

C O N S T I T U T I O N

of the

WORKERS PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

(Adopted at the Fourth National
Convention, June 1946)

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ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of the organization shall be "Workers Party of the United States" (hereinafter referred to as the "Party").

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of the Party is set forth in its program as embodied in resolutions and declarations of national conventions: its purpose shall be to educate and organize the working class for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a workers government to achieve socialism.

ARTICLE III - INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION

The Party is affiliated with no other group or organization in the United States or elsewhere. It seeks to establish fraternal relations with groups and parties in other countries, and, if they stand on the same fundamental program as its own, to cooperate with them in the elaboration of a complete world program and the speediest possible establishment of the new revolutionary international, the Fourth International. Action on any such step must be submitted to a national convention of the Party.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Every person who accepts the program of the Party and abides by the decisions and engages in its work shall be eligible to membership.

Section 2. Every member (except as otherwise specifically determined in individual cases by the National Committee) must belong to a duly constituted Branch of the Party in the city where he resides, if such a Branch exists. In territories where no Branch exists, applicants shall be admitted as members-at-large.

Section 3. All applicants for membership shall be recommended by two persons who have been members for not less than four months. Action by the Party Branch on applications for membership shall take place in the absence of the applicant.

Section 4. Applications for membership shall be acted upon by the Branch and the Local or City Executive Committee (Article V, Section 3) concerned, in accordance with the general procedures laid down by the National Committee and subject to review by higher units of the Party. Applications for membership-at-large shall be acted upon by the National Committee, or by such committees as it designates.

Section 5. A member desiring to transfer membership from one locality to another must apply to his Branch and the Local or City Committee for permission, and receive a transfer which is to be deposited with the Branch and Local or City Committee of the locality to which the member moves, but final permission can only be given by the National Committee or the body it designates. If no Branch exists in the locality, the member shall be a member-at-large.

Section 6. All new members shall be on probation for a period of two months. During this time they shall have all the privileges and obligations of membership except that they shall not have the right to vote or the right to hold office on the Branch Executive Committee or any higher body.

Section 7. The National Committee is empowered to accept groups or organizations of individuals, eligible under Section 4 of this Article, as members in bloc, and to assign them to the proper Branches.

ARTICLE V - UNITS OF ORGANIZATION

Section 1. The basic unit of the Party shall be the Branch. A Branch shall consist of not less than 5 nor more than 30 members. When a Branch achieves a membership of 30, it shall be divided into two Branches; exceptions may be made only by permission of the National Committee.

Section 2. Wherever more than two Branches exist in the same locality as determined by the National Committee, the highest governing body shall be a delegated City Convention. The City Convention shall meet at least annually. It shall elect a City Executive Committee which shall be the highest governing body between conventions. The City Executive Committee shall elect a City Organizer and such other officers as may be necessary to conduct the affairs of the organization. In between City Conventions decisions of the City Executive Committee shall be binding upon all units and members until and unless reversed by a higher body.

In localities where there are only two Branches, there shall be a Local Executive Committee. The Local Executive Committee shall be elected at a joint membership meeting of the two Branches called as a convention for the purpose of electing a

Local Executive Committee and for the transaction of such other business as may come before such a joint meeting. A joint membership meeting for the election of a Local Executive Committee and for the transaction of other business shall be held once each six months. In between joint membership meetings which have been called as local conventions, a Local Executive Committee shall be the highest governing body in the locality. Its decisions shall be binding upon all units and members until and unless reversed by a higher body.

ARTICLE VI - ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. The highest governing body of the Party is the National Convention. Its decisions shall be binding upon the entire membership.

Section 2. Between National Conventions, the authority of the Convention, subject to the decisions of the Convention itself, is vested in the National Committee elected by the Convention, except where the National Committee thinks it necessary to call a referendum.

Section 3. The National Committee shall be comprised as follows:

- (a) There shall be _____ members, elected by the National Convention.
- (b) The National Convention shall also elect _____ alternates, to fill vacancies in the National Committee in the order decided upon by the Convention.
- (c) Members of the National Committee may be removed from the Committee and/or expelled from the Party only by vote of the National Convention. Members of the National Committee may, however, be suspended from the National Committee and/or membership, for cause, pending final decision of the National Convention, by vote of two-thirds of the membership of the National Committee.

Section 4. The National Committee directs all the work of the Party, decides all questions of policy in accordance with the decisions of the Convention, appoints national officers, and all other subordinate officers and sub-committees, and, in general, constitutes between Conventions the highest functioning authority of the Party. The National Committee shall meet at least twice a year.

Section 5. The National Committee shall elect a Political Committee from among its members which shall function for the National Committee between meetings of the National Committee.

Section 6. The local governing body of the Party shall be the Local or City Executive Committee or, where only one Branch exists, the Branch Executive Committee.

Section 7. The Branch Executive Committee shall be elected and is removable by a special membership meeting of the Branch called for that purpose, and is subordinate to the Branch membership. Its term of office shall be for six months. Its duties are to direct the activities of the Branch and to act with full powers for the Branch between Branch meetings.

ARTICLE VII - INITIATION FEES AND DUES

Section 1. Each applicant for membership shall pay an initiation fee of one dollar. The entire initiation fee shall be paid to the National Office.

Section 2. Each member shall pay the following dues from which no member is exempt:

(a) Regular dues shall be \$1.00 per week.

(b) Exempt dues of 25¢ per week shall be paid by unemployed members or other members who for special reasons cannot pay regular dues. Permission to pay exempt dues for members other than unemployed can only be granted by a vote of the Branch Executive Committee.

(c) New members shall pay 25¢ per week for the first four months of their membership.

(d) All money collected in dues shall be paid to the National Office.

Section 3. The National Committee shall be empowered to establish a voluntary Booster Fund to collect weekly pledges from each member. The suggested pledges and the division of the Booster Fund between Branches, the Local or City Committees and the National Office is to be determined by the National Committee.

Section 4. Any member who is three weeks in arrears in payment of dues shall cease to be a member in good standing and shall be so notified by the Branch Executive Committee. Any member five weeks in arrears in payment of dues shall be stricken from the rolls of the Party into which he may be reinstated only by making a new application for membership accompanied by the regular initiation fee, and subject to any further conditions that may be deter-

mined by the Branch with the approval of the National Committee.

Section 5. Only members in good standing have the right to vote.

ARTICLE VIII - DISCIPLINE

Section 1. All decisions of the governing bodies of the Party are binding upon the members and subordinate bodies of the Party.

Section 2. Any member or unit violating the decisions of a higher unit of the Party shall be subject to disciplinary action up to expulsion by the body having jurisdiction.

Section 3. Charges of breach of discipline or conduct unbecoming a member made against any member shall be made in writing and the accused shall be furnished with a copy one week in advance of the hearings. Charges filed before Branches shall be considered by the Branch Executive Committee at a meeting to which the accused member is invited. The Branch Executive Committee shall submit a recommendation on the charges to be acted upon by the membership of the Branch.

Section 4. Disciplinary action against a member, proposed by a higher unit of the Party, shall be heard in the local Branch. In case of failure of the Branch to act, or Branch action deemed improper by a higher unit, or by any member of the Branch, the charges in question may then be considered and decided upon by the higher unit.

Section 5. Charges initiated against members of any unit higher than a Branch Executive Committee may be considered and decided by the higher unit in question, if it establishes its jurisdiction in the case.

Section 6. Any member subjected to disciplinary action has the right to appeal to the next higher body, up to and including the National Convention. Pending action on appeal, the decision of the Party body having jurisdiction remains in full force and effect.

ARTICLE IX - QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELECTIONS

Section 1. Except in the case of newly organized Branches, members of Branch Executive Committees must have been members of the Party for a least six months, and members of the Local or City Executive Committee must have been members of the Party for at least one year.

Section 2. Members of the National Committee must be members of the Party for at least two years.

ARTICLE X - NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Section 1. The National Conventions of the Party shall be held at least bi-annually. The National Committee may by two-thirds vote postpone the National Convention for not more than six months, provided that a notice of such postponement be given not later than one month before the time for the convention call. Such action may be nullified on the demand of Branches representing at least one-third of the membership.

Section 2. A special convention may be called by (1) a majority vote of the National Committee. (2) Any three or more Branches representing one-third of the membership can initiate a motion for a special convention. This motion upon receipt by the National Secretary shall be communicated to the Branches within ten days. (3) If within the period set in Section 5 of Article X, fifty percent of the membership signify their support of the motion, the call for the National Convention shall be issued. (4) The voting period shall extend over a period of thirty days from the date the question was formally submitted to the membership. (5) The rules of voting shall be the same as the rules under Article X, or the Rules and By-Laws, and those rules determined by the National Committee or the Political Committee.

Section 3. The Call for the Convention, together with an agenda and the proposals of the National Committee shall be issued at least 90 days before the date of the convention for discussion in the local organizations and the official publications. A bulletin shall be issued during the Convention discussion period under the direction and supervision of the National Committee.

Section 4. Representation at the Convention shall be proportionally based upon the dues-paying membership in good standing in Branches at the time of the election of delegates who were members of the Party at the issuance of the Convention Call.

Members voting for delegates to the National Convention shall vote in the Branches in which they were members at the time of the Convention Call. Branches organized after the Convention Call shall have fraternal representation in the form of a delegate or delegates with voice but no vote.

The election of delegates to the National Convention shall take place on a Branch basis.

Under no conditions shall persons who have been stricken from the rolls of the Party under Article VII, Section 4, be counted in the basis of representation.

Section 5. All other rules and regulations in relation to voting and representation at the National Convention which are not covered in the Constitution or Rules and By-Laws shall be defined by the National Committee in the Convention Call.

Section 6. Delegates and alternates to the National Convention must be members of the Party for at least one year, except in the case of newly organized branches.

Section 7. Members of the National Committee and alternates to the National Committee shall be seated at National Conventions of the Party as fraternal delegates with voice but no vote.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

Amendments may be made to this Constitution by majority vote of the National Convention.

ARTICLE XII - PRESS

All official organs of the Party are subject to and under the direction of the Party and National Committee.

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RULES AND BY-LAWS

I. All units of the Party shall be guided by Robert's Rules of Order and special rules established by the Branch, except where there is conflict with the Constitution or with the rules herein stated.

II. Any disputes on Rules and By-Laws that are not covered in the Constitution or in the Rules and By-Laws shall be settled by the National Convention or by the National Committee between sessions of the National Convention.

III. In all cases, except as specifically otherwise set forth in the Constitution, a majority or plurality vote shall carry a motion.

IV. A member may decline any nomination. Upon being renominated, the nominee shall remain a candidate and his declination shall be accepted by the body as an expression of opinion.

V. A recorded abstention is counted as a vote and is, there-

fore, tabulated in the total vote for purposes of proportional representation when this system of representation is employed.

VI. Not voting is not a vote nor is it tabulated in the total vote for purposes of proportional representation when this system is employed.

VII. A member has the right to be recorded in any unit of the Party of which he is a member on any question before that body.

VIII. Motions need not be seconded to be considered, except a motion to admit a new member.

IX. Censure, which is a disciplinary action, is a rebuke, a public (inside the Party) expression of disapproval.

X. Suspension, which is a disciplinary action, is a suspension of all or some of the rights of a member, but none of his obligations.

XI. All forms of discipline must be specifically defined by the unit voting the action.

XII. Chairmen always have the right to vote.

XIII. Former members, reapplying for membership shall be referred to the National Committee for action. Such applicants, if accepted for membership, shall be on probation for a period of not less than three months.

XIV. Representation at the National Convention shall be as follows:

1. Each Branch organized before the Convention Call shall be entitled to one delegate for such number of members as shall be specified by the National Committee in the Convention Call.

2. Where a Branch is entitled to one delegate, the majority gets the delegate.

3. The number of members voting shall be considered the total number of members who have cast any counted vote during the meeting on any resolution or motion presented for the convention. Majorities and minorities shall be established on the basis of votes cast and counted for any resolution or motions submitted on the night of voting by any member of the Branch.

4. Where a Branch is entitled to two delegates and a minority receives 33-1/3% of the total votes cast and counted, such a minority shall be entitled to one delegate and the majority to one delegate.

5. Where a Branch is entitled to three delegates and a minority receives 25% of the total vote cast and counted, such a minority shall be entitled to one delegate and the majority to two delegates.

6. Where a Branch is entitled to four delegates and a minority receives 20% of the votes cast and counted, such a minority shall be entitled to one delegate; or a minority receives 40% of the votes cast and counted, such a minority shall be entitled to two delegates.

7. Where a Branch is entitled to five delegates and a minority receives 16-2/3% of the votes cast and counted, such a minority shall be entitled to one delegate; or a minority receives 30% of the votes cast and counted, such a minority shall be entitled to two delegates.

8. Where a Branch is entitled to an odd number of delegates (1, 3, 5) and each motion or resolution receives 50% of the votes cast and counted, the delegates shall be divided in half (one delegate - each receives 1/2 vote; three delegates - each receives 1-1/2 votes; five delegates - each receives 2-1/2 votes).

9. A Convention Tax of one dollar shall be paid not later than the night of voting in order for a member to be in good standing. This is in addition to the constitutional requirements in Article VII, Section 4, and Article X, Section 4.

10. Delegates and alternates shall be named by the members voting for the respective resolutions or motions providing they have the required proportion of the total votes cast and counted and shall be formally ratified by the Branch as a whole.

11. Members on probation at the time of the Convention Call and those who have joined since the issuance of the Call shall not be counted in determining the number of delegates to which a Branch is entitled.

12. If between the time of the Call and the night of voting a member on probation has been installed as a regular member, he shall have the right to vote on resolutions and on delegates without being counted, however, in the total membership which forms the basis for representation to the Convention.

13. Voting shall take place not later than 7 days before the date of the convention nor earlier than 30 days before the date of the convention.

14. Unchartered Branches shall be represented at the convention by fraternal delegates with voice and consultative vote.

15. Branches may elect one or more alternates.

16. Voting for delegates by mail is to be allowed only in case a member is prevented from attending the election meeting of the Branch by virtue of his occupation, severe illness, or transfer to another locality. Mail votes must be in possession of the Branch secretary not later than the actual time of voting in the Branch.

17. All members of the Party must receive previous notification of the date, time and place of Branch elections of delegates to the National Convention.

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The Fourth National Convention of the Workers Party of the United States empowered the National Committee to provide statutory provisions in the Constitution for Party-Youth relations once the youth organization of the Party ceases to be provisional.

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