

National Platform

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The crucial issue of our age is written in gigantic letters across the social sky.

It is: *Capitalist Despotism or Socialist Freedom.*

The Socialist Labor Party of America, at its last National Convention in the City of New York, in placing its program for a Socialist reconstruction of society before the American workers, declares this to be the issue that confronts them:

Either the working class takes control of affairs out of the hands of the capitalist class, ends the system of capitalist private ownership, and rebuilds our society on the basis of social ownership of the means of production, democratic management and production for use;

Or, as surely as night follows day, the capitalist system will lead us down the road to a third world war, totalitarian dictatorship and imperialist barbarism.

The Socialist Labor Party earnestly asks you to consider the facts of the present situation:

With the invention of atomic bombs and guided missiles, and the development of germ warfare, war at last looms as the potential destroyer of the human race. Despite this portentous fact and its frightful implications, the plutocratic masters of this country are preparing for another global war.

- **Through the press, radio and motion pictures, they are conditioning the country psychologically for a war with America's imperialist rival, Soviet Russia.**

- **They have launched a huge rearmament program**

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that will divert the energies of millions of workers from the tasks of peace.

- **Flouting America's traditional hostility to militarism, they are scheming to enact a system of permanent military conscription.**

- **By means of fabulous subsidies voted by Congress for military research, they are reducing science and education to mere tools of an exalted military machine.**

- **They have drafted plans for total war and the regimentation of industry.**

- **They have brazenly acknowledged their intention to flout the Constitution. In plain violation of the Thirteenth Amendment they are scheming to conscript industrial manpower, and thus to reduce the workers to involuntary servitude.**

Their politicians and spokesmen say this huge militarization program is for peace, but everyone in his senses knows that it is for war, and that if matters are allowed to drift, sooner or later there will be war.

Why is the plutocracy taking this desperate and suicidal course?

The Socialist Labor Party declares that the capitalists who guide America's policies are acting in response to their material and class interests, and that the real cause of war is not "bad men," but an outmoded, predatory social system. The logic of this is easily explained:

The international rivalries that erupt in war are a direct result of the system of wage labor—of the fact that the workers receive in wages only a fraction of the value of their product, hence can buy back only a fraction. Of the surplus, a part is consumed by the capitalist class in extravagant living, a part is wasted, a part is employed in expanding industry, and another part goes down the huge drain of the bureaucratic political State.

All of this represents wealth of which labor is robbed, and

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which in no manner or sense accrues to the benefit of the producing workers or contributes to social progress. That which remains after these deductions must be sold in foreign markets to relieve the glut at home. It is competition for these markets and for spheres of economic influence and sources of raw materials that makes the recurrence of war inevitable as long as the capitalist principle prevails as the basis of society.

It follows that attempts to insure peace via the United Nations are doomed to fail. Sooner or later, every world-organization edifice that is built on the foundation of capitalist dry rot must collapse.

Socialism alone supplies a sound foundation for peace and for the free cultural and material intercourse among the peoples of the world. Socialism does this by destroying the parent evil—the exploitation of wage labor—and thereby ending the problem of “unsold surpluses.” Capitalism has everything standing on its head. Under capitalism surpluses are a curse. Under Socialism, which puts things right side up, there will be *production for use* instead of *production for sale and profit*, and surpluses, should they occur, will be a blessing. There can be no lasting peace without Socialism!

War is one consequence of prolonging the outmoded capitalist system; another is scrapping of the Bill of Rights and the State-ification of society.

In recent years the capitalists have turned more and more to the State as an agency to break the back of working class resistance to increased exploitation, and to prolong their existence as a ruling, privileged class.

Signs of the capitalist reaction abound.

• **One is the enactment by a pliant capitalist Congress of the labor-shackling Taft-Hartley Law and the revival of the medieval weapon of the court injunction.**

• **Another is the attempt, typical of the police State, to intimidate the workers and break their spirit by launching a Gestapo-like “disloyalty” witch hunt among them.**

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- **Still another is the ominous spread of police brutality and officially condoned mob violence and terrorism, and the alarming growth of race prejudice.**

- **Finally, and most conspicuous of all, is the rapid militarization of the country and the corresponding rise in the influence and power of the anti-democratic military caste.**

The Socialist Labor Party holds this reaction to be but a manifestation of an irreconcilable class struggle that rages in capitalist society.

One aim of the capitalist class is to hold wages down during the period of brisk demand for labor, to intensify exploitation, and thus to insure higher profits for itself.

A second aim is to reduce labor to the status of unresisting industrial serfs, thus evolving a labor-shackling system that corresponds to the needs of the present huge concentrations of feudalistic corporate capital.

The Socialist Labor Party warns the American workers that they are unprepared, ideologically and organizationally, to block this reaction or to prevent its success. Their present unions (A.F. of L., and C.I.O. and kindred bodies), by reason of their pro-capitalist philosophy, treacherous labor-faker leadership and job-trust character, are, like the German trade unions (which were taken over by the Nazis and converted into the Labor Front), preeminently capitalist weapons to bridle the working class.

To remove the menace of fascism and industrial feudalism, the American workers must scrap the unions that accept capitalism as a finality. They must build a new union based on their class interests, and one that will consciously fight for the Socialist goal. They must organize the all-embracing Socialist Industrial Union—the workers' power!

The Socialist Labor Party appeals to you to accept the logic of these facts:

WAR, FASCISM, AND POVERTY AMIDST PLENTY ARE

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THE EVIL BROOD OF CAPITALISM. No worker who reaches this conclusion can, without consciously aligning himself with the forces of reaction, support the parties that have as their aim the preservation of capitalism. In this category, besides the Republicans and Democrats, we include the “Third Party Progressives” (who acclaim “progressive capitalism”), and the “Liberal,” “Labor,” “Socialist” and “Communist” reformers. To speak of “progressive capitalism” today is as nonsensical as it would have been to speak of “progressive slavery” in 1860. And to propose capitalist reforms is to help prolong the capitalist cause of war and fascism. The logic of this is inescapable.

The Socialist Labor Party, therefore, calls upon the American workers, and all other enlightened citizens, to repudiate the parties of capitalism, and to support its program for a Socialist reconstruction of society.

The goal of the Socialist Labor Party is an Industrial Republic of Labor—a system based on collective ownership by the people of the land and all the instruments of wealth production, and one in which the workers will manage industry democratically through socially integrated Socialist Industrial Union Councils.

To bring to birth this society of peace, abundance and boundless human happiness, the Socialist Labor Party appeals to the working class, and to all other enlightened citizens, to support the principles of the Socialist Labor Party, and prepare now to help build the Socialist Industrial Union to back up the Socialist ballot. Unite with us to end the social system that 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 free Socialist Republic of Peace, Plenty and International Brotherhood!

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

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