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SLP Launches Emergency Fund

The SLP is confronted by a financial crisis that may not be easily overcome.

Friends of *The People* who have kept abreast of the problem have been responding to appeals for contributions printed in recent issues. Their responses have been sufficient to stop, at least temporarily, the monthly deficits that had reduced the cash reserves of the SLP to a dangerous level—so dangerous that the party's ability to maintain its national headquarters and continue publication of *The People* were—and still are—in doubt.

As can be seen from a financial report printed elsewhere in this issue, income from all sources for November was \$16,761. Most of that income—about \$11,250—came from contributions to several party funds. Combined with contributions received during the preceding two months, nearly \$31,000 in contributions have been received since our first appeal was printed in the October issue. It is our aim to raise a minimum of \$125,000 in contributions by Aug. 31.

Why Aug. 31, and why \$125,000? There are two primary reasons.

First: Aug. 31 is the date on which the lease on the party's national headquarters will expire. Long before then, a decision must be made on trying to negotiate an extension on the current lease or on locating new facilities that the party can afford. However, if the party's cash reserves are insufficient to enter into a new lease it will be necessary to close the headquarters and to discontinue *The People*.

Second: It will be impossible to keep our tiny staff on the payroll. They will be forced to look for other work. If that is allowed to happen it would also become necessary to shut the headquarters down.

The \$125,000 in contributions we hope to raise would bring the party's cash reserves back to where they were on Jan. 1, 2001. We believe that would be sufficient to see *The People*, the headquarters and the staff through for one more year.

To repeat, that amount is the absolute minimum needed to see the headquarters through for one year beyond the end of the current lease. As indicated, however, certain decisions must be made long before Aug. 31. We must have reason to feel confident that

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War on Terrorism Can't Bring Lasting Peace

Sept. 11 has been described as a turning point in the history of the world. We are not the same today as we were before the terrible events of that day.

No doubt the perception most working-class Americans have of the world has undergone dramatic changes since Sept. 11. The ancient concept of a "fortress America" impregnably sheltered behind the breadth of oceans finally went the way of its former justification. However, no great grasp of history or of modern technology is needed to understand why the material foundation that once propped up that idea had dissolved decades ago.

Now we know that Sept. 11 was episodic rather than epochal. It did not mark a seminal departure from the course of history. It did not signify a turning point in the history of Western, or capitalist, relations with the East. The call for a "holy war" against the invasion of Western "values," raised or echoed by Osama bin Laden and others with a similar bent of mind, has, for the most part, been ignored. The reason is simple: official Islam, like Christianity before it, caved in to capitalism long ago. The ground has been cut out from under it. It has adapted. The cheap commodities that Marx described as the cannon that would knock down all Chinese Walls of resistance in capitalism's march toward creating a world after its own image found no great obstacle to overcome in Islam. That, too, was accomplished long ago, and if the transformation is incom-

Louis Fisher

1913–2001

Louis Fisher, presidential candidate of the Socialist Labor Party in 1972, died on Nov. 28 following a lengthy illness.

Fisher was born in Baltimore, Md., in 1913. His parents moved to Chicago while he was still a child, but stayed only a few years before moving on to Chicago, where he graduated from Riverside High School in 1931. He joined Section Milwaukee in 1935 when he was 22.

Fisher was the SLP candidate for governor of Wisconsin in 1940. Soon thereafter, however, he moved to Chicago and transferred to Section Cook Co. He was Illinois state secretary for many years and a frequent candidate for state and local office in Illinois. He was the SLP candidate for U.S. senator from Illinois in 1970.

In 1972, the party's 28th National Convention nominated Fisher as the SLP's candidate for president of the United States. His running mate was Genevieve Gunderson of Minneapolis. The Fisher-Gunderson ticket appeared on the ballot in 12 states and was credited with 53,821 votes, the largest vote ever received by a national ticket of the SLP.

After retiring from the cleaning and dyeing industry, Fisher and his wife Ruth moved to Arizona in 1979, where he was instrumental in organizing Section Maricopa Co. in 1982. The couple returned to Chicago in 1998.

Fisher is survived by his wife, two brothers, a son, three daughters, 12 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. A notice in the *Chicago Tribune* of Nov. 29 suggests that contributions in his memory be sent to *The People*.



plete, the decisive moment that made the result all but inevitable occurred 100 or 150 years ago.

In short, not much has changed since Sept. 11. Indeed, the war that the United States unleashed on Afghanistan in the weeks and months

that followed underscore and confirm it.

The videotape that, for many, confirmed that Osama bin Laden was the perverted mastermind who hatched the diabolical plot that brought Sept. 11 about provides nothing more than

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Antiterrorist Effort Gives Big Breaks to Capitalists

By Carl Miller Jr.

During capitalism's past wars, the government pursued policies designed to hide the causes of war and protect the interests of those who stood to gain the most from such international conflicts. Among these policies were so-called excess profits taxes on businesses so that people didn't get the impression that capitalists were "profiteering" from the war effort. It did this to shore up (or whip up) support for the war effort and to keep the working class from resisting the enforced spilling of its blood on far-away battlefields.

Now that we face a "war on terrorism" and a sagging economy, the government seems intent on reversing the old pattern by giving tax breaks and benefits to the capitalist class.

The economy showed signs of downturn long before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. Some economists say the country has been in a recession since last March. Job growth had stalled and manufacturing had been in a downward spiral for over a year. More than 1 million manufac-

turing jobs disappeared between March 2000 and September 2001. There is little doubt that the attacks made a bad situation worse.

The airlines were the first to benefit from wartime corporate welfare. Shortly after the attacks, Congress passed a \$15 billion bailout to shore up the sagging industry. Even now an economic "stimulus" package is being debated in Congress to put more money into the pockets of big business in hopes of getting the economy moving again. It is a sure bet that very little in the way of assistance will find its way down to those who need it most, the workers who lost their jobs because of a recession, the impact of which has been exacerbated by the attacks of Sept. 11.

The 100,000 or so airline workers who have lost their jobs provide one example. Congress failed to appropriate as much as a dime to help them get back on their feet.

In October, the House passed a \$100 billion corporate assistance package that would allow huge tax deductions for investments that big

companies would probably make anyway. It would also make it easier for them to shelter their ill-gotten gains in offshore tax havens and offer billions in refunds to profitable corporations. It is not only the companies who benefit from this package, but the wealthy who own them.

Another part of this bill accelerates tax cuts for the richest taxpayers, bringing their effective date forward from 2006 to 2002. According to estimates by Citizens for Tax Justice, the majority of the tax breaks would go to the richest one percent of taxpayers and almost 75 percent would go to the top 10 percent. The rationale used by the Bush administration to justify this program is that it would encourage companies to invest, expand their operations and hire more workers, hopefully with the result of ending the present recession. However, there is no evidence that corporate breaks of this sort ever had the desired effect.

Such programs show whose interests are important under the system

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Private Capital Eyes Workers' Social Security Funds

By B.G.

When Social Security, the national retirement program, was instituted in the 1930s Republicans in Congress were overwhelmingly opposed, not because of the inadequacies of the system but because of their opposition to government involvement in social programs, which were conceived by them to be the realm solely of religious organizations and private charities.

Times have not changed much. The ultraconservative Republicans who now predominate in Congress and the White House are still trying to dismantle Social Security and turn at least a portion of it over to capitalistic enterprise. During his campaign for the presidency, George W. Bush continually advocated giving workers the right to invest 2 percent of their personal Social Security deductions in the stock market, which supposedly would pay higher returns than the U.S. government bonds in which Social Security deposits are now invested. The stated reason was to give retirees a more lucrative income. The real reason was to ease these funds away from a government program and to enrich the financial industry, which has been a source of huge campaign contributions to candidates for public office.

President Bush's Social Security Commission, set up to examine ways to privatize Social Security, has now issued three proposals that would permit, but not require, workers to invest part of their Social Security deductions in stocks or bonds and, as a result, relinquish some of their retirement benefits.

Option one would permit workers to invest up to 2 percent of their 6.2 percent Social Security payroll deduction in the stock market. These persons would then have their current scheduled benefit reduced.



Option two would permit workers to invest up to 4 percent of their Social Security payroll deductions up to a maximum of \$1,000 a year. This plan would reduce substantially a person's retirement benefits by calculating them, not according to annual wage growth as is currently done, but by price inflation, which is generally lower. Supposedly, this plan would improve retirement benefits for the poor.

Option three would work something like the present 401(k) program. Workers would contribute up to one percentage point in earnings beyond current payroll deductions, and this would then be matched by 2.5 percentage points of their payroll deductions, to \$1,000 maximum. This plan would supposedly increase benefits for the poor.

If this all sounds confusing in print, just wait until the poor workers are thrown upon their own trying to invest a portion of their payroll deductions in the stock market. How do they tell which

companies are financially sound, which are weak, which companies are run by scoundrels, which will have catastrophic losses somewhere down the road? The average worker does not know a stock from a bond, or cannot sort out the numerous varieties of federal government bonds, notes, bills, Ginnie Maes, Fannie Maes, etc., municipal bonds or commercial bonds, does not know what a callable bond is, does not know a put from a call, does not know what short selling is, does not realize how much of a stock broker's or bond broker's commission comes out of the worker's investment. Will the worker-investor be alert enough or knowledgeable enough to know when a broker is churning his or her account to increase broker commissions?

Capitalist economy goes through boom-and-bust periods. When Republicans in the year 2000 began advocating the privatization of Social Security, the stock market was in the stratosphere, puffing

up dizzying prices on stocks, many of which represented companies that had little or no earnings, such as the dot-com technology companies, and some, like the energy company Enron, that were engaged in questionable fiduciary practices.

Today, the stock market is in the sewer, dragging many investors down with it; and some economists are even bold enough to say that the United States is presently in a recession.

What would happen to the poor worker-investor if he or she had to go through such a stock market roller coaster during or just on the verge of retirement? What happens when the commercial investments in a person's pension fund shrivel up?

Not only is the average worker not sophisticated in investment matters, many of the superrich, who supposedly should know all about it, are also innocents at the game. Take the Belfer family of New York City, for instance. Robert A. and Renée Belfer, owners of a family oil dynasty and noted philanthropists, had invested nearly \$2 billion (yes, billion) in Enron. Enron's bubble suddenly burst and its stock is now not only worth next to nothing, but the company is wallowing in bankruptcy. The Belfers aren't exactly going to the poorhouse as a result, but they are a lot lighter in the wallet.

But what about a few thousand (or million) humble workers who would have had a substantial portion of their retirement funds invested in a supposedly unsinkable company like Enron? Perhaps they could all say, "Gee, thanks, President Bush!"

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.

Blizzards?

If you find yourself tramping through rain, sleet and snow to get your copy of *The People*: Wouldn't it be easier to enter a subscription? And one for a friend? Use the subscription coupon below.

Recession Fallout: Mexico's Border Workers Rebel

By David Bacon

©Pacific News Service

MONTERREY, NUEVO LEON—The U.S. recession is wreaking havoc in Mexico, especially along the border, where the struggle for survival in the face of job loss and low wages may be fueling a labor war.

Front-line staff at humanitarian, religious and labor organizations has seen renewed protest among men and women who work long hours for little money in *maquiladoras*, assembly plants run by U.S. and global companies.

The economic situation has challenged many Mexican families. A survey this spring by SEDEPAC, a barrio organization in Torreon and Ciudad Acuña, found it takes \$150 a week to provide food, housing and transportation for a family of four. A typical *maquiladora* worker makes just \$32 to \$35 a week.

"We asked people, 'How do you survive when there's such a huge gap?'" says organizer Betty Robles. "Many told us that two and three families share a couple of rooms, pooling income to cover rent and basic needs.

"In our communities, the whole family works," Robles says. "You see kids 9 or 10 years old bagging groceries in supermarkets or washing cars on the corners. The daughter of one of our activists was 13 when she went to work in the factory."

America is the market for most of the clothing, electronics and other products of *maquiladoras*. Since the U.S. eco-

nomie downturn, the omnipresent signs soliciting workers on factory gates in border industrial parks have disappeared. And greater competition among workers for the available jobs is pushing wages down.

Economists estimate half a million workers have been laid off since Mexican President Vicente Fox took office. The workplace rules and regulations of NAFTA are providing no safety net for the workers, as some hoped they would.

The pressures have fueled a wave of industrial unrest this year in factories all along the border, from Matamoros on the Gulf of Mexico to La Paz at the tip of the Baja California peninsula.

Border workers have tried to organize independent unions, free of control by a government that seeks to use their low wages to attract foreign investors. Many hoped Fox would support that right.

"To win votes, [Fox] made the famous '20 commitments,' which included union democracy," says Hector de la Cueva, who directs Mexico City's Center for Labor Research.

One of Fox's promises was to allow workers to vote by secret ballot in union elections. Traditionally, public voting has enabled the older, official unions favored by *maquiladora* owners to identify supporters of the newer unions. Following a string of incidents in which independent union supporters in Tijuana and Mexico City were threatened, fired and even beaten for their choices, Mexico agreed to

allow voting by secret ballot.

Fox's promise was put to the test this spring at the Duro Bag plant in Rio Bravo, just across the river from Texas. Workers trying to form an independent labor union there were forced to vote openly, in front of plant managers and officials of the company-favored union. Before voting took place, employees reported seeing guns being brought into the plant in an apparent attempt at intimidation. One whole shift of workers was held captive in the factory and kept

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Workers' Health Care Benefits Pounded by Mounting Layoffs

By B.B.

An article printed in *The New York Times* in November reported that nearly two-thirds of all "Americans under 65 get insurance through their employer, meaning that the loss of a full-time job can quickly translate into the loss of health benefits." (Nov. 12) Consequently, as layoffs sweep the economy, more workers are succumbing to the unsettling condition of having no coverage at all.

A 1986 federal law allows workers to continue the coverage they had with their former employers, provided they can pay for the premiums. However, the costs—"as much as \$500 to \$600 a month for coverage of a family, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation"—can be prohibitive when there is no income to draw on.

In addition, an already sagging Medicaid program is facing collapse. "Declining tax revenues because of the economy," the *Times* cited "authorities" as saying, "rising health care costs and an expected jump in the Medicaid caseload because of layoffs all make for a dangerous combination."

Hence, the usual political quibbles have broken out between Democratic and Republican members of Congress seeking (each party in its own way) to protect their wealthy constituents' mountains of profit against possible inroads by the "great unwashed." That



Carol *Simpson

explains why the "issue" has gotten tangled up with the economic stimulus package currently before the Senate.

Democrats want \$9 billion to cover 75 percent of the premiums of workers laid off since Sept. 11 who want to stick with their former employers' insurance programs, but there no mention of how the workers covered would pay for the other 25 percent. Furthermore, workers who lost their jobs before Sept. 11 are completely ignored.

Republicans have countered with the assertion that such a program would be too costly and that it is "not focused enough on the neediest," by whom it can be assumed they mean their

wealthy constituents. Republicans, notorious for doling out welfare to needy capitalists and tottering corporations, fear that once launched such a program would ossify into a permanent fixture and, as such, could become a visible symbol of Democratic accomplishment and thus not augur well for contesting future elections. This coincides nicely with their panacea, which is to pass the buck to the states in the form of \$3 billion to use as they may.

Meanwhile, there is a thing with the acronym of "Cobra," or innocuously Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986. This piece of legislation was supposed to enable unem-

ployed workers to cover the costs of health insurance for a nominal sum. For one worker, a woman who the *Times* said has a history of breast cancer, nominal means \$173 monthly. For another woman, whom the *Times* described as a single mom, the \$153 weekly unemployment check makes carrying health insurance a luxury. For millions of workers employed in small businesses of 20 or less, they aren't even eligible. For workers eking out a living on unemployment the costs can amount to one-half to two-thirds of their incomes.

Ron Pollack of Families USA summarized the worth of the palliative. "Cobra provides a very crucial right for recently laid off people," he said, "but it is unaffordable for the intended beneficiaries to exercise that right." Pollack may not have realized it as he spoke, but a right that cannot be exercised is no right at all.

While academics speculate, politicians maneuver and health insurers jockey for advantage, millions of working-class families are suddenly cast into destitution, unable to obtain the most basic health care services because the capitalist system has again produced so much that it impoverishes the vast majority!

The working class must ultimately recognize this absurd contradiction for what it is: a war between the despotic private ownership of the industries as opposed to the cooperative social basis upon which they are founded. That realization is the first step toward resolving all the horrors that are a part of capitalism and erecting a rational society based upon cooperation, peace and abundance for all.

COLOMBIA—

Murders at Coca-Cola Plant Spark New Labor Strategy

By David Bacon

©Pacific News Service

After their union leader was gunned down at the gates of the factory where they worked, Edgar Paez and his coworkers at the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Carepa, Colombia, tried for four years to get justice in the country's courts. Instead, some of the workers themselves wound up behind bars, while they watched the murderers go free.

Believing Colombian courts incapable of ensuring justice, they decided to haul Coca-Cola Inc. into U.S. courts, with the help of two powerful U.S. unions. The unions hope the new cross-border strategy will help stop a wave of murders of union militants at Coca-Cola and other

companies in Colombia that has lasted over a decade.

The Colombian union, SINALTRAINAL, together with the United Steel Workers of America and the International Labor Rights Fund, has filed in Florida against Coca-Cola Inc., soft-drink bottler Panamerican Beverages, and Bebidas y Alimentos, owned by Richard Kirby of Key Biscayne, which operates the Carepa plant. The three companies are charged with complicity in the assassination of Colombian union leaders.

Colombian unionists traveled to the United States, gathering support for the case and future legal actions. On Nov. 19, Paez was joined by James Hoffa, president of the 1.4 million-member Teamsters Union, and the Rev. James Orange, an African-American civil rights leader, in front of the World of Coca-Cola Museum in Atlanta, Ga., where the multinational company is based. Hoffa told Coke that "as the union that represents the most Coca-Cola workers in the world...we join in demanding that Coke stop the violence against workers."

The Florida case charges that on the morning of Dec. 5, 1996, a right-wing paramilitary squad of the United Self Defense Forces (AUC) showed up at the gate into the Carepa bottling plant. Isidro Segundo Gil, a member of the union's executive board, went out to see what they wanted. The squad opened fire, killing him. An hour later, paramilitaries kidnapped another union leader at his home; he later escaped and fled to Bogota. That evening, according to the suit, squads broke into the union's office and burned it down.

The next day, a heavily armed group went inside the bottling plant and called the workers together. "They said that if they didn't resign by 4 p.m., the same thing would happen to them that

happened to Gil—they would be killed," recalls Paez.

Rafael Fernandez, a spokesperson for Coca-Cola, says the company's code of conduct requires respect for human rights. Coke's Colombia spokesperson, Pedro Largacha, states that "bottlers in Colombia are completely independent of the Coca-Cola Company."

Bebidas y Alimentos owner Richard Kirby says he has no way to stop the paramilitaries. "You don't use them, they use you," he says. "Nobody tells the paramilitaries what to do."

Still, the suit charges that plant manager Ariosto Milan Mosquera, who had a history of socializing with the paramilitaries, gave them the order to destroy the union. And, Paez says, Coke benefited from the murders.

"At the time of Gil's death we were involved in negotiations with the company," he says. "They never negotiated with the union after that. Twenty-seven workers in 12 departments left the plant and the area. All the workers had to quit the union to save their own lives, and the union was completely destroyed."

The suit claims that the company prepared the resignation forms. The experienced workers, who had been earning \$380-\$400 a month, were replaced by new employees making minimum wage, about \$130 a month.

"For two months, the paramilitaries camped just outside the plant gate," Paez says. "Coca-Cola never complained to the authorities."

The plant's director and production manager were detained along with a local paramilitary leader during a subsequent investigation by the Colombian Justice Ministry. All three were later released without charges.

The assassination was neither the first nor the last among union leaders in

Colombian Coke plants. In 1994, two other union activists, José David and Luis Granado, were also murdered in Carepa, and paramilitaries demanded that workers quit the union. In 1989, José Avelino Chicano was killed in the Pasto plant. This year a union leader at the Bucaramanga plant, Oscar Dario Soto Polo, was murdered. When the union denounced the killings, the plant's chief of security, José Alejo Aponte, charged its leaders with terrorism. Five were jailed for six months. At the Barrancabermeja plant someone scrawled on the walls, "Get Out Galvis From Coca-Cola, Signed AUC." Juan Carlos Galvis is the president of the plant's union.

"One of our biggest problems in Colombia is that social protest in general is being criminalized," Paez says.

"In many ways, transnational corporations virtually govern the states in which they operate," says Samuel Morales of the Unified Confederation of Workers (CUT), the country's largest union federation. "And in our country, it's become a crime to speak out forcefully against them. They get cheap labor by weakening unions and getting rid of long-term workers."

By October, 125 Colombian trade union leaders had been murdered this year alone. Last year's assassinations killed 129. Out of every five trade unionists murdered in the world, three were Colombian.

Paramilitaries are blamed for almost all trade union assassinations. Robin Kirk, who monitors human rights abuses in Colombia for Human Rights Watch, says that there are strong ties between the AUC and the Colombian military.

"The Colombian military and intelligence apparatus has been virulently anti-Communist since the 1950s," Kirk says, "and they look at trade unionists as subversives, as a very real and potential threat."

"They believe it's a crime," says Morales, "to present any alternative, any option for social change. The paramilitaries don't act by themselves. In

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Military Tribunals

"A president of the United States has just assumed what amounts to dictatorial power to jail or execute aliens," wrote reactionary columnist William Safire in November, after President Bush authorized secret military tribunals to conduct trials of non-U.S. citizens accused of terrorism.

If allowed to stand, Safire continued, "We are letting George W. Bush get away with the replacement of the American rule of law with military kangaroo courts." Safire was right—though he had nothing sensible to say beyond that.

The post-Sept. 11 social and political landscape is being rapidly reshaped by the Bush administration—perhaps not coincidentally as the nation enters its most serious economic crisis in two decades, headed by an administration that attained power more by judicial fiat than by any "popular will" the capitalist class normally buys for candidates of the twin parties of capitalism.

Past, gradual encroachments by the political state and its police agencies on individual rights and liberties, conducted under the monikers of "wars" against crime, drugs and terrorism, served as reminders of Justice William O. Douglas' sentiment: "As nightfall does not come at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged. And it is in such twilight that we all must be most aware of change in the air—however slight—lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness."

Things are no longer "seemingly unchanged." The establishment of secret trials conducted under secret indictments with secret evidence judged by secret military panels who secretly sentence those convicted to incarceration or execution is not a mere indicator of a trend. It is the *establishment* of a prop that ruling classes normally reserve for the iron hoop of police powers they almost invariably resort to in seeking to defend their rule in times of social upheaval.

There can be no excuse for such tribunals in a land that proclaims itself a democracy. Trials of those accused in previous terrorist attacks, including the 1993 World Trade Center attack, were conducted without suspending the rules under which our class-biased judicial system metes out its usual "justice."

What's so different this time around? Perhaps because the Bush administration doesn't wish to give Osama bin Laden a public venue from which to further open a window on the atrocious human rights record of U.S. capitalism's foreign policy. That is the subject that stirs the hearts of many in the Third World to anti-U.S. fervor—even many who *haven't* been influenced by Islamic or other religious cultists or nationalistic local ruling-class opportunists. It is not in the material interest of the capitalist class to have that sentiment spread.

Moreover, too many U.S. workers, searching for the reasons why the terrorists and

much of the Arab world "hate us," have already opened that window enough to begin questioning *whose interests* U.S. foreign policy really serves.

U.S. workers must be more than vigilant in this period of rapid change. They must not fail to *act*, as too many did in Germany during the rise of the Nazis. They must remember the words found scribbled on a wall in the German extermination camp Dachau when it was liberated in 1944: "When they came to get the Jews I didn't say anything because I wasn't one of them. When the Nazis came to get the blacks I didn't say anything because I wasn't one of them. When they took the crippled, the mentally unstable and the insane away I didn't say anything. When they took the Catholics away I didn't say anything because I wasn't one of them. Now I can't say anything because they have come and taken me away."

U.S. workers need to proclaim: Give us a truce with your plans for a police state to save your rule from the economic convulsions into which your system of minority power and privilege has once again thrown all of society. Give us a truce with your wars, ostensibly conducted under the banner of "freedom and democracy," which actually serve your criminal material interests so well.

A police state may not yet exist in the United States. But with passage of October's so-called Patriot Act and its increased powers for surveillance and counterintelligence, and Bush's executive order establishing military tribunals, the administration has many of its building blocks already in place.

Recognizing that fascism is capitalism's last line of defense against the possibility of the working class effecting its own solution to capitalism's social decay, the Socialist Labor Party points out the need for a revolutionary alternative to the economic insecurity and social chaos sown by capitalism and reaped by fascists, growing right-wing and racist groups and other terrorists.

That alternative involves establishing independent, classconscious workers' economic and political organizations to wage revolutionary class struggle on a civilized plane. A political party of the working class is needed to work for a democratic mandate at the ballot box and help recruit workers for the needed economic force. That civilized force must be provided by Socialist Industrial Unions that will work for that mandate *and* organize on a classwide, industrywide basis to *back up* that mandate.

This is the civilized force needed to take, hold and operate the means of life and establish a socialist society collectively owned and democratically controlled by the working-class majority. Only such a society can put to an end the class divisions and economic conditions under capitalism that cause strife and anarchy, and establish the basis for lasting peace, plenty and freedom. It is time for workers to act on this need—*before it's too late.* —K.B.

New COINTELPRO?

Early last month, *The New York Times* reported that, according to senior government officials, "Attorney General John Ashcroft is considering a plan to relax restrictions on the FBI's spying on religious and political organizations in the United States." But the plan may affect more form than substance.

Restrictions on domestic spying were *ostensibly* adopted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the 1970s after public disclosures about the existence of an FBI program called COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program). In the 1960s and 1970s, COINTELPRO targeted antiwar protesters, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., members of the Black Panther Party and other dissident groups for infiltration and disruption—and others, like the Ku Klux Klan, for political manipulation like

that which led to the shooting deaths of five antiracist protesters in Greensboro, N.C., in 1979.

Whether or not the FBI ever halted its counterintelligence operations against dissenting groups must remain an open question because that is the covert nature of the beast. However, there is reason to suspect that it continued to spy and harass certain environmental and antiwar groups and personalities long after such operations were supposed to cease.

According to *The New York Times*, "senior FBI officials" are against Ashcroft's plans to rescind the prohibitions against domestic spying by the FBI. But as the agency's continued domestic spying under their own aegis shows, their concerns are more about the FBI's public image than about the civil rights and liberties of those they target. —K.B.



A De Leon Editorial

Rights & Liberties

Foreigners living in the United States are entitled to the same constitutional protections against governmental abuse as American citizens.

International Law and Socialist Civilization

(Daily People, Aug. 17, 1913)

A Deming, N.M., correspondent asks testily:

"I see from your paper that you approve Wilson's policy of leaving American citizens to the tender mercies of Mexican bandits. I suppose that is what you call 'socialist civilization.' Thank you."

We shall not try to peer behind the curtain, discover and uncover the peculiar material interests that prompt our indignant correspondent's sense of civilization. It is of more importance to consider the principles of international law that the New Mexico Sen. Albert B. Fall proclaimed in the Senate, and which our indignant New Mexico correspondent, probably having inhaled, now exhales.

On July 22, this country's relations with Mexico being intensely strained, Sen. Fall introduced in the Senate a resolution which purported to lay down the principle that "the constitutional rights of American citizens should go with them throughout the world," so that the United States government shall give to every American citizen residing in any foreign country full protection "both for himself and his property."

Here is a pronouncement that flies in the face of the enlightened principles of the law of nations.

International law provides that the citizens of a nation shall not be discriminated against in a foreign country, but shall enjoy there the same civic rights that are enjoyed by the foreign nation's own citizens, or subjects.

Sen. Fall's pronouncement sets up a new principle, to wit, that the civic rights of a nation's citizens residing in a foreign country shall be determined by the constitutional rights which such citizens are guaranteed in their own country.

The principle is not only new, it is jingoistically insane.

Constitutional rights are not identical in

all countries. Constitutional rights register a nation's stage of civilization, together with the nation's climatic disposition and geographic needs. The constitutional rights of the German subject are markedly different from the constitutional rights of the French citizen; again, the constitutional rights of the two are not identical with the constitutional rights of the British subject; the constitutional rights of the three differ in important respects from the constitutional rights of the American citizen; and so on.

It follows that the application in Mexico, for instance, of Sen. Fall's international law principle would be—

Either that there would be as many different civic rights administered in Mexico as there are foreign nations represented by resident citizens and subjects, plus the civic rights of Mexican citizens themselves; and that as many foreign armed forces have the right to invade the country, each with the right simultaneously to enforce, so far as the citizens or subjects of its own country are concerned, the rights that the constitution of their country guarantee both to themselves and their property:

Or, that the privilege shall be enjoyed by, and be enforced in behalf of American citizens only.

The first alternative belongs in bedlam; the second reads itself outside of the code of equity which international law sets up for all nations alike.

The American citizen, like the subject or citizen of any other nation in the sisterhood of nations who chooses to reside in Mexico, or any other country, takes his chances with the civic rights enjoyed by the subjects, or citizens, of the country in which he voluntarily sets up his residence. He throws in his lot with them, suffering when they suffer, enjoying when they enjoy.

So sayeth international law; so sayeth socialist civilization. And both languages combine and agree in repudiating the language, as they have left behind them the sentiments, of "fresh kids" and of jingoism.

what is socialism?

Socialism is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, mines, railroads, land and all other instruments of production. Socialism means production to satisfy human needs, not, as under capitalism, for sale and profit. Socialism means direct control and management of the industries and social services by the workers through a democratic government based on their nationwide economic organization.

Under socialism, all authority will originate from the workers, integrally united in Socialist Industrial Unions. In each workplace, the rank and file will elect whatever committees or representatives are needed to facilitate production. Within each shop or office division of a plant, the rank and file will participate directly in formulating and implementing all plans necessary for efficient operations.

Besides electing all necessary shop officers, the workers will also elect representatives to a local and national council of their industry or service—and to a central congress representing all the industries and services. This all-industrial congress will plan and coordinate production in all areas of the economy. All persons elected to any post in the socialist government, from the lowest to the highest level, will be directly accountable to the rank and file. They will be subject to removal at any time that a majority of those who elected them decide it is necessary.

Such a system would make possible the fullest democracy and freedom. It would be a society based on the most primary freedom—economic freedom.

For individuals, socialism means an end to economic insecurity and exploitation. It means workers cease to be commodities bought and sold on the labor market and forced to work as appendages to tools owned by someone else. It means a chance to develop all individual capacities and potentials within a free community of free individuals.

Socialism does not mean government or state ownership. It does not mean a state bureaucracy as in the former Soviet Union or China, with the working class oppressed by a new bureaucratic class. It does not mean a closed party-run system without democratic rights. It does not mean "nationalization," or "labor-management boards," or state capitalism of any kind. It means a complete end to all capitalist social relations.

To win the struggle for socialist freedom requires enormous efforts of organizational and educational work. It requires building a political party of socialism to contest the power of the capitalist class on the political field and to educate the majority of workers about the need for socialism. It requires building Socialist Industrial Union organizations to unite all workers in a classconscious industrial force and to prepare them to take, hold and operate the tools of production.

You are needed in the ranks of Socialists fighting for a better world. Find out more about the program and work of the Socialist Labor Party and join us to help make the promise of socialism a reality.

Capitalism & Species Extinction

By B.B.

"If money, according to Augier, 'comes into the world with a congenital bloodstain on one cheek,' capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt."

—Karl Marx, *Capital*

Marx was talking about the African slave trade, "child-slavery in England" and "the veiled slavery of the wage-workers in Europe" in this passage from *Capital*, his most important work. He was talking about the ruthless conduct of the capitalist class in pursuing profit and about some of capitalism's pitiless effects on the human species.

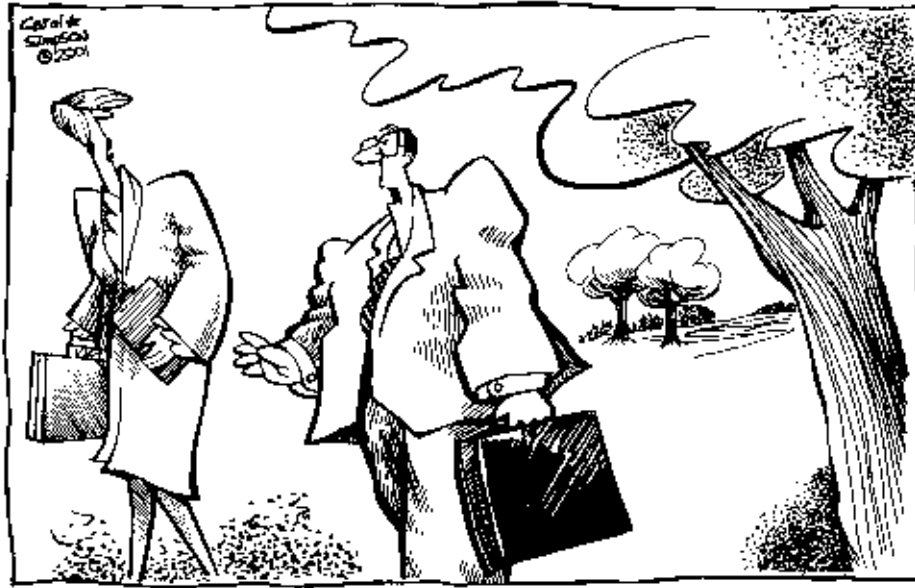
However, the human species is not the only one to suffer at the hands of the profit motive. It is not the only species on Earth mangled by a compulsion so powerful that it allows the capitalist class and its servants—in politics, in academia, in the media and in the pulpit—to disavow the impact of their stewardship of the globe.

Scientific American graphically illustrated this fact in its November issue with an article by W. Wayt Gibbs. In his article "On the Termination of Species," Gibbs reports on a Society for Conservation Biology conference held at Hilo, Hawaii. His report mentions many problems confronting the planet's dwindling number of species.

Although Gibbs does not mention capitalism by name, the problems he cites result from the chaotic effects of 300 years of worldwide capitalist development and exploitation.

To summarize the trouble some species are in consider the following particulars mentioned in the article:

- "According to the latest rough estimate, the extinction rate...accelerated during the past 100 years to roughly 1,000 times what it was before humans



"You know, if money DID grow on trees, I might be more sympathetic to the environmental movement."

showed up."

- "...Humans appear to be causing a cataclysm of [species] extinctions more severe than any since the one that erased the dinosaurs 65 million years ago..."

- "...Harvard University biologist E.O. Wilson cites current estimates that between 1 and 10 percent of species are extinguished every decade, at least 27,000 a year."

- "Michael J. Novacek, AMNH's [American Museum of Natural History] provost of science, wrote in a review...that 'figures approaching 30 percent extermination of all species by the mid-21st century are not unrealistic.'"

- A 1998 survey of biologists found that 70 percent "believed that a mass extinction is in progress" and "a third of them expected to lose 20 to 50 percent of the world's species within 30 years."

- John Alroy of the University of California at Santa Barbara noted "over the past 200 years...the rate of loss among mammal species has been 120

times higher than natural."

- Even skeptics concede that an extinction rate of 0.15 percent of species per decade, is "not a catastrophe but a problem—one of many that mankind still needs to solve."

The magnitude of the approaching disaster is inescapable, references to vagaries such as "humans," and "mankind" notwithstanding. They are a part of the shroud and an attribution that deflects guilt from capitalism to the hazy realm of people everywhere. This is not dissimilar to blaming species destruction on "original sin." Similarly, sophists will argue that species extinction has always been with us, which is an argument Socialists are accustomed to hearing from capitalist sources about the poor. But begging the question does not answer it.

Species extinctions have been an ongoing process since the appearance of life on the planet and are indeed a part of the evolutionary process itself, socioeconomic as well as natural. Whether caused by catastrophic mete-

or impacts, cycles of warming and freezing, or dwindling oxygen levels in shallow seas, those natural events have been part of the evolutionary process itself. It is also true that human intervention, through the socioeconomic system that organized such intervention in the natural world, is of ancient origins and has caused species extinction such as the theorized destruction of the woolly mammoth, the giant sloth and the saber-toothed tiger, but until relatively recently these have not been at a large enough scale to disrupt evolution itself.

Yet this is what biologists worry about. They also express their concern for the fragility of the ecology. "...What will happen to fig trees...if it loses the single parasitic wasp variety that pollinates every one of its 900 species? Or to the 79 percent of canopy-level trees in the Samoan rain forests if hunters kill off the flying foxes on which they depend? Part of the reason so many conservationists are so fearful is that they expect the arches of entire ecosystems to fall once a few 'keystone' species are removed."

The author devotes a section of the article to "Why Biodiversity Doesn't (Yet) Pay." Australian naturalist Ebbe Nielsen is quoted as saying of the moribund 1992 convention of 178 countries on biodiversity: "In developing countries the economic pressures are so high, people use whatever they can find today to survive until tomorrow." The "economist" Geoffrey Heal of Columbia University was paraphrased as noting: "Economics [capitalism] can only assign values to things for which there are markets..." Apparently, biodiversity is excluded.

Indeed, biodiversity cannot be reconciled and assured a future between exploited and exploiter. Under capitalism it is narrowly framed in terms of the commercial value of species, e.g., timber, pulp, extraction of drugs and pharmaceuticals, etc. Biologists and scientists concerned with species extinction need to overcome their aversion or reluctance to examine the cause of accelerated species death inherent under capitalism and make common cause with the working class of whom they are a part. They need to become Socialists in the way they view the world.

The capitalist class and its supporters either do not know or do not care what effect their precious system has on the world and the varied but dwindling forms of life that inhabit it. The working class, however, has the power—and more important, the responsibility—to wrest control of the world from its pillagers. As Marx put it:

"From the standpoint of a higher economic form of society, private ownership of the globe by single individuals will appear as absurd as private ownership of one man by another. Even a whole society, a nation, or even all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the globe. They are only its possessors, its usufructuaries, [and, like *boni patres familias*,] they must hand it down to succeeding generations in an improved condition."

To avert the unnatural extinction of more species—perhaps even the human species—the economic system of the United States must be changed to one based upon cooperation and use, not competition and profit. That change is summarized in these pages by the Socialist Labor Party that demands the socialist reconstruction of society. Otherwise, species extinction is assured.

Question Period

What distinguishes the working class from the capitalist class?

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels say: "Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeois, possesses...this distinctive feature: It has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat."

Or, to use language more familiar to American ears, *capitalist class* and *working class*.

The distinctive features of the working class are these:

Its members (1) own none of the means of social production; (2) must sell their labor power for a price, which is given the special name of "wages," to live; (3) perform all socially useful labor; and (4) have no voice in the disposition of their product.

This definition includes workers who wear white collars, blue collars or no collars at all. It includes so-called professionals, whose wages are given the obfuscating name of "salaries." It includes workers who have been beguiled or bludgeoned by employers into buying a few shares of stock. Capitalist propagandists to the contrary notwithstanding, such

trifling stock ownership does not make a worker a capitalist. The worker must still work to live.

In short, the working class includes the overwhelming majority of the population, and except for the capitalist here or there who may perform a useful dual role, it includes all the socially useful members of society.

By way of contrast, the distinctive features of the capitalist class are these:

Its members (1) own all the means of social production; (2) appropriate the surplus value created by labor, and by converting a portion thereof provide for the perpetuation of their system; and (3) as capitalists, perform no socially useful function whatsoever.

Farmer-capitalists are included in this category, as are so-called small business men and women. As for the petty capitalists whose capital is so small that they must work alongside their wage slaves, Marx writes: "Of course he can, like his laborer, take to work himself, participate directly in the process of production, but he is then only a hybrid between capitalist and laborer, a 'small master.'" (*Capital*, Chapter XI)

These are the socioeconomic features of the two great hostile classes of modern society. Today some who are in the capitalist category are enlightened and take their stand with the workers, supporting the latter's social and economic aspirations.

We may expect more to achieve the intellectual stature necessary to see beyond their narrow property interests. Nevertheless, the line that divides the two classes is the line of the irrepressible class struggle.



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Seventy-five years ago, in January 1927, the Coolidge administration brought the country to the brink of war with Mexico in a dispute involving Nicaragua and Mexico's decision to nationalize its oil resources and large land holdings under the control of foreign—primarily American—capitalists.

As excuse for its threat of war, the Coolidge administration cited Mexico's decision to recognize Juan Sacasa as the legitimate president of Nicaragua. The Mexican government was characterized as "Bolshevik" and accused of attempting to "export revolution" to its southern neighbor. The real reason for threatening war, however, was that U.S. financial and oil interests were menaced by Mexico's decision to assert control over its own natural resources.

As the crisis unfolded, the U.S. Marines were sent into Nicaragua for a second time within a year, which contributed to the rebellion led by Augustino Sandino (from whom the later Sandinista movement took its name).

In the end, war with Mexico was averted, primarily because of opposition from other powerful interests within the U.S. ruling class. However, on Jan. 13, 1927, when war with Mexico still seemed imminent, the Socialist Labor Party adopted a resolution condemning the Coolidge administration and the imperialist designs U.S. financial and oil interests had on Mexico's resources.

As indicated, the SLP was not alone in opposing the administration's intervention in Nicaragua and threats against Mexico. On the same day that the SLP adopted its resolution, for example, U.S. Sen. William E. Borah of Idaho delivered a lengthy speech on the Senate floor in which he reviewed the history of Nicaragua and sharply criticized the administration's policy.

Borah was a reactionary politician with presidential ambitions who had been instrumental in efforts to railroad William D. Haywood, and other leaders of the Western Federation of Miners, on trumped-up charges of having ordered the assassination of a for-

mer Idaho governor in 1906. In short, Borah was no "friend of labor," and he probably had even less regard for the peons of Nicaragua and Mexico than he had for the miners and other workers of the United States.

Nonetheless, Borah was an anti-imperialist, and in the course of his address on the Senate floor he enunciated a certain principle that it is timely and worth reminding ourselves of in the present war atmosphere.

"In 1909, and for a number of years prior thereto, one Zeyala had been president or ruler of Nicaragua," Borah said. "He is now referred to as a despot and a tyrant, and I have no desire to challenge that designation. I think he was acting, perhaps, in a manner somewhat similar to that in which many of the Central American rulers at times act; but, at any rate, whether he was a despot or a tyrant had nothing to do, or ought not to have anything to do, with a policy of the United States. The people of Nicaragua have just as much right...to have a despotic form of government as they have to have a republic; and we have no more right to interfere with them in regard to that condition of affairs...than we have a right to interfere with any great power which might choose to set up that form of government. If we can but realize...that in dealing with powerless and helpless countries, we are in duty and in conscience bound to practice the same precepts and follow the same principles as we practice and follow when we deal with powerful nations, we will have no trouble in finding our light along the pathway of duty in this matter."

No doubt Sen. Borah and other ruling-class elements had their own reasons for wanting to frustrate the ambitions of the oil and financial interests behind the Coolidge administration's threats against Mexico. Nonetheless, the principle involved is correct, regardless of who may happen to cite it. "The devil can cite scripture for his purpose," just as Shakespeare said.

That principle—the right of

nations to self-determination—is implicit in our own Declaration of Independence from Great Britain, which asserts that whenever the government of a people "evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

Note that well. It is *their* right and *their* duty, but neither the right nor the duty of any other. Accordingly, not only is it the right, it is also the duty of every true patriot to stand by that most American of fundamental principles and to speak out against any administration at Washington that violates it.

It was in that spirit that the SLP adopted the following resolution 75 years ago when the United States was brought to the brink of war with Mexico:

Resolution on the Mexico-Nicaragua Situation

(Weekly People, Jan. 22, 1927)

WHEREAS, War between the United States and Mexico is threatened; and

WHEREAS, Such a war, if it breaks out, will be due chiefly to the influence of powerful financial groups and oil interests; and

WHEREAS, The record clearly shows that the United States Government, acting particularly through the State Department, has done everything possible to provoke, and nothing to prevent, a severance of the peaceful relations hitherto existing between the United States and the Republic of Mexico; be it hereby

RESOLVED, That the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party of America, acting through its Sub-Committee in regular session this 13th day of January, 1927, emphatically protests against any contemplated war with Mexico; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we denounce the acts of the United States Government that have led to the present strained relations with Mexico—acts that have been denounced even by capitalist newspapers as proving that "the State Department is clearly and unmistakably looking for trouble"; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we condemn the intervention in Nicaragua as wanton, arrogant and utterly lacking in justification, this intervention being, in fact, a reversal of the pledged policy of the Government of the United States in that this country is supporting a usurper as against the democratically elected heads of the Nicaraguan Government, and we demand of the Government an immediate recall of all forces despatched to the Caribbean Sea with public disavowal of any intention on the part of the United States Government to support any government but that desired by the people of Nicaragua; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we call upon the working class who would be urged or conscripted to furnish life and labor in pursuit of such a criminal war to rouse themselves, to organize themselves politically and in Industrial Unions, to the end that exploitation and wars may be banished forever.

National Executive Sub-Committee, Socialist Labor Party.

AUGUST GILLHAUS, Chairman

WM. WOODHOUSE, Recording Secretary

ARNOLD PETERSEN, National Secretary

activities

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

OHIO

North Royalton

Social & Discussion—

Section Cleveland will hold a social and open discussion on Sunday, Dec. 30, at 9626 York Rd., North Royalton. Begins at 1:30 p.m. Refreshments 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 houston-slp@lycos.com or visit the group's Web site at <http://houstonslp.tripod.com>.

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... No Lasting Peace

(Continued from page 1)

that. The world is crawling with cultists and criminals who can be distinguished only by the nature and scope of their crimes. Not all of them want to turn the clock back 800 years to the days of the Umayyad or Abassid caliphates, as bin Laden is said to want. Some are self-deluded, others are simply crackpots on the make, but all traffic on the ignorance that ruling classes have no incentive to eradicate. No matter how terrible any one of them may be, no matter how horrid their offenses against humanity, their crimes do not absolve and cannot justify the crimes of their opponents and enemies.

American capitalism is guilty of many crimes—crimes committed in pursuit of profits in foreign places and here within the confines of our own national borders. A social system and a ruling class that impoverishes our children, resists our efforts to improve our wages, takes away our jobs, undermines our civil liberties and uses our environment

for its private sewer has no claim to moral superiority. It is an obstruction along history's path to a world in which the material basis—the motive and the opportunity—for all such crimes will be eliminated.

"Every Socialist is aware that capitalism brings in its wake outrages unheard of in previous systems," Daniel De Leon observed. "But every Socialist also knows that progress in the social evolutionary scale is not to be gauged by the volume of labor's trials. The determining factor of social progress is the possibility that a social stage offers for redress and for emancipation."

That is the dividing line or crossroads that humanity stands at today. That line was not drawn on Sept. 11, but unless the American working class is prepared to stumble along the path to even greater chaos, social breakdown and anarchy on a global scale it must decide that it cannot and will not tolerate a social system that breeds those conditions.

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on the web

The De Leon Online section of the SLP's official Web site now features the largest collection of editorials, speeches and debates by Daniel De Leon that can be found anywhere on the Internet. Recent additions bring the number of separate editorials to 110 and the number of speeches and debates to 12.

The recent additions include the 1901 speech, *Socialism vs. Anarchism*; the 1902 speeches, *Plebs Leaders and Labor Leaders* and *The Warning of the Gracchi*, which together comprise *Two Pages from Roman History*; and De Leon's 1908 address, *Marx on Mallock*.

Two of De Leon's famous de-

bates have also been added. They are the 1912 De Leon-Carmody Debate, also known as *Socialism vs. Individualism*, and the 1913 De Leon-Berry Debate, which was printed in pamphlet form as *Capitalism vs. Socialism*.

The collection of 11 editorials published as *Capitalism Means War!* has also been added.

Visitors to the SLP Web site will find some other interesting additions. One is *The People's* review of Anthony Lukacs' 1997 best-seller, *Big Trouble*, which is located in the SLP History section under a heading of "Class Struggle in the Old West."

SLP National Landmark

An addition to the Links of Interest section connects visitors to a Web page devoted to the Socialist Labor Party Hall at Barre, Vt. The hall was built by members of Section Barre in 1900. The building was restored in recent years by volunteer workers from the building trades unions in Barre and has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Public Parks Service. The Web page—which can also be reached directly at <http://www.centralvt.com/visit/nr/sitelist.htm>—features photographs and a brief history of the hall.

... Murders at Coca-Cola

(Continued from page 3)

Colombia, they're called the army's 'sixth division.'"

Despite the wave of death and violence, U.S. aid to the Colombian armed forces has grown rapidly. Under Plan Colombia, the United States has funneled over \$1 billion into the country, almost entirely in military assistance.

Paez says the U.S.-funded drug war is a pretext for protecting transnational investors. "Plan Colombia's objective is the elimination of move-

ments for social change in our country. That creates a much more favorable environment for the exploitation of our natural resources and our labor force."

One objective of the Coke suit is to pressure the Colombian and U.S. governments to comply with the conventions of the International Labor Organization and the Geneva Accords on Human Rights. But Colombian unions would also like to see those responsible for the murders brought to justice.

"We want to strip off the mask hiding the involvement of transnational corporations in our internal conflict," Paez explains. "To do this, we need a judicial forum outside the country, since within Colombia those guilty of these crimes are treated with impunity. In this particular case, those responsible include Coca-Cola. But they're not the only company pursuing policies that violate human rights."

"We're giving our own global answer to their global operations."

... Border Workers Rebel

(Continued from page 2)

from the polls. Many others who had been fired for independent union activity weren't permitted to vote at all.

Predictably, the independent union lost.

"The Duro election strips away any idea that the NAFTA process can protect workers rights," said Martha Ojeda, director of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras.

But labor unrest and organizing has continued. This spring, Torreon's streets filled with women chanting and shouting demands for a return to a standard of living capable of providing something more than cardboard houses and communities without sewers, electricity and running water. At the city's annual May Day parade, more than 2,000 women shouted "We won't be quiet anymore!" and "We want a decent life!"

Further north on the border in Ciudad Acuña, women marched with bags over their heads to hide their identity, presumably protecting themselves from firings and retaliations.

While labor unrest is most vigorous in the north, it is not limited to border regions. Workers at the Kukdong maquiladora in the central Mexican town of Atlixco, Puebla, organized an independent union and on Sept. 21 won the first contract in a garment maquiladora in a decade. Kukdong workers used the power of the growing antisweatshop movement in the United States, connecting to U.S. activists through the Mexico City office of the AFL-CIO. United Students Against Sweatshops organized picket lines at universities around the United States to publicize firings at the plant, and the fact that Nike and Reebok sportswear was being sewn there.

Garment workers in one of the

most remote corners of Mexico, on the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula, also faced firings in their efforts to organize an independent union. Workers at the California Connections and Pung Kook factories won legal status for their independent union in 1999.

Nevertheless, every worker named as a union officer on the legal documents has been fired.

To make matters worse, in May the World Bank recommended overhauling Mexico's labor law to eliminate severance pay, the 40-hour week, limits on part-time employment, permanent employment status after 90 days, bans on strike-

breaking, and constitutional guarantees of job training, health care and housing.

Mexican workers have some new political allies, however, including the new chief of the Mexico City labor board, Jesus Campos Linas. Campos Linas rejects the argument that the proposed changes to the labor law will create more jobs. "Mexico already has one of the lowest wage levels in the world," he said. In the capital, [the] minimum wage is about \$4 a day. "No one can live on this. And we've lost 400,000 jobs since January alone. Gutting the labor law will not solve this problem."

...Big Breaks

(Continued from page 1)

of capitalism. Nowhere has there been mention of helping those who really make the economy go, the working class.

Despite losing their jobs by the hundreds of thousands, it appears that the workers will continue bearing the brunt of the economic burden. But this is not news to anyone who knows the true nature of the system we live under. Capitalism will always benefit the capitalists, leaving those who do the work out in the cold.

It doesn't have to be this way. Society doesn't have to work in the interests of those who have the most money and own the means of producing what we need to live. We can build a socialist system where everyone who contributes to meeting the needs of society will benefit. You owe it to yourself and to your fellow workers to learn more about how getting rid of capitalism is in your interests, and in humanity's interests. Study the program and principles advocated by the

Socialist Labor Party. If you agree that socialism offers the best hope for yourself and our society then join us and help make it a reality.

...Fund

(Continued from page 3)

the \$125,000 goal will be reached before making any effort to extend the current lease or to investigate the possibilities for relocating the headquarters.

Accordingly, it is essential that much more progress be made toward the \$125,000 goal during the next two months than was made during the last two months.

Please contribute as generously as you can to the SLP Emergency Fund being launched with this issue.

Consider making a regular monthly contribution to the SLP Sustainer Fund.

Send for the booklet, *Steps You Can Take to Provide for the Financial Security of the Socialist Labor Party*.

Thank You

(Nov. 17–Dec. 12)

Christmas Box

Jack Radov \$1,000; Walter Vojnov \$300; Joseph L. Bregni \$200; \$100 each F.P. Cruikshank, Anonymous, Donald Rogers, Anthony Econom, Chris Dobreff, Richard A. Weimer; Bill Romberg \$55; \$50 each John & Rosemary Gale "In memory of Nathan Karp and Genevieve Gunderson," Tanner Zahrt, Edward T. Jasiewicz, James G. McHugh; Valery Zaytsev \$30; \$25 each Rudolph P. Sulenta, Leonard Minkwic, Robert Ormsby, Frank L. Minzenberger; Matthew Rinaldi \$20; \$15 each Joseph Viditch, Jan Reiner, Berenice L. Perkins, Morton J. Disckind; \$10 each Milton Poulos, Joseph Wood, Joseph J. Frank, Conrad Gutermuth, Gregory Stark, Dora Ruggiero; T. McGregor \$8; \$5 each Frank Rudolph, Libi Coquereau.

Total: \$2,643.00

Genevieve Gunderson

Memorial Fund

(Thanksgiving Fund)

Marie & Ray Simmons \$2,000; Section Wayne County, Mich. \$600; \$500 each Jack Radov, Jim & Mary Buha; Henry Coretz \$120; \$100 each Harry Banks & the Banks family, Ben & Sylvia Kraft, Harold P. Madsen, Anne Vukovich, Michael Preston; \$50 each Al & Ada Bikar, Robert A. Nash, Reynold R. Elkins; Joe Jurich \$35; \$25 each William C. O'Mahoney, Robert Ormsby, Juliette Jackson; \$20 each Brian Blanchard, Jim Comerford; Janelle Barabash \$15; Marshall G. Soura \$12; \$10 each Madeline Miller, Matthew Rinaldi, Harvey Kravitz, Leonard Cirino; add'l to Minneapolis SLP's memor-

ial meeting: William J. Prinz \$5; George Gaylord Jr. \$1.

Total: \$4,593.00

SLP Sustainer Fund

Joseph B. McCabe \$500; Robert P. Burns \$150; Bernard Bortnick \$100; Carl C. Miller Jr. \$50; Section San Francisco Bay Area: William Kelley \$20.

Total: \$820.00

Press Security Fund

Joseph Bregni \$300; Nicholas York "In memory of Nathan Karp" \$50; Carol & Edward Kaplan "In memory of Louis Fisher" \$25; \$20 each Chet Hensley, Guy Anderson; Harriet & Jeff Dorf "In memory of Louis Fisher" \$18; \$15 each Tom Dooley, E.G. Nielsen; William Prinz \$12; \$10 each Ray Hagan, L. Lela, Albert Evenich, Blake Bearden; Jefferson Coufal \$5.60; D. Mohle \$5.25; \$5 each Darlene Murnin, Edith G. Johnson, Roberta Diamond, Wheel Turner, Harry Maran; \$2 each Millard Culpepper, Calvin Slack, Ken Stibler; \$1 each David C. Komarek, Phillip White, Helen Tendler; Thomas Megas \$50.

Total: \$560.35

Leaflet Fund

Joseph Frank \$10.00 (Total)

Socialist Labor Party

Financial Summary

(Nov. 1–30, 2001)

Expenses\$10,105.45
Income16,761.29
Surplus for Nov. 6,655.84
(Jan. 1–Nov. 30, 2001)
Expenses132,645.56
Income84,665.64
Deficit as of Nov. 30 \$47,979.92

THE INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY OF SOCIALISM

Revolutionary Program

The Socialist Labor Party has a twofold program for building a socialist society. What follows is a brief summary of its main points.

POLITICAL ACTION

To establish socialism, political unity under the banner of a mass political party of labor is needed. The role of the party is to educate workers to the need to abolish capitalism, to agitate for the formation of classconscious industrial unions, and to express the revolutionary mandate of the working class at the ballot box. The party must also aim to capture and dismantle the political state—the present territorial form of government—and thus pave the way for a new form of government, a participatory democracy based on *industry*.

ECONOMIC ACTION

To establish socialism, workers must unite *as a class*, by organizing new unions. These democratic, rank-and-file-controlled unions, built along the lines of industry, would not only fight day-to-day battles for better wages and conditions. Based on the principle that the working class is involved in a *class struggle* with the employing, capitalist class, a struggle that cannot be ended under the capitalist system, a Socialist Industrial Union movement would be motivated by a higher goal: replacing capitalist ownership of the industries and services with social ownership and democratic workers' control.

Thus, while fighting day-to-day battles, these unions would move toward that goal, mobilizing workers' real strength as the sole productive class in society by building the greatest possible unity and solidarity. When the majority of society is in favor of socialism, the Socialist Industrial Union would back up the decision made at the ballot box by taking, holding and operating the industries and services of the land in the social interest.

Socialist Industrial Unions would then become the governing bodies of socialist society. We would have a truly democratic government in which society's useful producers would be in control of their own economic security and well-being.

NOT A BLUEPRINT

The chart below is not a blueprint. Rather, it is intended to illustrate graphically the principle upon which Socialist Industrial Unionism and the future socialist industrial democracy rest, using the auto industry as an example. A similar chart could be used for any socially necessary industry or service. A chart at the upper right depicts the flow of representation in socialist society.

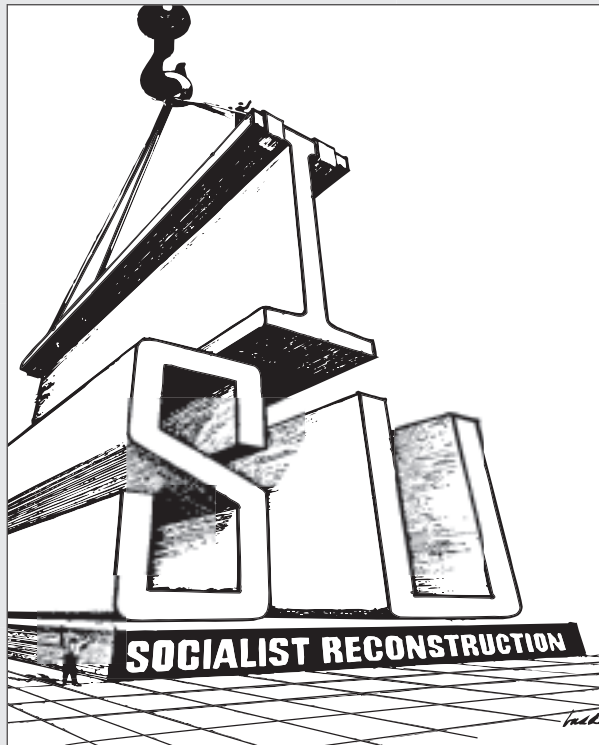
The Socialist Industrial Union unites workers for the establishment of socialism. And it provides the governmental framework through which to organize and administer social production for the benefit of all the people. Council members at every level of government will be elected from industrial constituencies which coincide with the subdivisions of the integral industrial union of all the useful producers. This industrial self-government of the producers provides a viable means for society to operate the economy collectively and democratically, without social classes or any form of state oppression.

Revolutionary Act

The revolutionary ballot will establish the *right* of the people to establish socialist society.

The Socialist Industrial Union will create the power to *back up* that right.

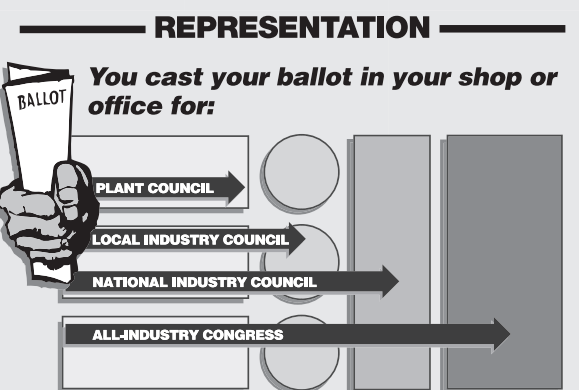
"Industrial unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the industrial union is the Socialist Republic in operation."
— Daniel De Leon



New Society

After the revolution, the administration of all production and distribution will be the function of the democratically elected Socialist Industrial Union government.

As industry is organized for production, so will be the administration of the new socialist society:



Socialist Industrial Unionism is the only certain safeguard against bureaucratic usurpation. In socialist society final authority will rest with the rank and file of useful producers.

The useful producers will elect administrators and representatives to all levels of government, and they will have the easily and immediately exercisable power to recall and remove any administrator or representative who, in their judgment, fails to serve their interests in office.

The Socialist Industrial Union, in firm possession of the industries and services of the land, will insure that all power remains in the only safe place for power to be—with the rank and file of society's useful producers.

Today, in the procapitalist unions, union bureaucrats are almighty, and union members are virtual subjects. But in the Socialist Industrial Union each individual worker will have an effective voice as well as a vote in everything from the operation of the workplace to the administration of society.

This will be a social organization in which the people who do the work will have complete democratic control of their tools and products—thus production will at long last be for use and the benefit of all.

THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

