



THE HOPE OF HUMANITY

BY

MAX SHACHTMAN

**NATIONAL SECRETARY
OF THE
WORKERS PARTY**

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What Do the Socialists Want?

WHAT is socialism? What do the socialists want?

The simplest way to find the answer to these questions is to ask yourself: "What do *I* want? What do the tens of millions like me throughout the world want?"

Everyone has different tastes, different ambitions, different hopes. But almost all are agreed in wanting *durable peace* in a world free of the scourge of war; *security and prosperity* in place of unemployment and low standards of living; *freedom and equality* in place of special privileges, special rights and special powers for the minority, in place of the rule of the many by the few.

These are just the things that the socialists want and that socialism aims to achieve. The socialists differ from all others who want the same things, or say they want them, in three respects. First, because they show why we do not have peace, security, prosperity, freedom and equality today and why we cannot have them for the great mass of the people so long as the present social order exists. Second, because they show just what the great mass of the people have to do in order to get what they want. Third, because they work unceasingly to bring together in an organized, systematic way all those who are able and willing to fight for the things we want.

The social system under which most of the people of the world live today is known as capitalism. It is based on the ownership of the big industries, banks, sources of raw materials and means of transportation by a few gigantic monopolies and trusts, and the production of goods for profit.

Socialists do not hide the fact that they are consistent enemies of capitalism. They aim to replace capitalism by socialism not only because it is possible to do so but because it is absolutely necessary to the maintenance and the progressive development of society. We hold that capitalism has outlived its usefulness. We are convinced that if capitalism is allowed to continue, we will be plunged into barbarism. In a word, we hold that capitalism is bankrupt and that if humanity is to advance it must move on to socialism.

Before we examine the question of what a socialist society

would be like and how it would satisfy the wants of the people, let us see what evidence there is of the bankruptcy of capitalism.

The Bankruptcy of Capitalism

Take, first of all, the question of durable peace. Nobody but a madman wants war for the sake of war, bloodshed for the sake of bloodshed. Surely, not even the capitalist world is ruled and controlled by madmen in the literal sense of the word, that is, by men who are mentally diseased and perverted to such a degree that they deliberately sit down to plot war after war because they delight in seeing millions killed, millions more suffer, and cities and whole countries ruined. We are not ruled by madmen—at least not by that kind of madmen.

Yet, in 1914, we had the first big World War, with countless dead and wounded, with frightful sufferings and enormous losses of wealth. When the war finally came to an end, all the rulers swore solemnly that there would never be another war, that they were determined to unite all their energy and power to prevent it, thereby assuring the people of the world a permanent peace. But the world knew no real peace even after 1918. Year after year, there was a war on a large or small scale in one part of the world or another.

Then in 1939, less than a generation after the outbreak of the First World War, every important country was hurled into the most colossal and most destructive global war in history. It differed from the First World War in that this time there was even more devastation, more wreckage, more thoroughgoing ruin of cities and whole countries, more killed and maimed, more intense suffering by many more people.

How could such a monstrous slaughter take place? Let us assume, for a moment, that the war was unleashed by German fascism. In a sense, that is true. But then we would have to ask: Who and what permitted German fascism to come to power and to grow so strong that it endangered the peace of the world? Why did the rulers of the other countries, representing more than ninety per cent of the world's population, fail to preserve the peace?

The causes of the Second World War are basically the same as the causes of the First World War. Just as every capitalist tries to expand his profit and power at the expense of every rival capitalist, so every capitalist nation tries to expand its power and rule at the expense of every rival capitalist nation. Every one of them seeks to hold on to its colonies, its "spheres of influence," its sources of raw materials and cheap labor, its fields of profitable investment, its con-

trol of foreign trade. Every one seeks to acquire more and more of them. They are in continual rivalry and conflict, one with the other. When "peaceful" methods of stealing from each other no longer work, they resort to armed force. Then we have war. Millions are put into uniforms, armed to the teeth with every modern device of destruction, and ordered to blow the other side to bits in order to decide which capitalist power will be highest on the list of world rulers, which will be next highest, and so on down the line.



We see this most clearly after the "enemy" has been defeated, for that is when the victors fall out among themselves and start the open struggle to determine who is to get the greatest share of the loot. Anyone with eyes in his head could see that in 1918, at the end of the First World War, and he can see it again now that the Second World War is over.

Capitalism Means War

During the war, when the people are bitter over the thought of their disrupted lives, the slaughter and ruin into which they have been flung, the air is thick with promises of the lasting peace that will follow the war. Once the war is over, the air thickens with preparations for the war to come. Each power once more jockeys for favorable position; each one trains and prepares its army and navy; each one concentrates on developing more diabolical means of warfare; each one scrambles for allies against the others for the next, inevitable battle.

In less than one generation we have had two World Wars. The threat of war is always present. Solemn promises about peace, solemn documents in favor of peace, even if signed by every nation in the world, eloquent speeches against war—these represent no serious guarantees. They not only do not bring the dead back to life, but they give no assurance whatsoever that the child born today is not growing up to perish in another “war to end all wars.” The people have been given such promises and documents and speeches before. But the Second World War broke out nevertheless. And, so long as capitalism exists, with its feverish hunt for more profit and greater profit, with its irrepressible rivalry between capitalists and between big capitalist powers, so long will the peoples of the world be cursed with imperialist wars in which they are destroyed or impoverished. Durable peace is a myth under capitalism. A social order that cannot assure peace to a single generation is a bankrupt social order. High time it were destroyed, before it destroys all humankind.

Security and Prosperity

Or take the question of security and prosperity. Subject capitalism to the test, not in some small or backward country, but in the most powerful, most richly-endowed, most advanced country of the world, the United States. To say that capitalism has failed in a country like Bulgaria or Portugal because it has not brought security and prosperity to the people, might be answered with the argument that the example is not a fair one. But if it is shown that capitalism has failed to provide security and prosperity to the people of a mighty country like the United States, it can safely be said that capitalism cannot succeed in this aim anywhere.

In 1929, the United States fell into the grip of a severe industrial and financial crisis. Banks collapsed, production declined everywhere and in some plants came to a complete standstill; millions

were thrown out of work for years, the living standards of the workers, the farmers and the middle classes fell catastrophically. Was the crisis the result of the Hoover Administration? It would certainly be a superficial conclusion to come to, if only because practically every capitalist country in the world suffered from the same crisis to one extent or another. It was a crisis of capitalism, of capitalist production, of production for profit, and not a crisis of this or that government administration.

First under the Hoover Administration and then under the successive Roosevelt Administrations, the best brains of capitalist society—industrialists, bankers, economists, scientists, statesmen—tried their skill at solving the crisis. You would think that the solution was a comparatively simple and easy one. On the one hand you had all the necessary (and very modern and efficient) machinery and tools and plants, the raw materials, and millions of workers able and anxious to produce. On the other hand, you had tens of millions of people who wanted and needed the most elementary products of industry, such as food, clothing and shelter, to say nothing of better educational, medical, transportation and cultural facilities. Open the idle factories, put the unemployed to work at decent wages, produce the goods needed by the people! If more than enough can be produced by the working force and the modernized methods of production, then cut the working day of all workers so that they can have more free time to devote to themselves!

Capitalism Means Insecurity

This simple and easy solution did not, however, occur to the best brains of capitalism, and if it did, it could not be applied under capitalism. Capitalism produces only when there is a profit for the owner of capital. When there is no profitable market for his product, the capitalist will not produce, no matter how great and urgent the need of the people for work, for food, for clothing and shelter, for a decent living standard, for security.

Under Hoover, representing one type of capitalist statesman, we had millions of unemployed, apple-selling, "Hooverilles," and the shooting of World War I veterans in Washington. Under Roosevelt, representing another type of capitalist statesman, we had heavy governmental subsidies to the big corporations, we had organized scarcity in the form of "plowing under" in order to encourage profitable production, we had better relief for the unemployed—but the unemployed still counted in the millions and the crisis remained unsolved.

How was the crisis finally "solved"? How was unemployment

completely overcome? How did every factory and mine and railroad get into motion again? *Only* with the outbreak of the war and the shift to war production!

Here is something to think about and think about deeply. When millions were unemployed in the richest country of the world, when millions were uncertain about their next meal, the next month's rent, a new outfit of clothes to replace the wornout rags, when all the industry was available to produce food, clothing and homes in abundance—capitalism and all the statesmen of capitalism were helpless in dealing with the situation. Millions of tons of food were deliberately destroyed, with the government paying producers to destroy them! Factories remained closed, or opened up for partial production only when assured of a profit or a government subsidy. Millions of men and women willing to work could get no work and had to be content with government relief which was just about enough, in the best of cases, to keep body and soul together.

Capitalism Produces for War, Not Peace

But—as soon as the country was sent into war, all those who were not drafted were soon absorbed into production. Not only the former unemployed, but millions of men, women and young people who had never been employed before were taken into industry. Not only were the idle plants of yesterday opened, and put on a full-time or double-shift or even a round-the-clock schedule, but the government poured billions of dollars into setting up new plants and industrial enterprises all over the country. Unemployment came to an end! The crisis was over! Production reached its highest former peak and then went 'way above it to a height never before known in the history of any country!

What made this economic miracle possible when it had seemed so impossible before? A new Administration? No, the same Administration held office in the country before the war began as well as afterward. All that changed was this: the country was organized for *war-production*, and the most profitable war-production imaginable.

The exceptionally important significance of this should be clear to everyone. When it was necessary to produce such things as food, clothing and shelter for the hungry, the ragged and the homeless, when millions wanted work just in order to live, the machinery of production could not be brought into full operation either by Hoover, Roosevelt or any other champion of capitalism. Full production became possible only when all economic life was arranged to provide the means of killing and destroying on the vastest scale ever

known. To maintain life, capitalism could not be made to work. To spread death, capitalism worked at full blast. And now that the war is over, and production can no longer be concentrated on battleships and bombers, rifles and flamethrowers, uniforms and artillery and other means of death and destruction, millions are again faced with unemployment, insecurity and poverty.

What more damning indictment of capitalism could be made than it has already given of itself! In peacetime, wholesale insecurity, wholesale destitution. In wartime, wholesale death, wholesale destruction. These are the marks of the bankruptcy of capitalism.



Freedom and Equality

Take, finally, the question of freedom and equality. Where wealth is concentrated, power is concentrated. The wealth of our society is made up mainly and primarily of the means of producing and distributing the necessities of life. Whoever has this wealth has the power to rule society and dominate the life of all others. The longer capitalism lives, the more this wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer monopolists, the giants of industry and finance. Every day the lives of millions and hundreds of millions, the workers, the farmers and even the middle classes, become more and more dependent upon these powerful few, the tiny minority of capitalist monopolists.

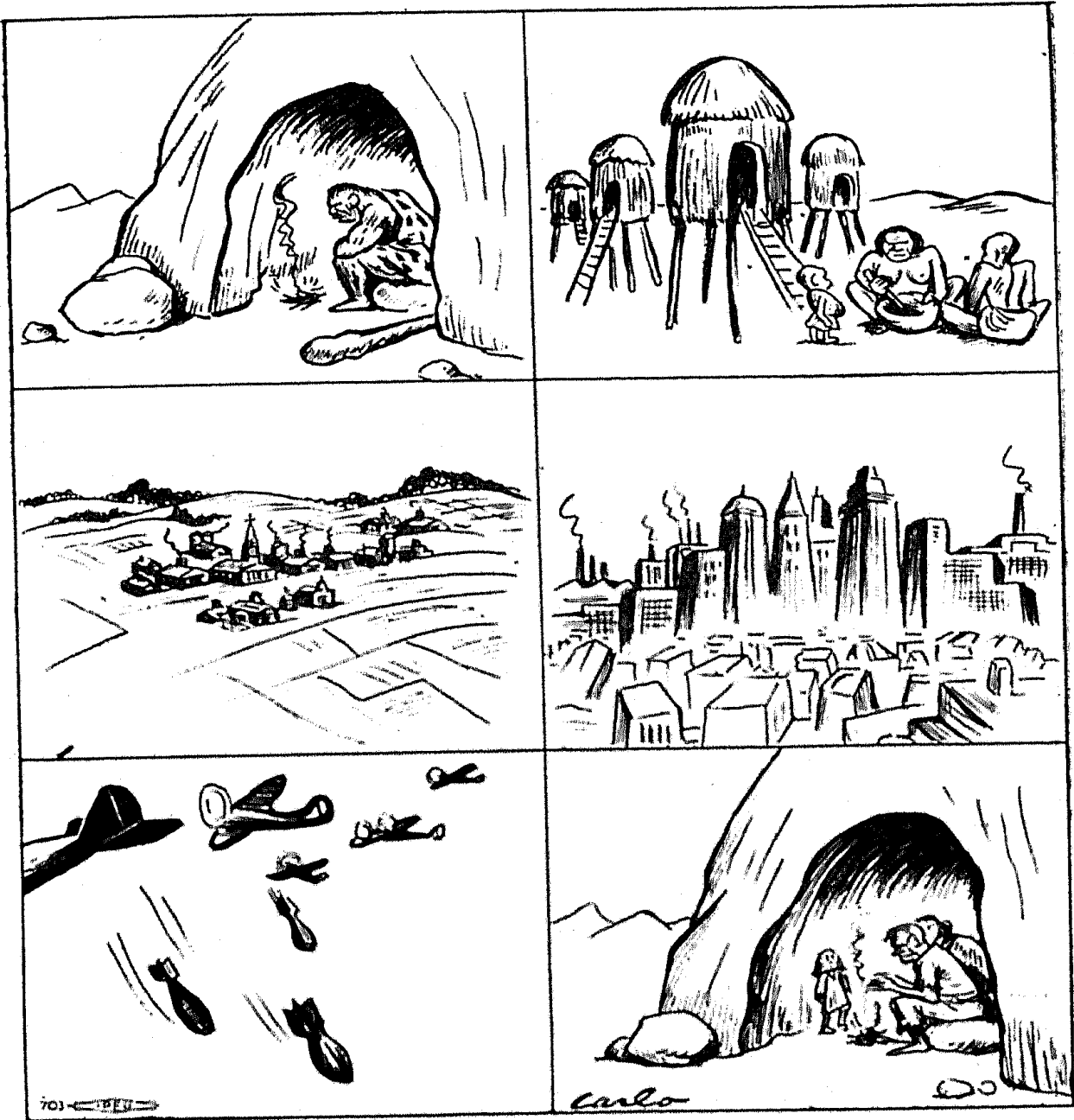
Where such power is in the hands of a ruling, exploiting, oppressing minority, all talk of genuine freedom is nonsense. All talk of genuine equality between those who have the power and those over whom they exercise this power, is likewise nonsense. With the economic and political power they have at their disposal, they control the newspapers, the radio, the screen, the schools, the churches, the legislatures, the courts, the police, the main political parties, and all other means for shaping the minds and controlling the bodies of the people.

What is worse is that the longer capitalism is allowed to exist, the greater becomes the inequality—social, economic and political—and the lesser becomes the freedom of the people in general and the working class in particular.

The more discontented the masses of the people become over the conditions to which capitalism reduces them, the more determined are the capitalists to rule over the people, to keep them docile and silent. The more desperately workers fight for a better living standard, or against a worsening living standard, the more violently the capitalists seek to maintain their power and their profits. The more hopefully the oppressed peoples and nations, especially in the colonial countries, fight for freedom and self-government, the more viciously they are brutalized by their foreign capitalist taskmasters.

Capitalism Nurtures Fascism

That is why, in country after country, capitalism has given rise to fascist or other reactionary dictatorships. That is why you always find capitalists and whole capitalist groups stimulating and financing reactionary and fascist movements. That is why even the democratic capitalist countries adopt more and more reactionary social legislation, anti-labor laws, restrictive laws on democratic



CAPITALISM WILL DESTROY US UNLESS WE DESTROY IT!

rights. The older and more degenerate capitalism becomes, the more reactionary it gets, the crueller its attacks on freedom, the greater inequality it introduces.

While profits such as they never dreamed of before flowed into the pockets of the big corporations of the United States during the war, one after another of labor's rights were abrogated. Its wages were frozen; its jobs were frozen; its draft status was at the mercy of the employer. This is only a beginning, and it is not confined to wartime. What is in store for labor and all other working people can best be seen in other capitalist countries. Labor's right to organize and strike is first whittled down; then it is abolished. The right to vote, the right to representative government, the right to free speech, free press and free assembly, are at first whittled down, and then abolished. For ten per cent of the American population, the Negroes, these rights do not exist today! Anti-Semitism, Jim Crow, all sorts of vicious racial, national and religious discrimination and antagonism are tolerated, then promoted, then officially enforced.

On an international scale, capitalism is reaction rampant. It robs more and more people of their most elementary right, the right to govern themselves, the right of self-determination. It reduces free peoples to slavery and keeps the slave people in subjugation. It makes concentration camps out of whole nations or transports millions from one land to another like cattle. It takes innocent peoples and makes forced-labor slaves out of them. It punishes the oppressed for the crimes of the oppressor. What the Hitlerites did to so many nations and peoples of Europe, the Allies now seek to do not only to the defeated countries but even to some of the victorious ones. Capitalism reeks more and more of the slave-market. Every day it lives it brings us a step closer to barbarism. It is a decaying monster that can be kept alive only by feeding on the life, liberty and happiness of the millions. It will destroy us unless we destroy it.

Socialism Is An Ideal — But Also A Necessity!

SOcialism means peace, security, prosperity, freedom and equality—all the things that the working people, the little people of society, have always wanted and longed for. Decades ago, socialism could be looked upon as a noble ideal, but nothing more than a noble ideal. Today it is more than an ideal, it is an urgent necessity!

What is this ideal which is also a necessity?

Socialism is the common ownership of the means of production and exchange and their democratic organization and management by all the people in a society free of classes, class divisions and class rule. Socialism is the democratic organization of production for use, of production for abundance, of plenty for all, without the exploitation of man by man. Socialism is the union of the whole world into an international federation of free and equal peoples, disposing in common of the natural resources and wealth, the highways and searoutes, of our earth.

Can this great ideal ever be realized?

It can and must be realized if society is to be maintained and advanced to the new, high level of historical development that lies before it. It can be realized because it is capitalism itself that has prepared the two main and indispensable conditions for socialism.

The first condition is such a highly developed industry, such a highly developed technique of production, such a highly developed *social* (instead of individual) way of producing the means of life, that it is now possible to organize our economic life to produce in *abundance for all* in a minimum of working time. The second condition is the development of a modern working class whose interests are so diametrically opposed to the interests of the capitalist class that it is compelled, in sheer self-defense, to replace capitalism by a rational socialist society, and which is so numerous and mighty that it is able to replace capitalism by socialism.

Capitalism has already established the great industrial plant, the highly-centralized machinery of production and distribution.



It is only necessary for the working class, in the name and interests of society as a whole, to take the huge monopolies and trusts out of the hands of the capitalist monopolists and place them into the hands of the nation as a whole led by this same working class. The nationalization of the big monopolies and trusts is the first necessary and indispensable step toward the common ownership and democratic organization of the means of production, that is, toward socialism itself.

Can socialism organize production and distribution in the interests of society as a whole, providing abundance, security and freedom for all?

Yes, socialism and only socialism! Under socialism, production is organized for use, not for profit. Production is carried on in a planned, centralized, democratically-controlled way, not on the basis of whether or not the private capitalist can make a profit on the market. Where production is planned, all the needs and comforts of society can easily be provided for, year in and year out. Every new invention, every improvement and advance in the field of production, would mean not only a higher standard of living for all, but a constant reduction in the working-day, that is, in the work-share that every member of society contributes to the community. Every increase in the leisure time of the people would mean an increase in the time to be devoted to art and science, to the cultural and spiritual development of each and of all. The machinery, the raw materials, the working force, the skill required to produce abundance for all, is already available. It is only necessary to free them from the paralyzing hand of capitalism and production-for-

profit in order to organize them in a rational and democratic manner.

Socialism Means Abundance for All

Where there is abundance for all, the nightmare of insecurity vanishes. There are jobs for all, and they are no longer dependent on whether or not the employer can make a fat profit in a fat market. There is not only a high standard of living, but every industrial advance is followed by a rising standard of living and a declining working-day.

Where there is abundance for all, and where no one has the economic power to exploit and oppress others, the basis of classes, class division and class conflict vanishes. The basis of a ruling state, of a government of violence and repression, with its prisons and police and army, also disappears. Police and thieves, prisons and violence are inevitable where there is economic inequality, or abundance for the few and scarcity for the many. They disappear when there is plenty for all, therefore economic equality, therefore social equality.

Where there is abundance for all, and where all have equal access to the fruits of the soil and the wealth of industry, the mad conflicts and wars between nations and peoples vanish. With them vanishes the irrepressible urge that exists under capitalism for one nation to subject others, to rob it of its rights, to exploit and oppress it, to provoke and maintain the hideous national and racial antagonisms that cling to capitalism like an ineradicable bloodstain.

Abundance for All Means Freedom

Where man is free of economic exploitation, of economic inequality, of economic insecurity, he is free for the first time to develop as a human being among his fellow human beings, free to contribute to the unfolding of a new culture and a new human race, which recalls the capitalistic war of all against all only as a sordid and horrible memory of mankind's ugly childhood.

To the achievement of this noble ideal which is a burning necessity, socialism addresses itself firstly and above all to the members of the working class. History has given them the lofty task of making a reality out of the ideal. They are the most numerous class in present-day society. They are the best organized and best trained class, and the most democratically representative of all the people ruled by monopoly capitalism. But not only that. The conditions of

existence to which capitalism condemns them, forces them, day in and day out, to fight against these very conditions. This fight cannot be conducted consistently nor, in the long run, successfully, unless it becomes a conscious fight against the whole rotten foundation of capitalism and for laying the foundation of socialism.



LABOR CAN DO IT!

The Workers Party and Socialism

WE OF THE Workers Party—which is a party of revolutionary, international socialism—are organized to make the working class conscious of its historical mission, of the great part it must play in leading and reorganizing society itself. We are part and parcel of the working class and the labor movement, fighting not only for its great future, but also for its present, for its interests and demands of today.

That is why we appear in the New York municipal election—as in every election campaign in which we are able to participate—not only as the party of socialism, but, precisely because we are socialist working men and working women, as the party which has a platform that represents the immediate needs, the immediate interests of labor.

We do not say to the workers: "Fix your eyes so rigidly on the socialist future that you ignore the needs and battles of the day." Rather, we say: "Precisely because socialism is the future, because it is the solution of the social problem, we support every fight and every demand of labor today which strengthens the working class, which gives it a stronger position in society, which increases its self-confidence and militancy, which pits it against its mortal enemy—capitalism and the capitalist class—which strengthens its independence, and which, therefore, brings it a step further along the road of struggle for the socialist future."

We are not the conservative brand of "socialist" of the Socialist Party type, which constantly wavers between working class-politics and action and capitalist politics. Neither are we partisans in any way of the so-called "Communist" Party which merely seeks to bring the labor movement and the working class under the despotic sway of the totalitarian bureaucrats of Russian "socialism," that is, of the Stalinist reaction. We are for the militant, working class, revolutionary socialism of the great founders and teachers of the scien-



tific socialist movement, for working-class democracy, for socialist freedom.

We do not believe that a well-cast vote will solve the problems facing the working class. If we appear in this municipal campaign with a platform and a candidate for the office of Mayor of New York City, it is first of all with the aim of presenting our views to the widest possible sections of the working class, and with the aim of winning and recording in the elections their support for these views.

That is what a vote for the platform of the Workers Party, and for its candidate for Mayor, means in this election. It means recording yourself in favor of the fighting labor demands of our party. It

means recording yourself in favor of our main watchword throughout the land at present: "Jobs for All! A Guaranteed Minimum Annual Wage for Every Worker! An Independent Labor Party! A Workers' Government in the United States!"

It means more than this, however. It means also recording yourself clearly for the Workers Party as the party of socialism. It means that you join, in so far as an election ballot permits you to do so, with those other working men and working women who wish to record their opposition to the capitalist social order of war, exploitation, oppression, poverty and misery, and at the same time their allegiance to the great cause of socialism and freedom!

Vote for the platform of the Workers Party!

Vote your socialist convictions!

Vote for Max Shachtman, candidate of the Workers Party for Mayor of the City of New York!

This speech, delivered by Max Shachtman, candidate of the Workers Party for Mayor of New York City, is published in pamphlet form for national distribution. The question discussed is one of general interest.

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Workers Party Program for Organized Labor

FOR THE UNEMPLOYED AND VETERANS:

1. Full Unemployment Insurance

Full unemployment insurance beginning with \$30 a week for single men and women and graduated upward for dependencies to all workers for whom government and industry do not find jobs.

2. Less Hours—More Pay

Absorption of all workers thrown into unemployment during re-conversion by reduction of the work-week with no reduction in weekly take-home pay.

3. Jobs and Full Opportunities for Veterans

Two years' base pay grant to all demobilized veterans, with the option of trade school and higher educational facilities at government expense, guarantee of adequate family maintenance and guarantee of decent jobs.

FOR THE POST-WAR WORLD:

4. Jobs For All at a Guaranteed Annual Living Wage

A job for every worker with a guaranteed minimum annual wage of \$2,500 per year. A rising standard of living, by means of government planning to insure the highest national production and income.

5. A Planned Rise in National Income

A guaranteed \$5,000 annual income to all workers' families by means of a planned rise in the national income and a thirty-hour maximum work week.

6. For a Democratic Peace

Against peacetime military conscription of American youth! For a truly democratic peace, which means no land-grabbing under any pretext; no reparations; no slave labor. Complete independence for all colonies and subject peoples and the right of all people to democratically decide their own future.

7. Full Social, Political and Economic Equality for Negroes

Complete democratic rights. The right to vote, to run for and hold any elective or appointive office, North and South. The right to equality in employment; to hold any job, skilled or unskilled. The right to be free from insult, segregation and Jim Crowism; anywhere and in any place; North or South.

THESE AIMS TO BE ACHIEVED THROUGH:

8. Clear the Slums

A \$250 billion five-year program to provide decent housing for all, extensive public works, rural electrification and modernization.

9. Nationalize Big Business

Nationalization of the banks, big industrial monopolies and transportation systems, and no handing over of government-built and owned plants and facilities to private ownership.

10. Raise the Money by Taxing the Profiteers

A 100 per cent tax on all war profits above a five per cent maximum on invested capital; a \$25,000 ceiling on total individual income, and a graduated capital levy on all accumulated wealth over \$50,000 to cover war costs and provide post-war security for labor.

THIS PROGRAM TO BE CARRIED OUT BY:

11. Workers' Control of Production

Control of production by democratically-elected workers' committees.

12. An Independent Labor Party and a Workers' Government

For a Socialist America with Plenty For All!

Make the machines that now produce only for war and capitalism produce for the needs of all the people!

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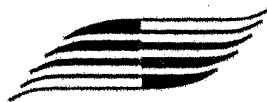
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