

National Platform

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Our society stands where the road forks. The signs are plainly marked.

One points to a continuation of capitalism. It leads to a postwar world of chronic economic crisis, of idle factories and idle men, of spreading anti-Semitism and racism, of fascist controls and Stateism, and of the perpetual struggle and war.

The other points to Socialism—a world of social ownership, democratic management of the industries, jobs and plenty for all, human brotherhood, and enduring peace.

The Socialist Labor Party of America, at its 21st National Convention in the City of New York, May 1, 1944, in placing its program for a Socialist reconstruction of society before the American workers, declares this to be the issue that confronts them: Either society moves onward and upward to peace and plenty via collective ownership of the industries, or it continues under the economic despotism of private property to a new dark age. There is no middle way.

The present global war—the greatest crisis ever to face civilized man—grew out of the prewar struggle among the capitalist powers for the markets and resources of the world. The chaos it has wrought is evidence of the breakdown of the capitalist system, of its inability to manage for the benefit of society the immensely productive machinery created under it.

Capitalism could not solve the problems besetting society before the war began; it cannot solve the immensely greater problems which will arise when the war ends.

For more than a decade prior to the outbreak of World War II

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the factories stood idle or operated part-time, while the army of unemployed workers numbered millions. The reason is self-evident. The capitalists, owning the instruments of production and using them to exploit the propertiless workers, could not find markets for labor's product. Only one "market" could absorb the abundant output of our fields and factories. That market is war.

What the New Deal failed to do—after spending billions of dollars in a vain attempt to prime the pump of business—war did. Production has soared to unprecedented heights. But note this: We *could* have produced just as much for peace in 1939 as we produce for war in 1944. We *could* have built new factories then, factories that would turn out just as many kitchen gadgets, automobiles, refrigerators, etc., as the shells, warplanes and guns our new plants are turning out today. We did not do this because the capitalists who own the factories and decide what shall be produced, or shall not be produced, could not find markets for more than a fraction of labor's actual or potential product.

The capitalists could not find a market for labor's product before the war began; how can they sell immensely greater product when the war ends? The capitalists themselves stand appalled before the magnitude of this problem. Their desperation is reflected in their preoccupation, in the very midst of war, with *postwar* markets and the *postwar* struggle for markets. The war has intensified and multiplied the problems confronting the capitalist class—it has, therefore, merely delayed, it has not averted, the collapse of capitalism.

The capitalist class turns more and more to the State as an agency to prolong its existence as the ruling class. Internationally the American capitalist State has become a huge cartel which utilizes the nation's military and economic might to the furtherance of capitalist aims. Domestically the State is called upon to control the forces unleashed by competitive capitalism—for the benefit of the capitalist proprietors. If private property remains the basis of society,

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and the capitalists are left in control of affairs, we may expect them to do precisely what the capitalists of Germany and Italy did when their rule was threatened—attempt to preserve dominion over the workers by putting totalitarian shackles upon them.

Signs of the capitalist reaction abound. The policy of dealing with fascists abroad is paralleled at home by the demand for fascist-pioneered controls over the workers—conscription of labor, for example, in open contempt of the Constitutional ban on involuntary servitude. Hardly less ominous are the demands to continue wartime controls into the postwar era, the establishment of permanent military conscription, the anti-strike laws, the creation of a huge State bureaucracy, and the spread of anti-Semitism and racism.

Anticipating unprecedented postwar unemployment and social unrest, the capitalist class and its reformer henchmen advance numerous schemes to appease the workers. Foremost among these are a vast postwar public works program and the extension of “social security”—a patent misnomer under a system which, by its very nature, dictates insecurity of the useful producers. From these proposals it is abundantly clear that what the capitalists envision is a condition of servility wherein the unemployed are held in reserve by the State in a huge public works reservoir.

Against this insane social system of capitalism, the Socialist Labor Party raises its voice in emphatic protest and unqualified condemnation, and calls upon the working class to organize politically and industrially to put an end to capitalism, and to establish the Socialist Industrial Commonwealth of Labor.

Socialism and Socialism alone is the hope of humanity! If the vast potentialities of this technological age are to be realized, capitalism must be destroyed. The industries and the land of the nation must become the collective property of society. Thus only can an end be put to unemployment, poverty, the scourge of racism and anti-Semitism, and the barbarity of war.

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The Constitution of the United States provides for its own amendment. The Constitution thereby recognizes and legalizes revolution. The working class, the majority, holds the government in the hollow of its hand. We propose, accordingly, that the revolutionary change be effected by the peaceful and civilized means of the ballot.

In presenting the issue—the *only* issue, Socialism or Capitalism—and a program for its solution, the Socialist Labor Party stands alone. All other parties, whatever their names or claims, propose to reform and to preserve the criminal, and crime-breeding, capitalist system. Recognizing the simple truth that RIGHT without MIGHT to support it is useless and meaningless, we call upon the workers of America to organize themselves into integral Socialist Industrial Unions to enforce the demand for collective ownership proclaimed through the ballot. Such unions must be organized, for none now exist adequate to the great task, the existing unions—A.F. of L., C.I.O. and kindred bodies—being avowed supporters and agencies of the capitalist class and their despotic social system.

Organized along Socialist industrial lines, the working class can act instantaneously, and with such momentum that no power on earth can stop it. Only the thoroughly integrated Socialist Industrial Unions could block a brutal reaction should the outvoted, expropriated capitalists rebel against the ballot-box decision of the majority.

More than an invincible force behind Labor's ballot, the Socialist Industrial Union organizes the workers intelligently *to carry on production*, thus averting chaos. Finally the Socialist Industrial Union becomes the *Government of the Socialist Republic*, supplanting the outworn and reactionary capitalist political State. *Democratically elected* representatives of the industrial constituencies will form an Industrial Union Congress, the duties of which will be the simple ones of directing and coordinating production for the benefit of all.

Workers of America! Repudiate the barbarous social system that exploits the mass of useful producers for the benefit of the

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few who merely own! Repudiate the political representatives of capitalism, be they Republican, Democratic, so-called "Socialist" or "Communist" or "Labor," who preach the criminal falsity that capitalism can be reformed and that it is worth reforming. Vote for the candidates of the Socialist Labor Party! Unite with us to demand the termination of the social system which dooms us to a lifelong tenure of wage slavery, with unemployment, poverty and wars as inseparable and ever recurrent features. Unite with us to establish the Socialist Brotherhood of Man, the Republic of Peace, Plenty and International Fraternity.

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*Transcribed for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party
Of America by Robert Bills*

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