

National Platform

*Adopted by the Twenty-Third National Convention,
Henry Hudson Hotel, 361 West 57th Street, New York City,
May 3–5, 1952*

The Socialist Labor Party of the United States of America, in National Convention assembled on this 4th day of May, 1952, reaffirms its previous platform pronouncements and declares:

The crisis that shakes the world today is a revolutionary crisis. It is one of those crucial turning points of history when an outmoded system is in a state of impending collapse, and a new order is waiting to be born.

The capitalist system rose on the ruins of feudalism—in this country on the transplanted feudal power of the British Crown. It had a mission to perform, the mission of establishing mass production and of organizing the workers in industry in keeping with that purpose. Its mission has been fulfilled: Abundance is now possible for all without arduous toil. But in fulfilling its historic mission the capitalist class has rendered itself useless—nay worse, it has become an encumbrance on the productive process, an incubus on society as a whole, and its continued presence as a useless class has become a menace to our very civilization.

Accordingly, the downfall of the capitalist system is certain. It is foredoomed by contradictions resulting from the division of society into classes and the exploitation of wage labor. Its economy is kept going today by rearmament and the waging of war. Without this huge, war-inciting multi-billion-dollar war-preparations program, capitalism would quickly sink in a quagmire of economic depression.

Socialist Labor Party of America

This is a permanent condition. The plutocratic rulers are committed to a permanent arms economy. In order to starve off the threatened economic breakdown, they are compelled to build and amass ever more military weapons and supplies, thereby accelerating the forces, *inherent in capitalist rivalry for world trade*, that are leading fatedly to a third world war.

Thus, decadent capitalism has brought society to the brink of catastrophe and ruin. The question now is: *Shall this doomed system be allowed to drag humanity down into the abyss? Or will the working class, in whose hands the future lies, wake up in time, organize its immense latent power, and put society on the road to safety and freedom?*

The Socialist Labor Party declares that such is the crucial nature of the crisis that grips our civilization.

The plutocratic capitalists are confused, intellectually bankrupt and divided among themselves. Although they still pay lip-service to the American tradition of civilian government, in practice they have renounced this tradition and have given professional military men a dominant role in formulating foreign and domestic policy.

The Korean war, a senseless war to all but the capitalist and Russian imperialist interests that profit from it, is a tragic consequence of ruling-class confusion and the military approach in international relations.

The frequent demands by high military leaders, and even by Cabinet members, that the United States abandon its moral scruples against “striking the first (sneak attack) blow,” and that the country become the aggressor in a “preventive war” with Russia, are frightening evidence of the panic that is overtaking the American ruling class.

The Socialist Labor Party asserts that the ferocious conflict that divides the world and threatens to hurl mankind into the fiery furnace of global war is an imperialist conflict. It is basically a struggle between the plutocratic masters of the United States and the bureaucratic masters of Soviet Russia for control of the

1952 National Platform

world's economic resources. Both these ruling groups must share the guilt for the appalling danger of extinction today threatening the human race.

Let no one underestimate the danger. A third world war would be an atomic war, a war of universal desolation. The Socialist Labor Party holds that peace today hangs only by a thread of fear. For the moment both imperialist rivals are deterred by the atomic bomb—the knowledge that if either attacks the other, retaliation will be swift and terrible.

In this revolutionary crisis the class struggle is becoming more intense.

The plutocratic capitalists sit uneasily on their mountains of stolen wealth. To secure their class privileges and to weaken the workers' resistance to increased exploitation, they have enacted the labor-shackling Taft-Hartley Law and revived the medieval weapon of the court injunction.

It is an incontestable fact that the workers are steadily falling behind in the race with living costs, which means, in effect, that their real wages, hence their standards of living, are being steadily reduced. By means of a wage freeze, restrictions on the right to strike and the regimentation of the workers that is accomplished through the faker-controlled, job-trust unions, the American worker is being reduced to the status of an unresisting industrial serf. Thus a new form of slavery is evolving, more in keeping with the despotic needs of the present huge concentrations of corporate capital.

By means of falsehoods and smears, whipped-up hysteria, witch-hunts and loyalty oaths, the capitalist plutocrats are attacking the very heart of American political democracy. They are imposing a "black silence of fear" on millions of once proudly independent and fearlessly outspoken Americans.

The Socialist Labor Party declares that the real target of this un-American attack is not the Communists, but the fundamental rights and civil liberties of the American people. The Communists are merely a convenient and vulnerable target. It has been said, not

Socialist Labor Party of America

without logic, that if there were no Communist party in America, the capitalist reaction would organize one.

The assault on liberty and the attempted Prussianization of the country via permanent compulsory military training are, we assert, desperate efforts to prolong an outmoded and foredoomed social system.

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

WAR, FASCISM, EXPLOITATION, AND POVERTY AMIDST PLENTY ARE THE EVIL BROOD OF CAPITALISM. No person who reaches this conclusion can, without consciously aligning himself with the forces of reaction, support candidates and parties that have as their aim the reform or preservation of capitalism. In this category, besides the Republicans and Democrats, we include all other parties, whatever their designation. For one and all they follow principles of capitalism and State despotism. One and all they preach reforms and promise improvement of conditions that are past improving. To propose reform when a fundamental social change is called for is to help prolong the capitalist cause of war, fascism and working-class exploitation. "To reform is to preserve."

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

The Socialist Labor Party program, in line with social evolution, demands the abolition of the political State with all its organs of class coercion. Political government (based on geographic constituencies), which was suited to an age of agriculture and primitive production, has been rendered obsolete by the growth of modern industry. The goal of the Socialist Labor Party is a democratic Socialist industrial government—a society based on collective ownership of the land and all the instruments of wealth production, with the management of industry completely in the hands of the

1952 National Platform

workers through socially integrated Socialist Industrial Union Councils.

To bring to birth this society of peace, abundance and freedom, the Socialist Labor Party appeals to the working class of America, and all other enlightened and social-minded citizens, to support its principles at the polls by voting for Socialist Labor Party candidates. And we call upon the workers to repudiate the present unions, which accept capitalism as a finality and are faker-controlled, and to build a new union based squarely on their working class interests and with Socialism as its goal. Build the integral Socialist Industrial Union, as the only union capable of enforcing the Socialist ballot and of assuming the administration of social production.

The program repudiates the kind of bureaucratic despotism masquerading as “Marxist” in Soviet Russia, and the reformist outfits, such as the British Labor party, falsely claiming to be “Socialist.”

What Abraham Lincoln said ninety year ago, in the midst of another revolutionary crisis, applies with even greater force today. He said: “The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate for the stormy present. . . . As our case is new, so must we think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.”*

Unite with us to save society from catastrophe—and to set an example in free, industrial self-government for all mankind! Unite with us to establish the Socialist Republic of Peace, Plenty and International Brotherhood!

* Second Annual Message to Congress, December 1, 1862.

1952 National Platform

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

Uploaded January 2003