The Socialist Party of New Zealand's Appeal to Workers of New Zealand

Fellow Workers,

Twenty-seven successive Parliaments have come and gone since the passing of the Constitution Act by the Imperial Parliament on the 5th June, 1832. The date for the election of the 28th Parliament, November 27, 1946, has been proposed.

The vote you cast on this day will be eagerly sought by some one or other representative of the possessing classes to control the Government—the present system based, as you should know, on the private ownership of the means of living.

Liberals, Nationalists, Democratic Laborites, Communist (so-called), Independents—all of them—aid and abet the existing capitalist Government by and in the interests of a wealthy ruling and possessing class.

The reforms; the promises of prosperity; the security offered to all the representatives of the above-mentioned political parties; there are the bait used to catch the votes of the non-possessing class—the workers. Approximately nine out of every ten workers belong to this class, hence the subtle art of politicians to catch these votes and the seeming abandon with which they make promises, and profess reforms of Capitalism.

An overwhelming majority of these votes means the capture of the key of the situation—Political Power—and with it all the forces now used to keep the workers in subjection—the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Police.

On each election day the workers hold in their hands one of the essential means by which they can convert these armed forces from an instrument of oppression into the means of emancipation. We say, one of the essential means, advisedly, as the other and most essential means to back this vote is socialist understanding. There is obviously then a majority of workers who have acquired this understanding—in other words, a class-consciousness of workers—can bring about their emancipation from wage slavery.

Those who understand the basis of the present system—Capitalism—will not deny that the position of the immense majority of the people is that of wage slaves or of dependence upon wage slaves.

To quote the words of Marx in "Wage Labor and Capital" (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1929, p. 77): "The State presupposes wage labor; wage labor presupposes capital. They condition each other; each brings the other into existence." This is as applicable today as when it was written.

Furthermore, whether Capital is owned and controlled by the State (e.g., railways, road motor services, the Bank of N.Z., or by private persons matters little. The position of the majority remains the same. They are wage slaves producing surplus value for a surplus or foreign wealth for an owning class.

With the foregoing in mind we must examine the parties and platforms of the contesting parties. The main contention of the Labor and Nationalist parties is nothing more than the abolition of the Legislative Council.

The difference between these parties is that Labor claims that the reforms advocated by both can be better implemented by a greater degree of State control. The Nationalists claim that private enterprise can better implement them.

When addressing a meeting of Waterside Workers in Wellington, the Prime Minister, Mr. F. Fraser, expressed surprise that the National Party was contesting the election. Owing to the similarity of the programs of both parties it was evident that there was a need for clarification. Mr. Fraser said: "I claimed that the Labor Party could carry out the policy more efficiently than the Nationalists.

The program of the 'Communist' Party, published in the 'People's Voice,' September 18, 1946, differs slightly from the Labor Party's, and in it is stated: "Nationalisation of Industries. Non-contributory Social Security: Raise Wages: Lift Taxes on Workers." Now one word of explanation of Socialism or Communism, of how the workers can achieve this object, which is the ONLY solution to their problem. The whole program is a familiar list of reforms no different in essentials from other parties. No doubt as in the past, they will continue to change and twist their party line to the needs of the furtive foreign policy of the Russian ruling class.

Other parties contesting the election have no essential differences in their programs. All agree that the basic conditions for the exploitation of the immense majority—the workers—shall be retained. These basic conditions are the private ownership in the means of living, the relation of wage-labor to the owning class, the maintenance of war, unemployment, and War is the outcome of these conditions.

A study of the wages system, fellow workers, will enable you to see the conclusion that not only is it the solution to the problems that confront us, but is Socialism. The task of achieving such a system in Socialism is the hard work to be associated with movements to make capitalism run more smoothly by a fusion of social and political reforms.

It is important to the Socialist movement that the two purposes should be quite distinct. Only consciously can Socialism be fought for. But, while reform movements attract, as well as unseating defectors of Capitalism, some of them may be anxious only to alleviate suffering. Others support reforms as a method of making Capitalism more tolerable.

Hence the reason for the entry of the Socialist Party of New Zealand into the field of political action. As the S.P.N.Z. has made clear in the past, that social reforms whether introduced by National, Labor, or so-called Communist parties cannot lead to Socialism as they follow that the S.P.N.Z. restricts its membership to those who are convinced socialists. We claim that given Socialist knowledge the workers will take the necessary steps to organise politically for the democratic conquest of political power, for the purpose of introducing Socialism.

We therefore appeal to all workers to study the socialist case and join us in the fight for carrying out Socialist knowledge, thereby hastening the day when a majority of workers become convinced that Socialism is the only remedy for social ills and thereupon vote a majority to Parliament to introduce it. Failure on the part of workers to see the workers—to bring this about will mean the retention of Capitalism and its effects, unemployment, poverty, and more than all the horrors, atomic bombs and railways.

We address ourselves to the workers because we know that they alone are able to deliver mankind from the horrors of such wars.

The Socialist Party of New Zealand, and its companion parties in Great Britain, Canada, U.S.A. and Australia, call upon the workers to help them achieve their object. The establishment of a system of social control over the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interests of society as a whole.

It is the ONLY remedy.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SP.N.Z.
The LABOR GOVERNMENT
A SAFETY VALVE FOR CAPITALISM

For the next three years Australia was in the grip of a depression with a slight decrease in production and an increase in unemployment. This was the first time in its history that Australia had to face a depression. The government, in an attempt to relieve the situation, decided to implement a series of measures, including a safety valve for capitalism.

The safety valve was introduced by the Labor government to prevent the economy from collapsing. It aimed to prevent the depression from worsening and to stimulate economic growth. The government introduced measures such as agricultural subsidies, public works projects, and increased government spending to create jobs and boost demand.

The measures were successful in preventing a further decline in production and unemployment. However, they also had some negative effects, such as increasing the government's debt and creating inflationary pressures. Despite these challenges, the Labor government's actions were seen as a major achievement in the country's economic history.
S.P.A.

OBJECT—The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

The Socialist Parties of Australia and New Zealand hold:
1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of production (land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class and the consequent necessity for the workmen working for wages, their labour alone being remunerated.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests between the working class as a class struggling between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into common ownership of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the workers' own bodies, and that this conversion must be the work of the working class itself.
4. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to serve the interests of the capitalist class, the workers of this country must fight to prosecute the war to its conclusion and afterwards support all political parties which aim at the transformation of society, the establishment of the ownership of the means of production and distribution by the workers, and the democratic control of society by the working class as a whole.

S.P.N.Z.

Such a system of society, based upon the emancipation of the working class and democratic control of the means of production and distribution, would be the most perfect guarantee for the realization of the ideals of social democracy and socialism.