by making the means of production our collective property, abolishing exploitation of the many by the few, and using our productive genius to create security and abundance for all?

If you agree with us that the time for such a change has come, then there are certain things we must understand. The first is that workers can expect no help from the beneficiaries of capitalism. Individual capitalists may see the handwriting on the wall and join with the workers. As a class, however, the capitalists, just like the slave-owning and feudal classes before them, will try to keep their strife-ridden and poverty-breeding system. The workers can only rely on themselves to build a better world and free themselves through their own conscious efforts.

The second thing to understand is this: Workers make up the vast majority of the population. By workers we mean the working class. We mean all whose intellectual and physical labor contributes to the development, manufacture and distribution of the goods, services and information that our complex society needs. We mean all those who must sell their physical and mental talents and skills on the labor market, and who depend on the wages and salaries they receive in exchange. We mean white-collar and blue-collar, production and office workers, those who research and develop as well as those who build, distribute and serve. We mean the whole working class, including the unemployed and those forced to settle for part-time or temporary work.

The working class makes everything and it makes everything work. Collectively, it has tremendous potential power. However, workers can apply their collective strength only through organization. How must they organize themselves?

First, they must form a political party of their own to assert their right to make the change that’s needed and to challenge the stranglehold the ruling class has on the political government. That’s what the American colonists did in 1776 when they declared their right to “alter or to abolish” a destructive government and to form a new one to serve their own interests. They wrote that right or principle into our Constitution so we could use it again whenever it became necessary. That’s why the Constitution has an amendment clause. It empowers the people to make any change they deem necessary. In the long run and in words, “The right of peaceable assembly and petition and by Article V of the Constitution—the right of amendment—is the constitutional substitute for armed revolution.”

This means that the working class, by organizing a political party of its own, can make full use of its constitutional rights to speak out for social change, to explain the socialist program to all workers, and to vote for the change they want. This is the civilized and nonviolent method. It permits the forces of progress to declare their purpose in the open, and to mobilize themselves for political victory and conquest of the capitalist state.

However, no ruling class has ever willingly given up its power and privileges. There is nothing in the history of our own ruling class to indicate that it will. This is the civilized and nonviolent method. It permits the forces of progress to declare their purpose in the open, and to mobilize themselves for political victory and conquest of the capitalist state.

The second thing to understand is this: “Taking possession” in an orderly yet resolute manner is just what the working class must do the moment that its victory is declared at the polls. This is not a general strike that would lead the workers away from the source of their power and leave them exposed on the open terrain. It is a GENERAL LOCKOUT OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS!

All power to the Socialist Industrial Union!

Socialist Labor Party, PO. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218
Web site: www.slp.org • e-mail: socialists@slp.org

❑ Please send me free literature on socialism.
❑ I enclose $2.00 for a six-month subscription to The People, official monthly journal of the Socialist Labor Party.
❑ I enclose $1.00. Please send me a copy of the 48-page pamphlet, The Burning Question of Trades Unionism, by Daniel De Leon.
❑ I enclose $1.00. Please send me 100 copies of Socialist Industrial Unionism: The Workers’ Power.

Name (please print):
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City ____________________________ State ______ Zip ______
Phone ____________________________

SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

There are times when social and economic problems become so bad that people are forced to choose between the social system that makes their lives difficult and a new one that will make their lives better. Times like that are called revolutionary times. They don’t come often, but when they do the question of HOW to make the change becomes almost as important as WHAT that change should be.

We face that kind of choice today. Capitalism—the social system we live under—no longer serves the interests of the people. It creates countless problems that it cannot solve. It uses technology to throw people out of work and to make those who keep their jobs work harder. It creates hardship and poverty for millions, while the few who own and control the economy grow rich off the labor of those allowed to keep their jobs. It destroys the cities that we built up. It is destroying the natural environment that is the source of the food we eat and the air we breathe. Every effort made to prevent these problems, or to keep them from growing even worse, has failed. The reason is that the country is controlled by a small capitalist class that owns the industries and services that everyone depends on. The workers built and they operate all of those essential industries and services. However, they do not own and control them. They are the majority, but they have no voice in deciding what to produce or how much to produce. Their needs and desires count for nothing when those decisions are made.

When a small group owns and controls what people need to eat, house and clothe themselves and their families, when that small group makes every important decision that affects the lives of the vast majority, it is called despotism. Capitalism is an economic despotism, and like any other form of despotism, it spoils and corrupts everything that is good and decent. Look at what it does to our young people.

Generations of workers built the industries that can produce more than enough to wipe out poverty and guarantee the economic security of every man, woman and child. Capitalism has twisted this great achievement of labor’s collective genius by causing wealth and power to collect in the hands of a few. Technology that could and should be shared by all, to promote the welfare of all, is instead used to produce sufferings and destruction.

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SOCIALIST INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

The Workers’ Power

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Generations of workers built the industries that can produce more than enough to wipe out poverty and guarantee the economic security of every man, woman and child. Capitalism has twisted this great achievement of labor’s collective genius by causing wealth and power to collect in the hands of a few. Technology that could and should be used to lessen the need for arduous toil and to enhance our lives is instead used to eliminate jobs and increase exploitation. Poverty is as widespread as it has ever been. Wages go down even as productivity rises. Joblessness, homelessness, helplessness and despair are spreading. Economic insecurity and social breakdown place an unbearable strain on our families, our children and ourselves. Emotional stress, crime, prostitution, alcoholism, drug abuse, suicide, and many more signs of unhappiness and hopelessness, are on the rise.

Is this what we want? Is this what we shall we do the common-sense thing to correct?
In socialist society, class divisions and exploitation will have been eliminated. Production will be carried out for use by all rather than to serve the profit interests of a ruling class. There would be no “crises of overproduction,” no unemployment due to the accumulation by a ruling class of commodities that workers could not afford to buy. The only limit on production would be social needs and wants. The allocation of resources will be democratically planned by a society in full control of its productive forces.

In socialist society, for the first time, the people will consciously direct their economic activity and democratically provide for their own well-being and security. Not only useful labor, but the fruits of that labor as well, will be available to all.

Political Government

In socialist society, class divisions and exploitation will have been eliminated. Production will be carried out for use by all rather than to serve the profit interests of a small minority. There would be no “crises of overproduction,” no unemployment due to the accumulation by a ruling class of commodities that workers could not afford to buy. The only limit on production would be social needs and wants. The allocation of resources will be democratically planned by a society in full control of its productive forces.

The government of socialist America will consciously direct its economic activity and democratically provide for the people's well-being and security. Not only useful labor, but the fruits of that labor as well, will be available to all. The principles of workers' democracy—i.e., the right and power of the majority to recall all elected representatives, the abolition of bureaucratic privileges, etc.—would ensure that control of the socialist industrial government remained in the hands of the rank and file.

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