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# Declaration of Principles of the Labor Party of the United States: Unanimously Adopted by the 1st National Convention: Chicago, IL — Nov. 22-25, 1919.

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Labor is the primary and just basis of political responsibility and power. It is not merely the right, but the duty of the workers by hand or brain to become a political party.

The Labor Party is destined to usher in the new day of freedom in the United States — freedom from the grind of poverty; freedom from the ownership of government by big business; freedom from the slave-driving of workers by profiteers; and freedom of the men and women who buy food and clothing and pay rent from exploitation at the hands of the money kings.

It is the party of organized workers and unorganized workers. Clerks, housewives, newspaper men, farmers, school teachers, and storekeepers are among those eligible to membership and welcome within its ranks. Such heads of organizations and business concerns as are not exploiters or profiteers may belong to it. There is no place in the party for those who are not workers. There is room within it for all who perform service to society.

The Labor Party was organized to assemble into a new majority the men and women who work, but who have been scattered as helpless minorities in the old political parties, by which they gain and keep control of the government. They withhold money from the worker and use it to make him pay for his own defeat.

Labor is aware of this, and throughout the world the workers have reached the determination to reverse this condition and take control of their own lives and their own government.

In this country this can and must be achieved peacefully by the workers uniting and marching in unbroken phalanx to the ballot boxes. It is the mis-

sion of the Labor Party to bring this to pass.

It is particularly appropriate that the Labor Party is organized upon a national basis at this time. During the war, under the cloud of alleged emergency necessity, the rights and privileges of citizens of the United States were stripped from them and guarantees in our constitution were suspended.

Now that the war is over, these rights, privileges, and guarantees are still denied and withheld from the people by federal officials and state and local officials who are under the domination of big business. Profiteers, grown fat with riches during the war, continue to prey upon the workers who have to pay tribute whenever they purchase the necessaries of life. Employers are engaged in a gigantic drive to crush organized labor. Organized wealth has cracked the whip and government officers are doing its bidding to smash and destroy all forward-looking movements among the people to curb the private masters of industry, commerce, and government. Legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the government are moving against labor and against progressive groups of citizens, and the military forces of the United States and of the several states are being used to further the reign of terror and tyranny.

In this emergency the Labor Party of the United States springs into being to strike off from our government and from the governments of the several states the shackles of the sinister forces of reaction, corruption, and greed.

This cannot be accomplished by compromising longer with the old parties. The day has passed when forward-looking citizens can hope for progress, aid, or sincerity at the hands of Republican or Democratic

Party officeholders. The time has come for the workers of the United States to force a clear line of cleavage and disengage themselves definitely and permanently from old party ties and henceforth support only those who openly espouse the cause of the workers who constitute the large majority of our citizens and do it under the banner of the workers' own party.

Hence the organization of this nationwide Labor Party to join together the state and local branches of the Labor Party that have sprung up spontaneously in many sections of our country and to call, with clarion voice, other workers to unite with these to work and vote for a free government with the iron heel of the exploiters removed from the neck of the producer and consumer.

We, the delegates to the First National Convention of the Labor Party of the United States, in order to form a more perfect government, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense against political, industrial, and social autocracy, promote the general welfare, and secure blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish the following Declaration of Principles, to which we pledge the Labor Party, its members, its officers, and its candidates:

1. We urge a league of the workers of all nations pledged and organized to enforce the destruction of autocracy, militarism, and economic imperialism throughout the world and to bring about worldwide disarmament and open diplomacy to the end that there shall be no more kings and no more wars. We declare that we will not be satisfied with a league of imperialistic governments, dominated by an international league of money-bosses to cement an international control of industry by a small group of men who manipulate the bulk of the world's wealth.

Not only do we demand abolition of secret treaties and international disarmament, but we also demand that no form of conscription, military or industrial, and that no form of compulsory military training be imposed upon the workers of the United States.

2. We demand immediate repeal of the infamous Espionage Law and complete restoration, at the earliest possible moment, of all fundamental political rights — free speech, free press, and free assemblage; removal of all wartime restraints upon interchange of ideas and movements of people among communities and na-

tions; and liberation of all persons held in prison or indicted under charges due to their championship of rights of labor or their patriotic insistence upon rights guaranteed to them by the constitution.

3. We dedicate the Labor Party of the United States to the principle of complete political and industrial equality of the sexes and of races, nationalities, and creeds. We urge ratification by the several states of the suffrage amendment to the constitution of the United States and we insist upon equal pay for men and women doing similar work.

4. Gradual usurpation of power by the courts has resulted in an era, now only beginning, of government by injunction to oppress the workers and deprive them of their liberties and rights guaranteed under the constitution of the United States. The injunction judges never properly held the power to issue labor injunctions, having unlawfully and violently seized that power. It should not be necessary to legislate away from them a power which they do not properly hold, but an effective stop must be put to their mad, revolutionary method of overturning the constitution and government of the United States. We demand that the several states pass legislation specifically directing judges that they have no power to issue injunctions in industrial disputes and that the Congress, which has already passed such federal legislation, proceed summarily to impeach and remove from office all judges who violate the law in that respect. We demand that Congress further enact legislation disqualifying forever from holding office again in the United States any judge so removed and also defining the crime of treason so it shall include the willful violation by any public official of any constitutional right of a citizen.

5. We demand that the government make full use of its powers under existing laws to reduce the unreasonable cost of living and to curb the depredations of profiteers who make huge fortunes daily out of the coal, steel, food, clothing, and other industries. We also stand committed to development, in connection with the labor union movement, the labor party movement, and the organized farmer movement, of a cooperative movement to link together consumers of the necessities of life on the one hand and producers on the other to eliminate middle men and wasteful methods of distribution of commodities. We also de-

mand that new laws be passed to cope with the cost of living problems, such as to extend the parcel post, to curb profits, and to prevent hoarding and speculative storing of goods that should be in free circulation until they reach the ultimate consumer.

6. All public utilities and natural resources, which are foundations of industry, must be restored to the people. We demand nationalization of railroads, mines, forests, water power, telegraphs, telephones, stockyards, grain elevators, natural gas and oil wells, cold storage and terminal warehouses, elevators, packing plants, flour mills, and of all basic industries which require large-scale production and are in reality on a noncompetitive basis; these to be democratically managed.

The citadel of special privilege today is the private bank. We demand the banking business, including the right to issue money and credit, be placed exclusively in the hands of the federal government. This result may be secured by placing a 10 percent tax on all banking business not performed by government institutions.

7. We endorse the Plumb Plan of national ownership and joint control by the government and the workers of the railroads of the United States.

8. We demand that education be democratized and that a free system of public schools from kindergarten to university be maintained, with free textbooks and teachers free from the oppression of poverty and the stiling of educational initiative, and every opportunity for full cultural, vocational, and physical training for every child, and that the principle be recognized that every individual is entitled to educational facilities in proportion with his ability to learn rather than with his ability to pay. We demand that, as the children of the workers fill the schools, the workers, and particularly the teachers, participate in the determination of methods, policies, and programs, to the end that our public schools may cease to be institutions to train industrial slaves, but may be transformed into institutions to train free, unafraid, and well-informed citizens of a free country.

We also demand revision of school textbooks by the deletion of false economic theory and fake history.

9. In order that men may keep their confidence in political methods as a means of effecting changes in our social order, it is necessary that voting and counting of votes shall be of a character that does not per-

mit of political manipulation and that the election systems ensure control by real majorities and a hearing and representation of all substantial minorities.

10. We demand nationalization of unused land, including reclaimed tracts of swamp and arid areas, such nationalized lands to be kept in use by lease to citizens who will cultivate them for production, title to remain public forever.

11. We advocate a steeply graduated tax on incomes and inheritances, exempting from taxation incomes sufficient to maintain individuals and families in health and comfort and limiting the amounts of incomes and inheritances allowed individuals.

12. We favor home rule for municipalities in every state, including sufficient independent bonding power to take over and operate public utilities, establish municipal markets, and conduct other municipal activities essential to the welfare of the people.

13. We favor revision of the United States Constitution, especially to provide that all proposed amendments by majority vote of Congress shall be submitted to the people by referendum for ratification, and to provide for initiative whereby the people can amend their own constitution.

14. We affirm our allegiance to the fundamental American principles of self-government and majority rule embodied in our Declaration of Independence and Federal Constitution. We submit as a matter of common knowledge that small minorities of powerful and wealthy men through corrupt practices and secret methods have secured control of the machinery of our government and for many years used this power for selfish ends and in such fashion as to subvert to an alarming degree the very purpose for which the American government was founded, namely — the common welfare.

Necessity demands that there be speedily introduced improved methods to secure: First, control of the law making power by the people in order that representative government shall represent the represented; and second, greater efficiency in the administration of our institutions to the end that the people's business shall be conducted with dispatch and economy equal to or exceeding that of any private business.

As practical methods of securing these ends we favor the adoption of the following well established and well tried instruments of government as supple-

mentary to our present system:

The initiative and referendum, which reserve to the people, whenever dissatisfied with the acts of their law making bodies, the power to veto any law they do not want or enact any law they do want, which is desired by the majority.

The recall, by which the people have direct power to discharge promptly any corrupt or inefficient public servant.

Better publicity through the adoption and extension of the publicity pamphlet system in order that the people may have accurate information upon public questions and as to what their government is actually doing.

15. We recommend an executive budget system for the United States.

16. We favor state and governmental aid to provide land and homes for residents of town or country.

17. The unlimited power of veto over national legislation now exercised by our Supreme Court should be abolished or strictly limited, so that the will of the people cannot in future be defeated by the decision of 5 men who may happen to represent the majority opinion of the court.

18. We favor abolition of the United States Senate.

19. We favor popular election of federal judges for terms not to exceed 4 years.

20. In all national and state legislation affecting divorce and the sexual relation, and in the enforcement of such legislation, the single standard of morals should be firmly adhered to and the age of consent for both sexes should be fixed at not less than 18 years.

21. We demand that the workers in industry and commerce shall have a real voice in the management of business and industry as the only effective means of preventing the exploitation of producers and consumers by selfish and greedy private owners.

22. We demand the abolition of employment of all children under 16 years of age, to be gradually increased to 18 years.

23. We demand abolition of private employment, detective, and strikebreaking agencies and the extension of federal and state employment services to make them agencies for finding jobs for workers, instead of merely finding workers for jobs, and to prevent them from placing workers in positions that do

not pay a living wage.

24. We insist that the government by legal enactment shall protect the unqualified right of workers to organize and to deal collectively with employers through such representatives of their organizations as they choose.

25. We demand for the workers freedom from economic hazard which comes with a minimum wage based upon the cost of living and their right to maintain, without the labor of mothers and children, themselves and their families in health and comfort, with ample provisions for recreation and good citizenship.

Producers on the farms are also entitled to incomes that will provide a suitable standard of living. We insist that farmers be assured prices for their products that will meet the cost of production and, in addition thereto, a reasonable margin.

To enhance the opportunity of the farmers to fulfill their function as producers, we demand that they be assured credit facilities as cheap and as available as those afforded any other legitimate and responsible industry.

26. We recognize the ever present contest between the commercial interests for foreign markets and the effort to pit the workers of one country against another country which has constantly tended to reduce the standard of living of wage workers. To offset this, we recognize the necessity of international solidarity.

Until this can be achieved, we favor legislation that will protect the workers from the competition of convict labor products or goods brought from other countries that are produced by cheap labor for the purpose of underselling the American product and reducing the standard of the American worker.

27. We demand for the workers in industry and commerce, leisure in which to enjoy happiness and improve mind and body by the institution of a maximum working day of 8 hours and a maximum standard working week of 44 hours for both men and women.

28. We demand abolition of unemployment by the further reduction of hours of work, as necessary to permit all who are able to work to find occupation; and with full pay for those who, for a time, are unemployed because of illness, accident, or temporary lack of work; and by the stabilization of industry through

the establishment and operation, during periods of depression, of governmental work on housing, road-building, reforestation, reclamation of cut-over and swamp lands, and development of water power plants.

29. We favor continuation of wartime soldiers' and sailors' insurance and the extension of such life insurance by the government, without profit, to all men and women; the establishment of government old age and health insurance, an adequate workmen's compensation law, and a mothers' pension law that will put an end to child poverty and permit full development of the child under its mother's care.

30. We favor the performance of all government work, not by contract, but directly by the government.

31. We demand the union label on all supplies and materials used by federal, state, and local governments, including school textbooks.

32. We demand full political rights for railroad and civil service employees.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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