
Platform of the Workers Party: Congressional Election 1922. †

A document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 145, ll. 15-18.

The workers of the United States face a crisis. Government by injunction, government by naked violence has become the order of the day. The constitutional rights of the workers have been swept aside completely in the vicious effort of the effort of the capitalists to grind down the workers to a bitterer industrial slavery.

Step by step, after the war, the capitalists deprived the workers of all the gains made by labor during the war. Wages have been mercilessly reduced, hours of work increased. Millions of men were thrown out of work to beg and scrape in order to keep alive. A nationwide open shop campaign was launched in order to destroy the labor unions in the workers' struggle to defend their organizations and to maintain enduring living conditions.

For decades the American capitalists have maintained spies, guard gunmen, and even paid deputy sheriffs to provoke trouble among the workers in time of strikes. They have stirred up one section of the working class against the other; natives against aliens, white against black, organized against unorganized.

Through their agents the big trusts have not hesitated to resort to bomb plots and train wrecks, and to lay the responsibility at the door of the workers. They have kept Mooney in prison. Only the protest of the workers all over the world have saved Sacco and Vanzetti from death.

The American Legion, Ku Klux Klan, vigilantes and sentinels of the Republic are maintained by the American capitalist class to terrorize the workers and working class organizations. The raids on strikers' meetings in Mingo County, West Virginia and at Herrin, Ill., the raid on the convention of the Trade Union

Educational League and on the alleged Communist convention at Bridgman, Michigan show what regard the capitalist have for the rights of the workers.

When the workers make a courageous resistance to the capitalist assault upon their standard of living and their organizations, the capitalists call in the government to beat them into submission.

During the recent great strikes, the coal, railroad, and textile strikes, which involved more than a million men and threatened to tie up the country, the government openly used its power to defeat the workers. Injunctions were issued by the score forbidding strike activities. State troops were freely used to terrorize the struggling workers. What the United States government did in Mingo County, West Virginia when it sent federal troops to put down the workers struggling to establish the right to organize, was done by the government on a national scale.

Through industrial court legislation, the workers are robbed of the right to strike to protect their interests through the Coronado decision of the Supreme Court, the unions are to be destroyed by levying enormous sums as damages caused by strikes.

The Daugherty injunction robbed the workers of all their fundamental and constitutional rights with one sweep of the pen of a puppet judge acting for the employers. The right to strike and picket are taken away from the workers. The rights of free speech, free press, and freedom of assemblage are denied them. Government by injunction and violence, the government with the hypocritical mask of "democracy" torn from its face — acting the open agents of the railroad kings, the coal barons and industrial magnates has become a fact in the United States.

†- This document was probably composed by C.E. Ruthenberg, attribution made on the basis of a typical spelling error he made.

The “democratic” government of the United States pretending to stand for “all the people” in practice puts all its resources at the disposal of the greedy capitalists.

The workers are again to be bled of billions of dollars as a result of an outrageous tariff. Hundreds of millions are being demanded by ship owners as subsidies, but not a penny was available to aid the 5 million unemployed, who were denied the opportunity to earn a living last winter. Not a penny could be found to pay a bonus to the soldiers who risked their lives and received a pittance in wages while the capitalists amassed enormous profits. A million and a half children still work in the factories and on the fields of the United States for whom there is no protection because an organ of the capitalist government, the Supreme Court, declares child labor laws unconstitutional.

The open service of the capitalists and brutal attack upon the workers of the Republican Harding administration is not to be distinguished from the same actions of the Democratic Wilson administration. The Wilson administration used the injunction and federal troops against the steelworkers and miners of 1919. The Cleveland administration shot down the railroad workers in 1894. Although administrations may change from one capitalist party to another, the government is always the tool of the capitalists to be used to beat down the workers.

The workers of the United States must organize their strength in a political party of their own which will fight in their interest against the capitalists. This party can have no other goal than to take from the capitalists the political power which the capitalists now use to oppress the workers and to use that power to secure for the workers all those things that they need in order to live — the land, the mines, mills, and factories, the railroads, and other means of distribution.

Wall Street now controls the government of the United States and uses it against the workers. Against the dictatorship of the financial kings and industrial magnates the workers must establish a dictatorship of the workers. The Democratic and Republican Parties are the instruments through which the capitalist dictatorship expresses itself. A vote for either of these parties means a vote to continue the dictatorship of Wall Street.

The Socialist Party misleads the workers through

its efforts to make them believe that the road to freedom lies through petty reforms achieved through the existing legislative bodies. No program of merely electing candidates to public offices will free the workers from the oppression and exploitation of the capitalists. The Socialist program is a program of electing candidates and legislative reforms. They deny the need of the use of the mass power of the workers in their struggles for freedom. In endeavoring to make the workers believe they can win their freedom through adherence to such a program, the Socialists are deceiving and betraying the workers.

The Workers Party declares that the workers will free themselves from the exploitation and oppression which is their lot under the existing system of industries through their use of mass power. This power must be used to end the existing dictatorship of the capitalists by establishing the workers’ rule through a workers’ government. It is only after the workers dictatorship is established in place of the dictatorship of the capitalists that the working class will be able to enforce those changes which will end the capitalist system.

The Workers Party calls upon the workers, the farm laborers and farmers, all of whom are exploited by the capitalist, to organize the power and fight for the establishment of a working class government.

In nominating its candidates it does so in order to carry on propaganda to unite the exploited for the realization of the goal of a working class government using its power against the capitalists and for the workers. Its candidates, if elected to office, will carry on a similar campaign from the legislative halls of the capitalist government.

In order to strengthen the position of the workers as a class, the Workers Party proposes as the slogans of immediate struggle the following:

The workers must demand:

1. The unrestricted right to organize, strike, and picket. The right of organization is not questioned in the case of the capitalists, who have formed trusts, syndicates, and every manner of manufacturers’ and bankers’ associations. This right also the workers must have. Without the right to strike and picket and to carry on all trade union activities, trade unionism becomes a mockery.

2. The unrestricted right of free speech, free press, and free assemblage. The workers must assert their constitutional rights, which have been suspended in the reign of capitalist terror at present ruling the country.

3. The abrogating of "government by injunction." The capitalists shall be granted no injunctions during labor struggles restricting labor activities.

4. The abolition of anti-syndicalism laws. Laws of this nation are not intended to protect the government from violent assaults, but merely are an excuse to suppress all militant labor organizations.

5. Prohibition of the use of guards, gunmen, deputy sheriffs, militia, or federal troops in labor struggles. Violence in strikes is provoked by the presence of troops and guards. To preserve peace in labor disputes, the strikers shall deputize men from among their own ranks.

6. The abolition of all industrial court laws. The purpose of such laws and institutions is to take away from the workers the right to strike. There is no such thing as an "impartial" court; hence submission to a court of this nature is to stultify the labor movement.

7. Removal of anti-alien and alien-restriction laws. The foreign-born are the most oppressed section of the working class of America. Imported in large numbers by the trusts to defeat the labor movement, the foreign-born are the major elements in some of the key industries. Every obstacle is put in their way to becoming citizens, in order that these oppressed people, naturally more radical, may not become the supporters of a radical party.

8. Abolition of secret anti-labor organizations. The capitalists maintain such organizations as the Ku Klux Klan and other extra-legal though open bodies, such as the Vigilantes, Security League, Sentinels of the Republic, to destroy militant and radical labor organizations. These organizations terrorize and use violence against labor bodies for the purpose of breaking them up.

9. Protection of the lives and civil rights of the Negroes. Lynching has become an established American institution. The American Negro is disfranchised in many states. This situation is a crying disgrace to

the working class.

10. Abolition of child labor. A million and a half children of school age are at work, while adults are unable to obtain employment. The exploitation of child labor must cease at once.

11. A bonus for ex-soldiers and unemployed workers. The government professes to be unable to raise the money necessary to pay the bonus to ex-servicemen while granting extravagant sums to the capitalist railroad and ship owners. The soldiers should continue the fight for the bonus. They should demand four-fold compensation for the wages they lost during the war. The workers who could not be given work during the unemployment crisis should be paid union wages for the time out of work.

12. Trade relations with and recognition of Soviet Russia. Soviet Russia is a country of the workers. American workers, therefore, should demand that the American government no longer discriminate against Soviet Russia, but open up trade relations at once — as other countries have already done — and recognize the Soviet regime as the government of the workers and peasants of Russia.

13. Withdrawal of troops from Haiti, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, and Nicaragua. The first two named countries were seized by military force during the war. Without heeding the wishes of the inhabitants of these countries, the American government has maintained troops and a military dictatorship there in the interests of the banks, big sugar and tobacco interests. The troops must be withdrawn and military dictatorship ended at once.

14. Nonintervention in the Near East affairs. The peoples of the Near East are demanding the withdrawal of the imperialistic forces of the Great Powers. In the Near East countries, there are rich oil fields, which are being competed for by British, French, Italian, and American interests. The American workers should demand that there be no interference in Near East affairs, since such intervention will merely denote war.

Workers Party of America.

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