

National Platform

Socialist Labor Party of America

*Re-Adopted by the Twelfth National Convention, New York City, July 1908 and approved by a general vote of the party's membership.*¹

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The Socialist Labor Party of America, in convention assembled, 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 the true theory of politics is that the machinery of government must be controlled by the whole people; but again taught by experience we hold furthermore that the true theory of economics is that the means of production must likewise be owned, operated and controlled by the people in common. Man cannot exercise his right of 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.

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 people into two classes, the Capitalist Class and the Working Class; throws society into the convulsions of the Class Struggle, and perverts Government to the exclusive benefit of the Capitalist Class.

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

Against such a system the Socialist Labor party raises the banner of revolt, and demands the unconditional surrender of the Capitalist Class.

¹ The National Platform of 1908 is identical to the National Platform of 1904.

The time is fast coming when, in the natural course of social evolution, this system, through the destructive action of its failures and crises on the one hand, and the constructive tendencies of its trusts and other capitalist combinations on the other hand, will have worked out its own downfall.

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.

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 modern factors of civilization.

Please report errors to

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