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**SLP Emergency Fund**

**The Fight is Not Over**

Several months ago we announced that the Socialist Labor Party and its official journal *The People* were in a serious financial bind. The party’s cash reserves had dwindled to about their level in more than a decade and it appeared likely that we would soon have no choice but to suspend publication of *The People* and possibly go a drastic step further by closing down the headquarters of the party itself.

During the months since making that announcement and launching the SLP Emergency Fund with its goal of $125,000, the party’s membership and supporters—and others who have come into contact with the SLP and *The People* for the first time—have responded with a generous outpouring from what we know are limited financial resources.

We struggle for words to express the appreciation the staff at national headquarters feels concerning this magnificent display of generosity—feelings we know are shared by all party members towards all others who have come forward in support of this effort. That struggle to give expression to the depth of our appreciation is not made easier by the fact that despite that outpouring of support, the President Bush will not provide 13 extra weeks of benefits to most U.S. workers, and will likely not be enough to help the majority of unemployed.

Information, for example, like that contained in a study released by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) in mid-March. That report made the case that, “The extension of unemployment benefits recently signed into law by President Bush will not provide 13 extra weeks of benefits to most U.S. workers, and will likely not be enough to help the majority of unemployed.” (Emphasis ours.)

The EPI study noted that not all workers in every state are eligible for 26 weeks of benefits. “Only eight states have a guaranteed 26 weeks of eligibility regardless of earnings; the rest of the states calculate the duration based upon either the total amount of wages earned or the dis-tribution of earnings in the qualifying year.” The study said. Accordingly, in 35 states unemployed workers “will receive less than a full 26 weeks of benefits, even after the extensions.” The study found that 43 percent of unemployed workers exhaust their benefits in less than 26 weeks.

Reflecting this reality, while more than 8 million workers were officially unemployed at March, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that only 3.8 million workers received unemployment benefits in the workweek ending March 30, according to the Associated Press. More than 4 mil-lion workers were therefore without benefits, desperately struggling to keep a roof overhead and food in their children’s mouths.

Even the almost 4 million who re-ceived benefits in that week were experiencing desperate poverty. “Benefits” levels differ from state to state, though not widely. California, one of the most prosperous states in the nation, provides less than a quarter of the rate of pay workers received before being laid off, with a maximum weekly benefit of $230. Reformers and for their retirement. More than any other sacrifices on the altar of profit. The EPI study noted that not all workers in every state are eligible for 26 weeks of benefits. “Only eight states have a guaranteed 26 weeks of eligibility regardless of earnings; the rest of the states calculate the duration based upon either the total amount of wages earned or the dis-tribution of earnings in the qualifying year.” The study said. Accordingly, in 35 states unemployed workers “will receive less than a full 26 weeks of benefits, even after the extensions.” The study found that 43 percent of unemployed workers exhaust their benefits in less than 26 weeks. Reflecting this reality, while more than 8 million workers were officially unemployed at March, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that only 3.8 million workers received unemployment benefits in the workweek ending March 30, according to the Associated Press. More than 4 mil-lion workers were therefore without benefits, desperately struggling to keep a roof overhead and food in their children’s mouths.

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The trend reported by the Times was for the majority of unemployed, according to the Times, “to help the majority of unemployed.” In fact, the EPI report maintains, “estimates of a spring 2002 recovery are

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**Pension Illusions Going Up in Smoke**

By Ken Boettcher

“American workers now put more money into pension and retirement-savings plans sponsored by their employers than the companies do them-selves”—or so proclaimed *The New York Times* on April 7.

But workers have always put more wealth than their employers into such retirement plans. Indeed, it is a care-fully nurtured illusion that capitalists contribute to pension funds. It is all Fact is that the “contributions” some capitalists make or once made to pension funds come from wealth produced by workers and stolen from them in the process of exploitation. The illusion that capitalists contribute to pension funds is a handy one for spurring workers to accept speed-ups, job hazards and all manner of other sacrifices on the altar of profit. The trend reported by the Times makes it clear that fewer and fewer capitalists think it necessary to main-tain that illusion by “squandering” resources on a working class that is clearly not organized to enforce at least some of its demands. For the past two decades, more capitalists have “contributed” less of the wealth they steal from workers to fund pensions plans. The failure of some companies to live up to pension deals made with unions and workers produced a plethora of government regulations. Like most reforms meant to benefit workers, however, regulations cover-ing pensions were never intended to do away with more than the worst abuses—they were window dressing to help shore up the illusion of capi-talist beneficence. Indeed, pensions for workers, regardless of what form they take, are a tacit admission that wages are not adequate to provide for workers’ needs during their working years and for their retirement. More that than, they amount to a balled up explanation of capitalist guilt in the social crime of human exploitation, which is the very foundation of the capitalist system. Patry and inequity as pension plans can be, the funds that go into them represent a portion of the wealth that is produced by the workers but kept from their paychecks. Their in-clusion into American industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a stroke of capitalist genius. They serve the double purpose of creating an illusion of capitalist generosity while concealing the fact of capitalist theft. This capitalist scam produced enor-mous social, political and econom-ic benefits for the capitalist system, and went largely unregulated until the Studebaker collapse in 1963. When Stude-ubaker suddenly closed its auto pro-duction works and filed for bankruptcy that year, it not only left 7,000 produc-tion workers high and dry without jobs but claimed it could not pay the so-called retirement benefits promised to at least 4,000 of those workers under its employee pension plans. It would take another 11 years fol-lowing Studebaker’s collapse and re-turning of its pension plan to Congress finally intervened by passing the so-called Employee Retire-ment Income Security Act (ERISA) in 1974. When President Gerald Ford signed ERISA into law, he said: “Under this law the men and women of our labor force will have much more clearly defined rights to (Continued on page 7)
Many Workers Excluded From Jobless ‘Benefits’

By Curt C. Miller Jr.

Many workers who lost their jobs as a result of recessionary reductions in demand are finding that because they lost their jobs they don’t necessarily mean that they qualify for unemployment benefits. “I didn’t ask to be laid off,” he said. According to the formula used by most states to disqualify as many workers as possible, he was not eligible to receive benefits.

“The first four of the last five completed quarters must be counted, and a worker must be employed for at least two quarters during that time and wages must meet a certain level,” the AP article added.

“Why am I being penalized?” the Atlanta worker wanted to know. “I did not quit. I did not get fired.”

“The unemployment office says that [he] was not employed at the garage for two full quarters during the eligibility period,” the AP article added.

The Atlanta worker is one of many who have no “safety net” to fall back on because of the exclusionary formula used by many states to determine eligibility that plainly fails to meet the needs of the workers.

“Many states unemployment insurance isn’t a true safety net, but a series of gaping holes loosely strung together,” said Jeffrey Wenger, who the AP identified as a labor economist at the Economic Policy Institute in Washington.

Jeff Faux, a colleague of Wenger’s, said: “The new economy is characterized by widespread job insecurities. Working life has changed dramatically.”

The system doesn’t take into account that today “more part-time workers, temporary workers, contingent workers, contract workers and seasonal workers than ever before” are susceptible to capitalism’s periodic convulsions, or that “the unemployment insurance system has not changed since the 1980s.”

Unemployment insurance was created as part of the Social Security Act in 1935. It was a sop thrown to the working class during the Great Depression and its purpose was to offer a bare minimum of support to keep workers from gravitating toward notions of dumping the capitalist system. The purpose of the program hasn’t changed since then. On average nationally, the program replaces less than half of the worker’s lost wages. Benefits average about $237.78 a week, and in most states workers can only draw the benefit for 26 weeks—provided they qualify to collect the meagly pitance.

Critics of the unemployment compensation system say it is outdated and needs to be overhauled to conform to modern conditions. The changing composition of the working class make this necessary, they argue, and the 45 percent figure cited by the AP would seem to bear them out.

In short, it’s time to reform the reform that supposedly was designed to give workers a hand when their employers got knocked out of the competitive running or sought to save themselves by tossing unwanted workers out.

Despite statistics such as the 45 percent exclusion rate cited here, the Employment Policy Foundation, a capitalist-financed “think tank,” says that the number of workers who do not qualify for unemployment benefits is being overblown. In a manner befitting of a capitalist-supported entity the foundation, according to the AP article, said “the system was not meant to cover people who leave their jobs voluntarily or new entrants to the labor force who are counted as unemployed.”

All this boils down to a pure case of confusion and avoidance. By concentrating ownership and control of the means of life into the hands of a tiny ruling class, capitalism has reduced the working-class majority to a state of economic dependence, but when economic crises develop the ruling class absolves itself of all responsibility for those whom it has reduced to this state of dependence. To obscure this morally reprehensible betrayal, particularly when circumstances threaten to alert the dependent majority to the truth— as, for example, during the Great Depression—the ruling class prevaricates upon its handpicked politicians to come up with “humanitarian” reforms such as unemployment insurance. As seen, however, unemployment insurance insures no one against unemployment or its effects, and is nothing less than an insult to the workers without whose labor the ruling class would not and could not exist.

Worse, the ruling class not only side-steps the responsibility implicit in its conscious, self-interested needs for its survival, it uses a portion of that wealth to prostitute science and opinion to develop “philosophies” to justify injustice and conceal the truth under a banner of righteously.

What is outmoded is not simply the unemployment insurance insult to the working class and the immoral efforts to make it appear that the insult is a “benefit” but the social system that generates economic dependence and the moral turpitude reflected in that insult.

There is a solution that will eliminate not only unemployment and all of its associated problems, but all of the other miseries that go along with the capitalist system itself. The solution is a socialist reconstruction of society along the lines laid out by the Socialist Industrial Union plans.

If you agree that it’s time to throw off the burden placed on us all by wage slavery and the other ills of the profit system, join us under the banner of the SLP and help make a better world a reality.

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 a 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.

Capitalist Ford Flips-Flops On Improved Environment

By B.G.

William Clay Ford Jr., great-grandson of the car company founder Henry Ford Sr., was once regarded as an enthusiastic environmentalist. He is also a vegetarian, a guitar player and a member of the materialist theory of history knows that the higher standard would reduce fuel consumption by model year 2016. Kerry and McCain also argued that the McCain bill aimed at requiring the auto industry to produce vehicles that are 30 percent more fuel efficient by model year 2016. Kerry and McCain also argued that the higher standard would reduce dependence on foreign oil by 2.5 billion barrels a day. During the debate the Ford Motor Co., joined by the other auto companies, supported a vigorous advertising campaign to bring pressure on the Senate to defeat the bill. A number of far-fetched arguments were used to undermine the bill, such as a claim that fuel economy meant phasing out sport utility vehicles and trucks in favor of subcompact cars. Farmers, it was claimed, would have to give up their trucks and use subcompact cars to tend their crops and take them to market.

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Sweatshop Commodity Stock College Store Shelves

By B.G.

Sweatshops are alive and well in the United States, as much as in other countries where American companies contract for even more ruthlessly exploited labor to manufacture items for sale in this country. College campus stores that sell clothing with college logos have long been among the beneficiaries of sweatshop labor. Exploited workers in Puebla, Mexico, for instance, turn out Nike and Reebok clothing for far as little as $0.16 an hour. These items can sell in campus stores for as much as $36 for a college logo T-shirt, $21 for a polo shirt and $48 for a hooded sweatshirt.

The nonprofit Worker Rights Consortium based in Washington, D.C., has been conducting a campaign to encourage colleges to dump their suppliers who deal with sweatshops. Thus far it has been successful in gaining the support of 94 colleges and universities in this effort.

There is now strong likelihood that the New York State Legislature will be given a boost with the addition of the public colleges and universities in New York State. The State University of New York system has 64 campuses and the City University of New York system has 20. The New York State Legislature presently has before it a bill permitting all these public colleges and universities to refuse to deal with companies using sweatshops to make items for sale to colleges, even if these sweatshop dealing companies submit the lowest competitive bids.

The bill has strong support in the New York State Assembly and Senate and is likely to pass and be signed by the governor. A year ago, a similar bill was defeated in covering public elementary and secondary schools in the state.

Private colleges in New York State are free to make their own regulations regarding sweatshop-produced products, and some have already done so. Are politicians who have hitherto shown no opposition to capitalism per se at least beginning to react against some of the worst human rights abuses of capitalism? If they are it isn't the first time, and least of all where it concerns the sweatshop. Politicians have been "outlawing" it for more than a century, with that success may have been due to their wanting to outlaw it again—for the umpteenth time. Umptheenth time or not, however, it is as widespread in the land of the "free-enterprise" as anywhere on the dollar-green earth. "In Los Angeles, nearly 70 percent of immigrant garment workers receive below minimum wage," according to CorpWatch. And someone is "assuring us at Heartland.org that sweatshops are "rampant" throughout the country. "Sweatshops are again a familiar fixture in the garment industry," it says. "DOL [Department of Labor] estimates that 50 percent of 22,000 registered garment contractors pay less than minimum wage, two-thirds do not pay overtime and a third operate with serious health and safety violations. Workers who try to organize and protest poor working conditions are fired. Despite the legislation put together by politicians in Albany, New York City still ranks as a leader in the sweatshop field. "New York City sweatshops operate behind locked doors—often in the same buildings used more than 60 years ago in the Garment District," Heartsandminds.org reports on its Web site. "Steam from clothing presses can be seen spewing from pipes sticking through the boarded-up windows. DOL estimates that 4,500 of New York City's 7,000 garment factories are sweatshops."

"Outlawing" the sweatshop is good politics, and always has been. However, even if such efforts are meant to succeed, they have an assumed level of sincerity that most workers would not attribute to the run-of-the-mill politician—they are doomed to fail, as they have always failed, and for the same reason. Producing the modest for the leastest, to paraphrase that Confederateascal, Nathaniel Hawthorne, these efforts will be the law of the competitive capitalist jungle.

A piecemeal reform of capitalism over centuries and more will leave behind its worst aspect while giving only a little bit of relief here and there along the way. The idea that the capitalist class would still remain, with workers constantly begging for crumbs of relief from the capitalist banquet table. What is needed is the development of an outmoded and unjust system by an economic democracy under the leadership of the working class of the nation. Only socialism means complete economic and political democracy that will ensure humanity for all.

Death and Denial—Breaking the Silence on Black Suicide

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson

In his stage days, comedian turned political activist Dick Gregory linked up with two of the country’s top television programs, "The Girl from U.N.C.L.E." and "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." In his words, "The reason for the escalating self-carnage, according to CorpWatch, is "the juggernaut of competition for sales," or "the competitive bid.

Though the risk for suicide among young people is greatest among young white males, recent CDC studies show that from 1980 through 1995, suicide rates increased most rapidly among young black males. For black males aged 15-19, the rate increased 105 percent. During the same period, the overall suicide rate for all persons averaged 21 percent.

Though CDC researchers gave no reason for the escalating self-carnage, some suicide prevention experts speculated that as more blacks climb the social and economic ladder they encounter the same pressures and frustrations as their white counterparts in the chase for better careers, bigger incomes and richer lifestyles.

This explanation is shaky. The CDC did not break down suicides among blacks by income status. In Chicago, where some mental health professionals report that the suicide rate among young blacks exceeds that of whites, most of those who take their lives are lower income blacks. They are plagued by chronic problems of drug and alcohol use, high unemployment and prison rates, family breakdown and the absurdly easy access and availability of guns. These offspring seem to have the paucity of mental health centers, treatment facilities and trained professionals in poor neighborhoods.

Then there's the belief among many black leaders and parents that their children could have the same deadly consequences as the persistent refusal of many blacks to admit that HIV/AIDS is a genuine problem. They often ignore glaring signs of at-risk behavior, such as uncontrolled rage or aggression, exhibited by many young blacks. Or they don't recognize that this "acting out" behavior frequently masks acute feelings of depression, hopelessness, alienation and low self-esteem.

The end result is that many young blacks fail to receive the counseling and treatment that could save their lives. Another troubling concern is that children can take their lives, often by their wanting to outlive it again—for the umpteenth time. Umptheenth time or not, however, it is as widespread among young black males as is the case for many young blacks. The national suicide rate for blacks at 14 years of age increased only 11 percent.

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In March it was Vice President Cheney who made the rounds of capitals in the Middle East in search of support for the Bush Administration’s plans for launching a military attack on Iraq. The fact appeared to fail for the good and sufficient reason that the rulings classes of the Arab states did not square with those of the United States in all particulars. In April it was Secretary of State Colin Powell who turned the rounds. His missions were interspersed and layered by countless levels of intraclass friction and classes is interspersed and layered by the ruling class together to put an end to class exploitation. They all are that between ruled and ruling classes or state. So cruel and violent was the Israeli action that it sparked numerous large anti-Isreal demonstrations in the West Bank and Gaza. Cities and refugee camps last month was as universal peace to rule and establish the universal peace for individuals. As last year’s 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor party declared, the capitalist media to denounce it. On bank ears. Public repudiation of Israel’s violence was made more for showing a reflection of any real concern over the death, suffering and destruction the invasion. That is fact that American capitalism and the policy objective of the United States is to bring the oil-producing regions of the Middle East and Central Asia safely within the orbit of Western imperialist control. That objective is so patent and obvious now that even the propaganda mills of the U.S. ruling class barely need any longer to cover it over with sweet-sounding phrases on the virtues of the all but forgotten “New World Order” of global peace and harmony that was their theme during those heady days that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. There can be no peace in the Middle East as long as class conflicts are permitted to exist. That they will continue to exist as long as class rule is permitted to survive, or until they lead our nation and the world into that “common ruin” of which the capitalist system is incapable. In short, capitalism is leading the world into chaos. However, that need not be the case. As this year’s 45th National Convention of the SLP put it, “The Resolution on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict reprinted elsewhere in this issue: “The Israeli and Palestinian working classes face multiplicity of oppression under the capitalist system. Therefore, the Socialist Labor party of America calls upon them to establish mutual connections to oppose their common class enemy.” Indeed, there can be no peace in the Middle East until the working classes of the world, first and foremost the U.S. working class, have dealt with their own problems and established of. In a socialist world of peace, plenty and freedom. Leaders of The People who agree with this assessment of the situation in the Middle East and the SLP’s analysis of where capitalism and its imperialist representative, the United States, are taking the world are urged to look carefully at what the SLP offers as a solution to these problems and as a basis for their own programs. Join us in our efforts to bring the working class together to put an end to class rule and establish the universal peace for individuals that socialism alone can guarantee.
The Paterson Silk Workers' Strikes of 1911–1912

The following article from the Industrial Union News of May 12, 1902 is the fourth in a series of reports on the Paterson silk workers' strikes of 1911–1912. The Industrial Union News was the official monthly newspaper of the "Detroit IWW." Its reports from the scene were written by Russell H. Palmer. An introduction to this article and their appearance in their new February issue. The series will conclude with an epilogue on the significance of the strikes and the organization that conducted them.

—Editor

FROM THE STRIKE ZONE

STRIKERS STANDING FIRM IN EVERY TOWN—PATERSON POLICE STOP INTENDED PARADE AT LAST MOMENT.

NEWARK EVENING STAR ATTEMPTS TO STAPMIDE STRIKERS INTO THE "BUMMERY," AND FINDS STRONG ALIEN IN THE NEW YORK CALL AND VOLSHEIZGUT—SOCIALIST PARTY LOCAL IN PASSAIC ATTEMPS SAME SCABBY TACTICS.

"From victory to victory," is the story of the progress of the IWW strikes in Paterson, Passaic, Bayonne, Hackensack and towns in Hudson County, N.J., and Atlantic City, N.J.

In Paterson, where 5,000 silk workers were out in the early days of the strike, shop after shop has settled, recognized the union's scale, and agreed to pay the workers their wage slaves. Capital is extremely nervous anyway. For the last nine months the profits have been sent forth—yale, tremble, ye wicked agitators—that the silk manufacturers would never—no, never—recognize the IWW as a legitimate union. The bosses are unconscious humorists, as most capitalists are, they do not see that they were not the only people trying to organize the workers. They were trying to keep their wage slaves. Capital is extremely nervous anyway.

From these confabs the solemn news was brought that the bosses (the United Mine Workers, for instance) were trying to evict him from the park, he was arrested and on Monday morning at the police headquarters in Paterson.

The IWW demanded recognition in the most practical and sensible way possible—recognition of the shop committee and payment of the union scale of wages. The shop committees and the bodies of workers they represent recognize the IWW as the only really effective recognition—the recognition of the working class. A union which secures for its life upon the recognition of the capitalist's signature is no more binding than the word of the worker. That the action taken was overdue has been proved by subsequent events; the very bosses who were the first to sign the collective contracts were now trying to tear them up. There are still about 800 weavers on strike. The weavers of the notorious Siff & Cohen Co. in Paterson and the clothing manufacturers in the city labor area have been obdurate, have been striking valiantly for several weeks. TheHenry A. Hubermann strikers, who started the present agitation, have joined Local 25 IWW, and are receiving support through the organization.

POTTER PALMER OF CHICAGO AND THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

Potter Palmer of Chicago and the march on Washington.

Organizer Rudolph Katz has been to Allentown and Mauch Chunk, Pa., preparing the ground for a movement of the silk workers there. He addressed enthusiastic mass meetings in which he explained what was going on in Paterson, New Jersey New York towns, and urged the workers in Pennsylvania to get ready to demand more of the product of their labor, looking forward to the time when they can demand and get all. Four thousand weavers, spinners and dyers in the woolen mills and dye shops of the Paterson area, in Clifton and Passaic, have struck for an increase of wages and the abolition of the fining system. Boris Reinstein took charge for the IWW and, with the aid of his fellow workers, organized the strikes in the IWW, forming Local No. 28.

At the same time several hundred ribbon weavers and winders in Astoria, L.I., and are putting on a great fight under the leadership of Organizer Elmer B. Flowers. Their strike is No. 27, IWW.

No sooner were these strikes under way than a general walkout took place among the silk workers in Hudson County—West Hoboken, Bayonne, Union Hill and other places. Several shops belonging to a single firm, the Schwartzbach and Hoberman Co., struck in Hudson County, and also their mill in Hackensack. At this writing the workers in the same firm's shop at Sterling, N.J. are expected to strike. Between 6,000 and 9,000 silk workers are on strike in Paterson in February. They have formed the local of the IWW known as No. 120. One shop has already granted the demands—20 percent increase—and the workers have returned to their shops and frames. This is the R. H. Linon Co. at Union Hill.

Ortbert McLaure, member of the General Executive Board of the IWW is in charge of the situation in Paterson. August Gillfause, Ove M. Johnson, Wm. Finley, C.E. Parker, Arthur Reimert, Louis Reinstein and others are in charge of the various strikes. Organizer Katz is in demand everywhere and flies from one place to another, making the calls.

In all these places where the IWW is engaged in combating bona fide strikes, that cheery, and having created a dis- tension of God," and a terrible fire wiped out the greatest portion of the city.

Mr. Palmer was among the greatest sufferers, as his hotel and many other buildings belonging to him were burned. But disdaining all that, he went on to work, bought the depreciated properly and turned up the improvement. He now owns round-up three-quarters of a mile of valuable land along State Street, and within five years Mr. Palmer’s patrimo- nam, expressed in cash, was worth $25,000,000.

(Continued on page 7)
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**...Time Running Out...**

(Continued from page 1)

...that massive permanent unemployment promises!

The answer lies in the hands of the unemployed and the rest of the working class. Why? They must do is accomplish a complete social change—one that will end their suppression, establish a democratic socialist system, with its booms that benefit for so few and its busts that devastate so many. Workers must place the means of production and distribution and all the social services in their own hands so that they can be administered democratically and operated to produce an abundance for all. In short, they must accomplish a revolutionary change of our society from capitalism to socialism.

Accordingly, the task confronting American workers—whether unemployed, underemployed or employed—is to organize their political forces into a party of their class. Further, they must consolidate their economic power into one mighty Socialist Industrial Union. The goal of both must not be merely to ameliorate the messes and “benefits” of capitalism, but to demand the abolition of the wage system and its effects altogether and undertake an orderly and civilized socialist reconstruction of society.

K.R.

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**Steps You Can Take...**

(Continued from page 1)

...pension funds and greater assurance that the workers will be there when they are needed.”

Despite the reforms, under most pension plans workers forfeit pension benefits unless they remain with a company for years, and benefits are usually forfeited when workers are fired.

While workers are thus obligated to individual capitalists if they want to keep their benefits, capitalists are free of such obligations. They can—and do—terminate workers’ pensions by a variety of means.

Not infrequently, workers are fired before qualifying for pensions, and many others are dismissed by the fine print in pension contracts. Capitalists have closed entire plants to avoid paying pension benefits unless they remain with a company for years, and benefits may vary from one employer to another.

The trend, according to the Times, has been away from pension funds as such. Capitalists more and more prefer such voluntary schemes that have less possibility of government oversight and “lack the protections [sic] of the old pension plans, such as a guaranteed benefit and federal insurance if the company goes bankrupt.”

The Enron debacle provides an example of what can happen to workers who trust the newer plans. Enron workers were encouraged by company officials to invest their 401(k) plan funds in the company’s own stock, only to see the company go down. Workers lost not only their jobs but their retirement benefits.

Workers with some sort of pension or retirement plan—old style or new—should therefore not count on a cursory retirement simply because they have such a plan.

Moreover, apart from Social Security, only 52 percent of U.S. workers are included in retirement or pension plans of any kind. Excluding government employees, according to the Times, “only 47 percent of employees have anything other than Social Security awaiting them at retirement.”

A cursory retirement is not in the cards for most workers even though the working class collectively produces more than enough material wealth to satisfy the needs of all workers—including those of retired workers—but the wages and “benefits” workers receive represent only a fraction of this wealth.

Ultimately, both active and retired workers face the same problem—increasing economic insecurity, poverty and misery under the capitalist exploitation and capitalist system. Their only defense against such conditions is to begin to organize an offensive—classwide Socialist Industrial Unions that can wield enough economic clout to defend their interests under capitalism, and ultimately to overthrow capital and establish a socialist society under which the workers collectively own the means of production and democratically administer production in the service of human needs and wants.

Perhaps, with the illusion of pension “benefits” fast fading, more workers may realize that their future security is dependent upon themselves and their own class-conscious actions, not on the “generosity” of the capitalists who employ—or employed—them.

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**SLP Emergency Fund...**

(Continued from page 1)

“finance reforms” designed to cover their financial tracks and conceal their subservience to capitalism interests, the SLP is an organization of working class men and women whose purpose is as straightforward and simple as anything could be. That purpose, as briefly explained in our last issue: “For 111 years The People and the Socialist Labor Party have proclaimed the right of the people to democracy. Why decide their fate? But it has ceaselessly pointed out that no such right can be established or guaranteed unless the people collectively own and democratically control the nation’s economy. That’s why The People are proudly pursuing in its efforts to bring the message of the SLP’s Socialist Industrial Union to the American working class.”

But dedication to principle by those who do the day-to-day work of publishing The People is not enough. It also requires a matching level of dedication and financial support from all those who understand why it is important that the SLP and its official journal continue until their mission is successfully completed.”

We admittedly are in a race against time to build up the cash reserves of the SLP to a point where we can continue our efforts to spread that message. We are prepared to continue that fight, and plan to stay put unless it becomes plain that the resources are not available to go on. Our fight is yours, and if you want to see The People continue building up its end of that fight, it is imperative that you redouble your efforts to hold up yours. You can do that with your contribution to the SLP Emergency Fund. Please use the coupon printed in this issue.

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**Abolition of Poverty...**

By Daniel De Leon

An examination of capitalism and its philosophical “justifications” as presented by a Jesuit priest. Continues Father Schmidt’s material conception of history with class society’s “ideology.”

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argue against the bill ignored the possibility of making larger vehicles that are more fuel efficient. Opponents also ignored that safer vehicles that run on less fuel are not only possible but could be built if only the automotive industry would recognize that. Even now, Toyota and General Motors are bringing out experimental cars run by hybrid engines and fuel.

Ford’s ad campaign and Senate opponents of the Kerry-McCain bill also ignored that environment-friendly cars and trucks, which drive more miles on less fuel, would cause the automotive industry to rethink and redesign its present less-efficient vehicles, thus causing the industry more immediate outlay of money before the vehicles even become profitable. The green of the dollar was more than the green of the environment. The United Auto Workers union also opposed the bill because it feared losing dues-paying members.

Resolved. That the party make it known that attacks on capitalist effects—including corruption, war, political despotism, poverty, etc.—can never strike at the capitalist cause of the social evils; and be it finally resolved that the Socialist Labor Party of America pursue its campaign with renewed vigor. It is necessary to educate the workers and all forward-looking citizens that the only cure for the evils produced by capitalism is socialism, that is, to build not only possible but could be built if only the automotive industry would recognize that. Even now, Toyota and General Motors are bringing out experimental cars run by hybrid engines and fuel.

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The 45th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party of America calls upon those governments that will conform to the capitalist system. Therefore, the Socialist Labor Party of America calls upon them to establish mutual connections to oppose their actions.

Ultimately, there can be no peace in the Middle East until the working class—on a world scale, first and foremost—is able to set up the beachhead desired by U.S. capital. The Israeli and Palestinian working classes have a common interest in opposing the capitalist system. Therefore, the Socialist Labor Party of America calls upon them to establish mutual connections to oppose their actions.

By B.B.

Ever since the fall of the Soviet Union, the mantle of misrepresenting socialism has lain on the People's Republic of China. This despicable bureaucratic state has served world capitalism well. It has offered vast markets and investment and development opportunities. It has supported the most reactionary regimes in concert with capitalist imperialism. It has disfigured the political arrangements made for China's entry into global politics. Today, China has become a key player in the global political economy. At the same time, the political subjugation of a populated nation--one of the world's most populous nations--has become.

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