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Rotting from the Inside: Cancer in the Heartland

BY COMRADE CUEBALL

In its latest report, the Iowa Cancer Registry estimates that 21,700 Iowans will be newly diagnosed with cancer in 2026. Of those afflicted, 6,400 will die. Iowa has the 2nd highest cancer rate in the country and that rate is increasing faster than any other state. Two of the biggest contributors to the increased cancer rate are directly tied to our unsustainable industrial farming practices: Exposure to crop protection chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, etc.) and high levels of nitrate in our drinking water, aka toxic runoff from industrial farms. So what are our state and local governments doing about this? Less than nothing.

Last March, the Iowa Senate passed Senate File 394, a Pesticide Immunity Bill also known as the “Cancer Gag Act”. You’d expect with a name like “Pesticide Immunity Bill” that it provides protection against companies knowingly selling poisonous chemicals that leach into the soil and ground water giving cancer to those that come into contact with it. You would be wrong. This bill is designed to provide protections for the pesticide manufacturers themselves. Manufacturers like Bayer AG which sells the weedkiller Round Up. Bayer has been pushing these kinds of bills in states all across the country for years, and the soulless freaks at the Iowa legislature were happy to lend a hand.

This bill effectively makes it so that psychopathic corporations like Bayer can’t be held responsible in the event that their product inevitably gives more and more Iowans cancer so long as the correct ‘warning’ label is printed on the box. Bayer’s profit margins just aren’t high enough if they have to keep paying settlements on the ever-increasing

number of cancer lawsuits. Your Iowa legislature’s “solution” to this problem is to pass a bill that makes it even cheaper for pesticide manufacturers to kill their constituents with impunity. Capitalism proves yet again to be an industrious killing machine.

Not only are there cancer-causing chemicals sprayed on almost every inch of farmland in Iowa, the animal waste and runoff from those same farms has led to our drinking water containing some of the highest levels of toxic nitrates on record. Iowa produces more factory farm waste (pig shit) than any other state (109 billions pounds annually), providing another avenue for increasing the rates of cancer. Even at low levels, studies show that drinking nitrate contaminated water can lead to birth defects, colorectal cancer, breast cancer, and thyroid disease.

In response to the issues with our drinking water, the strategy among elected officials is outright denial and gaslighting. Despite study after study putting a giant red X on the problem, the lunatics at the state capital are trying to convince you that there’s “nothing to see here folks”. When shells like Sen. Ken Rozenboom say “Our water quality is fine” what he’s actually saying is “Please shut up about cancer so I get to keep receiving my fat campaign donation checks from the industrial farmers across the state”

The electoral system we find ourselves subjected to continues to anoint inept con artists that are ill-equipped to address the problems that impact our communities. Capitalism renders these ‘elected officials’ complicit as they capitulate to the owning class and willingly sacrifice the lives of those they were elected to govern at the altar of the almighty dollar. ■

Revolutionary Projects Must Hold an Intrinsic Value of Human Life

Future Collapse Defines our Context, not our Aspirations

BY COMRADE JORDAN

As we stare down the barrel of accelerating ecological collapse and descent into fascist powers hoarding survivability for their chosen people, those who think about the future tend to reasonably propose projects in the context of catastrophe. In times of severe danger and scarcity, there are contexts in which caring for some may endanger others. However, this survivalist framework should be distinct from the societies and worlds we aspire to build. Our efforts to build a better world will coincide and co-develop with our efforts to survive hardship to come, but clear discernment between the two goals is essential to the success of each.

People with disabilities of innumerable kinds require additional resources to maintain a given standard of living. Capitalism is not concerned with an equal or minimum standard of living for workers; instead the focus is only how much value can be extracted. Under capitalism, many people with disabilities require a greater exchange value of care to survive than they can produce with their labor. These people live in various states of societal abandonment. Communists envision that the production of society will

be used equitably. All people must be included in this calculation—even if they require additional resources to maintain the same dignified life as their peers.

Although production of eyeglasses requires resources, the resources are minute compared to the increased ability and social inclusion of a huge percentage of people. However, the math is not always so straightforward. Many disabilities create much greater resource needs for the people who experience them. In capitalism the factor that decides whether these people can live a good life—or at all—is their personal wealth. How will a future society handle small populations with significant needs to live a good life?

No line can be morally drawn between cheap enough and too expensive to be allowed to live. If a resource cost is great, the society has a pressure to innovate - notably without the drive for profits. Technologies that are developed in pursuit of new treatments or care have applications in future public health challenges and other areas of production. Nearly all of us will experience significant disability at some point in our lives, and we will have to rely on societal help in some form. If maintaining a dignified life can be done, it must be done. ■



Remember the Martyrs on International Workers' Day



BY COMRADE BETSY

Most Americans are only familiar with May Day in terms of baskets, or not at all. In fact, most are unaware of the radical roots of this working-class holiday. Because of deliberate propaganda, Labor Day is celebrated in September, promoted as a “peaceful alternative” to the politically charged International Workers’ Day, observed on May 1st.

The origins of May Day lie in the late nineteenth century, as workers fought together to establish basic labor protections, including safer conditions and an eight-hour workday. Thousands of men, women, and children were dying every year in the workplace, with life expectancy in some industries falling as low as the early twenties.

Around a quarter of a million workers in the Chicago area became directly involved in the struggle to implement the eight-hour day, including the Trades and Labor Assembly, the Socialistic Labor Party, and local Knights of Labor. Radicals of many stripes united, and the campaign extended beyond the workday to broader demands, including:

- Workingmen to Arms!
- War to the Palace, Peace to the Cottage, and Death to LUXURIOUS IDLENESS.
- The wage system is the only cause of the world’s misery. It is upheld by the rich classes, and to destroy it, they must be made to work—or be swept aside.
- One pound of DYNAMITE is better than a bushel of BALLOTS!
- MAKE YOUR DEMAND FOR EIGHT HOURS with the

strength to meet the capitalistic bloodhounds, police, and militia in proper manner.

On May 4th, 1886 over 100,000 workers walked off their jobs in Chicago to make their demands heard. Police agents and company thugs harassed striking workers, escalating tensions until violence broke out, leaving two dead and several injured. At a meeting the next day in Haymarket Square, as police moved to disperse the crowd, a bomb was thrown into their ranks. Its source remains unclear, though some have speculated it may have been the work of an agent provocateur.

Chaos followed. Police opened fire indiscriminately into the crowd. An estimated eight civilians were killed and as many as forty wounded. Eight police officers also died, though only one was killed by the initial blast - the rest likely fell to their own gunfire. Eight anarchists were subsequently arrested, despite the fact that only three had even been present at Haymarket, and those three were in full view of all when the bomb was thrown. Four were hanged, August Spies, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, and Albert Parsons. A fifth, Louis Lingg, took his own life the day before his execution.

These martyrs were killed for their beliefs. It is thanks to their sacrifice and that of the thousands of others killed in the struggle for labor that we enjoy even the limited labor rights which exist today. The weekend, overtime pay, and every other concession extracted from the capitalist class were won through courageous struggles whose stakes were often life or death.

On International Workers’ Day, we stand in solidarity with countless other workers and activists around the world who carry forward the ideals of the Haymarket Martyrs. ■

Know Your Billionaire — Palantir’s Peter Thiel

BY COMRADE JESS

Thiel is a German-born American citizen who spent formative years of his childhood living with his family in South Africa as part of the white minority under apartheid. Born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1967, his parents brought him to the US when he was one year old, before making the move to South Africa, and eventually South West Africa, in 1971. By the time he was 35, Thiel had sold PayPal to eBay for \$1.5 billion as the company’s co-founder and acting CEO. A surface level glance at his accomplishments from a capitalist perspective yields the image of a model immigrant who worked his way through the upper echelons of the American educational system and found success as a forward-thinker in the nascent tech industry. A closer examination, however, reveals a ruthlessly arrogant, paranoid contrarian who was undoubtedly molded by the racial inequities of his upbringing under apartheid.

During his time in South West Africa, Thiel lived with his parents in a small, isolated coastal town called Swakopmund. The seaside oasis was founded in 1892 as a harbour for German South West Africa. As a result, the town was thoroughly German—from its architecture and citizenry, to its ongoing glorification of Nazism after the conclusion of World War II. In fact, Thiel’s father (a chemical engineer who spent his formative childhood years under the Third Reich), repeatedly moved his family away from progressive ideals, until they found an ideological haven in Swakopmund. The beginning of this series of moves came in the midst of growing student unrest in Germany during the 1960’s. As the country’s youth came-of-age and found themselves grappling with its recent Fascist past, they were incensed by the presence of former Nazis in professional circles like academia, and refused to allow the previous generation to sweep their transgressions under the rug. Thiel was denied any part in this cultural shift. He was still thoroughly entrenched in Nazi culture while living under the inequities of apartheid.

After selling PayPal to Ebay, Thiel used a portion of his proceeds to found Palantir Technologies in 2003. Aptly named after the “seeing stone” in J.R.R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings, Thiel (chairman), along with Alex Karp (CEO), envisioned Palantir as a tool for the government to track terrorism in the same way PayPal had discovered they could monitor for financial fraud - by amassing user data and tracking their transactions. Palantir would not be amassing data on a voluntary user base like PayPal, however,

but everyday American and global citizens (without their complete knowledge or consent). As a result, Thiel’s career saw a shift away from a more idealistic libertarianism with the goal of amassing personal freedom and capital, towards a higher-stakes position in national security, surveillance, and data brokering.

Thiel’s reorientation in outlook came in the aftermath of 9/11 and the formation of the Department of Homeland Security. American ideas about personal freedom and its relationship to national security were beginning to shift. In the same way, Thiel was stepping away from his roots in an optimistic libertarianism toward his current anti-human, anti-democratic outlook on American and global society. Thiel outlined this shift himself in his essay “The Straussian Moment”, published shortly after 09/11.

After this shift, Thiel began to align his beliefs with the techno-feudalist ideas outlined by bloggers like Curtis Yarvin and Nick Land. Yarvin deemed his philosophy “Formalism” and Land subsequently coined the term “The Dark Enlightenment”, but both men envisioned a future where capitalism would serve as the basis for society, and life itself. In this theoretical society, a “National CEO” would serve as the ultimate Authoritarian, guiding the oblivious, ignorant masses towards a “brighter future” (where capitalism could sustain itself without interference). After reviewing Thiel’s growing involvement in geopolitical conflict, his position of prominence in the tech industry, and his increasing dissatisfaction with American democracy, it’s clear who he might have pictured in the role of Yarvin’s clandestine “tech genius king”. Thiel himself has suggested that the United Nations should be replaced with a secret Echelon, coordinating the world’s intelligence networks.

Apart from creating the largest surveillance tool of the late-stage capitalist ruling class, Thiel was also one of the earliest investors in Facebook. He personally mentored Mark Zuckerberg, and remained on Meta’s Board of Directors until 2022. His venture capital fund Founders Fund has poured capital into startups like Anduril, an advanced military technology company, SpaceX, OpenAI, Polymarket (a crypto-currency-based prediction market where users can wager money on global events like War), and the SeaSteady Institute, an organization dedicated to the creation of sea-based autonomous communities that can shirk the confines of international law. From the outside, Thiel could be seen as a futurist invested in progress of humanity, but from a materialist analysis



of his investing history, one can paint a picture of a man obsessed with amassing capital from the increasing de-regulation of industry and the desire to rob the working class of their surplus value, their privacy, and an ongoing list of other rights. Thiel himself has professed to view the rules of democracy as a “barrier to human progress”.

Today, Thiel’s Palantir is a critical tool utilized by the greatest enemies of the world’s working class. Palantir assists ICE with tracking the movements of immigrants. Law enforcement agencies like LAPD and NYPD take advantage of its data set for “predictive policing” and the mapping of gang networks. Every three-letter Agency from the CIA to the NSA and FBI access Palantir’s data networks for the purpose of surveilling and controlling the American people. Even Israel relies on Palantir’s AI-Targeting technology to kill Palestinians in the ongoing genocide in Gaza. For Thiel, data and surveillance is a means to an end—and that end is, without exaggeration, the complete domination of the world’s working class, their governments and the preservation of unfettered capitalism at all costs. ■