

National Platform

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April 30–May 2, 1932*

Social systems and their corresponding forms of government come into being as results of social forces making for social progress. The purpose of government is ostensibly to insure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of the useful members of society.

Whenever a society fails in or becomes destructive of these ends, it has self-evidently outlived its usefulness, rendering it imperative for the exploited and oppressed class to organize its forces to put an end to the outworn social system.

Such a crucial period of history is facing humanity today, and in view of this the Socialist Labor Party in National Convention assembled, May 1, 1932, reaffirms its former platform declarations and in accord with the international Socialist principles declares:

The history of mankind has been a struggle for progress, taking the form of struggles for power between contending classes. Whenever a ruling class had fulfilled its mission, and its interests ceased to be in harmony with social interests, it was supplanted by the class below, which, by increasing economic and political powers, attained its revolutionary goal. This class, in turn, became a carrier of social progress until it had outlived its usefulness and, becoming reactionary and a stumbling block in the path of humanity, had to give way before the combined forces of social progress and a new revolutionary class.

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With capitalism there remain in society just two contending classes, the capitalist class and the working class—the capitalist class, the owner of the means of production, which ownership today is wholly destructive of the life, liberty and happiness of the mass of the people; and the working class whose interests demand the abolition of private ownership in the means of life.

The interests of the working class demand the institution of collective ownership and control, guaranteeing to all the right to work, and by securing to all the full fruits of their labor, ending for all time the destructive class wars which have up to now torn humanity asunder.

For forty years the Socialist Labor Party has been moving upward toward this historic moment.

The capitalist system is now creaking and breaking in every joint and cranny. It is no more “on trial” than a horse-drawn vehicle is on trial beside a powerful motor van. Capitalism is outworn, obsolete, ready for the museum of social history. A mere glance at the world situation should suffice to convince even the dullest of this forceful fact.

Economic bonds have snapped; social bonds are dissolving. As a result, factories are closing down, machinery stands idle and rusts, until from ten to twelve million working men and women of this country are idle and they and their dependents stand bereft of food, clothing and shelter. The million mass of the people, the world over, are starving and dying, surrounded by tremendous wealth created by their own labor. Workers are unable to find work, to secure the necessities of life.

The Socialist Labor Party has ceaselessly pointed out the inevitable doom of the capitalist system of production and distribution:

has pointed to the fact that “free” competition—one of the beatitudes of the system—was inevitably leading to the elimination of the small, and gradually not so small either, business men and manufactures;

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has shown that the cumulative effect of the gigantic machines of production in fewer and fewer hands would be so tremendous as to get beyond the possibility of control by the few industries;

has demonstrated beyond doubt that the capitalist profit system was built and could exist only on the exploitation of labor;

that this exploitation with the aid of the machines was becoming so tremendous that it would eventually become absolutely impossible for the capitalist expropriators to dispose of this surplus in either domestic or foreign markets;

that this "stolen goods" would eventually accumulate and lie like an incubus on the chest of humanity, preventing it from breathing and living while a multi-million army of unemployed would tramp the streets and highways unable to find the wherewithal to live.

This state of social dissolution is now upon us.

When a social system has reached the point of utter dissolution, when the bonds that held it together are snapping, ruling class interests eagerly offer palliatives and reforms to stave off the impending doom of the system. It is so with capitalism. In various disguises, but moved with one purpose, various agents of capitalism appear, holding out alluring promises of reform ostensibly to bring relief to the workers. But there can be no relief to a revolutionary class within a social system that is doomed.

Where a social revolution is pending and, for whatever reason, is not accomplished, reaction is the alternative. Every reform granted by capitalism is a concealed measure of reaction. He who says reform says preservation, and he who says that reforms under capitalism are possible and worth while thereby declares that a continuation of capitalism is possible and worth while. But capitalism has grown into an all-destroying and all-devouring monster that must be destroyed if humanity is to live.

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At this crucial moment the Socialist Labor Party calls upon the working class of America, more deliberately serious than ever before, to rally at the polls under the Party's banner.

The Socialist Labor Party also calls upon all other intelligent citizens to place themselves squarely upon the ground of working class interests, and join us in this mighty and noble work of human emancipation, so that we may put summary end to the existing barbarous class conflict and insane contradictions between unlimited wealth and wealth production, and the poverty and wretchedness suffered by those whose labor created all this wealth.

We call upon them to place the land and all the means of production, transportation and distribution in the hands of the useful producers as an organized industrial body, under a national industrial administration to take the place of the present outworn political or territorial government. And we further call upon the workers to hasten this work of social and human regeneration to the end that a speedy termination may be put to the present state of planless production, industrial war and social disorder, substituting for it the Socialist of Industrial Commonwealth of Emancipated Labor—a commonwealth in which every worker shall have the free exercise and full benefit of his faculties, multiplied by all the factors of modern civilization.

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*Transcribed for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party
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