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# Constitution of the Communist Political Association.

Adopted by the Constitutional Convention, May 20-22, 1944.

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## Preamble.

THE COMMUNIST POLITICAL ASSOCIATION is a non-party organization of Americans which, basing itself upon the working class, carries forward the traditions of Washington, Jefferson, Paine, Jackson, and Lincoln, under the changed conditions of modern industrial society.

It seeks effective application of democratic principles to the solution of the problems of today, as an advanced sector of the democratic majority of the American people.

It upholds the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and the achievements of American democracy against all the enemies of popular liberties.

It is shaped by the needs of the nation at war, being formed in the midst of the greatest struggle of all history; it recognizes that victory for the free peoples over fascism will open up new and more favorable conditions for progress; it looks to the family of free nations, led by the great coalition of democratic capitalist and socialist states, to inaugurate an era of world peace, expanding production, and economic well-being, and the liberation and equality of all peoples regardless of race, creed, or color.

It adheres to the principles of scientific socialism, Marxism, the heritage of the best thought of humanity and of a hundred years' of experience of the labor movement, principles which have proved to be indispensable to the national existence and independence of every nation; it looks

forward to a future in which, by democratic choice of the American people, our own country will solve the problems arising out of the contradiction between the social character of production and its private ownership, incorporating the lessons of the most fruitful achievements of all mankind in a form and manner consistent with American traditions and character.

For the advancement of these aims, the Communist Political Association establishes the basic laws of its organization in the following Constitution.

## Article I: Name.

*Section 1:* The name of this organization shall be Communist Political Association.

## Article II: Purposes.

*Section 1:* The purposes of the Association are to assure to its membership adequate information, education and organized participation in the political life of our country in cooperation with other Americans for the advancement and protection of the interests of the nation and its people.

## Article III: Membership.

*Section 1:* Any resident of the United States, eighteen years of age or more, regardless of political affiliation, race, color, national origin, sex, or religious belief, who subscribes to the purposes of the

Association shall be eligible for membership.

*Section 2:* Any person eligible for membership according to Section 1, who accepts the program and policies of the Association as determined by its Constitution and Conventions, who is active on their behalf, reads the press and literature, pays dues regularly, and holds membership in an Association club shall be considered a member.

#### **Article IV: Initiation Fees, Dues, and Assessments.**

*Section 1:* Initiation fees and dues shall be paid according to rates fixed by the National Convention.

*Section 2:* The income from dues and initiation fees shall be distributed to the various subdivisions of the Association as determined by the National Convention.

*Section 3:* Special assessments may be levied by the National Convention or by a two-thirds vote of the National Committee. All local or district assessments are prohibited except by special permission of the National Committee.

#### **Article V: Rights and Duties of Members.**

*Section 1:* Every member of the Association who is in good standing has the right to participate in the making of its policies and in the election of its leading committees, in a manner provided for in this Constitution.

*Section 2:* After thorough discussion in any club, committee, or convention, decisions are made by a majority vote, and all members are duty-bound to carry out such decisions.

*Section 3:* Association members disagreeing with any decision of a club, state, or county committee

have the right to appeal such decision to the next higher body, until they reach the National Committee and the National Convention. Decisions of the National Convention are final.

*Section 4:* No member shall be eligible to be elected to an office or committee, or to vote in the adoption of policies or in the election of officers, committees, or delegates who is three months or more in arrears in the payment of dues.

*Section 5:* Every member is obligated to fight with all his strength against any and every effort, whether it comes from abroad or from within, to impose upon the American people the arbitrary will of any selfish minority group or party or clique or conspiracy, or to interfere with the unqualified right of the majority to direct the destinies of our country.

#### **Article VI: Structure.**

*Section 1:* The basic organization of the Association is the club, which shall be organized on a community basis in cities, townships, or rural areas.

The officers and executive committees of the clubs shall be elected by secret ballot once a year. Except for newly-organized clubs, these elections shall take place in January of each year.

The clubs shall meet at least monthly, but shall establish standing committees, to be provided by the By-Laws, whose task shall be to function continuously and develop activity under the direction of the club executive committee.

*Section 2:* The state organization shall comprise all clubs in one state organized in such subdivisions as may be established, as provided for in this Constitution.

The highest body of the state organization is the State Convention, which shall convene every two years, and be composed of delegates elected by the conventions of the subdivisions of the As-

sociation or by the clubs in the state. The delegates shall be elected on the basis of numerical strength.

The State Convention shall elect, by majority vote, a State Committee, a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and such other state officers as it may determine. The State Committee may be composed of regular and alternate members. It has the responsibility to carry out the Convention decisions and direct the activities of the state organization between state conventions.

The State Committee shall elect from among its members a State Board, which shall be responsible to the State Committee.

Special state conventions may be called by either a majority vote of the State Committee, or upon written request of clubs representing one-third of the membership of the state.

*Section 3:* District organizations may be established by the National Committee. Where these cover two or more states, the State Committees shall be under the jurisdiction of the District Committees, elected by and representing the Association membership of the states composing these districts. The rules for convening the District Conventions and the election of leading committees shall be the same as those provided for the state organizations.

*Section 4:* State and District Committees shall have the power to establish all necessary subdivisions, such as county and city organizations and committees, and the rules for election of such committees shall be the same as those provided for the State Committees.

*Section 5:* In matters of a state or local nature, the clubs, state, and country committees have full autonomy and the right to make decisions within the limits of the general policies and Constitution of the Association and its Convention.

*Section 6:* All officers and leading committees of the Association, from the club executive commit-

tees to the highest committees, shall be elected either directly by the membership or through their elected delegates. Every committee must report regularly on its activities to the body that elected it.

*Section 7:* Any Association officer may be removed at any time from his position by a majority vote of the body which elected him, or by the committee to which he is responsible.

### **Article VII: National Organization.**

*Section 1:* The highest authority of the Association is the National Convention. Regular National Conventions shall be held every two years. Only National Conventions are authorized to make political and organizational decisions binding upon the entire Association and its membership, except as provided in Article VII, Section 7.

*Section 2:* The National Convention shall be composed of delegates elected by the State and District Conventions. The delegates shall be elected on the basis of the numerical strength of the state or district organizations. The basis for representation shall be determined by the National Committee.

*Section 3:* Prior to conventions, adequate time shall be allowed for discussion in all Association clubs of the main resolutions and problems coming before the convention. During this discussion all Association organizations have the right to adopt resolutions and propose amendments to the draft resolutions of the National Committee for consideration at the convention.

*Section 4:* The National Convention shall elect a National Committee by a majority vote. The National Committee shall be composed of the national officers and other regular and alternate members. Alternate members shall have voice but no

vote, except where they replace regular members absent from meetings of the National Committee.

*Section 5:* The officers of the Association shall be: President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer, and shall be elected by a majority vote of the convention.

*Section 6:* The number of members of the National Committee and number of Vice-Presidents shall be determined by a majority vote of each National Convention.

*Section 7:* The National Committee is the highest authority of the Association between National Conventions and is responsible for the enforcement of the Constitution and the execution of the general policies adopted by the National Convention. The National Committee represents the Association as a whole and has the right to make decisions with full authority on any problem facing the Association between conventions. The National Committee organizes and supervises its various departments and committees; conducts all the political-educational and organizational work of the Association; elects or removes editors of its press, who work under its leadership and guidance; organizes and directs all undertakings of importance to the entire Association; administers the national treasury. Special conventions may be called by the National Committee by a majority vote or by a vote of two-thirds of the State Committees. The National Committee shall submit a certified, audited financial report to each National Convention.

*Section 8:* The National Committee shall elect a National Board. The National Board shall be charged with the responsibility of carrying out the decisions and work of the National Committee between its sessions. The number of members of the Board shall be determined by the National

Committee by majority vote. It shall be responsible for all its decisions to the National Committee. The duties and responsibilities of the Vice-Presidents shall be determined by the National Committee or National Board.

### **Article VIII: Disciplinary Procedures.**

*Section 1:* Conduct or action detrimental to the working class and the nation, as well as to the interests of the Association, violation of decisions of its leading committees or of this Constitution, financial irregularities, or other conduct unbecoming a member of the Association, may be punished by censure, removal from posts of leadership, or by expulsion from membership. Such conduct or action by any committee may be punished by removal of the committee by the State or National Committee, which shall then order new elections for said committee.

*Section 2:* Adherence to or participation in the activities of any clique, group, circle, faction, or party which conspires or acts to subvert, undermine, weaken, or overthrow any or all institutions of American democracy, whereby the majority of the American people have maintained power to determine their destinies in any degree, shall be punished by immediate expulsion.

*Section 3:* The practice or advocacy of any form of racial or religious discrimination shall be grounds for expulsion from membership.

*Section 4:* No member shall have personal or political relations with enemies of the working class and nation.

*Section 5:* Charges against individual members or committees may be made by any member in writing to the club of which he is a member, or to the leading committee having jurisdiction. Clubs shall act upon charges directed against anyone holding

membership in that club.

*Section 6:* All parties concerned in disciplinary cases shall have the fullest right to appear, to bring witnesses, and testify.

*Section 7:* The club or leading committee having jurisdiction shall have the right to decide by majority vote upon any disciplinary measure, including expulsion. Disciplinary measures taken by the leading committees are subject to approval by the body to which they are responsible.

### **Article IX: Appeals.**

*Section 1:* Any member who has been subject to disciplinary action has the right to appeal to the next higher body up to the National Convention, whose decision shall be final.

### **Article X: Amending the Constitution.**

*Section 1:* This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote at any regular or special National Convention.

### **Article XI: Relations and Affiliations With Other Organizations.**

*Section 1:* The Association shall cooperate locally

and nationally with all organizations whose activities contribute to the welfare and furtherance of the interests of the working people and the nation.

*Section 2:* Organizations — local, state, or national — which subscribe to the purposes of the Association as set forth in this Constitution and desire to become affiliated with it may be accepted, upon such conditions as the National Committee may adopt, by Association Committees in whose jurisdiction the application is made.

### **Article XII: By-Laws.**

*Section 1:* By-Laws may be adopted, based on this Constitution, for the purpose of establishing uniform rules and procedures for the proper functioning of the Association organizations. By-Laws may be adopted or changed by majority vote of the National Convention, or, between conventions, by majority vote of the National Committee.

*Section 2:* State By-Laws not in conflict with the National Constitution and By-Laws may be adopted or changed by majority vote of the State Convention, or, between conventions, by majority vote of the State Committee.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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