

OUTLINE FOR CAMPAIGN ON PRICES
HOW WE CARRY OUT AND APPLY THE PARTY LINE ON PRICE CONTROL

Price Campaign Circular No. 1.

WORKERS PARTY CAMPAIGN ON PRICES

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1. The Party was notified in WEEKLY LETTER NO. 4 that the next WEEKLY LETTER would contain plans, suggestions and organizational directives for the Party campaign around the question of PRICES. The organization of such a campaign was authorized by the following motions which were passed by the Political Committee and which have already been communicated to the Party in WEEKLY LETTER NO. 2

II. POLITICAL COMMITTEE MOTIONS

1. That we keep as the spearhead of our attack in this campaign the GM program.
2. That we approve the five point program (Reuther's) and exploit it in LABOR ACTION, but that it be held subordinate to the GM Program as an immediate thing which the unions propose to do in connection with the ending of price control.
3. We direct all party fractions to the effect that the escalator clause is the immediate spearhead in the renegotiation of all contracts.
4. We direct all party fractions to conduct activity in their unions for negotiation of wage contracts and wage increases commensurate with the rise in prices.
5. In our present agitation in connection with the struggle against price inflation, in all programs for the struggle against price rises, such as the new five point program of Reuther, we shall lay the main emphasis upon the need and possibility of combatting price inflation by means of price control committees organized by the unions, to include other representative democratic popular organizations (consumers' organizations, tenants' organizations, housewives' organizations, poor farmers, etc.). In placing the emphasis upon this point, our agitation should show that even the most radical of the proposals yet put forward in the labor movement (UAW Program) have as their fatal weakness the fact that they ignore the decisive question of control and that the only control the workers and masses of people can rely upon in the struggle against price inflation is popular price control committees, and that such popular price control committees are organs that can be formed immediately to take immediate effect and to go into immediate actions, in contrast to all other types of proposals which require even theoretically long delays before they can be put into effect (OPA, elect good Congressmen next November, wait until the new contract is negotiated, or even the very necessary slogan of the independent labor party, etc.).

6. That both in LABOR ACTION and in THE NEW INTERNATIONAL the editors are instructed to publish educational and polemical articles on the political significance, the practical validity and the revolutionary-theoretical justification of slogans for price control and the revolutionary Marxist championing movements for price control in the U.S. today, with special reference to the sectarian and sterile position taken by the Cannonites, and the reactionary position taken by the bourgeois ideologists.

In line with these motions it is necessary to impress on every Branch Organizer and Branch Executive Committee that the very heart and core of our position on prices is what we have called the GM Program. From the very beginning we have emphasized this in our publicity and in all communications to the branches. All aspects of the living standards of the masses are included in the question of prices. When we speak of the GM Program we do not mean Reuther's GM Program but the revolutionary content of that proposal as contained in the party propaganda.

At the time of the GM strike Reuther put forward two slogans "Open the Books" and a demand for the raising of wages without price rises. We did not take up the "Open the Books" slogan as a basic slogan. We used it as a temporary one of attack during the strike wave. It was used agitationaly for the purpose of attempting to rally not only the GM workers but the workers in other unions around a single agitational slogan useful at the moment and for a specific purpose. We did not however, support this demand as the main demand which the workers should make, but rather the slogan of wage increases without price increases.

Reuther did not take this program seriously. During the past few months he has in effect capitulated to Murray. He switched from a demand for the stabilization of prices and wage increases to a demand for the stabilization of the dollar, and is holding the question of wages in abeyance.

Today as during the strike wave our main slogan revolves around the question of increasing prices and our position as to how prices can and should be controlled. The marked rise in prices is the outstanding economic and political event today and on the basis of present trends will remain so. According to a reliable source the cost of living continues to rise. There is every reason to believe that labor will become increasingly restive thus giving the Workers Party the opportunity for effective agitation and propaganda on the question of prices.

While pushing our main slogan demanding wage increases without price rises we also support the immediate demand programs of the unions such as the recent "5 point program" of the UAW. In connection with such programs we advocate popular price control committees organized under the leadership of the unions. It should be stressed that our emphasis is on action by the masses and the organization of the masses. We make the price control committees wider than the union organization. However, we emphasize and stress the importance of the leadership of the unions.

We also emphasize the imperative necessity for the popular price control committees taking concrete steps to force prices down, thereby demonstrating the ability of the masses to exercise a large measure of control over prices. While we are opposed to the abolition of such a price control body as the OPA we do not place our emphasis on control by governmental bodies such as the OPA. Our emphasis is on control by the workers and consumers functioning through their own price control committees. For us, and we seek in every way to indoctrinate the proletariat with this notion, the GM Program has a distinct revolutionary content. The workers and the masses who follow them serve notice on the bourgeoisie and the government that they will no longer be concerned merely with pure and simple economic demands. The GM Program, as we put it forward, makes it clear that prices and production are indissolubly connected with wages and will be dealt with as such.

These briefly, are some of the political motivations for the campaign and an explanation of the motions passed by the Political Committee.

III. PROGRAM OF ACTION

Such a campaign is provided for in the PROGRAM OF ACTION, as follows: "Political Campaigns. The Central Political Focus and Tasks." "The political activity of the Party will be focussed upon two primary (and related) political issues: A. The fight against rising prices. B. The housing crisis." There follows, under the title "The Fight Against Rising Prices," a discussion of the content and organizational steps of the campaign. Your attention is also called to section C on page 3 of the Program of Action.

The Program of Action is the fundamental textbook for the Campaign. Every member should read and study the Program of Action.

IV. AIMS AND GOAL

This Campaign is to be a major political campaign of the whole Party. It is to have definite aims and a concrete goal. It is to be both a Propaganda Campaign and a Recruiting Campaign.

We will have two major aims in the Campaign: 1. to publicize the Workers Party nationally and to make its name and activities known. 2. To recruit the maximum number of new members through the activities and propaganda of the Party during the Campaign and after the Campaign.

Under (1) it is our intention: (a) to make a name for the Party by virtue of its practical activities around the question of rising prices, inflation and the virtual stabilization of wages. (b) to disseminate the political program of the Party, specifically our program in connection with the prices situation.

Under (2) above we will carry on practical and sustained efforts at recruitment. This flows from the position taken in the Program of Action. In the campaign we apply the position set forth on recruitment in the Program of Action. (A. Recruitment. Page 5 Program of Action "...the primary objective, the goal, the beginning and end of every individual campaign, every effort, every activity must be fixed immovably on recruitment...Recruitment through individual campaigns means the winning of members exclusively on the basis of that campaign. In assessing the results of each campaign, every Branch must answer the question: 'How many members have we gained, not during the period of the campaign but as a direct result of the campaign.'")

Not only do we seek to put the Party "on the map nationally" as a result of the Campaign but we also seek to establish and publicize the existence of the Party Branches in the various cities. For instance the campaign should make it known that a Workers Party branch exists, where its headquarters is and what activities the branch is engaged in. In the course of the campaign the name and function of the Branch Organizer should be publicized and established. The Branch Organizer and the NC member should become known as the "Party spokesman or spokesmen" and the leading representatives of the Party. In every city the Party should have at least one comrade who appears before the public as the outstanding representative of the Party. This can be accomplished or further developed in the course of the Campaign.

V. ORGANIZATION

The campaign is organized to operate as follows: 1. From the Center. (a) Planned and persistent agitation and propaganda in LABOUR ACTION. Articles in the NEW INTERNATIONAL. (b) A national pamphlet or four page folder. (c) Weekly communications and suggestions to the Branches. (d) Conveying to the Branches any significant experiences or accomplishments of other Branches.

2. By the Branches. (a) Local Branch publicity and propaganda. (b) Individual activity of each Branch member: in the shop and union and in neighborhood activity. (c) Reports to the Center on results and problems encountered.

VI. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

It is only in New York City that the Party is conducting an election campaign. Other Branches however can participate in the election campaign even though they do not have candidates in the field. It will be possible for Branches to relate the Party price campaign to the election campaign in the various cities and states where we have branches.

VII. HOW THE BRANCHES WILL OPERATE THE CAMPAIGN.

1. Use of LABOR ACTION and the NEW INTERNATIONAL.
 - a. Sell LABOR ACTION and the NEW INTERNATIONAL at union and other meetings conducted around price control. It is necessary to emphasize to the Branches that the NI should be sold at these meetings.
 - b. Organize discussion groups of workers around the question of prices, using LA and NI articles as basis for discussion material.
 - c. Get worker contacts to distribute LA and other Campaign literature.
 - d. Send Center address of local union headquarters to be placed on LA and NI mailing list temporarily. These should be the addresses of "progressive" locals which would probably display the paper and magazine.
 - e. Attempt to get LA articles on prices on bulletin boards.
 - f. Each Branch to select working class area; housing project etc. for intensive use of LA and NI.
2. Branch Organizers to attend public meetings on prices and speak where possible in the name of the Party.
3. Party housewives to agitate among working class housewives for housewives committees. Organize housewives demonstrations.
4. Branches to operate in a practical way in connection with rent increases and evictions. Organize tenants against rent increases and evictions.
5. Branches to hold public meetings on prices. Aim to get non-Party trade union militants to speak. All meetings to be held in name of the Workers Party. (Not Labor Action). Party speakers to be introduced as Party members.
6. Branches to organize letter writing campaign to local press. By individual members and by Branch Organizer, as Organizer of the _____ Branch, Workers Party.
7. Each trade union member to participate in all activities of the union on price control. Join union price committees and "flying squadrons."
8. Branches to write short articles for LA on price control activities of Branches and unions.
9. Without setting any quotas Branches should develop definite recruitment perspectives during and after the Campaign.
10. It is expected that each Branch will develop its own detailed plans for carrying out the general plan of the Campaign. Objective conditions are different from city to city. The identical procedure cannot be used by every Branch. Branches will be expected and urged to develop initiative and make some contribution to the political and organizational phases of the Campaign which will be of use to other Branches and to the Center. 965

11. Such a Campaign as is contemplated can and should be directed primarily to three groups: white workers, Negroes and housewives. We specify the groups in this manner for a reason. The order is not to be taken as setting priority. There has been some tendency toward relative overactivity among Negroes. It has been reported from time to time that "Negroes are easier to work among." We do not however want this to become a standard for activity in the Campaign. We want to go to Negroes because they are the group hardest hit by high prices, high rents, etc. We go to them because they are a proletarian group. We try for white workers with the same amount of vigor. Housewives are an indicated group because they do the family marketing and are the people who feel the problem most acutely. Housewives are likely to be very militant on this question.

VIII.

The discussion of the Campaign in the Branch should be confined 99 44/100 per cent to the political-organizational aspects of the Campaign. Not one administrative detail should be discussed in the Branch. Organizational routine and administration of the Campaign are and should be the function of the Branch EC. In relation to the Campaign the Branch meeting should be devoted strictly to the political content of the Campaign, the application of the political line of the Party on prices and the goal of the Party in the Campaign.

No termination date is set for the Campaign. This will be decided after the Campaign gets under way and in line with the concrete situation in connection with the price-wage production situation.

It is imperative that every member participate. This is a campaign in which every member can be assigned a concrete task.

It is probable that toward the end of the Campaign Comrade Shachtman will tour the country speaking at public meetings and meeting with "contacts" and new members who have been gained in the course of the campaign.

IX. SUPERVISION

The Campaign will be under the general over-all direction of the Chairman of the Party and the National Secretary. All details however which relate specifically to their departments will be handled by the Director of Organization, the Educational Director, the National Negro Committee and the Editorial Board of LABOR ACTION.

All articles for LA should be addressed to the paper.

All requests for educational material should be addressed to the Education Department. This Department has on hand Speakers

Outline for Popular Agitational Speeches. An Outline on Price Control and Marxist Theory for Branch Educationals.

All matters of detail relating to Branch functioning in the Campaign, plans for recruitment and other such organizational matters should be directed to the Director of Organization.

Specific matters in connection with trade union activity should be addressed to the National Secretary.

This set-up is for the purpose of providing the most efficient carrying through of the Campaign including provision for making it a coordinated whole.

Each Branch is instructed to begin immediately on the organization of its local campaign.

Organize your plans in writing and after adoption by the Branch send them to the Center. Use the enclosed form headed "Outline of Prices Campaign to be Conducted by the _____ Branch."

Get started. Don't write to the National Office making suggestions for changes in the general plan of the Campaign. Write us after you have done something concrete and practical. Right now have all discussions about the Campaign in the Executive Committee and in the Branch not with the National Office. Write the National Office telling what you have done, what your experiences have been and what has been accomplished.

Good Luck!

E.R. McKinney,
National Secretary