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# **Socialist Party Due to Make Greatest Gains in its Entire History, Eugene Debs Declares:**

**National Chairman of the Socialist Party Outlines Political Situation  
Confronting Workers of the Nation in a Stirring Call to Strengthen the Party  
Machinery — Unless Real Labor Party is Formed, the Socialists Will Continue  
to Carry on Labor's Battle Alone as in the Past, Leader Announces.**

by Eugene V. Debs

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The doctors in charge of the sanitarium in which I am taking a course of treatment have warned me that my condition of nervous and physical exhaustion is such that I must abandon my usual activities entirely, avoid all excitement, keep quiet as possible, and give myself up wholly to rest and treatment if I expect to recover my health and take up my work again.

I know the doctors are right in issuing their stern orders in my case, but my comrades will understand, I am sure, that it is not easy for me to be inactive and to keep "quiet" at such a time as this, when every live human being should be at the front in the great historic battle that is raging all over the world for the overthrow of the monstrous triune of Capitalism, Militarism, and Despotism and the emancipation of the race from the age-long inheritance of ignorance and superstition, of poverty, misery, and degradation.

But I shall be patient as I can, bide my time until the bodily repairs are completed, and then take my place in the ranks where my heart is and will be until it ceases to beat forever.

However, the unusual circumstances now existing and the great emergency now confronting our party, which may mean its triumphant rise to greater power than it ever had before, or its utter undoing, move me to break over the rule of silence and make this appeal, feeble though it may be, to my comrades, as to the needs and duties of the hour in the present important and critical situation.

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The Socialist Party came to birth in 1897 out of the great railroad strike which had been crushed by the courts and troops of the United States government. Twenty-seven years ago it entered the field as the Social Democracy on a Marxian platform and began its mission of educating and organizing the American workers for their industrial emancipation, to which it has adhered loyally and steadfastly through all these years of trial, privation, and persecution, without once hauling down its tattered flag, renouncing its historic purpose, or compromising its revolutionary principles. That is the record and in this year of 1924, when so many forces are moving toward independent political action of the working class, no member need to blush for it, for the agitation and awakening we behold today, even in the most conservative and reactionary circles, is due more to the 27 years of resolute, energetic, and unceasing educational activity of the Socialist Party than to all other causes combined.

That is the actual fact of the case and no one can successfully gainsay or deny it. It was the Socialist Party that, through days fair and foul, through good and evil report, sowed the seed and nurtured the crop that is now coming to harvest and fruition.

That, briefly stated, is what the Socialist Party has meant in the past, but it is also the prelude to what it will mean to the American workers in the future.

When the World War came, the capitalist class at once recognized the Socialist Party as the most powerful menace to its criminal misrule and paid it the high compliment of assaulting it more brutally and persecuting it more atrociously than any other party in the land, a grim fact that has not lost its significance. Thousands deserted for one reason or another when the savage furies of capitalism burst upon it, but other thousands remained at their posts, stood their ground, bravely bore insult, outrage, and persecution, saved the Party, and kept its principles inviolate and its proud and defiant banner unsullied before the world.

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Later on, in the general upheaval that followed the war, the Party was rent asunder and thousands more deserted for the strange reason that the Party was “not radical or revolutionary enough,” and today we behold these same comrades seeking affiliation, under another party standard, with the rawest recruits, the latest arrivals, the most conservative and backward elements in the slow-moving forces, jarred loose mainly by Socialist Party agitation, now marshalling, under more or less reluctant leadership, for independent political action of the working class.

Does it not seem a little strange that nearly all the leaders of these “progressive” organizations and elements that are now proposing to merge into one general Labor Party were at one time members of the Socialist Party, had their eyes opened by its teachings, and received their training and equipment under its guidance and inspiration, and then withdrew from its ranks because it was “not radical and revolutionary enough,” or, on the contrary, too much so, to suit their views? And especially so on the part of those who were reared in the Socialist Party, so to speak, and who are now most vehement in denouncing it and most intent upon destroying it?

But this is due to and will have to be accounted for upon the ground of a peculiar post-war “tactic” which we are unable to comprehend and have no desire to imitate.

The important point is that the progressive tendencies of the many parties and unions toward unity and solidarity upon a class-conscious basis, so marked

and significant today, can be traced and credited almost wholly to the Socialist Party, and they serve to vindicate triumphantly the 27 years of its toilsome and tempestuous existence.

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And now what of the future of the Socialist Party in the face of the impending conventions whose purpose it is to unify all the progressive forces and launch a united party of the workers to fight for their emancipation?

What will take place at St. Paul on June 17 or at Cleveland on July 4, we do not know and cannot tell, but *we do know that whatever the outcome of those conventions, the Socialist Party will be more imperatively needed and in greater demand than ever before in its history.*

For myself, I earnestly hope a united Labor Party, based upon the principles of industrial democracy and cornerstoned in the interest of the working class, may issue from these conventions; but whether it does or not we must preserve strictly the identity and guard rigidly the integrity of the Socialist Party as an uncompromising revolutionary political organization of the workers in their struggle for emancipation.

In the event of a united party with which we have affiliation, we shall be in position to carry forward our educational work to better advantage, as the Independent Labour Party was in developing and building up the British Labour Party in England.

In case our Party should not merge in the present movement for a united party, we shall need as never before to be on the political battlefield this fall, sounding the clear note and issuing the clarion call in the babel of confusion, for the unconditional surrender of capitalism and the triumphant emancipation of the working class.

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What now is the need of the Socialist Party and the duty of its loyal membership in this crucial situation? The Party is still sadly crippled as a result of the capitalist slaughter. The wonder is that it could survive at all and the fact that it did is proof conclusive that it is indestructible and that it is and will prove

itself to be *the party of the American workers* in fighting their battles in the supreme crisis and in achieving the final triumph over their exploiters and oppressors. Its membership has been greatly reduced and its treasury utterly bankrupted. But the loyalty of the remaining members has not been impaired and that is now the Party's vital asset and its assured salvation.

The Party needs now and cries aloud for the aid and support of every member. Not one whose name has remained upon the roll of honor can be spared. Not one!

Above all, the Party needs money, and first of all the National Office should be rescued from its burden of debt so that it can once more function freely in organizing and building up the Party. Our National Secretary [Bertha Hale White] is harassed constantly for the want of funds to meet the necessary expenditures, and she cannot possibly do justice to the very important work assigned here and which she is doing with amazing results, under the existing circumstances. Comrade White, Comrade [George] Kirkpatrick, and their assistants are bending all their energies early and late, and often with no salary in sight, to build up the Party. Let us at least relieve them of their financial handicap and provided them with the necessary office help and equipment to enable them to render the Party the valuable service they are so able and eager to do. We can do it if we will. There are enough of us to do it overnight. Why not?

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Collect at once and send in the dues owed by your local. Collect and forward the voluntary assessment levied for convention expenses. The amount of this levy is 50 cents, \$1.00, and \$5.00, according to

your means. A thousand of you at least can afford to pay \$5.00; several thousand can pay \$1.00; and the very least of you can afford a fifty cents contribution. This levy is voluntary, not obligatory. It is an appeal to your loyalty, your honor, your sense of obligation to the Party that expresses and fights for your ideals and aspirations.

The National Office and those entrusted with its affairs are doing all that humanly can be done to place the Party where it belongs, and so are the few organizers that still hold the field and are battling bravely to win the day for a triumphant Socialist Party.

If you have a dollar, five, or ten dollars or more to spare, send it at once to Bertha Hale White, National Secretary, 2653 Washington Boulevard, Chicago. You can make no better use of it. Ten thousand dollars at the National Office now will be worth more than \$100,000 a year from now. *We can easily raise it. Let us do it! And begin at once!*

As for the rest, let us all set to work, right now, in dead earnest to get our house in order — to put our Party in shape for heroic action in the coming campaign.

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Build up your Local and set its machinery clicking with new life; pay up your dues and hold up a clean bill as an example and inspiration to others; add as many new members as you can to your roll of membership; secure every possible subscriber to some Socialist paper; distribute Party tracts and leaflets among your neighbors. In a word, toe the mark squarely, do your full duty as a Socialist, and help speed the day of human emancipation.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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