

WORKINGMEN'S PARTY

OF THE

UNITED STATES.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNION CONGRESS,

HELD AT PHILADELPHIA

ON THE

19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd day of July 1876.

Declaration of Principles, Constitution,

Resolutions etc.

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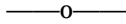
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1876.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

OF THE

Workingmen's Party of the United States.



The emancipation of the working classes must be achieved by the working classes themselves independent of all political parties of the propertied classes.

The struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule.

The economical subjection of the man of labor to the monopolizer of the means of labor, the sources of life, lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of all social misery, mental degradation, and political dependence.

The economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end, to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means.

All efforts aiming at that great end have hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labor in each country, and from the absence of concerted action between the workingmen of all countries.

The emancipation of labor is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution upon the practical and theoretical concurrence and co-operation of the most advanced countries.

For these reasons, the Workingmen's Party of the United States has been founded.

It enters into proper relations and connection with the workingmen of other countries.

Political liberty without economical independence being but an empty phrase, we shall in the first place direct our efforts to the economical question.

We repudiate entire connection with all political parties of the propertied classes without regard to their name.

We demand that all the means of labor (land, machinery, railroads, telegraphs, canals, etc.) become the common property of the whole people, for the purpose of abolishing the wages system, and

substituting in its place co-operative production with a just distribution of its rewards.

The political action of the Party is confined generally to obtaining legislative acts in the interests of the working class proper. It will not enter into a political campaign before being strong enough to exercise a perceptible influence, and then in the first place locally in the towns or cities, when demands of a purely local character may be presented, providing they are not in conflict with the platform and principles of the Party.

We work for the organization of trades unions upon a national and international basis to ameliorate the condition of the working people and seek to spread therein the above principles.

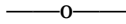
The Workingmen's Party of the United States proposes to introduce the following measures, as a means to improve the condition of the working classes:

1. Eight hours for the present as a normal working day, and legal punishment of all violators.
2. Sanitary inspection of all conditions of labor, means of subsistence and dwellings included.
3. Establishment of bureaus of labor statistics in all States as well as by the National Government; the officers of these bureaus to be taken from the ranks of the labor organizations and elected by them.
4. Prohibition of the use of prison labor by private employers.
5. Prohibitory laws against the employment of children under 14 years of age in industrial establishments.
6. Gratuitous instruction in all educational institutions.
7. Strict laws making employers liable for all accidents to the injury of their employees.
8. Gratuitous administration of justice in all courts of law.
9. Abolition of all conspiracy laws.
10. Railroads, telegraphs, and all means of transportation to pass into the hands of and to be operated by the Government.
11. All industrial enterprises to be placed under the control of the Government as fast as practicable and operated by free co-operative trades unions for the good of the whole people.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

WORKINGMEN'S PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES



The affairs of the party shall be conducted by three bodies: The *Congress* the *Executive Committee* and *Board of Supervision*.

ARTICLE I.—THE CONGRESS.

1. At least every two years a Congress shall be held, composed of the delegates from the different Sections that have been connected with the party at least two months previously and complied with all their duties. Sections of less than 100 members shall be entitled to one delegate, from 100 to 200 to two delegates and to one more delegate for every additional one hundred. (See also II. 4 d, and III. 4.)

2. No suspended Section shall be admitted to a seat before the Congress has examined and passed judgment on its case. It shall, however, be the duty of every Congress to put such cases on the order of business and dispose of them immediately after the election of its officers.

3. The Congress defines and establishes the political position of the party, decides finally all differences within the party, appoints time and place of the next Congress and designates the seat of the Executive Committee and of the Board of Supervision.

4. The entire expenses of the Congress as well as the mileage and salary of the delegates shall be paid by the party and provided for by a special tax to be levied six weeks before the Congress meets. Before the year 1880 however no mileage will be paid beyond the 36th degree of northern latitude, nor beyond the 95th degree of western longitude (Greenwich).

5. All propositions and motions to be considered and acted upon by the Congress shall be communicated to all Sections at least 6 weeks previously. (See also II 3 f III. 4, IV 7, VI 6 and press regulation No. 19.)

II. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

1. The Executive Committee shall consist of seven members and

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shall appoint from its own midst one corresponding secretary, one recording secretary, one financial secretary and one treasurer.

a. The E.C. shall be elected by the Sections of the place designated as its seat and vacancies shall be filled in the same way.

2. The E.C. shall hold office from one Congress to the ensuing one.

3. The duties of the E.C. shall be:

a. To execute all resolutions of Congress and to see that they are strictly observed by all Sections and members;

b. To organize and centralize the propaganda;

c. To represent the organization at home and abroad;

d. To entertain and open relations with the workingmen's parties of other countries;

e. To make a quarterly report to the Sections concerning the state of the organization and its financial position;

f. To make all necessary preparations for the Congress as well as a detailed report to the same on all party matters.

4. Rights and powers of the E.C.

a. The E.C. with the concurrence of the Board of Supervision may refuse to admit to the organization individuals and Sections as well as suspend members and sections till the next Congress for injuring the party interests.

b. In case of urgency the E.C. may make suitable propositions, which propositions shall become binding if approved of by a majority of the members of the Party within two months.

c. The E.C. has the right to establish rules and regulations for the policy to be observed by the party-papers, to watch their course and in cases of vacancy to appoint editors pro tempore.

d. The E.C. may send the corresponding secretary as delegate to the Congress. The delegate will have no vote and shall be prohibited from accepting any other credentials.

5. The salary of the party officers is fixed by the E.C. with the concurrence of the Board of Supervision. (See also IV 6, V 2, VI 4, VII 2, VII 13 and the press regulations No. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13 and 17.)

6. The corresponding secretary shall copy all documents and writings issued by the E.C., place on file all communications received, and keep a correct record thereof. He shall receive a proper salary.

7. The financial secretary shall keep and make out the lists of sections and members, receive and record all monies and hand

them over to the treasurer, taking his vouchers therefor.

8. The treasurer shall receive all monies from the financial secretary, pay bills and honor all orders of the E.C. after they are countersigned by the corresponding secretary and one more member of the E.C., make a correct report on the state of the treasury to the E.C. in every meeting and to the whole organization every three months, and give security to an amount fixed by the E.C.

9. The reports of the treasurer must be examined in a regular meeting of the E.C., and endorsed by the same.

III. THE BOARD OF SUPERVISION.

1. The B.S. (Board of Supervision) shall consist of five members to hold office and to be elected in the same way as the E.C. (See II. 2. and II. 1. *a.*)

2. The duties of the B.S. shall be:

a. To watch over the action of the E.C. and that of the whole party, to superintend the administration and the editorial management of the organs of the party, and to interfere in case of need.

b. To adjust all differences occurring in the party within four weeks after receiving the necessary evidence, subject to the final decision of Congress. (See I. 3.)

c. To make a detailed report on its actions to the Congress.

3. In case of urgency the B.S. may suspend officers and editors till the meeting of the next Congress, such suspension to be submitted at once to a general vote, the result of which shall be made known within four weeks thereafter. (See also II. 4. *a.* and II. 3. {})

4. The B.S. is entitled to send one delegate to the Congress under the same conditions as the E.C. ({}See II. 4. *d.*)

(See also V. 2, VI. 4, and press regulations 3., 7., 16, and 17.)

IV. SECTIONS.

1. Ten (10) persons speaking the same language and being wages-laborers shall be entitled to form a Section, provided they acknowledge the principles, statutes, and Congress resolutions, and belong to no political party of the propertied classes. They shall demand admission from the E.C. by transmitting the dues for the current month, and their list of members, the latter to contain the names, residences and trade of the members, and to show their condition as wages-laborers.

2. At least three-fourth of the members of a Section must be wages-laborers. (See VII. 12.)

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3. There shall be no more than one Section of the same language in one place, which may meet in different parts of the town or city for the purposes of an active propaganda. Business meetings shall be held once a month.

4. Every Section is responsible for the integrity of its members.

5. Every Section is required:

a. To make a monthly report to the E.C. concerning its activity, membership and financial situation.

b. To entertain friendly relations with the Trades Unions and to promote their formation.

c. To hold regular meetings at least once every two weeks.

d. To direct its efforts exclusively to the organization, enlightenment and emancipation of the working classes.

6. No Section shall take part in a political movement without the consent of the E.C.

7. Five Sections of different localities shall be entitled to call for the meeting of an extraordinary Congress, such Congress to be convened if a majority of the Sections decides in its favor.

V. DUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS.

1. A monthly due of five (5) cents for each member shall be transmitted to the E.C. to meet the expenses of propaganda and administration.

2. In case of need and with the consent of the B.S. the E.C. is empowered to levy an extraordinary tax.

(See also I. 4., VII. 10, and VII. 11.)

VI. GENERAL REGULATIONS.

1. All Officers, Committees, Boards, etc., shall be chosen by a majority vote.

2. No member of the organization shall hold more than one office at the same time.

3. All Officers, Authorities, Committees, Boards, etc. of the Organization may be dismissed or removed at any time by a general vote of their constituencies and such general vote shall be taken within one month from the date of the motion to that effect, provided, however, that said motion be supported by not less than one-third of the respective constituents.

4. Expulsion from one Section shall be valid for the whole Organization if approved of by the E.C. and by the B.S.

5. All members of the organization, by the adoption of this con-

stitution, take upon themselves the duty to assist each other morally and materially in case of need.

6. The Congress alone has the right of amending, altering or adding to this constitution, subject to a general vote of all Sections, the result of which shall be communicated to the E.C. within four weeks.

VII. LOCAL STATUTES.

1. Every section shall choose from its ranks one organizer, one recording secretary, one corresponding secretary, one financial secretary, one treasurer and two members of an auditing committee.

2. All these officers shall be elected for six months and the E.C. shall take timely measures to make the elections of newly formed sections correspond with the general elections of the whole party.

3. The organizer conducts the local propaganda and is responsible to the section. The organizers of the various sections of one locality shall be in constant communication with each other in order to secure concerted action.

4. The secretary is charged with the minutes and the correspondence.

5. The financial secretary shall keep and make out the list of members, sign the cards of membership, collect the dues, hand them over to the treasurer and correctly enter them.

6. The treasurer shall receive all monies from the financial secretary and hold them subject to the order of the section.

7. The auditing committee shall superintend all books and the general management of affairs, and audit all bills.

8. All officers shall make monthly reports to the section.

9. A chairman is elected in every meeting for maintaining the usual parliamentary order.

10. The monthly dues of each member shall be not less than ten (10) cents, five cents of which shall be paid to the E.C. (See V, and I, 4.)

11. Members being in arrears for three consecutive months, shall be suspended until fulfilling their duties, always excepted those who are sick or out of work.

12. Persons not belonging to the wages class can only be admitted in a regular business meeting by a two-third vote. (See D. {IV?} 1 and 2.)

13. The result of every election within the section must be at once communicated to the E.C.

Regulations concerning the press of the party.

1. The "Labor Standard" and the "Arbeiter-Stimme" of New York, and the "Vorbote" of Chicago are recognized as organs and property of the party.

2. The press (i.e. the organs) shall represent the interests of labor, awaken and arouse class-feeling amongst the workingmen, promote their organization as well as the trades union movement and spread economical knowledge among them.

3. The editorial management of every one of the above papers is entrusted to an editor, appointed either by Congress or by the E.C. and B.S. jointly,—said editor to receive an appropriate salary.

4. Whenever needed, assistant editors will be appointed by the E.C. with the advice and consent of the chief editor.

5. The chief editor is responsible for the contents of the paper and shall be guided in matters of principle by the declaration of principles of the party: in technical and formal matters by the regulations of the E.C. (See Constitution II, 4, c.)

6. Whenever refusing to insert a communication from a member of the organization, the editor shall make it known to the writer thereof directly or by an editorial notice, when appeal may be made to the E.C.

7. The editor shall observe strict neutrality towards all differences arising within the party, till the B.S. and the Congress have given their decision.

8. For every one of the above three papers there shall be elected at their respective place of publication a Council of Administration of five (5) members who jointly with the E.C. shall appoint and remove the business manager and his assistants.

9. The C.A. (Council of Administration) shall be chosen for one year in the first week of August of every year.

10. The C.A. shall establish rules for the business management, superintend the same, investigate all complaints concerning the business management, redress all grievances if found good, pay their weekly salaries to the editors and managers and make a full report of the state of the paper every three months to all sections by a circular.

11. The manager is bound to mail punctually and address correctly the papers; he shall receive all monies, book them and hand them over to the treasurer of the C.A., and he shall keep the office of the paper in good order. His salary will be determined by the

Congress or by the E.C.

12. The receipts of all monies from without shall be published in the paper.

13. The treasurer of the C.A. and the manager shall give security to the C.A. to an amount fixed by the E.C.

14. All sums over and above the amount of the security shall be deposited in a bank by the C.A.

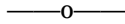
15. The chief-editor's salary shall be between 15 and 20 dollars per week.

16. All complaints against the business management shall in the first place be preferred to the C.A., in the second place to the B.S.

17. All complaints against the editorial management shall in the first place be put before the E.C., in the second place before the B.S.

18. The sections are responsible for the financial liabilities of newspaper agents nominated by them.

19. The Congress alone can alter, amend or add to these regulations.



The Ballot Box.

Considering, That the economical emancipation of the working classes is the great end, to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means;

Considering, That the Workingmen's Party of the United States in the first place directs its efforts to the economical struggle;

Considering, That only in the economical arena the combatants for the Workingmen's Party can be trained and disciplined;

Considering, That in this country the ballot box has long ago ceased to record the popular will, and only serves to falsify the same in the hands of professional politicians;

Considering, That the organization of the working people is not yet far enough developed to overthrow at once this state of corruption;

Considering, That this middle class Republic has produced an enormous amount of small reformers and quacks, the intruding of whom into the Workingmen's Party will only be facilitated by a political movement, and

Considering, That the corruption and misapplication of the ballot box as well as the silly reform movements flourish most in the

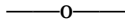
years of presidential elections, at such times greatly endangering the organization of workingmen;

For these reasons the Union Congress meeting at Philadelphia this 22d day of July 1876, *Resolved*,

The sections of this party as well as all workingmen in general are earnestly invited to abstain from all political movements for the present and to turn their back on the ballot box.

The Workingmen will therewith save themselves bitter disappointments, and their time and efforts will be directed far better towards the organization of the workingmen, which organization is frequently destroyed and always injured by a hasty political movement.

Let us bide our time! It will come!



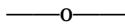
Women's Rights.

The Union Congress of the Workingmen's Party of the United States declares:

The emancipation of Labor is a social problem, a problem concerning the whole human race and embracing both sexes. The emancipation of women will be accomplished with the emancipation of *men*, and the so-called womens rights question will be solved with the Labor question. All evils and wrongs of the present society can be abolished only when economical freedom is conquered for men as well as for women.

It is the duty therefore of the wives and daughters of the workingmen to organize themselves and take their places within the ranks of struggling labor. To aid and support them in this work is the duty of the *men*. By uniting their efforts they will succeed in breaking the economical fetters, and a new and free race of men and women will rise recognizing each other as peers.

We acknowledge the perfect equality of rights of both sexes, and in the Workingmen's Party of the United States this equality of rights is a principle and is strictly observed.



No general vote on the work of the Union Congress.

Considering, That by ordering a general vote on the labors of this Congress the Union so much needed and desired would be retarded;

Considering furthermore, That by a general vote these labors might be left unsettled and even a new Congress might be made necessary;

For these reasons the Union Congress assembled at Philadelphia this 22d day of July 1876.{,} *Resolved*,

“The general vote on the decisions and resolutions of this Congress is dispensed with and they will be in force and valid for all Workingmen’s groups here represented on and after the date of their publication.

Workingmen’s Party of the United States.

Executive Committee:

PHILIP VAN PATTEN, corresponding Secretary, 103½ N. Wells st., Chicago, Ill.

Board of Supervision:

New Haven, Conn.

ORGANS OF THE PARTY:

The “*Labor Standard*,” published weekly at 154 Eldridge st., New York, at 60 Cts. per quarter; \$2.00 per year.

In the German language:

The “*Arbeiterstimme*,” published weekly at 154 Eldridge st., New York; 65 Cts. per quarter.

The “*Vorbote*,” published weekly at 124 S. Franklin st., Chicago. Ill.; 65 Cts. per quarter.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America

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