

since we would collectively own the factories and means of production, we would have full and free access to the means of wealth production and distribution. Since we would receive the full social value of our labor there would be no unwanted surplus. We would collectively produce the things we want and need for full and happy lives. It would be to the benefit of all to find new inventions, new means of production, improved means of distribution. Society as a whole would have a vital interest in providing opportunity to each individual to find the work for which he or she is best suited and in which he or she will be happiest. There would be the fullest freedom and opportunity.

And, we repeat, there would be a complete and *full* democracy. Democracy that will truly be based on the broadest lines. Democracy in which the final and only power will be the great mass of

our people, the useful producers, which in socialist society would mean everybody. Society no longer would be split into two contending classes. Instead, we would all be useful producers, collectively owning the means of production and distribution, collectively concerned with producing the most with the least expenditure of human labor, and collectively jealous of the rights of the individual to a full, free and untrammelled life of happiness and accomplishment.

How can we get such a society? The answer is easy. It is within the power of the working class to establish such a society as soon as they recognize the need for it and organize to establish it. The program of the Socialist Labor Party of America points the way. By learning about that program you will learn how to effectively demand the end of capitalism and to organize with your fellow workers for the establishment of socialism.

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SOCIALISM— ITS MEANING AND PROMISE

Many people believe that socialism means government or state ownership and control. Who can blame them when that is what the schools teach and what the media, politicians and others who oppose socialism say? Worse, some people and organizations that call themselves socialist say it, too—but not the Socialist Labor Party.

The SLP says that socialism is something entirely different. After all, we have plenty of government or state ownership in America today, but who would argue that America is a socialist country because of it?

This is a capitalist country, not a socialist one. Yet many cities own and run their own hospitals, libraries, transportation systems and utilities. The public schools, state college and university systems are government owned. The federal government owns and controls the FBI, the CIA, the army, the navy, the air force, the U.S. Marines and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Why, it even owns all the national forests and national parks. Yet, who would call these institutions examples of socialism? Who would say that today's government is socialist because it owns all of these things? Not the SLP.

What Socialism Is

If government or state ownership is not socialism, what is?

Before answering that question there is something you should know about

government. Not all government is *state* government. State government is government based on territory, such as cities, counties and nations. It is *political* government, and it is designed to rule over places and the people in them.

Socialist government is not state government. It would not rule over people and places, but would empower the people to rule over things. Socialism means a government in which the people collectively own and democratically operate the industries and social services through an *economic* democracy. And when we say "collectively own," we are not talking about homes, or cars, or other personal belongings. We are talking about the things needed to produce and distribute homes, cars and all the other things we need and want.

Under socialism the workers who operate the industries and services would collectively own and democratically manage them. In each factory and other workplace, the rank and file would elect their own immediate supervisors and management committees. They would also elect representatives to local and national assemblies of the industry or service in which they work, and to an all-industrial congress to coordinate production and distribution of all goods and services throughout the country. In short, socialism would replace the *political* government run by politicians with an *industrial* government run by workers and their elected representatives.

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Instead of a senator from California or a representative from New York, there would be worker-delegates from the automotive industry, from the transportation systems, from the mines, from the clothing factories, from services such as restaurants, hospitals, schools and so on. These representatives would have the single task of deciding what should be produced and how best to produce it.

Today we have political democracy only. Workers do not have economic democracy. The owners of the factories have almost absolute power over their employees. They can fire whomever they please, whenever they please. They can close the plant down and move to another state or another country. They can even order their workers to manufacture something worthless or harmful. In short, they have all the power of dictators—*economic* dictators.

Socialism means economic democracy. Instead of voting once every two or four years for politicians, workers would be making decisions every day where they work and in the field in which they are most qualified. Here is where their vote counts because it vitally affects their own personal lives.

When we use the word “worker,” we mean everyone who sells his or her labor power, or ability to work, at so much per hour, or so much per week, to a capitalist employer. Coal miners are workers, but so are musicians, scientists, nurses, teachers, architects, inventors and mathematicians.

Benefits of Socialism

Under capitalism workers receive only a small fraction of the wealth that they alone produce, while the lion’s

share goes to the capitalist owners and to the bankers, landlords, insurance companies, lawyers, politicians, and all the other parasites who live off the back of labor and perform no useful work. By ending this robbery of the working class, socialism will enable workers to enjoy the full fruit of their labor.

Socialism would also enable us to raise our living standards dramatically by ending the billions of dollars thrown away on arms production and “defense,” by ending the waste, duplication and inefficiency of capitalist industries, and by returning millions of soldiers and unemployed workers to useful occupations.

In socialist society there would be no wage system. Workers would receive the social value of their labor. And since the people would collectively own the industries, anyone would be free to select any occupation in which he or she has an interest and aptitude. No longer would workers live under the fear of being laid off, or be compelled to spend their lives at some job they hate or are unsuited for. Also, since the people would collectively own the colleges and universities, no longer would workers be denied education or training because they lack the money to buy it.

Production for Use, Not for Profit

Furthermore, under socialism we would produce for use and to satisfy the needs of all the people. Under capitalism the industries operate for one purpose—to earn a profit for their owners. Under this system, food is not grown primarily to be eaten. It is grown to be sold. Cars are not manufactured primarily to be driven. They are made to be sold. If there are enough buyers here and abroad, then the capitalists will have

their factories turn out cars, appliances, pianos and everything else for which buyers can be found. But if people lack money, if the domestic and foreign markets cannot absorb them, then these factories shut down and the country stagnates, no matter how much people need these commodities.

At the present time, agricapitalists know that they can produce more than market conditions and price-protecting government restrictions, compensated for by cash subsidies, permit them to. Meanwhile, millions of Americans suffer from malnutrition and hunger, as recent surveys have shown, and most households count their nickels and dimes when they shop for food.

The periodic depressions and recessions of the past have occurred, we are told, because too much was produced—overproduction. Factories turned out so vast a quantity of goods that their owners shut them down and laid off the workers who produced this abundance.

Under socialism the factories and industries would be used to benefit all of us, not restricted to the creation of profits for the enrichment of a small group of capitalist owners. Under socialism our farmlands would yield an abundance without great toil; the factories, mines and mills would be the safest, the most modern, the most efficient possible and productive beyond our wildest dreams—and without laborious work. Our natural resources would be intelligently conserved. Our schools would have the finest facilities and they would be devoted to developing complete human beings, not wages slaves who are trained to hire themselves out for someone else’s profit. Our hospitals and social services would create and maintain the finest

health and recreational facilities.

An End to Poverty

In all previous ages of human history, poverty for most of the people was inescapable. There was simply not enough to go around. But not so today. Industrial technology and scientific knowledge have so vastly increased our ability to produce what we need and want that there is no longer any excuse whatsoever for the poverty of a single member of society. Today we have the material possibility of abundance for everyone, and the promise of the leisure in which to enjoy it.

But under capitalism industrial technology is used to replace workers and increase profits. Instead of creating a society of abundance, capitalism uses machinery to create unemployment and poverty. Our inner cities have been converted largely into festering slums in which impoverished people, not understanding the cause of their miseries, are imprisoned and damned to a life of misery.

It is not technology that threatens us. By themselves, improved methods of production and distribution are not social evils. They could be a blessing, but under capitalism technology is used for antisocial purposes.

This follows from the fact that technology and industry are the exclusive property of a small minority of the American people—the capitalist class. Capitalism uses the industries for the private profit of their owners and not for the benefit of the vast majority of the American people—the workers who invented and built them.

Build a New Society

In socialist society, on the other hand,