

National Platform

*Adopted by the Fourteenth National Convention,
Held at Assembly Hall, World Building, New York City,
April 29–May 3, 1916*

The Socialist Labor Party, in national convention assembled, reaffirming its previous platform declarations, reasserts the right of man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We hold that the purpose of government is to secure to every citizen the enjoyment of this right; but taught by experience we hold furthermore that such right is illusory to the majority of the people, to wit, the working class, under the present system of economic inequality that is essentially destructive of THEIR life, THEIR liberty, and THEIR happiness.

We hold that the true theory of economics is that the means of production must be owned, operated, and controlled by the people in common. Man cannot exercise his right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness without the ownership of the land on, and the tool with which to work. Deprived of these, his life, his liberty, and his fate fall into the hands of that class which owns these essentials for work and production.

We hold that the existing contradiction between social production and capitalist appropriation—the latter resulting from the private ownership of the natural and social opportunities—divides the people into two classes: the Capitalist Class and the Working Class; throws society into the convulsions of the Class Struggle; and perverts government in the interests of the Capitalist Class.

Thus Labor is robbed of the wealth it alone produces, is denied the means of self-employment, and by compulsory idleness in wage-slavery, is even deprived of the necessaries of life.

Against such a system the Socialist Labor Party raises the

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banner of revolt, and demands the unconditional surrender of the Capitalist Class.

In place of such a system the Socialist Labor Party aims to substitute a system of social ownership of the means of production, industrially administered by the Working Class,—the workers to assume control and direction as well as operation of their industrial affairs.

This solution of necessity requires the organization of the Working Class as a class upon revolutionary political and industrial lines.

We therefore call upon the wage workers to organize themselves into a revolutionary political organization under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party; and to organize themselves likewise upon the industrial field into a revolutionary industrial union in keeping with their political aims.

And we also call 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 by placing the land and all the means of production, transportation, and distribution into the hands of the people as a collective body, and substituting the Co-operative Commonwealth for the present state of planless production, industrial war and social disorder—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
Of America by John-Paul Catusco*

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