

RECONVERSION PROGRAM OF THE WORKERS PARTY  
(Supplement to the Resolution on the American Question)

For Workers Struggle!

For Socialism!

I

1. The National 20-hour week

4 hours a day. 5 days a week

The productive capacity of the U.S.A. makes a secure, dignified and completely human life possible for all, now, today. Production during the war proved it.

The shortening of the working day is the first requirement if the worker is to develop and express himself as a truly social being.

2. Workers Control of Production

By factory committees democratically elected by rank and file workers in order:

- a. To inspect the books of the capitalist class and to secure production for the use of men in place of production for capitalist profit.
- b. To make the workers masters of and not the mere tools of the machine.

3. Workers Defense Guards

Only the organization of strike pickets into permanent and disciplined workers guards can defend the workers and the country against police brutality and Fascist violence and aggression.

4. A Guaranteed Minimum Annual Wage of \$5000.00 per family

Only such a wage can enable industrial and farm workers to enjoy the facilities they create.

Only a wage that rids the family of the limitation, the competition, the degradation of poverty will permit building harmonious relations between husbands, and wives, parents and children, between man and man, race and race.

5. Abolition of Jim Crow

The organized working class with the mass organizations of the Negroes must systematically wage merciless war against Jim Crow which weakens, divides and dishonors the whole class, disgraces the whole nation.

This is a fundamental necessity if Labor, Negro and White, Gentile and Jew, are to resist and overcome the common enemy, the capitalist class.

For full economic, political and social equality for Negroes and all racial and religious minorities.

II

No program can be fought for today unless organized labor leads the great masses of the people against capitalism's crime of constantly raising the cost of living.

1. Fight the Rising Cost of Living

Experience proves that this struggle must not be left in the hands of compromising, cowardly and vacillating trade union leaders. Organized action by the unions must be supplemented and supported by rank and file committees, committees of farmers, consumers, housewives, tenants and by every variety of local, regional and national mass action.

a. No Wage Cuts

An immediate federal law to establish \$40.00 a week as the minimum wage in all industries.

b. Fight Against Inflation and Black Markets

Representatives of organized labor and of the independent mass organizations of the people shall participate in conjunction with the Federal and State authorities to:

- i. establish commodity prices.
- ii. allocate and distribute scarce commodities, including housing to guarantee the minimum of essential requirements to the poorest workers and farmers, irrespective of their wage status.
- iii. mobilize the people against the black markets which live off scarcity and inequality.

c. Automatic increases in Wages to Meet any Rise in the Cost of Living

Organized labor must lead the nation in waging an immediate struggle for:

2. The Return At Once of All American Armed Forces From Abroad

3. Vocational and General Education, to any standard required, for youth, unemployed workers and ex-service men at government expense, supplementary to unemployment insurance at regular trade union rates.

III

In the world-wide struggle between capitalist barbarism and the new age of peace and plenty, the great majority of the American people passionately need a better world, a world of:

- 1. Planned Economy
- 2. Socialization of the Means of Production
- 3. Control and Development of Atomic Energy in the Interests of Civilian Production and Consumption.
- 4. The Substitution for the Standing Army of a Peoples' Militia, Indissolubly Linked up with the Factories, Farms, Mines, etc.

- 5. Fraternal Unity with the Workers and Farmers and Their Parties and Organizations all over the World, including Germany and Japan,
- 6. Freedom of the American Colonies

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While missing no opportunity to struggle for this program, organized labor must demonstrate to the nation that this program can never be realized without:

An Independent Labor Party

based upon the trade unions, the rank and file committees of the workers, consumers committees, farmers committees, mass organizations of the Negroes and all other mass organizations.

This Independent Labor Party must mobilize the masses of the people to establish:

A Workers Government

- which will
  - a. institute the truly democratic rule of the workers and farmers and all the exploited
  - b. exercise the great power of American to help in the establishment of the World Socialist Federation, the only safeguard against capitalist barbarism and the Third World War.

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Workers, establish an alliance with the farmers, the exploited middle classes, the masses of the Negroes, the ex-service men and the youth to protect the democratic liberties of the people. Win them over to the program of the Workers Party, carry it through to the end, and break the resistance of the capitalist monopolists and reactionaries who seek to oppose the wishes and the will of the great majority of the American people.

The Use of the Program by the Party

The slogan of a four hour day and a five day week should be the central slogan by which the party brings to the masses:

- a. its concrete conceptions of a socialist order
- b. its immediate stop-gap for any mass unemployment.

That the workers might not immediately accept it is not an argument against the slogan. Its significance is that, not being posed merely as 20 hours a week, it allows the party propagandistically to raise all questions of capitalist production and socialist relations of production, and consumption (leisure, education, for higher productivity, emancipation and equality of women, etc.) in concrete terms, understandable to the workers.

At the same time, Section II of the Program enables propaganda to revolve around the simplest and most immediate of issues, fighting the high cost of living, the release of American soldiers, etc.

The mere reading of the program must be an education for the workers. The program aims at making concrete the workers' resentment against the bloody chaos of contemporary capitalist society and linking the struggle for immediate demands to the need and the concrete vision of a civilized life for the working class.

The program at the same time must fortify the worker against the specific capitalist propaganda of the age, the incessant hammering into the workers' mind that socialism and planned economy mean totalitarianism. For this among other reasons, the program emphasises always the active intervention of the masses themselves, their self-activity, their self-mobilization, as the embryonic form even under capitalism of the full democracy of the working class which will in time unloose their full creative power and safeguard them against totalitarianism of any kind. Part II of the program gives the immediate concrete axis for struggle. It can be changed and supplemented as the concrete situation demands.

The program, by constantly emphasizing the activity of the workers as a social force in the process of solving social problems, makes the workers grasp the conception not only of socialism as plenty for all, tomorrow or in the distance, but of the self-mobilization of the masses today as the need and duty of the working class, leading inevitably to violent social revolution tomorrow. Thus, the working class is made to see social revolution as the inevitable end of its attempt not only to win a decent life but to substitute its own activity for the tyranny of capital and the bureaucratic leading strings of its labor lieutenants.

The program does not hide the idea of revolutionary action or seek to smuggle it in as some discovery to be made by the workers at the last moment. Addressing itself to the militant worker, it guides itself and attempts to teach the workers the truths of communism and the methods of social revolution. Not to do this is to deny our whole analysis of the epoch and to create an imaginary working class which at this stage is unable to produce sufficient workers who are able to understand from the Workers Party the harsh truths of modern society.

The party or the individual party member does not at all times under all circumstances advocate all sections or all aspects of the program in the same way. The activity of the individual party member has been, is and always will be adroit response to a concrete situation. There will be one response in the democratic UAW, another in the bureaucratic UMW, yet another in a period of quiescence, still something different in a period of sharp crisis, varying according to the strength of the Workers Party in the particular situation, and innumerable other qualifications and modifications. But in this epoch, the party press, the general propaganda, pamphlets, speeches, education, etc. set the strategic line of the party's approach to the working class and arms the individual party member in his individual approach to contacts in the

shop. The same strategic line, appearing in the press with flexibility, firmness and ingenuity, stimulates the workers to bring to the party or the individual member their observations, enquiries, and even their doubts about the policies of the Workers Party as the party of social revolution. Thus, the very sobriety and close attention to the daily business of the union, which must distinguish every party member, should form precisely the wedge by which the advanced workers who read the party press will be driven to raise with the Trotskyites the problems of the social revolution. That the worker may disagree should not unduly trouble the party activists. If the epoch is what we say it is, that disagreement will be turned to agreement in the case of increasing numbers. What is imperative is that the workers, while respecting us for our devotion and resource in our daily activity, should know what we stand for, not merely for a workers government and nationalization, but for the self-activity of the workers on the road to social revolution.

If the social revolution is not posed, the constant emphasis of the party upon the present barbarism and the coming destruction of our society by World War III, can only lead the worker to an attitude of hopelessness or a belief that these tremendous problems can be solved by parliamentary or constitutional means. In neither case does he feel impelled to join the revolutionary party. On the other hand it is the bold posing of revolutionary socialism and revolutionary action which meets the instinctive desires of the advanced worker, pierces through the shell of bourgeois ideology and pulls him toward the party.

April 8, 1946

J. R. Johnson

THE PROGRAM OF THE MINORITY

The coming convention of the Workers Party is confronted with opposing resolutions on all the main questions facing the party.

These differences began to appear in 1941 following the first convention of the Workers Party. Although the political differences remain within the framework, aims and principles of the Fourth International, the majority tendency in the Workers Party shows a growing divergence from the theories and methods of Marxism, the traditions of Bolshevism, and the program and perspectives of the Fourth International.

Therefore, for the purposes of the convention, the minority proposes to form an organized faction because it is firmly convinced that the party line must be radically changed in order to overcome the gap which exists between the radicalization of the American masses and the growth of the Fourth International in the United States.

The Workers Party is based upon the fundamental conception of a Bolshevik Party as one in which groupings and factions have the fullest right to existence.

The minority is fully aware of its responsibilities as members of a faction. It intends to be scrupulous in its observance of them.

It is also aware of its rights and it expects from the leadership of the party, precisely because it is in the majority, a scrupulous observance of the letter and the spirit of all its rights. The minority will expect the cooperation of the party leadership in trying to minimize the inevitable frictions inherent in factional relations. An important part of this cooperation is the education by the majority against rumors or accusations, either in public or in private, that the minority intends or proposes to split the party and join the Socialist Workers Party.

The minority particularly wishes to draw the attention of the membership to the fact that it does not propose factional division in branches, branch executive committees and other organizational units of the party except in the highest policy-forming bodies.

The minority further declares that it will do its utmost to give an example of how a Bolshevik Party conducts factional struggles for the education of the party as a whole and to help convince the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International of the feasibility of unity and the sincerity of the Workers Party in this question.

Those comrades who understand and appreciate the significance of the general political line advocated by the minority should understand that it is not only their right but their highest duty to the movement to resist moral intimidation of any kind and to join the proposed faction. To follow the organizational course resulting from their political convictions constitutes not disloyalty

but loyalty to the party.

While the minority does not in any way minimize the importance and significance of its position on the Russian question, it does not consider agreement on this question a prerequisite for joining the faction. It invites those comrades to join who accept the general line of this declaration and of the minority resolutions presented to this convention.

In the light of the above, the minority submits the following program to the membership:

Program for the United States

1. For the reaffirmation of the analysis of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International that the United States, as part of world capitalism is in a pre-revolutionary period.

Against theories of American "exceptionalism."

For the transitional program which is based on the objectively pre-revolutionary situation.

Against basing a transitional program on the conjectural backwardness of the masses.

For carrying on the day-to-day tasks in the framework of the concrete, actual, i.e. revolutionary perspective.

Against the opportunism which concentrates the attention of the workers on immediate demands while posing socialism as some distant and ultimate goal.

2. For the advocacy of a Labor Party distinguished from the very beginning from a reformist labor party and inseparably linked with the revolutionary purpose of the transitional program.

Against the sectarianism which opposes the slogan of the Labor Party.

For the propagation of the concept of workers' control of production and a workers' government based on factory committees. For propaganda and agitation for rank and file trade union committees, stewards committees, etc to open the books and to control production as a step in the development toward factory committees.

Against the abstract use of slogans of nationalization, workers control of production and workers government, without linking them with concrete forms of mass action and organization.

For the propagation of the concept of workers defense guards in connection with every strike and street demonstration.

Against the concept that the propagation of workers defense guards presupposes preparation for the immediate seizure of power.

3. For the reaffirmation of the position of the Third International (First Four Congresses) and the Fourth International, that the Negro question is part of the national question.

Against the Debsian conception that there is no Negro question outside of the struggle between labor and capital.

For the recognition by the party of the immediate practical significance for the building of the party which lies in the tremendous revolutionary energy of the Negro masses.

Against any depreciation of the independent mass struggles of the Negro people. Against any program which implies breaking up the independent Negro organizations.

International Program

4. For the reaffirmation of the analysis of our epoch as being profoundly revolutionary and the analysis of the proletariat as capable and striving to take the most drastic measures to tear down capitalist society.

Against the theory of retrogression.

For the reaffirmation of the analysis of the Fourth International of our epoch as the death agony of capitalism.

Against any estimate of our epoch which poses the possibility of a world bureaucratic collectivist social order.

5. For the reaffirmation of the analysis of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International that the decay and ruin of bourgeois democracy only poses more sharply the perspectives of proletarian power.

Against all conceptions that the proletariat has been hurled back to the conditions of its birth, capable of struggling only for democratic rights.

6. For the reaffirmation of the position of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International that democratic slogans play only an incidental and episodic role. For the slogan of workers (or workers and peasants) republic. Advocacy only of a constitution based on the Soviet Power for advanced countries like France and Italy.

Against the conception that workers today can be brought into motion only by democratic slogans. Against raising the slogans of the democratic republic or "the most democratic constitution" for advanced countries like France or Italy.

7. For the reaffirmation of our traditional analysis that a revolutionary situation can exist without a mass revolutionary party.

Against the theory that the situation in Europe and elsewhere cannot be revolutionary because of the absence of a mass revolu-



tionary party.

8. For the Marxian analysis that Russia is a capitalist state, the most advanced outpost of the world-wide movement toward statification.

Against the theory that bureaucratic collectivism is a new social order.

Against the theory that Russia is a workers state and demands defense by the working class, conditional or otherwise.

9. For the concept that the Stalinist parties, outside of the U.S.S.R., are working class parties.

Against any theory that these parties are the political expression of a new class.

For critical support to the Communist Parties, outside of the U.S.S.R., whenever they oppose the bourgeoisie (e.g. France, China).

Against any policy of abstentionism towards the Stalinists.

Against Stalinism chiefly because, more than any other party today, it frustrates and betrays the desires of the masses for social revolution.

For the self-mobilization of the masses towards workers democracy as the only safeguard against the Stalinist and reformist misleaders of the proletariat and as the only solution to the economic-political contradictions of capitalist society.

#### Building the Party

10. For the transformation of our party, now a propaganda group, into a mass party of the working class.

For the proletarianization of the party membership.

For a paper which appears openly and obviously as an organ of revolutionary socialism and which presents "the truths of Communism and the methods of social revolution" concretely related to the class struggle.

For a paper which will address itself mainly to the militant elements of the working class.

Against any reversion to concentration on the radicalized intelligentsia.

For a paper which acts as a recruiting agent in harmony with the rhythm of the developing class struggle in the United States.

For agitation which is governed by the strategy of the transitional program of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International.