

Declaration of Fundamental Principles

Socialist Labor Party of America

Adopted at the
Twentieth National Convention
New York, April, 1940

Declaration of Fundamental Principles

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF AMERICA

The Socialist Labor Party of America, in convention assembled, in the City of New York, April 29, 1940, reasserts the inalienable 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 man cannot exercise his right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness without the ownership of the land on and the tools with which to work. Deprived of these, his life, his liberty and his fate fall into the hands of the class that owns those essentials for work and production. This ownership is today held by the minority in society, the capitalist class, exercising through this ownership and control an economic despotism without parallel in history.

Government statistics* establish that 59 per cent of the nation's wealth is owned by 1 per cent of the population; that 33 per cent of the wealth is owned by 12 per cent of the population, thus finally establishing that 92 per cent of the nation's wealth is owned by 13 per cent of the population, leaving the vast majority, the working

* [Federal Trade Commission Report, 1926.](#)

Declaration of Fundamental Principles

class, or 87 per cent of the population, the owners of but 8 per cent of the nation's wealth.

That ownership of the bulk of the nation's wealth by the few is conclusive evidence that labor is robbed of the major portion of the product which it alone produces. Thus the worker is denied the means of self-employment, and, by compulsory idleness in wage slavery, is deprived of even the necessaries of life.

We hold that the existing contradiction between the theory of democratic government and the fact of a despotic economic system--the private ownership of the natural and social opportunities--divides the nation into two classes: the non-producing, but owning, Capitalist Class, and the producing, but propertiless, Working Class; throws society into the convulsions of the Class Struggle, and invariably perverts government to the uses and benefit of the Capitalist Class.

The time is now here when, as the natural result of social evolution, this system has worked out its own downfall. Having completed its normal development, the capitalist system, and its political reflex, the State, are now outworn. No longer able to dispose readily of the huge quantities of surplus commodities in foreign markets, each capitalist nation seeks desperately to crowd out its competitors, with the result that wars and conflicts convulse the civilized world. In this mad struggle for survival, the working classes of all nations are the chief sufferers.

Against such a system the Socialist Labor Party raises the banner of revolt and demands the unconditional surrender of the Capitalist Class. In this supreme crisis no reform measures will stand, and history teaches that where a social revolution is pending, and, for whatever reason, is not accomplished, reaction, dictatorship, is the alternative. Having outlived its social usefulness, capitalism must give way to a new social order--a social order wherein government shall rest on industry, on the basis of useful occupations, instead of resting on territorial (political) representation. This new social system can only be the Socialist Industrial Union form of Government if the needs of the vast majority are to be served, and if

progress is to be the law of the future as it has been in the past. Upon the despoiled workers rests the duty of effecting this revolutionary change in a peaceful, civilized manner, using the ballot and all that thereby hangs in order to effect the change.

We, therefore, call upon the wage workers of America to organize under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party into a class-conscious body, aware of its rights and determined to conquer them.

We further call upon the wage workers of America to organize into integral Socialist Industrial Unions to enforce the fiat of their ballot, and to fulfill the needs and purposes of the Socialist Industrial Union Government. Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic IN THE MAKING; the goal reached--the Industrial Union--is the Socialist Republic in operation.

And we also call upon all other intelligent and social-minded citizens to place themselves squarely upon the ground of Working Class interests, and join with 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 useful producers as a collective body, and substituting the Socialist Industrial Cooperative Commonwealth for the present state of planless production, industrial and international wars and social disorder--a commonwealth in which every worker shall have the free exercise and full benefit of his faculties, multiplied by all the modern factors of civilization.