
Proposed Statement of Principles of the Conference for Progressive Political Action. [For the 2nd Conference, Dec. 11-12, 1922] †

Prepared by the Workers Party of America

A document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 145, ll. 28-32.

In the Declaration of Independence, a document underlying the institutions of this country, it was laid down as a principle that all men are endowed with certain inalienable rights and “that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

These rights do not exist for the millions of industrial workers and farmers of this country. The means of producing wealth have been concentrated in the hands of a small class which uses the power which ownership of the means of production and distribution gives it to exploit and oppress the wage-workers and farmers. Today in the United States the Morgans, the Rockefellers, the Schwabs, the railway kinds, the coal barons, and the industrial magnates are amassing greater and greater fortunes for themselves, while denying the millions of industrial workers and farmers even a “living wage.”

The government of the United States is an instrument of these exploiters which they use to uphold and strengthen their system of exploitation and oppression. Whether the Republican or Democratic Party is in power the government is equally subservient to the wishes of the exploiters. A Democratic administration hurled the country into the bloody shambles of the World War to protect the investments and profits of the American bankers and industrial magnates. A Republi-

can administration passes tariff bills and ship subsidy legislation and is preparing for new wars in the interest of the same group of exploiters.

The power of the government is openly used by the exploiting class to secure opportunities for profitable investments in foreign lands and to protect these investments. Haiti, Santo Domingo, and Nicaragua have been robbed of their independence by the government of the United States in the interest of the Wall Street bankers. Mexico is coerced and refused recognition for the benefit of the oil interests. In the Near East the United States is carrying on a struggle against England and the interest of the Standard Oil Co. In China it is in conflict with Japan in an effort to secure the privilege of exploiting that country for the American capitalists.

The government, whether in the hands of the Republican or Democratic representatives of the capitalist class is an agency to carry on the imperialist adventures of the American bankers and financial lords. Imperialism turned Europe into a shambles from 1914 to 1918 in which 10 million lives and hundreds of billions of [dollars worth of] wealth were destroyed. In spite of the League of Nations, which was to end war, in spite of the Washington Conference treaties, imperialism is threatening the world with another orgy of bloodshed and destruction, and in this new im-

†- Although undated, this document was clearly prepared for the Dec. 11-12, 1922 Second Conference for Progressive Political Action held in Cleveland, which the Workers Party of America made a concerted effort to enter and shape. This document next to a December 12, 1922 statement of the Workers Party to the CPPA and was probably prepared shortly before that date.

perialist struggle the government of the United States is playing the most aggressive part.

It is in the struggle against the wage-workers, against the workers in the labor unions, however, that the government has shown most clearly that it is a government of exploiters, fighting the battles of the exploiting class against the oppressed and exploited workers.

Government injunctions have been issued against organized labor by the scores in the great industrial struggles since the end of the war. A federal judge tried to destroy the United Mine Workers by declaring it an outlaw organization. The Daugherty injunction, which still stands as the law of the land, swept away all the rights of the railway shopmen, free speech, free press, freedom of assemblage, the right to organize, the right to strike, with one stroke of the pen of a federal judge. In the Coronado decision the United States Supreme Court has given the exploiters a weapon with which the destroy all labor unions.

Industrial courts are being created to rob the workers of the right to strike. The Railroad Labor Board proved itself a government agency to force down the wages of the workers and to destroy their organization and President Harding now proposes that the power which this board, or a substitute for it, wields over the workers be made even more drastic.

Federal soldiers were used against the miners of West Virginia. Federal troops were used to help beat the mine workers and steelworkers into submission in the strikes of 1919. State militia sprang to arms in aid of the exploiters in many states in the great industrial struggles of 1922. Private armies of armed guards are maintained by the employers. Frame-ups against militant workers are regularly used to railroad such workers to prison.

These facts prove that the government of the United States, under both Republican and Democratic administrations, is virtually a dictatorship of Wall Street, of the bankers, railroad kings, coal

barons, and industrial magnates to maintain the system of oppression and exploitation under which the wage-workers and farmers suffer. The only answer which the wage-workers and farmers can make to this dictatorship which upholds capitalists' robbery and oppression is to organize their political power independent of the capitalist parties and to enter the struggle to wrest political power from the hands of the exploiters.

The Conference for Progressive Political Action enters the political arena as the expression of the political interests of the industrial workers, the farm laborers, and the working farmers. Its goal is to establish in place of the present Dictatorship of Wall Street a government which will express the rule of the workers and farmers — a Workers' Republic. It will use the power of that government to abolish the exploitation and oppression of the workers and farmers in accordance with the following program:

American "Democracy."

The Constitution of the United States was so drafted as to protect the interests of the exploiters of the workers. The merchants, the bankers and landowners of 1787 wrote into the Constitution provisions which they hoped would forever protect the interests of their class.

A majority of the people of the United States cannot change the Constitution. The Constitution contains a series of checks and balances which are intended to make it impossible for a majority antagonistic to the ruling class to make its will effective. The members of the House of Representative are elected every 2 years, the President every 4 years, the members of the Senate every 6 years, so that a complete change of government can only be made through elections spread over 6 years. The Senate has a veto over the decisions of the House, the President can veto the actions of both bodies, and over and above the House, Senate, and President stands the Supreme Court,

which can nullify laws which all three unite in passing.

Millions of workers are disfranchised through naturalization laws. Hundreds of thousands of citizens cannot vote because of residential qualifications which fall most heavily upon workers who must move from place to place in the search for the opportunity to earn a living.

The capitalists control thousands of newspapers through which they shape the ideas of the masses in their interest; they control the schools, the colleges, the pulpit, the moving picture theaters, all of which are part of the machinery through which the exploiters shape the minds of the workers.

Under these conditions, to talk of "democracy" is to throw sand in the eyes of the workers. The much talked of "American Democracy" is a fraud. Such formal democracy as is written into the Constitution and the laws of the country is camouflage to hide the real character of the rule of the capitalists.

The Conference for Progressive Political Action will support such measures as the direct election of the President, the abolition of the Senate and the veto power of the President, and the ending of the right of the Supreme Court to declare laws unconstitutional. It realizes, however, that such measures cannot change the essential character of the government as an instrument of the exploiters for use against the workers. In order that the government may become an instrument of the workers' struggles against their exploiters, the whole machinery of the existing government must be replaced by organs of government springing out of the workers' organizations.

Industrial.

To strengthen the workers in their struggle for better wages and working conditions, the Conference for Progressive Political Action will carry on the fight for legislation to prevent the issuance

of injunctions in labor disputes; to prohibit the use of troops in strikes; for the abolition of all industrial courts and government boards to regulate wages and working conditions; requiring the payment of union wages to all unemployed; abolishing all limitations upon the right to organize, strike, and picket; measures to prohibit the employment of children under 16 years of age.

Soldiers' Bonus.

The Conference for Progressive Political Action favors the payment of a bonus to all soldiers to recompense them for their economic losses during the period of their service in the army during the World War.

Political.

The Conference for Progressive Political Action will work for the restoration of the unrestricted right of freedom of speech, press, and assemblage. Toward this end it will seek to repeal all so-called criminal syndicalism and sedition laws. It will seek to liberalize the naturalization laws and to abolish residential qualifications of the suffrage.

The Conference for Progressive Political Action will exert all its strength against the militarism which seeks to build up a great military and naval establishment of this country. The Washington agreement is already a scrap of paper. The building of other than battleships is continuing at an increasing rate. Proposals for increase of the army, for new conscription laws, for building an air force, are continually emanating from the agents of the exploiters in the government. Against this and the enormous bureaucracy and spy system maintained by the federal government, the Conference for Progressive Political Action will fight with all its power.

The Conference for Progressive Political Action declares itself against the restriction of immigration and against the registration of aliens. Such

registration can only be the basis of persecution of alien workers.

Economic.

The Conference for Progressive Political Action proposes the immediate nationalization of the railroads, the coal mines, the steel mills, the oil industry, the merchant marine, and other large-scale industries in which ownership has become highly centralized, through application of the Plumb Plan, modified to give the organized workers in these industries a majority control of the industry and with provisions for taxation of the capitalist owners in such a degree as to quickly wipe out their title to these industries.

Agricultural.

To secure relief for the farmers from the exploiters who now rob them of what they produce, the Conference for Progressive Political Action proposes the immediate nationalization of all storage, transportation, and marketing utilities and

the revision of the banking laws so as to provide for the widest credit to the farmers through government loans without interest. The nationalization of the farm machinery industry which is part of the economic program of the Conference for Progressive Political Action will also bring relief to the farmers.

Such measures of relief as the Conference for Progressive Political Action is able to win for the industrial workers and farmers are only preparatory to the time when the Workers' Republic will wrest all the means of production and distribution from the hands of the exploiters and bring these into collective ownership and under the management of the organized industrial and agricultural producers. The Conference for Progressive Political Action will mobilize all the strength of the exploited class to achieve this goal. It pledges itself to continue the struggle against the existing system of exploitation until the new social order has come into being.

The Workers Party.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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