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# Constitution

OF THE

Socialist

Labor Party

OF THE

United States  
of America



ADOPTED AT THE

Eleventh National Convention

NEW YORK, JULY, 1904

AMENDED AT THE

National Conventions

New York,

1908, '12, '16, '20, '24, '28, '32



## S. L. P. ORGANS.

### *English.*

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Members of the Party are referred to Art.  
II, Sect. 23, Party constitution.

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The foreign language press of the S.L.P. performs a very special and necessary function. Its chief object is to reach the foreign wage workers in the language they speak and understand. Members and sympathizers should direct the attention of their foreign fellow workers or friends, to one of the above papers. Have all subscriptions sent to the address given.

Second printing.

## CONSTITUTION

### ARTICLE I.

#### Management.

Section 1. The affairs of the Party are conducted by the National Executive Committee, the National Secretary, the State organizations, the Local organizations, the Sections, the National Conventions, and the General Vote.

### ARTICLE II.

#### Sections.

Section 1. Seven persons may form a Section, provided they acknowledge the Platform, Constitution and Resolutions of the Party and belong to no other political party.

Not more than one charter shall be granted in any city or town, except in a city comprising a territory greater than a county, in which case not more than one charter shall be granted to each of such counties. But where a part of a county falls inside a city and a part outside of it a charter may be granted to each of the towns and cities located in the part of the county not included in such city.

a. They shall report to their National and State Executive Committees their organization as a Section with the names and addresses of the members.

b. Each Section shall send to the National and State Executive Committees a report of its numerical and financial condition and the names and addresses of mem-



bers in good standing and otherwise on December 31 of each year.

Sec. 2. The Section shall be the unit of organization.

Sec. 3. The order of business of the Section shall be as follows:

1. Reading of minutes.
2. New members.
3. Correspondence.
4. Financial report.
5. Report of organizer.
6. Report of committees.
7. Party press and literature.
8. Unfinished business.
9. Roll call and standing of members.
10. New business.

Sect. 4. Every Section shall elect from its members an Organizer, and such additional officers as it deems proper. The Organizer shall conduct the correspondence with the National and State Executive Committees, and shall send an official report to each of the said committees on December 31st of each year; the Organizer shall send at least thirty-five cents of the monthly dues of each member to the S. E. C., or in the absence of such, to the N. E. C.; the Organizer shall conduct the local organization and agitation.

Sec. 5. Applicants may be admitted to membership by a majority vote of those present at a regular Section meeting, but should a protest be entered against the admission to a Section of any applicant for membership, a two-thirds vote of all present at a regular business meeting shall be necessary to admit him.

Sec. 6. Sections shall have jurisdiction

over their own members. Members of the Party must belong to the Section which has jurisdiction over the territory in which they reside.

Sec. 7. Every Section shall elect a standing Grievance Committee of three members, which shall investigate all charges referred to it, and report its decision to the Section.

Sec. 8. All charges must be made in writing, signed by the individual members preferring same, and must be submitted first to the Section and then referred to the Grievance Committee. Charges against members shall not be debated until the Grievance Committee has thoroughly investigated them and reported to the Section. The Grievance Committee shall deliver a copy of the charges to the accused and shall proceed to investigate the case without unreasonable delay, hearing the witnesses of both sides. A detailed report of the investigation and the findings with the recommendations of the Committee shall be submitted to one of the next business meetings of the Section. The findings and recommendations to be voted on separately. The accused party shall be notified in due time by the Secretary of the Committee to appear at such meeting. The Section shall then decide the matter in executive session and its decision be entered on the minutes. The minutes and all papers concerning the investigation shall be delivered to the Organizer, who thereupon forwards them to the National Office where they are to be kept in a special file. The Organizer



shall inform the accused in writing of such decision.

Sec. 9. A member under charges is technically under arrest and deprived of all membership rights pending decision on the charges, and no such member shall hold any office, or serve in any capacity whatever in the Party, until all charges are disposed of, except in the case of a National Secretary or Editor who shall continue to function in their respective capacities until dealt with in accordance with Article VII Section 3, and Article X Section 3.

Sec. 10. A majority of the members, voting upon this question, at any business meeting, shall be sufficient to expel any member or to suspend him for a definite period. Expulsion and suspension shall be reported at once to the State and National Executive Committees, giving cause for action.

Sec. 11. All decisions of the Section in connection with charges may be appealed from within three months to the State Executive Committee. Decisions of the State Executive Committee may be appealed from within one month to a general vote of the Sections in the state, or to a State Convention, and the decision then reached, and all decisions of the National Executive Committee in individual grievances, where no State Executive Committee exists, shall be final.

Sec. 12. No expelled or suspended member shall be accorded the privileges of a member of the Party unless properly reinstated by the Section or Language Feder-

ation Branch that expelled or suspended him, or, if either shall have ceased to exist, by the State Executive Committee or Language Federation, or, in the absence of such, by the National Executive Committee.

A Section may, if it chooses, refuse a suspended member admittance at its business meeting.

An expelled member may be readmitted to membership if his application for reinstatement is endorsed, first by the Section having expelled him, and, second, by the National Executive Committee.

In case the expelling Section is or has been located in a State having a State Executive Committee, the N. E. C., in the event of its endorsement of such application, shall forward the same to such S. E. C. for submission to a general vote of the membership in such State for final action; but if the Section having expelled the applicant is or has been located in a State not having a State Executive Committee, it shall be the duty of the National Executive Committee finally to dispose of such application. The same procedure and differentiation as between organized and unorganized States shall be adhered to in the case of expelled members-at-large applying for readmission.

Sec. 13. Members who have withheld payment of their dues for two months, unless they are known to be sick or unemployed, shall be immediately notified in writing by the Financial Secretary, and at the conclusion of the third month of delinquency shall stand suspended without further action of the Section. At the end of the fifth month another notice shall be sent



to the delinquent and at the end of the sixth month, unless paid up, his name shall be stricken from the list of members and the fact so recorded in the minutes.

Sec. 14. Sick or unemployed members, unable to pay dues, shall be granted exemption stamps upon request for same being made by such members to the subdivision having jurisdiction over them. A record of such exemption must be made in the minutes of the subdivision, and exemption stamps must be inserted in the card of the member exempted.

Sec. 15. Members who have been dropped for non-payment of dues cannot be readmitted except as provided in Section 5 of this Article.

Sec. 16. Each Section shall hold a regular business meeting at least once a month.

Sec. 17. The result of every election within the Section must be communicated at once to the National and the State Executive Committees.

Sec. 18. In case of the dissolution or expulsion of any Section, all property of the same must be delivered to the State Executive Committee, or, in the absence of such, to the National Executive Committee.

Sec. 19. No Section shall enter into any compromise with any other political party. No candidate of the Party for any public office shall accept any nomination or endorsement from any other political party, nor allow any such nomination or endorsement to stand without public protest, otherwise his nomination must be at once withdrawn and the fact made known through

the Party organs and as much as possible through all other means of publication.

Sec. 20. Members residing in states where there are no Sections may become attached to the organization as national members-at-large, paying their dues direct to the National Office, and are to be subject to the jurisdiction of the N.E.C. All decisions rendered by the N.E.C. in disputes involving national members-at-large shall be final, but where a decision has been rendered by the N.E.C. Sub-Committee, acting on behalf of the N.E.C., the latter may review the case, if it so chooses, as in the case of all other acts by the N. E. C. Sub-Committee.

Sec. 21. Members-at-large residing in states that have no State Executive Committee, but where one or two Sections exist, shall be attached to such Section or Sections as out-of-town members. Applicants for membership-at-large shall be admitted by the N. E. C. Sub-Committee and then transferred to whatever Section the Sub-Committee may decide.

Sec. 22. No member, committee, or Section of the Party shall support any political publications other than Party organs by donations of money or procuring subscribers for the same.

Sec. 23. Acquaintance with the current affairs of the Party being essential for an intelligent discharge of the duties and responsibilities of Party membership, each Section shall relentlessly insist upon each member being a regular reader of the Party organ, except when none such is published in the language read by the member,



and the Section shall order the paper at its own expense, if necessary, for the benefit of the unemployed.

Sec. 24. For a similar reason as in the preceding, it shall be the duty of each Section to acquire as soon as possible an assortment of Party literature dealing with the fundamental principles of the Party and to stimulate their careful study by the members either individually or jointly.

Sec. 25. When a member transfers his membership to another Section, the organizer of the receiving Section shall notify the organizer of the transferring Section of such transfer. The transfer shall not be considered complete until officially confirmed by the receiving Section or other subdivision of the Party and such member shall be under the jurisdiction of the Section, Language Branch, S. E. C. or N. E. C., as the case may be, issuing the transfer pending its completion.

Sec. 26. Wherever possible Sections shall organize study classes. These are to be under the direct supervision and control of the Section, and the leader of such study class shall be selected by the Section. No member may attend any so-called study class conducted by another organization or by a person or persons not connected with the Party. Nor shall a member of the Party be permitted to function as director or teacher of any so-called labor college or study class which is not under the control of the Party.

### ARTICLE III.

#### Local Organization.

Section 1. When in any city or town a

Section is subdivided into Branches, it shall form a City or Town Organization, to be known as the General Committee, and all local business and all dealings with the Party's National and the State Executive Committees shall be carried on by such Committee through the Organizer. When the general local government embraces a locality greater or smaller than a town or city the same rule shall apply.

In the case of such Branch (or Branches) being a foreign language group (other than a Federation Branch) the Section may forego the formation of a general committee, but in such cases each foreign language group shall attend Section meetings either in a body, or by a representation of at least three of its members. The members of such foreign language groups shall at all times be under the complete jurisdiction of the Section, which shall keep a record of their standing, and see to it that dues stamps are purchased as in the case of all other members.

Sec. 2. Such General Committee shall alone exercise the powers delegated to Sections under Article II as far as concerns the admission, expulsion and suspension of members, and from all decisions of the Committee in such matters appeal may be taken within one month to a general vote of the Section under its jurisdiction. The Committee shall consider no application for admission to membership unless the same has been accepted by a branch under its jurisdiction.

Sec. 3. In a city, town or other locality having a legal organization under laws per-



mitting non-members to elect the same, the General Committee, and in the absence of such the Section, shall prepare a set of rules for the government of such organization, subject to the approval of the National and the State Executive Committees, and all members of the Party who are members of such organization shall strive in every way to secure the adoption of such approved rules by such organization and strive at all times to secure the rejection of any rule in conflict with the same.

Sec. 4. In cities, towns or other localities where there exists a Section of the Socialist Labor Party and a Branch or Branches of any S. L. P. Language Federation there shall be formed a Propaganda Committee composed of delegates from said Sections and Branches, whose function it shall be to cooperate for the purpose of furthering the agitation of the S. L. P. in such localities, in addition to such agitation which may be carried on by the respective Sections and Branches separately.

#### ARTICLE IV. State Organization.

Section 1. When in any state there are three Sections in three different towns or cities, the National Office shall initiate a move for effecting the formation of a State Organization to be known as the State Executive Committee by appointing one who is a member of one of the three Sections to call for nominations for State Secretary which nominations shall be submitted to the N. E. C. for approval. When the State Secretary is elected, he shall

proceed to conduct the nominations and election of a State Executive Committee. It shall be the duty of such committee to conduct systematic agitational work within its jurisdiction, form new Sections, and maintain close contact with all Sections and members-at-large in the state.

Whenever temporarily a state lacks the required number of Sections to maintain a State Executive Committee the National Executive Committee may in its discretion permit the continuance of such State Executive Committee pending the reorganization of the temporarily lapsed Sections.

Sec. 2. Every Section connected with such Committee must also be connected with the National Executive Committee.

Sec. 3. The Committee shall send regular annual reports to the N. E. C., giving the state of the organization and also a financial report for the twelve months ending December 31.

Sec. 4. In a State having a legal State organization under laws permitting non-members of the Party to elect the same, the State Executive Committee shall prepare a set of rules for the government of such organization, subject to the approval of the National Executive Committee, and all members of the Party who are members of such organization shall strive in every way to secure the adoption of such approved rules by such organization, and strive at all times to secure the rejection of any rule in conflict with the same.

Sec. 5. No State Executive Committee shall have the power to expel, or suspend



and reorganize any Section guilty of disloyalty.

## ARTICLE V.

### National Executive Committee.

Section 1. For the purpose of providing a basis for National Executive Committee representation, the country shall be divided into nine regions as follows: REGION No. 1 to comprise the following states: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island. REGION No. 2: New York. REGION No. 3: New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia. REGION No. 4: Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan. REGION No. 5: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri. REGION No. 6: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah. REGION No. 7: Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, California. REGION No. 8: Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma. REGION No. 9: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida.

Sec. 2. The National Executive Committee shall consist of one member from each Region having at least three Sections in good standing.

(Note: For representation on the N.E.C. of Language Federations see Article XIII Sec. 2.)

Sec. 3. The members of the National Executive Committee shall be elected by a

general vote of the members of the Party in their respective Regions.

All members of the N. E. C. must be citizens of the United States, but a Region or Language Federation unable to comply with this provision may dispense with the same as far as may be necessary, subject to the approval of the N. E. C.

Sec. 4. Every candidate, before his name is submitted to a general vote, shall sign a pledge to support the Party, its principles, declared resolutions and tactics, such pledge to be filed with the National Secretary.

Sec. 5. The term of office of the members of the National Executive Committee shall be one year, commencing May First.

Sec. 6. Any member of the National Executive Committee shall be removable at will, either: (a) Upon the application of three Sections within the Region he represents, or (b) Upon the application of five Sections within at least two Regions.

In either alternative the initiating Section must submit its application to the National Office for the necessary seconds, all seconds to be made within six weeks from the date the call is issued by the National Office. If sufficient seconds are received the question is then submitted to the entire membership for a referendum vote.

Sec. 7. The N. E. C. shall meet once a year in regular session, on the first Saturday in May, or in special session upon the written call of at least a majority of its members pledging themselves to attend; said call to be sent to the National Secretary and published in the national organ twice in succession.



Sec. 8. Five members shall constitute a quorum for the regular sessions of the National Executive Committee. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for a special session.

Sec. 9. The sessions, regular and special, of the National Executive Committee shall convene at the national headquarters of the Party.

Sec. 10. No member of the National Executive Committee shall at the same time be a member of the State Executive Committee, or hold any other national office.

Sec. 11. The National Executive Committee shall elect a Sub-Committee for the purpose of carrying on the executive work of the Party during the time intervening between the sessions of the National Executive Committee; said Sub-Committee to act on its behalf in conjunction with the National Secretary and subject to the instructions and control of the National Executive Committee, and the latter shall elect all other local committees and officers at the national headquarters that it may deem necessary.

Sec. 12. The whole or any part of the above mentioned Sub-Committee is at any time subject to recall by a majority vote of the National Executive Committee, adopted while in session or by written communication.

Sec. 13. The Sub-Committee may, at will of the National Executive Committee, be chosen from the membership of the Sections located within a two hours' ride from the national headquarters.

Sec. 14. The Sub-Committee shall be composed of eleven members.

Sec. 15. The National Executive Committee has for its duty:

a. To carry out the resolutions of the National Convention and those adopted by a general vote.

b. To supervise the agitation throughout the country.

c. To render final decisions in all appeals made to it where no State organization exists.

d. To expel and reorganize any State Executive Committee or Section guilty of disloyalty.

e. To establish proper relations and communication with the Socialist parties of other countries.

f. To make all necessary preparations for the National Convention, and make a full report to such convention on all Party matters.

g. To audit the books of the National Secretary and all other books of the Party annually, and to issue annually to the membership a report of the Party's finances.

h. To submit propositions to a general vote. A proposition sent from any Section, if endorsed within six weeks by at least five others located in at least three different states, shall be submitted to a general vote; but if in the opinion of the Committee the proposition is not in the interest of the Party, it shall not be submitted to a general vote unless ten per cent of all the Sections in good standing shall subsequently re-endorse it. The voting to close within nine



weeks from the time the proposition was submitted to a general vote.

i. To be represented at the National Convention by the National Secretary, who shall have no vote, but merely an advisory voice, and shall bear no other credentials.

j. To issue application cards bearing a plain exposition of the principles of the Party and the duties required from the applicant.

k. To issue membership cards, and also to provide transfer cards to members.

l. To publish in the official Party organ all expulsions and suspensions reported and all its decisions on appeals.

Sec. 16. The Committee may make its own order of business, and may compensate its officers from the Party treasury, according to the labors performed.

Sec. 17. No editor of a Party publication, and no permanent, salaried employe of the Committee, except its own officers, shall be a member of the National Executive Committee.

Sec. 18. N.E.C. Session Expense: The expenses of the N.E.C. members while attending sessions shall be covered through a special assessment of 50 cents to be imposed once every year, using one stamp in conjunction with the Mileage Assessment, the total assessment thus to be levied once a year to be in the amount of one dollar. (See also Art. VI.)

## ARTICLE VI.

### Mileage.

The railroad fare of the N.E.C. members shall be defrayed from a joint con-

vention-N.E.C. Mileage Fund to be collected by the National Executive Committee by means of a special annual assessment of fifty cents per member and for which a stamp shall be issued in conjunction with N.E.C. Session Expense Assessment. (See Art. V, Sec. 18.) The National Executive Committee shall bank the funds so collected in a savings bank, the same to be drawn against only immediately prior to the holding of the N. E. C. sessions and National Convention.

## ARTICLE VII.

### National Secretary.

Section 1. The National Secretary shall be elected by the National Convention, the election to be specifically approved by a general vote of the whole Party.

Sec. 2. His term of office shall be four years and he shall sign a pledge similar to the one required of the candidates for the National Executive Committee.

Sec. 3. The procedure in removing the National Secretary from office shall be the same as that provided for the removal of a member of the National Executive Committee by Article V, Section 6, clause b.

Sec. 4. In case of vacancy in the office of National Secretary the National Executive Committee shall fill the vacancy temporarily, and at once proceed to nominate two candidates and submit the same to a general vote of the whole Party for the selection of a permanent National Secretary.

Sec. 5. He shall be the Financial Secretary of the Party and shall act as Secretary for Foreign Affairs. He shall not be a mem-



ber of the National Executive Committee, but shall have an advisory voice in all its proceedings.

## ARTICLE VIII.

### National Convention.

Section 1. The National Convention of the Party shall be held every fourth or Presidential election year; but, if five Sections in three different States so demand, a general vote shall be taken as to holding a special convention. A general vote shall decide as to the place, but the date of the convention shall be fixed by the National Executive Committee.

Sec. 2. The State shall be the basis of representation, each State to be entitled to one delegate for every fifty members and one additional delegate for a major fraction thereof; but the apportionment shall be made on the average membership for the last twelve months of the year next preceding. Any State having less than fifty members to be entitled to one delegate; a territory to be treated as a State.

Sec. 3. The National Executive Committee shall call for nominations for the place of the convention six months prior to the date of same, and the State Executive Committee shall call for nominations for delegates and alternates, such nominations to be submitted to a general vote of the Sections with instructions as to the number of candidates and alternates, each member has a right to vote for. The delegates and alternates to be voted upon separately.

In the absence of a State Executive Committee the National Secretary shall call for nomination and election of delegates and alternates. In the case of Language Federations such call shall be issued by the National Secretary of each respective Federation.

Delegates and alternates must be members in the State electing them.

Sec. 4. Delegates shall be members in good standing of the Party for one year and citizens of the United States, but a State unable to comply with these provisions may dispense with the same as far as may be necessary, subject to the approval of the National Executive Committee. Each delegate shall have but one vote.

Sec. 5. The expenses of the delegates shall be borne by the States and Federations with exception of their railroad fare coming and going which latter shall be defrayed as per Article VI.

Sec. 6. The National Convention shall frame the National Platform, decide the form of organization, select the seat of the National Executive Committee, and investigate and decide all difficulties within the Party. A majority vote shall be necessary in selecting the seat of the National Executive Committee.

Sec. 7. All acts of the National Convention shall be submitted to the membership for approval by a general vote, and shall not be effective until so approved except in the case of presidential nominations, platform and resolutions.



## ARTICLE IX.

### Dues.

Section 1. The Sections shall levy upon each of their members a monthly tax of at least thirty-five cents, to be paid to the State Executive Committee.

Sec. 2. The dues shall be receipted for by stamps to be furnished by the National Executive Committee to the State Executive Committee at the rate of at least twenty-five cents each, and, in the absence of such, to the Sections at the rate of thirty-five cents each.

Sec. 3. Every newly organized Section shall receive a free quota of stamps, to be measured by the size of the membership. All stamps received subsequently must be paid for in cash, and the National Secretary, as well as Secretaries of State Executive Committees, shall not send out any stamps other than in compliance with this rule.

## ARTICLE X.

### The Party Press.

Section 1. The National Executive Committee shall have control of the contents of all Party Organs, and shall act on grievances connected with the same.

Sec. 2. The editor of every Official Party Organ shall be elected by the National Convention, the election to be specifically approved by a general vote of the whole Party.

Sec. 3. The procedure in removing the editor of an Official Party Organ, and in

case of a vacancy in his position, shall be the same as that provided for the National Secretary, but any such editor who may prove incompetent or disloyal shall be at once suspended by the National Executive Committee.

Sec. 4. The election of editors of other publications recognized as Party Organs, but not official, shall be subject to the approval of the National Executive Committee. The National Executive Committee shall demand from the publishers the immediate removal of an editor who may prove incompetent or disloyal, and in case of non-compliance with this demand, the National Executive Committee shall at once repudiate the publication.

Sec. 5. No member, committee, or Section or Language Federation of the Party shall publish a political paper without the sanction of the National Executive Committee, and then only on condition that all the property of such paper be vested in the National Executive Committee free from any financial or legal liability, the editor of such paper to be subject to the provisions of the preceding section.

## ARTICLE XI.

### Official Party Organs.

Section 1. The Weekly People (and such daily paper as the Party may at any time publish) shall be the official organ of the Party.

Sec. 2. The management of Official Party Organs shall be administered by the National Executive Committee, said committee to hold the property of the Official Party Or-



gans in trust, subject to the Constitution and Resolutions of the Party affecting their management.

## ARTICLE XII.

### Miscellaneous.

Section 1. This constitution may be amended by the National Convention or by a general vote. Within five weeks after the issuance of a call for a general vote relative to changing the constitution, except that required for approving the acts of a National Convention, amendments may be proposed by any Section to any proposition so laid before the Party, and such amendments shall then also be submitted to be voted on together with the original proposition. The result of the vote must be reported fifteen weeks after the first call was issued.

The National Secretary shall forthwith transmit to the Sections a tabulated statement of the vote cast by each Section.

Sec. 2. All officers and committees of a Section, or of State and Local organizations, shall be subject to removal by their constituents upon charges duly made and tried.

Sec. 3. No applicant shall be admitted to membership without the presiding officer explaining the significance of the class struggle to him, and his pledging himself in writing to its recognition and support. A copy of the constitution and platform shall be handed to every new member.

Sec. 4. A member in good standing of one Section shall have the right to attend and speak at any meeting of another Sec-

tion or branch of a Section, but shall not be allowed to vote.

Sec. 5. No person shall participate in hearing or deciding an appeal who is a party to the proceedings.

Sec. 6. No person who has not been a member for at least one year, and who has not identified himself with the Party by active participation in its work, shall be nominated as a candidate for any public office, except in the case of a new Section and only with the specific approval of the State Executive Committee or, in the absence of such, by the National Executive Committee.

Sec. 7. At all elections and in all voting, unless otherwise provided, a plurality vote is sufficient to decide.

Sec. 8. Sections and local and State organizations may make rules for their action, but such must not conflict with any rules duly provided for their formation and procedure nor with any rules of the State or National organization, all rules of the Sections and local organizations to be approved by their respective State Executive Committees; and all rules of State organizations to be approved by the National Executive Committee.

Sec. 9. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the organization in so far as special rules are not provided.

Sec. 10. The functions of a State Executive Committee under the Constitution and Regulations of the Party shall be exercised by the National Executive Committee where no State Executive Committee exists.

Sec. 11. It is the duty of every State Secretary and Section Organizer to transmit



promptly to their respective Sections and members all official matters and communications sent to them from the National Executive Committee for that purpose.

Sec. 12. If a member is expelled or suspended after being elected delegate to a State or National Convention, such member may be seated in the convention to which he has been elected, if it, upon investigation, so decides.

Sec. 13. No member of the National Executive Committee, nor any other national officer, nor any of their subalterns or appointees shall have power to raise any loan or loans or otherwise incur any liability in the name of the Socialist Labor Party, without first securing the express approval of the membership of the Party by general vote.

Sec. 14. No Party institution shall extend credit to organizations of the Party sending for supplies.

Sec. 15. All former provisions conflicting with this Constitution are rescinded.

## ARTICLE XIII.

### Language Federations.

Non-English speaking Language Federations nationally organized shall be affiliated with the S. L. P. in the following manner:

Section 1. Each Federation shall pay a per capita tax of eight cents per member per month into the national treasury.

Sec. 2. Each Federation to be represented on the N. E. C. by one member.

Sec. 3. Each Federation shall be represented in the National Convention of the

S. L. P. by one delegate for every 50 members or major fraction thereof, as provided in Art. VIII Section 2.

Sec. 4. Branches of Federations shall be represented in the State Conventions and State Executive Committees of the Party with vote and voice upon all matters pertaining to the conduct of political campaigns, but they shall not participate in decisions pertaining to internal Party matters, as to do so would mean the exercise of dual membership functions.

Sec. 5. The S. L. P. shall have full jurisdiction over all properties of the Federations, as with all other subdivisions of the Party, without responsibility for any indebtedness incurred by the Federations.

Sec. 6. No member of a Federation Language Branch shall at the same time be a member of a Section of the Party.

Sec. 7. The constitution and by-laws of the national bodies of Language Federations shall be subject to approval by the N. E. C. of the Party, and shall contain all fundamental provisions of the National Party Constitution.

Sec. 8. The units of organization shall be known as Branches. Branches shall have jurisdiction over their own members in conformity with Art. II, Sections 7 to 11, inclusive.



## Socialist Labor Party Platform

(Adopted at the 18th National Convention,  
May 1, 1932.)

Social systems and their corresponding forms of government come into being as results of social forces making for social progress. The purpose of governments is ostensibly to insure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of the useful members of society.

Whenever a society fails in or becomes destructive of these ends, it has self-evidently outlived its usefulness, rendering it imperative for the exploited and oppressed class to organize its forces to put an end to the outworn social system.

Such a crucial period of history is facing humanity today, and in view of this the Socialist Labor Party, in National Convention assembled, May 1, 1932, reaffirms its former platform declarations and in accord with international Socialist principles declares:

The history of mankind has been a struggle for progress, taking the form of struggles for power between contending classes. Whenever a ruling class had fulfilled its mission, and its interests ceased to be in harmony with social interests, it was supplanted by the class below, which by increasing economic and political powers, attained its revolutionary goal. This class, in turn, became a carrier of social progress until it had outlived its usefulness and, becoming reactionary and a stumbling block in the path of humanity, had to give way before the combined forces of social progress and a new revolutionary class.

With capitalism there remain in society just two contending classes, the capitalist class and the working class — the capitalist class, the owner of the means of production, which ownership today is wholly destructive of life, liberty and happiness of the mass of the people; and the working class whose interests demand the abolition of private ownership in the means of life.

The interests of the working class demand the institution of collective ownership and control, guaranteeing to all the right to work, and by securing to all the full fruits of their labor, ending for all time

the destructive class wars which have up to now torn humanity asunder.

For forty years the Socialist Labor Party has been moving upward toward this historic moment.

(The capitalist system is now creaking and breaking in every joint and cranny. It is no more "on trial" than a horse-drawn vehicle is on trial beside a powerful motor van. Capitalism is outworn, obsolete, ready for the museum of social history. A mere glance at the world situation should suffice to convince even the dullest of this forceful fact.

Economic bonds have snapped; social bonds are dissolving. As a result, factories are closing down, machinery stands idle and rusts, until from ten to twelve million working men and women of this country are idle and they and their dependents stand bereft of food, clothing and shelter. The million mass of the people, the world over, are starving and dying, surrounded by tremendous wealth created by their own labor. Workers are unable to find work, to secure the necessities of life.

The Socialist Labor Party has ceaselessly pointed out the inevitable doom of the capitalist system of production and distribution:—

has pointed to the fact that "free" competition—one of the beatitudes of the system—was inevitably leading to the elimination of the small, and gradually not so small either, business men and manufacturers;

has shown that the cumulative effect of the gigantic machines of production in fewer and fewer hands would be so tremendous as to get beyond the possibility of control by the few industries;

has demonstrated beyond doubt that the capitalist profit system was built and could exist only on the exploitation of labor;

that this exploitation with the aid of the machines was becoming so tremendous that it would eventually become absolutely impossible for the capitalist expropriators to dispose of this surplus in either domestic or foreign markets;

that this "stolen goods" would eventually accumulate and lie like an incubus on the chest of humanity, preventing it from breathing and living while a multi-million army of unemployed would tramp the streets and highways unable to find the wherewithal to live.



*This state of social dissolution is now upon us.*

When a social system has reached the point of utter dissolution, when the bonds that held it together are snapping, ruling class interests eagerly offer palliatives and reforms to stave off the impending doom of the system. It is so with capitalism. In various disguises, but moved with one purpose, various agents of capitalism appear, holding out alluring promises of reform ostensibly to bring relief to the workers. But there can be no relief to a revolutionary class within a social system that is doomed.

Where a social revolution is pending and, for whatever reason, is not accomplished, reaction is the alternative. Every reform granted by capitalism is a concealed measure of reaction. He who says reform says preservation, and he who says that reforms under capitalism are possible and worth while thereby declares that a continuation of capitalism is possible and worth while. But capitalism has grown into an all-destroying and all-devouring monster that must be destroyed if humanity is to live.

At this crucial moment the Socialist Labor Party calls upon the working class of America, more deliberately serious than ever before, to rally at the polls under the Party's banner.

The Socialist Labor Party also calls upon all other intelligent citizens to place themselves squarely upon the ground of working class interests, and join us in this mighty and noble work of human emancipation, so that we may put summary end to the existing barbarous class conflict and insane contradictions between unlimited wealth and wealth production, and the poverty and wretchedness suffered by those whose labor created all this wealth.

We call upon them to place the land and all the means of production, transportation and distribution in the hands of the useful producers as an organized industrial body (i.e., Industrial Unions), under a national industrial administration to take the place of the present outworn political or territorial government. And we further call upon the workers to hasten this work of social and human regeneration to the end that a speedy termination may be put to the present state of planless production, industrial war and social disorder, substituting for it the Socialist or Industrial Commonwealth of Emancipated Labor—a commonwealth in which every worker shall have the free exercise and full benefit of his

faculties, multiplied by all the factors of modern civilization.

## **Resolution on the Economic Organization of Labor.**

*Adopted by the 18th National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party, May 1932.*

The labor movement throughout the world has found its expression in two distinct fields, the political party and the economic union. Without either of these the movement is crippled. Because of this intimate and inevitable relation between the political and economic organizations of labor, the Socialist Labor Party in National Convention assembled in New York City, May, 1932, reaffirms its former position on the necessity of Industrial Union organization, viz.:

"The bona fide or revolutionary Socialist movement, needs the political as well as the economic organization of labor, the former for propaganda and to conduct the struggle for the conquest of the capitalist-controlled Political State upon the civilized plane of the ballot; the latter as the only conceivable force with which to back up the ballot, without which force all balloting is moonshine, and which force is essential for the ultimate lockout of the capitalist class.

"Without the political organization, the labor or Socialist movement could not attain the hour of its triumph; and without the economic organization, the day of its triumph would be the day of its defeat. Without the economic organization, the movement would attract and breed the pure and simple politician, who would debauch and sell out the working class; and without the political organization, the movement would attract and breed the agent provocateur, who would assassinate the movement; therefore, in order to maintain the uncompromising policies and tactics, the Socialist Labor Party of America condemns all efforts to blur the lines of the class struggle, by whomsoever attempted, efforts that aim at misleading the working class on the political field into middle class movements and confounding it with middle class issues; and on the economic field would seek to confine all efforts at working



class organization to a 'boring from within' collaboration with the capitalist controlled labor lieutenants of the pure and simple craft unions."

The economic organization of the workers under each changing status of the development of the capitalist system has sprung directly out of the conditions at the time, based ever upon the given facts in production, unfortunately hanging on long after its usefulness is ended.

Prior to the Civil War unions were isolated and sporadic as was capitalist industry itself. The strikes for higher wages and shorter hours were usually successful because labor was scarce and the great west lay open to migration.

Following the Civil War and the growth of foreign immigration new conditions set in. The country was growing and building up apace. The average American was a jack-of-all-trades. He could jump from one kind of work to another, from one part of the country to another. The Knights of Labor, with its undefined union groupings, reflected completely these facts of American production and development. With increasing factory and railroad expansion came the demand for skilled labor, and the trade union, the American Federation of Labor, had its day. Each craft built a wall around itself by high dues and high initiation fees, kept out apprentices and other applicants, and, in fact, formed a complete job trust. These tactics, as far as a few favored crafts were concerned, succeeded as long as the demand for skilled craftsmen existed.

These tactics were totally suicidal to labor and the labor movement. It divided the working class into union men and "scabs," the ins and outs, those organizable on trade bases and the great mass totally unorganizable in accord with A. F. of L. theories. It raised an enmity between these groups of which the capitalist class could not fail to take advantage to the ultimate defeat of the workers as a whole. Leaders of labor, labor fakers, entrenched themselves in these unions, selling out labor to capitalism and becoming, in fact, the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." But the social soil was again shifting. With the tremendous increase in machinery which followed the turn of the century, the facts in production no longer favored craft unionism. Whole crafts died out; industry opened the doors to untrained labor. Craft unionism is now as

obsolete as is the old blacksmith shop. The remnants of it can carry on only as out-and-out rackets, and intimidation, arson, even murder have developed into accepted craft union tactics.

Alongside the faker-led craft union the classconscious Socialist union has struggled for place. It has been uphill work, but the idea thereof is now firmly rooted in large masses of the workers, and is struggling for concrete expression.

During the nineties the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance gave forth the idea of a classconscious union organization embracing the shop, mill, mine and factory "from top to bottom." With still broader vision the I.W.W. called for the organization of the workers on industrial lines, not only for the conduct of the day to day class struggle, but with the purpose in view of taking, holding and operating industry, and it recognized at first the inevitable unity between the political and the economic movements of labor.

However ripe the conditions were a quarter of a century ago for the Socialist Industrial Union, the workers were not sufficiently prepared for it. Mental anarchy reigned, the American Federation of Labor was still powerful and was preaching its pernicious doctrine of the brotherhood of capital and labor, backed by the Socialist party, which was catching votes apace with all sorts of reform baits. The capitalist system itself was in a process of expansion and prosperity, and to the average workingman revolutionary social change was a hundred years away, while the hope of improving present conditions possessed him powerfully. Between anarchy and hope of present betterment the I.W.W. totally degenerated. Only the IDEA of revolutionary industrial organization continued to march on.

The war and its aftermath scattered utter confusion among the American workers. The A. F. of L. decayed. The I. W. W. was wrecked. The Socialist party, for a long time beset with internecine warfare, split in several parts. The "Left Wingers," later so-called Communists, supposedly sickened by Socialist party compromise and political trading with Republicans and Democrats and its reformism in general, departed to start a new party. But having been utterly corrupted mentally before departure, these burlesque Communists took with them the entire mass of S. P. reform-



notions, which they have tried hard ever since to paint red with imported Russian revolutionary phrases. Among the notions they took with them from the S. P. was a peculiar reverence for the American Federation of Labor; the conception that it was a real labor union and that to accomplish anything with labor they must "bore from within" the present trade unions. The Communists have "bored" and "bored themselves out" and have simply succeeded in adding to the present confusion resulting from the breaking up camp of the A. F. of L.

They have started all sorts of "cells," leagues and "mass unions," existing only on paper, and which are no more industrial than was the old Knights of Labor, because they are not patterned upon the human, social organism which springs from the productive mechanism of today. To add to the confusion, they are even starting "unemployed unions," creating division and antagonism between those at work and those who cannot find a job. Spasmodic, unorganized strikes are promoted, by which the workers are led out to be defeated one battalion at the time, even more helpless against the capitalist class than were ever the craft-divided A. F. of L. unions. In every case where large strikes have been fomented, the workers have been completely beaten, and not a remnant of their organization exists. Disgust and discouragement are alone left in their wake. On the economic as well as on the political field, the Communists, honeycombed by spies and capitalist agents, are the most sinister force in the labor movement today.

However, the Revolutionary Industrial Union idea is spreading. Workers are commencing to realize that productively they are cogs and wheels, composed of brain and muscle, in a giant social mechanism of production. The idea is permeating the wide layers of the workers in shop and factory. But the structure of Socialist Industrial Unionism does not lend itself to the starting of sporadic small and scattered unions. Not only would these be easily defeated and scattered by capitalist attack but they would, in the nature of things, be no Industrial Unions at all. Isolated organizations that from now on are bound to spring up, should aim at nothing more drastic than to hold together and maintain organization until large groups of workers get

ready to move. Whole industries, related industries, groups of industries, thus only are the workers invulnerable, non-defeatable.

For the worker today there is no hope except through social revolution, the overthrow of the capitalist system of private ownership of the means of wealth production. The Socialist Labor Party advocates this change on the political field, establishing through the ballot our revolutionary right to abolish the present corrupt Political State and to institute an Industrial Government. But the Revolutionary Industrial Union of Labor alone can furnish the power with which to enforce the mandate of the ballot box. Economic power is the real power. With industry at our command the revolution is won.

The workers must organize in shop, mill, mine, factory, on the railroads and on the land to take, hold and operate the means of production. That is Socialism. That is the Industrial Republic of Labor.

Workers, rise in your might, organize to end wage-slavery and starvation.

*All power to the Socialist Industrial Union!*