite rightly, that the students of economics and sociology, in the years to come, will find the record of that Convention a landmark from which to date the great forward movement of the Labour Movement in America. It is a historic affair the importance of which will be more and more recognised as economic development thrusts forward the working class of all countries, and impresses upon it that its great mission is to hew down those intoler-

able barriers of class ownership that prevent humanity from entering into its just inheritance, viz., that legacy of Knowledge and Wealth within which is embodied the immortality of its forbears, being as it is, the result of the combined social labour of generations untold.

The Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain recognised the great importance of that Chicago Convention, and has, since its declaration quoted above, worked hard to bring into being the British section of the I.W.W. While the S.D.P. were expelling members for advocating Industrial Unionism, and were engaged in striking it off their Conference agendas, and while the I.L.P. were throwing dirty water on the efforts of their few advanced members to bring Industrial Unionism into I.L.P. advocacy, the S.L.P. was struggling against great odds in the carrying out of the pledge it gave to the advanced section of the American working class. Owing to its efforts Industrial Unionism has become a force in the British Labour Movement, and it has been made known to almost every large village and town of the British Isles. Its propaganda called into being the "British Advocates of Industrial Unionism," it had a good deal to do with making ripe the times for the formation of the more definite "Industrial Workers of Great Britain," and

it influenced, in no small way, the throwing out of the "amalgamation of unions by industries" sop by the union officials at the last Trades Union Congress, to satisfy the discontented craft union dues payers.

The formation of the "Advocates" and of the higher "Industrial Workers of Great Britain" are landmarks in the British Labour Movement. They testify to the growth of class consciousness and mark the period at which the British working class garbed itself in a new role and let go of the old ideas which were born of past institutions. When their history comes to be written, the S.L.P. should find a place in it as the one party who fought for the principles of Industrial Unionism while the others were wandering and crying in the "reform" wilderness.

Nowhere more than in Scotland has the S.L.P. waged the fight and drove the principles of Industrial Unionism home, and in the formation of the Singers' Industrial Union Group it played no small part. We have pleasure in producing below a report of the recent activities of that Group, and believe that to the Singer Factory Industrial Unionists belongs the honour of carrying through the first Industrial Union struggle in Great Britain, and we congratulate them on the result of their fight.

—*The Socialist*, April 1911

SINGERS' INDUSTRIAL UNION GROUP AT WORK

Points Gained by the Workers

SINGERS' Sewing Machine Factory is one of the most modern factories that we have in this country. Here the method of producing sewing machines has become a fine art, and, coupled with the extensive mechanical improvements which have been effected, there has been a great deal of speeding up and breaking of prices—all for the purpose of turning out 176 per cent dividends.

The workers in this factory have, up till

the formation of the Group, had no form of organisation by which they could meet the ruthless speeding up and breaking of the "piece" rates. Once Trade Unionism tried many years ago, but failed (one of the heid yins is now a gafter,) and it was declared that these men were *unorganisable*. The Industrial Unionists have given the lie to that statement. Given a sound form of organisation and an example of the fighting spirit of that organisation, these men and women are now joining by the hundred. But let me give the history of the Group.

About five and a half years ago four or

five Industrial Unionists in the factory started a steady propaganda among their fellow workers by selling pamphlets, *The Socialist*, and distributing leaflets. For about four years little fruit was seen, but after a visit by a member of the Glasgow S.L.P. to the factory gate during the election of January 1910, it was thought that the time had arrived when an Industrial Union Group should be formed, and for this purpose a meeting was called, at which 18 attended, and on 29th January, 1910, The Sewing Machine Workers' Industrial Union Group was formed. During the eleven months of

its existence several propaganda meetings were held at the Factory gates, and thousands of leaflets were distributed; also many pamphlets were sold. When, in December, we decided by ballot of members to become affiliated to the Industrial Workers of Great Britain, we had 150 members. Since then our numbers have continued to increase, but the actual work of the Group was not known until occasion arrived which demanded that the workers should shew a solid front to the enemy. This came in the beginning of February, when the Foreman of No. 10 Department reorganised the squad who were employed assembling the I.M. machine and reduced the prices, making it impossible for the men to make their usual wage. Indeed, they would have had to handle 800 more machines (20 tons weight) to receive 1/9d. less per week. But the whole squad, 16 in number, refused to do it, and when the foreman saw the men were determined, he cancelled the break. Now, this is something that never happened before. Usually these breaks had been taken lying down, but we were at the dawn of a new era in the history of the Kilbowie factory. The result of this action was that about 60 of the men in this Department joined the Group, and from all over the factory applications came for membership; truly we were beginning to reap the fruits of our labours.

The foreman was not yet done with the I.M. squad, and on the 18th February he intimated a reduction of 1d. per 100. This time he did not take defeat so easily. When the men went to him he told them that they would have to accept the reduction or get out, and more, if they went out, they should never enter the factory again. Here I may say that these men had not consulted the Shop Committee before taking action, probably they thought that our numbers would not justify our taking action, so, under these conditions, we decided to call a meeting of the whole Department at the dinner hour, but this plan was upset when the foreman approached two Industrial Unionists and asked them to go on to this job. This they refused to do, and, thinking it was all up with them, they put on their coats. Our Shop Committee saw that the time had now arrived for action, so we decided to go out, and every man in the Department but 20 came with us (about 400). Of these 20, 8 were underforemen and 10 were fitters. A meeting was held immediately in the Clydebank S.L.P. Rooms. Here we gathered all the necessary information regarding the dispute, and found two other squads with a grievance—one of them a week old. A deputation then waited on the foreman with the demand that these breaks should be rectified. He at once told us that these new prices were cancelled, pending investigation by the management; stating, further, that none of the men would suffer financial loss through any arrangement that might take place. This was on condition that the men would start work on the following morning. Before the men started the next morning, the Shop Committee again met him, to be clear whether the men on the 31K machine would have the wages which they had been short of made up or not. He said that they would, and the following Saturday they were paid the shortage.

On the day upon which we returned to work, the I.M. turners' prices were advanced one halfpenny per 100. This enabled them to make their usual wages.

This was a start, and since then the men all over the factory have taken up a different attitude. They are out to fight, and are lining up in the Group by the hundreds.

Since then, in Department 13A (Buffing), where, during the last two years, there has been callous speeding up and reorganisation, there has been more trouble. About 16 men, who are employed on a particular plate, had been speeded up almost to breaking point. Then, quite unexpectedly, the men were told that they

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... Singer Strike

(Continued from page 5)

would receive 1/ more per hundred, as a higher standard of work was desired. This standard the men gave, and now that the quality of work that had been wanted was given, the 1/ was deducted from the price, while the same standard was demanded. A meeting of the squad was then held, the men decided to fight, and two of their number were sent to interview the foreman. The interview concluded with the foreman stating that he would give his decision on Monday. (This happened on Thursday.)

It has long been the custom for this firm to waste time and put the men off on the slightest pretext. However, the delegates delivered their message, and the men decided that to delay the matter would do them no good, so, assured that they had the support of the whole of the men in the Department, they sent the delegates once more to the foreman. The delegates this time demanded that an immediate decision be given, and though on the previous visit the men had been told that Monday was the earliest that a decision could be given, the foreman said they should get it the following morning. His reason, he said, was that his power was limited. Meanwhile the Shop Committee had not been idle. Posting the members on the situation, the news travelled like wildfire, and the Department was soon in a state of effervescing enthusiasm, and had the word been said, almost the whole Department would have walked out. The following morning, about 8 A.M., the foreman came into the Department, and, ignoring the delegates, went to the understrapper of the squad and informed him that he would give them the 1/ for another month's trial. The men immedi-

ately met, and came to the decision that they would have a permanent rise or make a fight for it. Accordingly, the delegates went to the foreman with the men's demands, and he conceded, saying that he was sorry to deprive them of a holiday.

This is not all; the men are now following the example which has been set, and several fights have been fought in a like manner. One in particular I would like to give.

In Department 16 (Building Department) there is a "policeman" walking the floor, and of late he has been the means of several men being suspended for a few days, but on Saturday, 11th March, the members in this Department thought that things had gone far enough, and as one of their number had been suspended for an indefinite period, they decided that no work would be done on the Monday until he had been reinstated. Accordingly, on the Monday none of the men in the Department started work, and a deputation waited on the foreman, who at once gave orders that the man was to be informed that he could start the following morning, also stating that no men would be suspended through the "policeman" again. This was what the men desired, as this "policeman" has been a source of much discontent. Now he is without power.

These incidents have had their effect, for from being a small Group of 250 at the time of the first encounter, we are now 1,500 strong. We had spread the principle, we only needed to shew that what we preached we could practice. It has opened the eyes of many of our I.L.P. and S.D.P. friends, who used to sit on the fence and smile at our efforts; it has given the direct lie to the statement that we would never get the men to act as we wanted

them to act. It shews that the working class are only waiting for the proper form of organisation to rise in their might and overthrow the capitalist system. So now it is up to all of us who believe in the principles of Industrial Unionism to see to it that they are given the proper lead, and I am sure that the spirit that is now being shewn by the "Singer wage-slaves" is the spirit of the whole working class.

Soon we shall see the working class throughout the country recognising, like the workers of Clyde valley, that they have one common enemy, and that their only hope lies in the Ownership of the tools of Production.

Let me say before I finish that I believe that one of the questions on our application form, viz., "Do you believe that the condition of the working class cannot be permanently improved under Capitalism, and that therefore, Socialism is their only hope?" has caused more discussion on what Socialism is than all the propaganda that has been carried on by the quack reform parties.

The outlook is hopeful, and the action of the "Singer wage-slaves" is causing the workers in all the other industries to wake up. With an organiser on the field and the *Industrial Unionist* set agoing again, I am sure that we would go forward with leaps and bounds. This the opponents of Industrial Unionism know, and in one of their Club Rooms they organised a meeting for the purpose of trying to get at the Buffers and Grinders, but at that meeting there turned up 16—3 were buffers. Fourteen of the 16 were members of the Group,—result, no *trade* union for buffers and grinders here. Industrial Unionism has come to stay.

GEO. MALCOLM, Secy.
—*The Socialist*, April 1911

... Poor & Lawyers

(Continued from page 2)

ther her lobbying of the state officials nor pressure by bar groups has brought any response from these state officials, including the state's governor, George Pataki, who evidently consider the poor and oppressed families these defenders have represented to be of little concern, for they lack both money and political power. State officials so far have been unwilling to provide extra funds to recompense the private lawyers who defend these unfortunates.

Of the 30 cases a day that New York City's family courts receive that require assigned counsel, only a small minority are taken by such private organizations as Safe Horizon and the Legal Aid Society. The private lawyers called upon to defend these cases are overwhelmed. Last year Manhattan had 28,098 new family court cases and Brooklyn had 59,061. Because of these desperate conditions, lawyers who represent the poor in the city are refusing to take new cases unless their compensation is increased.

A lawyers' strike thus appears to be looming.

Even more significant, however, is the truth that this situation reveals. People who are down at the bottom of the social and financial heap are of scant concern to the state's power structure. Those who care about defending these unfortunates are also not considered worthy of sufficient compensation for their labors. "Equal Justice Under Law" is a slogan that applies only to those who have enough wealth to be able to afford equality.

Thanks

A few months ago, The People reported that the National Executive Committee of the SLP had called upon all supporters of the party to raise a special fund to help beat back the wolf from the party's door. To accomplish the purpose, a goal of \$25,000 was established for The People's annual Thanksgiving Fund. Last month we were able to report that the party's supporters had responded to our appeal with contributions that amounted to \$23,890.18. Since then, as shown below, an additional \$1,271 for the fund was received, bringing the total to \$25,161.18. That in itself was a gratifying response that attests to the

open-handed generosity of those who recognize the importance of the SLP and its work. Moreover, SLP members and other supporters turned around to contribute an additional \$4,493.51 to the annual Christmas Box appeal, which brought the grand total for the two funds to \$29,654.69.

We are extremely grateful for this show of support, and we will do everything within our power to show our appreciation through our work on The People and in other ways.

As for the wolf, we know that beating it back is not the same as making it go away. It is certain to return, as greedy as ever, and no doubt it will be necessary to ask for your assistance in beating it off again in the not too distant future. In the meantime, however, all who contributed to the

Thanksgiving and Christmas Box Funds can share in the great satisfaction that we take from the knowledge that there are many dedicated men and women who are as determined as we are to see the SLP and The People continue their important work for as long as necessary.

—Editor

Thanksgiving Fund

(Total: \$1,271)

Daniel Deneff "In memory of John Reynolds," \$200; \$100 each Roy K. Nelson, Joseph Bregni, Glenn Schelin, Earl Prochaska; \$50 each J. Blesington, Harvey K. Fuller; \$25 each William Kelley, Stanley W. Tuttle, Roger Caron, Richard R. Farrell, Phillip Colligan, Peter Teeuwissen,

(Continued on page 7)

activities

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

OHIO

North Royalton

Social—The members of Section Cleveland will hold a social on Sunday, Feb. 25, at the Burns residence, 9626 York Rd., N. Royalton. Begins 1 p.m. Refreshments will be served. For more information, please call 440-237-7933.

OREGON

Portland

Discussion Meetings—Section Portland holds discussion meetings every second Saturday of the month. Meetings are usually

held at the Central Library, but the exact time varies. For more information please call Sid at 503-226-2881 or visit our Web site at <http://slp.pdx.home.mind-spring.com>. The general public is invited.

TEXAS

Houston

Discussion Meetings—The SLP group in Houston holds discussion meetings the last Saturday of the month at the Houston Public Library, Franklin Branch, 6440 W. Bellfort, southwest Houston. The time of the meetings varies. Those interested please call 713-721-9296, e-mail reds1964@netzero.net or visit the group's Web site at <http://home.beseen.com/politics/houstonslp>.

Steps You Can Take...

You can help provide for the long-term financial security of *The People* by including a properly worded provision in your Will or by making some other financial arrangement through your bank. Write to the Socialist Labor Party, publisher of *The People*, for a free copy of the booklet, *Steps You Can Take*. Use this coupon.

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Socialist Labor Party, P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218 02/01

... Electors

(Continued from page 1)

candidate for vice president, Thomas Watson, instead voted for the Democratic vice presidential candidate, Arthur Sewall. Watson ended up with only 27 electoral votes instead of the 31 he expected.

8. In 1912, all eight Republican electors pledged to vote for James S. Sherman, but since he died on Oct. 30, they instead all voted for Nicholas Murray Butler.

9. In 1948, two Tennessee electors were nominated by two parties (Democratic and States Rights), each with a different presidential candidate (the Democratic Party of Tennessee foolishly nominated them early in the year, before the party split in July). Both said that if elected they would vote for Strom Thurmond. They were elected, but only one voted for Thurmond; the other voted for Truman.

10. In 1956, an Alabama Democratic elector refused to vote for Adlai Stevenson for president and instead voted for Walter B. Jones, an Alabama judge.

11. In 1960, an Oklahoma Republican elector refused to vote for Richard Nixon and instead voted for Harry F. Byrd

of Virginia.

12. In 1968, a North Carolina Republican elector refused to vote for Richard Nixon and instead voted for George Wallace.

13. In 1972, a Virginia Republican elector refused to vote for Nixon and instead voted for the Libertarian presidential candidate, John Hospers.

14. In 1976, a Washington Republican refused to vote for Gerald Ford and instead voted for Ronald Reagan.

15. In 1988, a West Virginia Democrat refused to vote for Michael Dukakis for president and instead voted for the party's vice presidential candidate, Lloyd Bentsen, for president.

16. On Dec. 18, one elector from Washington, D.C., refused to vote for Al Gore. Instead, she abstained to protest that the District of Columbia has no voting member in Congress. It was the first time since 1832 that any elector had failed to vote for anyone. That year, two Maryland electors elected to vote for Henry Clay, didn't vote.

*Richard Winger, publisher and editor of *Ballot Access News*, maintains a Web site at www.ballot-access.org.

directory

USA

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

NATIONAL OFFICE, SLP, P.O. Box 218, Mtn. View, CA 94042-0218; (408) 280-7266; fax (408) 280-6964; e-mail: socialists@slp.org; Web site: www.slp.org

ALBANY, N.Y.

SLP, P.O. Box 105, Sloansville, NY 12160-0105.

CHICAGO

SLP, P.O. Box 642, Skokie, IL 60076-0642.

CLEVELAND

Robert Burns, 9626 York Rd., N. Royalton, OH 44133. Call (440) 237-7933. E-mail: j.oneil@worldnet.att.net

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEX.

Call (512) 991-0287.

DALLAS

Call Bernie at (972) 458-2253.

DENVER

Call (303) 426-5108.

DULUTH

For information, call Rudy Gustafson at (218) 728-3110.

EASTERN MASS.

Call (781) 444-3576.

HOUSTON

Call (713) 721-9296. Web site: <http://home.beseen.com/politics/houstonslp> E-mail: reds1964@netzero.net

HUNTER COLLEGE, NYC

HunterSLP@aol.com

LARAMIE, WYO.

E-mail: portage@uwyo.edu

LONG ISLAND, N.Y.

LongislandSLP@aol.com

MIAMI

Call (305) 892-2424. E-mail: redflag@bellsouth.net

MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

SLP, 506 Hunting Hill Ave., Middletown, CT 06457. Call (860) 347-4003.

MILWAUKEE

SLP, 1563 W. Rogers St., Milwaukee, WI 53204-3721. Call (414) 672-2185. E-mail: milwaukeeesp@webtv.net

NEW LONDON, CONN.

SLP, 3 Jodry St., Quaker Hill, CT 06375. Call (203) 447-9897.

NEW YORK CITY

Call (516) 829-5325.

OCEANSIDE, CALIF.

Call (760) 721-8124.

PALMDALE, CALIF.

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...Valley's Assembly Line

(Continued from page 8)

deadline passed with no word, so my lawyer set a meeting with the local board investigator.

I took a day off my new job and was told that my case was so complex the investigation was taking longer than expected. They were not sure whether to go after Manpower, Hewlett-Packard, or both.

Months passed, seasons changed, and the board kept giving themselves new deadlines.

My lawyer moved to another organization, but I kept calling every 30 days. The answer was always the same: "We are in investigation and will make a decision shortly."

Finally, more than 20 months after the original filing, the California labor commissioner ruled that Manpower had violat-

ed my right to express health and safety concerns at work.

As a remedy, the commissioner called on Manpower to stop discriminating against employees exercising their health and safety rights, to post a notice at the warehouse of the ruling, purge their files of any reference to my unlawful separation from employment, and give me a week's back pay (around \$240).

I was ecstatic—as if I'd won the Lotto—and I wanted the world to know. But this soon faded as I realized that the decision did not address the reason I got into this mess in the first place.

I filed my complaint, and stuck with it, to show that workers have the right to a safe workplace. I wanted employers to know that if they violated these rights, the law

would come down on them like a sledgehammer. Posting a notice and paying \$240 is more like a love tap.

Workers at the printer warehouse and others like it are still breathing in the same dangerous substances.

It's clear that laws designed to protect workers' health have meaning only if people fight for them. Public regulatory agencies alone cannot be trusted to enforce them in a timely fashion.

Worker associations and unions, then, must not only hold employers accountable, but also work to hold state agencies to their word. Unions, worker advocacy organizations, and workers themselves must fight to make health and safety laws real, usable, and accessible tools for employees to protect themselves at work.

Question Period

Such people as actors and teachers perform useful service, but they do not produce real wealth. How, under socialism, will they be paid? Will there be taxes to support them? Will they receive time vouchers?

All wealth that is consumed must, of course, first be produced. Although teachers and actors perform socially useful and even necessary functions, they are technically nonproductive workers. The wealth that goes to support such nonproductive workers therefore must come from the labor of productive workers. In fact, many deductions must be made from the proceeds of productive labor, but as we shall see this does not in any way diminish the truth that, under socialism, all who perform useful work will receive the full social value of their socially useful labor, whether that labor is directly productive of concrete physical wealth or otherwise necessary to provide for the physical, intellectual and emotional well-being of society.

This is the way Karl Marx deals with the subject in *The Gotha Program*:

"If we now take the term 'proceeds of labor' in the sense of the product of labor, then the cooperative proceeds of labor are the total social product.

"From this is to be deducted:

"First: The amount required for the replacement of the means of production used up.

"Secondly: An additional portion for the expansion of production.

"Thirdly: A reserve and insurance fund against mischance, disturbances through forces of nature, etc.

"These deductions from the 'unabridged proceeds of labor' are an economic necessity....

"There remains the other portion of the total product, destined to serve as means of consumption.

"Before this can be distributed among the individuals there are again to be deducted from it:

"First: The general administrative expenses that do not form a part of production.

"This portion is from the outset very considerably reduced in comparison with present society, and diminishes in the same measure in which the new society develops. [It will be "considerably reduced" because planned administration will replace the administrative anarchy of competitive capitalism.]

"Secondly: That portion which is destined for the satisfaction of common wants, such as schools, provision for the protection of public health, etc.

"This portion is, from the very outset, considerably larger than in the present society and increases in the same measure in which the new society develops. [This will follow, not only because socialism will greatly expand education, public health service, entertainment, cultural activities generally, etc., but

also because they may not lend themselves to automation to the degree that production, communications and transportation do.]

"Thirdly: Funds for those unable to work, etc., in short, for what now belongs to so-called public charity."

Under socialism, this portion will also be considerably increased, not only because it will cease to be "charity," but the just due of all human beings, and because socialist society will recognize the duty to maintain in comfort and amplitude all who retire because of advancing age, each generation of productive workers providing for the generation that preceded it, to be provided for when it retires.

The foregoing reveals a social concept of production, a concept consonant with the socialized techniques of production that have developed under capitalism, and a social concept of distributing the benefits.

It was also in *The Gotha Program* that Marx identified the means of distributing wealth under socialism as "labor vouchers." For individual workers, as he saw it then, the abundant means of consumption would be distributed by way of labor time vouchers—i.e., both productive and nonproductive workers would receive such vouchers entitling them to withdraw from the social store consumer goods equivalent to their contributions, minus, of course, the deductions noted above.

These days, of course, the same purpose can be served by the more sophisticated means made possible by modern technology, as exemplified by the ATM or debit card that enables people to withdraw cash deposited in bank accounts without the necessity of carrying any cash with them. Something similar almost certainly will be used under socialism to deduct minutes and hours from "savings" of accumulated labor time. Apart from what modern technology makes feasible, however, the principle involved is precisely the same as that which Marx described in *The Gotha Program*.

"Taxes," which came into the world with the emergence of class-divided society and political government, will disappear with the advent of classless, nonpolitical socialism.

...Thanks

(Continued from page 6)

Nikolas Trendowski, Mr. & Mrs. Harry Louik, Mildred Killman, Michael K. Brooks, June A. Svoboda, Jennie Seekford, George Kira, Frank & Betsy Kennedy, Earl Shimp, Dawn Moore; \$20 each William O'Mahoney, John Hagerty; Herbert N. Joyce \$16; \$10 each Stephen Hawkins Jr., Roberta Diamond, R. Collins, Ira Werner; Haskell R. Hazelwood, Harry Buskirk, Fred L. Koenig, Frank Dobberphul, Edmund J. Light, E.J. Pacharis; \$5 each Richard Wilson, Jack Lally, Albert Perez.

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Total: \$4,493.51

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David Melamed "In memory of Nathan Karp" \$8; Milton A. Poulos \$6; \$5 each Jill Campbell, Gerald Gunderson, Harvey P. Kravitz, Anthony DeBella, Diane Lorraine Poole, Harry C. Segerest, Diane Lee Secor, Richard Wilson, Willard Krantz, Costanzo Rufo, Dionisio Villarreal, Anna Cantarella; \$2 each K.M. Davis, Mary L. Marshall; Jude Daniel \$1.

NEC Sets SLP Convention Date

The next National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party will convene on June 1, 2001.

The SLP holds its National Conventions biennially in odd-numbered years. Under the party's Constitution, the National Executive Committee is responsible for deciding the convening date and location. The NEC reached its decision last month.

The basis for representation at SLP conventions is the local section. However, national members-at-large also are entitled to representation as a unit.

The National Office expects to call upon the sections to nominate and elect the delegates and alternate delegates they are entitled to this month.

This year's convention will be the 45th since the SLP was founded in 1877.



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Army Report Whitewashes U.S. Atrocity at No Gun Ri

By Ken Boettcher

It's official. The U.S. Army, after a year-long review of charges that U.S. soldiers committed an atrocity during the Korean War by killing civilians near the village of No Gun Ri, has determined that the killings happened, but the incident did not amount to an atrocity. It was just a misinterpretation.

The Army's study rejected the contention, made in an investigative report by Associated Press in 1999, that U.S. soldiers were ordered to kill the men, women and children who died at No Gun Ri.

As *The New York Times* recently observed, "In the early days of the [Korean] war, refugee columns were infiltrated by

North Korean soldiers dressed as civilians, and refugees came to be considered hostile targets by some troops. Investigators found that American soldiers were 'given an order to stop civilians and not to let them pass their position.'" As the Army's inspector general put it, "The order to not let refugees pass could have been misinterpreted to be an order to fire."

President Clinton called South Korean President Kim Dae Jung with news of the report and to announce that the United States would, among other things, erect a monument in South Korea to honor the more than one million civilians who died in the war.

But nothing can change the fact that

an atrocity was committed at No Gun Ri. It's just that for domestic consumption, it cannot be called what it was. The word atrocity is reserved for descriptions of what U.S. enemies do.

War itself is an atrocity. The additional killings of helpless civilians and the looting, raping and destroying are byproducts of war. Soldiers, no matter what their character in civilian life, are trained to kill, maim and destroy. They are placed in situations in which their own lives are endangered. Resentment over the possible aid civilians may give to "the enemy," terror aroused by mines and snipers, acceptance of the ruthlessness and brutality absorbed during military training and discipline,

racist tendencies spread at home that condition minds to look upon other people as inferior and less than human—these and other factors explode into murderous action during at least some of the situations that take place in every war, by all forces involved.

The competing material interests of rival ruling classes that lead to war are the ultimate causes of the atrocities of war. As Daniel De Leon once wrote, puppet-like "the political heads of the capitalist class move as their masters, the capitalist class, pull the strings. According as the strings are pulled, presidents and kings, congresses and parliaments, shut their eyes to infractions of the law, or rattle their sabers. Obedient to capitalist dictation, laws are superseded, or passed; and war clouds are pulled upon the scene or pulled off."

No Gun Ri is no doubt special to the families of those who died there; but in the history of the imperialist expansion of capitalism it merely marks one more of many, many atrocities.

Junked Workers Give NAFTA Its Final Test

By David Bacon
© Pacific News Service

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS—Plant managers called them the "jonkeados"—the junked ones—workers so sick they were given special jobs. But they weren't put on "light duty" until they could go back to the line. Instead, they were assigned tasks so unpleasant "that we knew they were just waiting for us to quit and leave," according to Joaquin Gonzalez.

In mid-December, Gonzalez came here with fellow "jonkeados" to testify that the Mexican government had allowed their employer, Florida's Breed Technology, to violate systematically health and safety laws in two border plants—Auto Trim in Matamoros and Custom Trim in Valle Hermoso.

That San Antonio hearing may be the final test for NAFTA's labor side agreement, which the Clinton administration promised would protect workers' rights to decent factory conditions. Critics charge it has failed dismally.

Since NAFTA went into effect in

January 1994, more than 20 complaints have charged Mexico with failing to enforce laws guaranteeing workers' rights. There are some similar allegations against the United States.

All the cases have met a similar fate. Hearings are held. Workers testify. The U.S. Department of Labor's National Administrative Office (NAO), which hears complaints against Mexico, concludes that serious violations have occurred.

And then, nothing. No firm has ever been required to rehire illegally fired workers or to enable an independent union to negotiate a contract. If this most recent hearing results in the same inaction, workers and unions on both sides of the border say they may abandon the process.

More than a dozen witnesses testified about health problems at the Breed *maquiladoras*. Many workers assume that medical complications suffered by their children are due to parents' exposures at work.

Bruno Noe Mantaez Lopez, who glued leather covers to steering wheels for five years at the Matamoros plant, told of a son

born with spina bifida, a spinal tumor, an enlarged heart and no kneecaps. The doctor would not let him donate blood for his son. "He told me I couldn't give it since my blood was contaminated." After six months, his baby died.

Another worker's testimony described the birth of a daughter with no urethral opening. Despite heavy exposure to glue fumes while she was pregnant, the only protective equipment she says she received was an apron.

Mexican health and safety expert Dr. Francisco Mercado Calderon condemned Breed for causing irreversible injuries to workers, and declared that "gross negligence, or possibly wanton negligence by government authorities" had permitted the company's actions.

According to U.S. health expert Garrett Brown, Mexico's desperate need for hard currency to pay off International Monetary Fund loans has undermined its will to enforce the law, since it fears that will alienate foreign investors.

Breed Technologies, with \$1.4 billion in sales in 1998, was represented at the hear-

ing by a vice president for legal affairs, but did not present evidence or respond to interview requests.

The AFL-CIO has supported the Breed workers. Deputy director for international affairs Tim Beaty agreed that the NAO is not very effective. "But," he said, "the process has provided a way for workers to show solidarity across borders, since NAFTA complaints are filed not in the country in which the violations occur, but by workers and unions in another one."

Martha Ojeda, director of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, calls the Breed case a final test for NAFTA's labor side agreement. "If there's no remedy here," she says, "we'll have to look for some other alternative for protecting workers' rights on the border."

The political terrain is hostile, however. The party of Mexico's new president, Vicente Fox, has a long record of using low wages and weak government-affiliated unions as an incentive to attract investment to border states. It is unlikely he would launch an effort to protect the rights and health of *maquiladora* workers if it promised to discourage companies like Breed from building new plants.

And under a new, Republican president, it is also unlikely that the U.S. Department of Labor will become more enthusiastic about imposing sanctions on Mexico over problems in those same plants.

Horror Story From Silicon Valley's Assembly Line

By Raj Jayadev
© Pacific News Service

SAN JOSE, CALIF.—This is the story of one warehouseman who filed a claim against the country's biggest employer and won.

And lost.

In 1997, I was one of some 300 workers assembling and packing printers in the Hewlett-Packard warehouse here. No one actually worked for HP, however. We were officially employed by Manpower Staffing Services, the temp agency.

I worked at the start of the line. We would grab half-made printers off pallets delivered by forklifts, place them on a conveyer belt, insert formatters and screws, then send them on. Over and over—each line of 30 had to assemble and pack over 1,000 printers a day.

The work required strong hands, quick feet, and a back flexible enough to take all that twisting, bending, and carrying. But it also seemed I was having trouble breathing. None of the others were surprised to hear this. They told me about

nosebleeds, asthma, and similar problems and said it was part of the job.

Then one day, there was a temporary shutdown. To keep us occupied, our supervisor asked me, as the volunteer safety committee rep, to lead a "safety meeting." Usually this meant making sure everyone was wearing their smocks and had their hair tied back to avoid contaminating the products.

Instead, I asked what sort of health and safety concerns people had at work. This was a new question, so everyone stood silent awhile. Then, from the middle of the sea of blue smocks, Barbara cleared her throat and said, "Yah, my asthma has been acting up a lot lately, and I keep getting that bronchitis."

As heads nodded in empathy, Raquel spoke of similar problems, then the idea caught fire. Over half the line workers spoke emotionally about recurring respiratory illnesses. This naturally led to talk of the bad air quality at work.

As safety representative, I asked for an air quality check. The response was, "No inspection is needed. It's just the season,

lots of pollen in the air." No one thought that was true, but we got the same answer every time we asked.

Then I found a worker advocacy organization called the Santa Clara Center for Occupational Safety and Health. They told me every employee has a right to get a "Material Safety Data Sheet" describing every substance we work with.

We asked for such a sheet for the chemicals that came off the ink cartridges we inserted in the printers. Management was reluctant but after a couple of weeks we had the information sheet which noted, in very small type, that the ink included "carbon black" which has been linked to respiratory irritation and is a "possible carcinogen."

We pushed harder for an air quality check. My supervisor informed me that I would no longer be allowed to lead safety meetings, "People got too riled up, that's not what the meetings are for."

When I said I would go to OSHA if we did not get the air quality test, my supervisor moved me to another line on the other side of the building. I was "a troublemaker."

After a series of meetings with managers, verbal warnings, and a written reprimand, I got a phone call one evening after work from a Manpower representative. She told me my assignment at HP had unexpectedly ended, and that I had to hand in my badges.

She could not tell me why I was laid off, and informed me that I should not have any contact with anyone from the warehouse. "When you turn in your badge, please do so at our main office, not the warehouse."

Later that night I had a call from Eliza, a vocal coworker, who had also been let go. She was devastated. She had worked at the plant as a temporary for more than three years, and was supporting her 10-year-old son with the \$10-an-hour job.

We went back to the Santa Clara Center. They offered free assistance to help us file a claim with the State Industrial Relations Board. We filed, but a week later Eliza pulled out because she feared a record of fighting with an employer would hurt her chances for finding work—a risk she could not afford on account of her son.

I filled out the paperwork and spent weeks with my lawyer recalling events and exchanges with employees and employers.

Under the law, the Industrial Relations Board has 60 days to reply to a claim. The

(Continued on page 7)