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Socialist Freedom

or

Capitalist Serfdom?

Peace and Plenty or
War and Want?

*Manifesto of the Socialist
Labor Party of America,
September, 1945*

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Declaration on the End of the
Second World War*

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Socialist Freedom or Capitalist Serfdom?

PEACE AND PLENTY OR
WAR AND WANT?

Manifesto of the Socialist Labor Party
of America, September, 1945

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Manifesto of the Socialist Labor Party of America,
September, 1945

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of [modern] capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive [capitalist] accumulation. On their heels treads the commercial war of the European nations, with the globe for a theater....

Capital comes [into the world] dripping from head to foot from every pore, with blood and dirt. [And, it may be added, it is leaving the world in blood and dirt, the bloodiest criminal monster of the ages!]*—KARL MARX.*

I.

The global war—the war of capitalist imperialism—has come to an end. The international war of the classes—the class struggle—continues.

The global war was, in part, a war of survival of capitalist States, in part a struggle for the mastery of a globe shrunk to proportions of individual nations. This war, all claims to the contrary, was not a war resulting from clashing ideologies. It was basically a war of economic rivalries, a war for foreign markets, a war for the control of the essentials of modern mammoth capitalist production—minerals, oil, coal, iron, rubber, and so forth. Hence, a war for the control or conquest of those areas of the earth where these vitally important raw materials are found.

The spark that set off this global war—itsself a con-

tinuation of the so-called First World War—was the fact of modern capitalism, in its evolutionary course having become divided into two main camps which may roughly be designated as the Anglo-American and the German-Japanese capitalist camps. The former were in full possession of, or commanded unhindered access to, the present and potential riches of the globe. The latter lacked these, or possessed them in a measure altogether insufficient to sustain their vigorous, inventive and industrious teeming millions in an otherwise typical capitalist economy. The final outbreak of war did not come unheralded. It had been preceded by a long period of economic rivalries (temporarily interrupted by the “First World War”), of which the political and diplomatic struggles were but the echoes, and at the same time the forewarnings of the coming storm.

“Capitalism Means War!”

These economic rivalries result from the very nature of capitalism itself. Originating within the individual capitalist nations, they reach the point eventually where they spill over the artificial political boundaries, and produce the international clashes called war. Within each capitalist nation, each capitalist, or capitalist group, carries on a constant warfare with his domestic competitors. In the course of this ruthless struggle, small capitalist units are crushed or absorbed by the larger ones, and the remaining and ever more concentrated and centralized units resume the competitive struggle in a never-ending process, with the surviving units more and more assuming the proportions of monopolies. In the language of Marx: “Monopoly produces competition, competition produces monopoly”

—but ever within a steadily circumscribed sphere. Theoretically—that is, if capitalism lasts long enough, and if all social and human factors are disregarded—the final result would be one huge monopoly, with all competition completely eliminated.

As with the internal competitive struggle, so with the competition among capitalist nations. The smaller nations, or those lacking in the modern industrial essentials, are absorbed by the larger nations, or rendered subservient and ineffective by these, sometimes “peacefully,” more often through military conquest. The same applies to colonies and primitive regions. As an accompaniment to this process, the markets of the world are being developed and eventually eliminated, or largely so, as markets for other countries; and recently developed capitalist nations, each in turn, must seek outlets for the surpluses produced by the exploited workers, the home markets, for obvious reasons, being unable to absorb the surplus and exportable goods. As a further consequence, economic and financial crises result in the highly developed industrial nations, and the ranks of the unemployed are augmented and swell in proportionate and ever increasing measure. The international competitive struggle continues, and more and more the globe becomes divided between a few powerful industrial nations—the point reached at the outbreak of the global war, with its two main camps, Anglo-American and German-Japanese. The final struggle, given a continuation of capitalism, will be between the surviving “monopolistic,” or imperialistic, nations. “War,” said the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Mr. Marriner Eccles, “War is merely the openly armed continuation of our peacetime business.” In short, **CAPITALISM MEANS WAR!**

II.

System Engenders Internal Conflict.

But similar as are the struggles between competing units within capitalist nations, and the struggle between these nations themselves, there are obvious differences. In the former case the process is purely economic, except insofar as it is attended by political, i.e., legislative interferences, and influenced by the power of the State's enforcing order, while on the international field the deadly contest (unrestrained as yet by any international "police power") is confused and confounded by a variety of subsidiary or contributing factors, including national and racial prejudices, religious or would-be religious claims and pretensions, apart from the transitory effect of ambitions of adventurers who rise out of obscurity to occupy positions of authority in various countries. These subsidiary, or perturbing, factors, however, do not alter the essential character of modern wars, nor do they qualify to obliterate or materially obstruct the effect of the basic cause, viz., capitalism, and the economic laws flowing from that cause, which laws operate within the capitalist system with an immutability comparable to the operation of the immutable laws of nature.

Capitalism, that is, the capitalist system of private (or State) ownership of the land and plants of production, means of transportation, mines, etc., is, accordingly, the basic cause of the present state of world anarchy, of international wars, and of the prevailing poverty and misery which within each country drive workers to strikes and sometimes bloody, premature uprisings. And often enough in the past a powerful contributing cause of wars has also been the hope or desire

of ruling classes to quell rebellion at home by provoking conflict with another nation. "Like all other governments," said the eminent American social scientist, Daniel De Leon, "our own is on a footing of social war with the bulk of its own population—the working class. *War at home compels alliances abroad.*" The wise and witty Jonathan Swift observed that "Wise princes find it necessary to have wars abroad, to keep peace at home." Our fourth President, the far-seeing James Madison, with keen penetration and insight, observed:

"Among the Romans it was a standing maxim to excite war whenever a revolt was apprehended. . . . It is perhaps questionable whether the best concerted system of absolute power in Europe could maintain itself in a situation where no alarms of external danger could tame the people to the domestic yoke."

Or, in the terse language of Daniel De Leon: "A foreign war ever has been the refuge of tyrants from the danger of turbulent elements at home."

All this is not to say that capitalists generally do not prefer peace to war. Obviously they do, just as they prefer to keep the workers employed. Wars are costly, and in the long run peaceful invasion and exploitation of foreign markets are more profitable. And there is no surplus value to be squeezed out of unemployed workers, though a "reasonably" limited reserve army of unemployed is regarded by capitalists as essential in order to "stabilize" the labor market. But wishes of even the most powerful capitalists do not, in the last analysis, weigh heavily in the scales of war and peace. Events control them and their actions, however much they may think of themselves as masters of their own fates, as architects of their fortunes.

When we say that modern wars are wars of capitalism, we do not mean that they are necessarily, or even generally, the result of conscious plots of capitalists to provoke wars, though this has happened. By the phrase, "wars of capitalism," is meant that such wars are the logical and inevitable results of a social system organized on the principle of the present capitalist system of production for profit; that, moreover, such wars could *only* take place under a system of society such as capitalism; finally, that such wars are fated to strengthen (momentarily, at least) the cause which produced them, and to multiply the very evils which they were supposed to eliminate. History proves it, experience teaches it, and the economic factors render it inevitable. Leagues of Nations may be formed, San Francisco world charters may be engraved and solemnly adopted by world politicians, and a priesthood whose interests are inseparably bound to the system of capitalist property rights and principles may pray for peace, even where peace is not and cannot be. But all the oratory of international politicians, all the pleadings of reformers, and all the preaching and moralizing by the priesthood, will avail nothing so long as capitalist exploitation of the working class, and capitalist property rights and the worldwide quest for profits remain the ruling principles of society, and constitute the guide to action of ruling classes everywhere. The very nature of capitalism renders peace impossible. "Carnage is a specter that dogs the heels of capitalism," said Daniel De Leon. International peace is incompatible with economic warfare—economic warfare abroad, the economic warfare (the class struggle) at home.

CAPITALISM MEANS WAR.

III.

Capitalism, a Phase of Social Evolution.

When we say, and prove, that capitalism is the basic cause of war and world anarchy, and of the prevailing misery and poverty among the exploited masses of the world, and that, by the elimination of the cause, the effects will thereby cease, the question is likely to be asked: "Suppose that is true—but what are you going to do about it?" And the question is apt to be followed with contentions to the effect that capitalism is a "natural" order, and that the best one can do is to check and limit the evil effects of the capitalist system, exactly as the evil effects of nature unharnessed are checked and limited as much as that is possible; and that it is as foolish to talk about abolishing capitalism as it would be to talk about abolishing nature. The answer to such questions and contentions is that capitalism is not a "natural" order—that it is no more rooted in nature than were preceding social systems which persisted during centuries of slow development, eventually to yield place to the succeeding systems of society. In short, capitalism as a social system is no more eternal than was feudalism out of which it grew. And feudalism was as transitory as was the absolute slavery of antiquity which preceded feudalism. And none of these social systems compares in point of longevity with ancient communism, the designation given to social beginnings, which originally knew nothing of capital, slavery, political government, of private property in any form, but which did practise equality and fraternity, though it was an equality and fraternity on the basis of scarcity in a static society.

Capitalism grew out of feudalism. But it took cen-

turies before modern capitalism, the origin of which may be dated roughly from the middle of the 15th century, could emerge as a functioning and dominant social system. The great struggles, the bloody and long wars that laid waste large areas of Europe, particularly since the 16th century (just as the recent global war has laid waste the greater part of Europe, and large areas in Asia), were the direct results of the slowly emerging capitalist system, struggling to establish itself, hemmed in on all sides as it was by feudal restrictions. Capitalism heralded the dawn of the modern age. Its entry into the world caused profound revolutions in ethical and religious concepts, in the arts, in political relations, and, of course, in economics. Rightly has the age which witnessed the initial beginnings of capitalism been called the *Age of the Renaissance*, i.e., the age of rebirth. That age was almost as turbulent as is the present age of turmoil and worldwide disorder and dislocations. And it was quite logical that this should have been so since the Renaissance witnessed the birth of the capitalist system, just as our age witnesses the death of capitalism amidst universal ruin and the horror of countless dead and maimed.

World War II Sealed System's Doom.

During the long struggle between the then youthful capitalism, and the decaying feudal system, there were "compromisers" who sought to reform the old system—they wished to benefit by the blessings of the new system aborning, and yet without surrendering the rights and prerogatives of the old order. Men would speak, in one breath, in the terms of youthful capitalism, while in the next breath they would exult in what

they acclaimed as the virtues and beauties of the old feudal order. And even many who realized that feudalism (that is to say, the obvious features and characteristics of feudalism) was corrupt and that it ought to be destroyed, hesitated to take the plunge from the old to the new. But neither traditions, vested feudal rights, nor all the power of the crown and church could check the victorious march of capitalism, which found itself fairly established economically, and largely politically also, in all the important countries by the end of the 18th century.

Having grown to maturity, and having now reached old age, capitalism is irrevocably in the final stages of decay and dissolution. The process is a natural one, an inevitable one, even if the global war had not hastened the process, and sealed the doom of the system. And yet there are those who imagine that the capitalist system can still be rejuvenated, just as there were many with vested interests in feudalism who thought that that outworn and corrupt system could be rejuvenated! As well try to restore the lost youth of a senile person. And even if it were possible to reconstitute capitalism as it was in its youthful competitive stage, the question inevitably presents itself: "To what socially useful purpose?"

The evolution of capitalism has taken place in conformity with those laws, peculiar to its inherent nature, which we have designated immutable—immutable, that is, within the sphere of capitalism. So long as capitalism exists, these laws will continue to operate, and manifest their effect precisely as we have witnessed during the more than 150 years that have passed since the American and French Revolutions, both of which world-shaking events signalled the definite establish-

ment of capitalism, on a world scale, as the successor of feudalism. That which gave early capitalism its glamor, that which caused it to work near-miracles in the world, that which brought into being the wealth, and the fabulous men of wealth so lovingly pointed to by present-day plutogogues as models of enterprise, as examples worthy of emulation, was precisely the fact that capitalism was growing—growing from lusty youth into powerful maturity.

Capitalism's Historic Role Fulfilled.

Being now worn out as a social system, having outlived its usefulness, and become a hindrance to, rather than a promoter of, progress, and a past and potential cause of death and universal disaster, it is folly to expect it to perform as it did in its prime. And greater folly yet to speak as if youth and new vitality could be restored to it! If it were possible to restore youth to capitalism, that is to say, if it were possible to restore small-scale production, scarcity and competition, nothing would be gained except a futile and useless repetition of the identical processes which have brought us to where we now are. We should witness the same painful, laborious struggle to enlarge the forces of production, that is to say, to increase enormously the capacity for producing the necessities of life. The visual demonstration of this (even were it not so obvious) is seen in the difference between undeveloped nations and countries fully developed as capitalist units. For a country, industrially developed, is in its relation to an industrially backward country what the former is to its own earlier stage fifty or one hundred years ago.

The capitalist system had a definite mission to per-

form. That mission was to increase the productivity of the race to the point where leisure and culture for all might be compatible with abundance for all, thus forever ending the necessity for dividing the world, and keeping it divided, in classes, with a numerically large class to do the drudgery of the world to the end that a cultured minority might have leisure and opportunity to carry forward the arts and the sciences. Capitalism, at an enormous cost in human lives and human happiness, and to the tune of the agonized cries of the mass of humanity—the producing workers, its chief victims—has fulfilled that mission. Today it is economically possible to give leisure and abundance to all, without halting the onward march of the race in its quest for a higher intellectual and spiritual life. In the past, the slave—ancient slave, serf and modern wage worker—toiled in order that the select few might think and explore. The machine of mass production, now operated exclusively by wage labor, and privately owned by or for the few, offers itself as the “slave,” and only the class-selfishness and class-blindness of the ruling class, as well as the workers’ lack of understanding of their class interests and class mission, stand in the way of putting into effect, but on an infinitely higher plane, the equality and fraternity of ancient communism, the “Golden Age” of man.

IV.

Workers’ Freedom Illusory.

Labor produces all social wealth. Under the system of capitalism the workers are inescapably reduced to the status of commodities. They are, in effect, bought and sold in the labor market, essentially as the

chattel slave was bought and sold in the slave market, or as cotton and textiles are bought and sold in the cotton and textile markets. The worker under capitalism is, to be sure, nominally a free man, and politically the equal of men of wealth. His "freedom" and "equality" are of a quality similar to the nominal equality before the law, concerning which the celebrated French author, Anatole France, wrote: "The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets and to steal bread."

Paraphrasing this, we can say that capitalism, in its impersonal workings, permits the rich as well as the poor to sell their labor power in the labor market, at the prevailing rate! The rich need not, and obviously do not, sell themselves in the market—the poor, that is, the workers, *must*, and do, sell themselves (that is, their labor power, or their ability to perform some productive task) in the labor market, provided they can find capitalist buyers. If they cannot find buyers they starve, and theoretical freedom thus becomes the freedom to starve to death. The fact of the existence of the labor market under capitalism constitutes a conclusive answer to those sophists who assert that labor is not a commodity, or article of commerce. And, by way of contrast, let it be noted that no one has as yet advanced the claim that there is *also* a shoe manufacturer market, a textile or steel baron market, or a banker and stock broker market, where these gentlemen are bought and sold, as labor is bought and sold in the labor market!

To put the matter in this realistic way is also to expose the fraudulent argument of those who claim that equal opportunities exist for all in capitalist America. The fact is that the majority, under capitalism, are eco-

nomically dependent on that small minority which owns the wealth-producing agencies of the country. Economic dependency is the root and substance of all slavery. And were it not for the fact that capitalism reduces the majority to economic slavery, the system could not survive—it would collapse almost instantaneously. Without a well stocked labor market, capitalist concerns could not operate. When capitalist spokesmen declare that every worker can become independent, when they talk about everybody having an equal chance of “going into business,” they know they are making fraudulent claims. For, if that were so, if it were possible for all workers to become self-employed, so that none would have to offer his labor power (that is, himself) for sale in the labor market, who would operate the industries for the capitalists? Where and how would capitalists derive their huge profits, the immense quantities of surplus value they now sweat out of the hides of their wage slaves? Would they take in each other’s washing—would Mr. Ford go to work for Mr. Rockefeller, or vice versa? To ask these questions is to answer them.

System Decrees Economic Slavery.

The worker, then, sells his labor power (that is, in fact, himself) in the market at the highest price he can obtain. That price is at any given moment determined by the supply of, and demand for, the particular kind of worker. And since the supply tends to exceed the demand (except in wartime), the price invariably seeks its lowest level. Theoretically, however, the price coincides with the *value* of the commodity labor power, and the value in turn equals, in effect, the amount of food,

shelter and clothing needed by the worker in order that he may live and rear another generation of wage slaves.

Thus, through the operation of the immutable laws of capitalism, the workers, as a class, can never hope to receive more than a mere subsistence wage, and, as a class, under capitalism can never rise above the status of wage slavery. And all the oratory of politicians, or all the shams of the labor fakers, can neither alter that fact, nor render other than inescapable the degradation and continued wretchedness and poverty of the workers. Let it be repeated: *Under capitalism* 90 per cent or more are doomed to wage-slavery—*doomed* as certainly as all are “doomed” to pass into eternity eventually! The cards in a deck may be shuffled, but, however they are shuffled, it remains the same deck of cards. One or two workers here and there may rise out of the wage slave class, but the *fact* of wage slavery is not affected one whit thereby, any more than the occasional escape from slavery by this or that Negro in the slightest degree affected chattel slavery as an institution.

Let the professors, and the subservient special pleaders of capitalism, ponder that a bit!

The Concept of a “Living Wage.”

John Adams, second President of the United States, said: “When the workers are paid in return for their labor only as much money as will buy the necessaries of life, their condition is identical with that of the slave.” The Law of Value (with its corollaries, the Law of Supply and Demand and the Law of Wages) makes it certain that the working class will never receive more

(but frequently less) than so much money "as will buy the necessaries of life." The workers, under capitalism, are paid in wages *at most* as much as will enable them to buy merely these "necessaries of life," that is, a slave's pittance! And, yet, the workers are told that they are fortunate if they secure "a living wage," and they are enjoined, by capitalist exploiter, politician and labor faker alike, to expect no more. The late President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a Labor Day speech delivered at Block Island, R.I., on September 4, 1937, said:

"There has been, and continues to be, urgent need to insure all able-bodied working men and women a *living wage* for a fair day's work. I repeat what I said in my message to the workers of the United States last year: '*The wage-earners of America do not ask for more. They will not be satisfied with less.*'" (Italics ours.)

There is a far cry between President Adams's correct designation of a mere "living wage" as the badge of slavery, and the late President's presumptuous acceptance, on behalf of labor; of that badge of slavery as something with which the workers ought to be (and, as he claimed, *are*) satisfied! So deeply has American democracy sunk into the morass of decadence and decay that what was denounced as slavery by the second President of the United States was extolled by the thirty-second President as the hope and salvation of the workers!

This is the prospect held out for the class in society which produces all the social wealth, and which carries the entire civilized world on its strong, but weary, shoulders!

“The Problem of Super-Abundance.”

With capitalism in the final stages of its decay, nationally and internationally, society has reached an impasse, a deadlock. It cannot, or should not, go backward, it cannot stand still, yet the outworn and now worse than useless capitalist system will not permit it to go forward to that industrial and complete social freedom made possible by the marvelous technological development of the last few decades, and especially during the terrible war years. Atomic energy (characteristically enough, for capitalism, first demonstrated in its incredible destructiveness through the atomic bomb which with two blows laid waste two large Japanese cities)—atomic energy alone holds a promise of freedom from want and fear so glittering as to dazzle the boldest seer and thinker. But even without the application of atomic energy to industrial uses, it is possible to produce the necessities and luxuries of life in such a super-abundance as to render forever ridiculous so monstrous a thought as toleration of continued poverty and miseries for the useful producers.

The near future will inevitably witness a productivity so great as to render capitalism and its false premises forever obsolete. This productivity, *under capitalism*, creates for the capitalists “the problem of super-abundance,” and what to do in order to stop further progress, thus reversing the age-old problem of how to produce enough in order to insure progress! But this is *under capitalism*. Under Socialism, in the Socialist Industrial Union Commonwealth, there would not be, as there could not be, any such problem. For, under Socialism, the greater the productivity, the less

time the producers would have to work, hence the more leisure *all* would have for artistic and cultural pursuits, for play and pleasure, and the wholesome life in beauty and contentment.

And so, despite the promises and possibilities of our modern marvelous production machine, the capitalist class and those who serve capitalist interests are frightened at the prospects of the near future. Blinded by their class interests, and dreading the thought of surrendering their class privileges and power, they are attempting to stem the tide of progress, and fatuously seek to fit the living and growing organism of society into the procrustean capitalist bed. Like the savage who trades gold for glittering glass beads, so the capitalist class clings to the dross of a dying capitalist society, with its century-old inhumanities—wars, poverty, diseases and countless other capitalist-made miseries—while passing up the golden age of the Brotherhood of Man, the age of peace, plenty and happiness, which persistently and in thundering measures is knocking on the portals of our time.

The “Specter” of Socialism.

And, like the superstitious savage, they, too, are ruled by superstitions. These superstitions are many, and are commonly known as “objections to Socialism.” They picture to themselves such “dreadful specters” as “collectivism” than which Hell knows no greater evil! Of this “collectivism,” they say, they will have none, forgetting that they are operating under the greatest collectivism the world has ever known, the collectivism of capitalist production and exchange, without which they would cease to exist as capitalists! But

theirs is a *despotic collectivism*, a collectivism which they own and control. What they really fear, what they object to, is not collectivism, but *democratic collectivism*—the collectivism owned and controlled by society through the industrially organized producers in a free commonwealth.

They clamor for "individualism," they, whose very existence as capitalist owners of industry is dependent upon the denial of *individuality* to the mass of the people, the present-day wage workers. But just as capitalism denies individualism to the majority, while insisting upon it for themselves through despotic collectivism, so Socialism would insure individuality through cooperative and democratic collectivism.

And they speak of the virtues of their so-called "system of free enterprise," a nostalgic designation for the system of capitalism which is based on the denial of economic freedom to the majority, a system for which the term "free enterprise" is a mockery to the exploited wage slaves. For "free enterprise," based on wage slavery, is as meaningless to the mass of the people today, as the word "democracy" was meaningless to the majority (the slaves) of ancient Athens!

As there could be no democracy in ancient Athens with the majority of its inhabitants bound in abject slavery, so there can be no free enterprise under capitalism where the vast majority are totally divorced from the tools of production, to which they can secure access only by selling themselves into abject and soul-killing wage-slavery. To the vast majority there is not, there cannot be, either freedom or individual enterprise, or *any* individuality, in such a situation. When the plutocracy and their spokesmen speak of private

property rights as being sacred, when they announce with soulful expressions that where there is no "private property" (meaning private property in the socially produced and socially operated and needed instruments of production), there can be no freedom, the truth is not in them, nor do they utter common sense. For capitalism is a social (or rather anti-social) system where the opportunity to own property is permanently denied to upward of 90 per cent of the people.

"Free Enterprise" Is Economic Despotism.

In the pre-capitalist era the workman owned his own tools, and he was economically a free man. Now the "tools of production" (the mammoth plants) are owned by a small plutocratic minority who have the power to deny (and do deny when it suits their interests) the workers access to them except on terms of economic slavery. This is the so-called "free enterprise" system, this is what they call freedom—this is our celebrated "American way of life" for which sons and daughters of American workers supposedly gave their lives on the battlefields of the global war!

The fact of the true situation is that the right of private property, once a respected right in America, has come to mean, not the right of the workers to own their own tools, and to enjoy the fruits of their own labor, but the right of useless or stock-gambling capitalist owners to close the plants of production whenever it suits them to do so, and to deny the producing workers access to the plants and instruments of production whenever the class which merely *owns* thinks it unprofitable to operate them.

In short, and to recapitulate, the "free enterprise"

system—that is, capitalism—establishes this set of facts:

1—The worker, bereft of property, or the tools of production, must sell himself into wage slavery. Slavery, in whatever form or degree, can never be made to spell *Freedom*.

2—As wage slaves, the workers are robbed of the major portion of what they produce, the bulk going to the State and to the property-owning class, in one form or another. No free or decent society can exist which rests on the robbery of one class by another.

3—A virtually absolute despotism prevails in the industries and wherever wage labor is employed and exploited. Economic despotism can never be made to spell *Democracy*.

4—As a class, the workers are doomed to lifelong slavery. It is an indispensable condition for privately owned industry (capitalism) to have available a well-stocked labor market. "Free enterprise," i.e., capitalism, could not, as we have seen, survive a day if there were not always millions of workers so reduced in circumstance as to compel them to sell their labor power, i.e., themselves, for a price—a price that at best barely keeps them above the starvation line. Where the door of "opportunity" is fatedly and permanently closed to the majority, it is fraudulent to insist that capitalism is a system of free enterprise and equal opportunity to all. The inherent *denial* of opportunity can never be made to spell possible or guaranteed opportunity.

VI.

Fear of Social Revolution.

The civilized world stands, as never before, at the cross-roads. The bloodiest war in all history, osten-

sibly fought to bring peace, plenty and freedom to the world, has so far produced, or is by way of producing, the exact opposite so far as the vast majority are concerned. And those who work with might and main to preserve the system responsible for the recent bloody slaughter, and the incredible wanton destruction of wealth, in short, the capitalists and the apologists for the capitalist system, are demonstrating that their professed concern for the welfare of peoples everywhere, and their professed desires to preserve and advance the decencies of civilization, constituted fraud and deception.

Wherever the oppressed move, however cautiously, and in however circumscribed manner, to establish conditions which are conceived to recover for them lost freedoms, or enlargements of those previously enjoyed, the capitalists of the dominant nations seek to check them, and to keep them down. And if there seem to be indications of social revolution anywhere, these powerful capitalist groups do not hesitate to employ, or to ally themselves with, their erstwhile fascist enemies, in order to crush rebellion and to protect their interests as capitalists. Which proves again that what the capitalist class fears is not so much the ruling class "enemy" of another nation, but the revolutionary working class of any nation, especially their own. By their fears and treacherous conduct the capitalist classes of the world prove anew the Marxian dictum that "the working class of all nations has but one enemy—the capitalist class of all nations, its own nation's at the head of the list." (De Leon.) May the workers everywhere soon learn this lesson, if they did not learn it through the blood and sweat and tears of the global carnage and orgy of destruction.

The Program of Marxism.

If they have learned that lesson well, they have taken the first step toward the free Socialist society which must succeed capitalism if we are to live decent and civilized lives in comfort and concord and untrammelled happiness. But, having taken that step, the next one must be taken: To organize the instruments of government suited to, and required of, the free Socialist society, the Socialist Industrial Union Government of the Republic of Labor. To organize on the sane and simple plan projected by the Marxian Socialist Labor Party of America. And what is this plan? It is—

1—The working class of each nation organized into Socialist Industrial Unions, allied to the workers of all other nations similarly organized. The Socialist Industrial Union is dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism, and to the establishment of the industrial form of government—Industrial Administration of things, producing for use and not for profit or for the markets. The Socialist Industrial Union Government will supplant and supersede the political State of capitalism everywhere.

2—In line with social evolution, the Socialist Industrial Union Government derives its representation from industry, in contrast to the capitalist political State which is based on territorial, or political, representation. Political government, class rule, is cast in the mold of territory. Socialist Industrial Government is cast in the mold of useful occupations.

3—Ignoring artificial, or geographical boundaries, Socialist Industrial Unionism cuts across political lines

of demarcation, nationally and internationally. Industrial Unionism, accordingly, organizes the useful occupations—the industries of the world—into the constituencies of the future Society of Free and Emancipated Labor.

Thus, Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and, the goal once reached, it becomes the Socialist Republic in operation.

This is the plan, the only workable plan whereby the struggle of the ages may be terminated, and through which alone peace, plenty, freedom and happiness may at last be brought to a war-ridden and slave-driven world. This is the hope of humanity—the hope, the promise and the fulfillment!

The prophetic and meaningful words of Thomas Carlyle come ringing to us through the years in crystal-clear accents:

“We must some day, at last and forever, cross the line between Nonsense and Common Sense. And on that day we shall pass from Class Paternalism, originally derived from fetish fiction in times of universal ignorance, to Human Brotherhood in accordance with the nature of things and our growing knowledge of it: from Political Government to Industrial Administration; from Competition in Individualism to Individuality in Cooperation; from War and Despotism, in any form, to Peace and Liberty.”

*

Workers of America—and, through you, Workers of the World—heed this plea and this call to action! Time is running against us. We must act before it is too late. Beware of the cruel deceptions and blandishments offered by the discredited and bankrupt capitalist

class! Beware of the visionary reformers who speak words of promise of a "better life," but who do the work that will insure continuity of the capitalist way of life! Beware of the labor misleaders, the agents and lieutenants of the capitalist class, whose task it is to keep you in chains of slavery, under the illusion of freedom of choice—the "choice" to accept wage slavery on its degrading terms, or starve, and perchance starve in any case.

No Short-Cuts to Freedom.

Beware of those who pose as Socialists but who in reality are allied with capitalist interests in perpetuating the capitalist system—self-styled friends of labor such as the group of labor misleaders and petty reformers in Great Britain who recently succeeded the Tory Winston Churchill in managing the imperialist affairs of the British capitalist class. Falsely proclaiming themselves "Socialists," and their accession to power as "a victory for Labor and Socialism," they are in fact anti-Labor and anti-Socialists, concerned primarily with the preservation of the capitalist system, and with the securing of British commercial power in the international field. Whatever their intentions, their efforts will result in shackling British Labor still more, in keeping the exploited workers down, in preventing them from coming into their rightful own. We have not forgotten that it was they who made it possible for British capitalism to impose forced labor (labor conscription) on the British workers during the war, maintaining it even now that the war is over—labor conscription, the hated slave labor system which they copied right out of Hitler's own book!

There are no short-cuts to revolution, and no ruling class can be cajoled, bought out, or frightened out of its class power and privileges. Society, in the language of Marx, cannot be revolutionized behind its back. Society, said Marx in one of his most trenchant observations, "can neither clear by bold leaps, nor, removed by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen the birth-pangs."

Beware, too, of the pseudo-Marxists (also known as Stalinists) who speak of their "Socialist State"—a contradiction in terms ("The existence of the State is inseparable from the existence of slavery."—Marx), a contradiction which exposes the fraudulent claim of those who present a "benevolent despotism," under bureaucratic class rule, and entrenched Stateism, as the true Socialist Brotherhood of Man, the Brotherhood that knows neither despotism, bureaucracy nor the political State! And these would-be Marxists add further insult to proven injury to the noble cause of Socialism by also maintaining, during the war and after, a forced labor system which it is impossible to distinguish from the Nazi system of forced labor, whether the slaves be native Russians, or German prisoners.

Beware, in short, of all who plead good intentions—the "good intentions" that do the work of the worst intentions!

Fellow workers, working men and working women of all lands: Turn your backs to the dead past, and to the dying capitalist present—turn your faces toward the sun of the future, the brilliant and beneficent sun of Socialism! Sever the bonds that bind you to the capitalist system of exploitation, with its fratricidal struggles, and join together the bonds that shall unite

workers universally in fraternal concord and high social endeavor! Unite to end class rule! Organize to institute the Commonwealth of Labor! Organize for the peaceful, but thoroughgoing, revolutionary overthrow of the inhuman system of capitalism! Organize industrially and politically for Socialism, the dream of the ages, the realizable hope of the near future! Unite to end the thousand-year horror of war, slavery and poverty! Unite to establish the thousand-year reign of freedom in cooperation, and peace amidst abundance!

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY
OF AMERICA.

Arnold Petersen,
National Secretary.

September 13, 1945.

*Declaration of Fundamental Principles,
Socialist Labor Party of America.*

The Socialist Labor Party of America, cognizant of world-wide social disintegration, reasserts the inalienable right of man to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, in the following declaration of principles:

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

*Federal Trade Commission Report, 1926.

The 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 necessities 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 sys-

tem 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 classconscious 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.

*(Adopted in National Convention assembled,
in the City of New York, April 29, 1940.)*

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