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# Constitution of the Communist Party of America: Adopted at the Joint Unity Convention of the United Communist Party and the Communist Party of America, May 1921.

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## Article I: Name, Purpose, and Emblem.

*Section 1.* The name of this organization shall be the Communist Party of America, Section of the Communist International.

*Section 2.* The Communist Party of America is the vanguard of the working class, namely, its most advanced, class conscious and therefore its most revolutionary part. Its purpose is to educate, direct, and lead the working class of America for the conquest of political power; to destroy the bourgeois state machinery; to establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the form of Soviet power; to abolish the capitalist system and to introduce the Communist society.

*Section 3.* The emblem of the Party shall be the crossed hammer and sickle between sheaves of wheat and within a double circle. Below the hammer and sickle the words "All power to the workers." In the circular margin the words "Communist Party of America — Section of the Communist International."

## Article II: Membership.

*Section 1.* Every person who accepts the principles and tactics of the Communist Party and of the Communist International, and agrees to submit to the Party discipline and engage actively in its work, shall be eligible for membership, provided he is not a member or supporter of any other political organization.

*Section 2.* No person whose livelihood is gained by exploiting labor shall be eligible to membership in the

Communist Party of America.

*Section 3.* Applicants shall be vouched for by two persons who have been members for at least six consecutive months, except in newly organized groups in new territory. Every applicant shall be assigned to a recruiting group on probation for three months, with voice but no vote. The applicant shall be accepted only upon examination and recommendation by the recruiting group captain, and by unanimous approval of the Branch Executive Committee.

*Section 4.* A special captain shall be placed in charge of each recruiting group by the Branch Executive Committee.

*Section 5.* An applicant shall pay one dollar initiation fee, and all dues and assessments beginning with the month in which he is accepted in the recruiting group.

*Section 6.* A member may transfer from one Party unit to another only upon certification of the Party unit to which he belongs. The unit granting the transfer must ascertain that the member asking for it has discharged all his Party obligations, and shall notify the unit to which the member transfers through the regular Party channels. He shall go to the group to which he is assigned by the Branch Executive Committee.

## Article III: Form and Units of Organization.

*Section 1.* The Communist Party of America is an underground, illegal organization. It is highly central-

ized, with the Convention as its supreme body, and the Central Executive Committee acting as such between Conventions.

*Section 2.* The basic unit of the Party shall be a group of approximately ten members, and wherever possible not less than five.

*Section 3.* Groups of the same language within a city or locality shall form a Branch. Branches shall consist of not more than ten groups each.

*Section 4.* Branches within a locality shall form a Sections. Sections shall consist as nearly as possible of ten Branches, and shall be formed wherever there are two or more Branches within a locality.

*Section 5.* Sub-districts shall consist of not more than ten Sections and of isolated Branches within a territory prescribed by the District Executive Committee.

*Section 6.* All Sub-districts within a prescribed territory shall form a District. The limits of Districts are determined by the Central Executive Committee. Districts and Sub-districts shall be organized within industrial sections regardless of political boundaries.

#### **Article IV: Conventions.**

*Section 1.* The Convention is the supreme body of the Party, and shall be called by the Central Executive Committee at least once a year.

*Section 2.* Emergency Conventions, with all the powers of regular Conventions, shall be called by the Central Executive Committee upon its own initiative or upon the demand of District Conventions representing a majority of the membership.

*Section 3. (a)* Elections to the Convention shall begin in the groups. Each group shall elect one elector to the Section Convention, and the Section Convention shall elect delegates to the District Convention. Branches that are directly connected with the Sub-district shall send their delegates to the nearest Section. The representation in the Section and the District electors' meeting and in the Convention of the Party shall be fixed by the Convention call, issued by the Central Executive Committee.

*(b)* If there are more than fifteen groups in a Sec-

tion, the Sub-district Committee shall subdivide the Section for the elections so that no more than fifteen attend a Section electors' meeting. Wherever necessary, units shall be combined to comply with the accepted basis of representation.

*Section 4.* The number of delegates shall be determined by the Central Executive Committee according to the circumstances. Delegates shall be apportioned to the Districts in proportion to the membership.

*Section 5.* Section, Sub-district, and District Organizers of the Party shall attend the electors' meetings of their respective and subordinate units, and shall have voice but no vote, unless elected as delegates themselves.

*Section 6.* Section, Sub-district, and District electors' meetings may elect as their delegates members of the Party from any unit outside their territorial divisions.

*Section 7.* At the same time that the call for the Convention is issued, the Central Executive Committee shall submit to every group for discussion the Agenda and other propositions that are to come before the Convention. At least sixty days before the convention, the Party Press shall be opened for discussion of important Party matters.

*Section 8.* Delegates to the National Convention shall be paid railroad expenses and the same wages as Party officials.

#### **Article V: Central Executive Committee.**

*Section 1.* Between Conventions the Central Executive Committee shall be the supreme body of the Party and shall direct all the Party's activities.

*Section 2.* The Central Executive Committee shall consist of ten members elected by the Convention. The Convention shall also elect six alternates. When the list of alternates shall have been exhausted the Central Executive Committee shall have the right of co-optation.

*Section 3.* All Central Executive Committee members shall devote all their time to the work of the Party

and shall live in the city in which the National Headquarters are located, or in adjacent cities.

*Section 4.* Candidates for the Central Executive Committee must have been members of a Party affiliated with the Communist International for at least eighteen months.

*Section 5.* The identity of the Central Executive Committee members shall not be made known either by themselves or by those present at the Convention.

*Section 6.* The Central Executive Committee shall elect delegates to the International Congresses and the Communist Party of America members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

*Section 7.* The Central Executive Committee shall call in the District Organizers for a conference at least every six months.

*Section 8.* The Central Executive Committee shall make a monthly report of the Party activities and Party finances itemized by Districts.

*Section 9.* A complete audit and accounting of all Party funds shall be made every six months. The auditing committee shall consist of three members elected by the Convention. The Convention shall also elect three alternates. No member of the Central Executive Committee and no paid Party employee shall be a member of the auditing committee. The report of the auditing committee shall be made to the membership, within one month after completion of its work.

#### **Article VI: District and Subordinate Units.**

*Section 1.* The Central Executive Committee shall appoint District Organizers for each District.

*Section 2.* Every District Organizer shall make complete reports to the District Executive Committee as to the general Party work in his District. He shall submit and carry out the instructions and decisions of the Central Executive Committee. He shall make remittances, financial statements and reports to the Central Executive Committee at least once a week. He shall submit financial statements to the membership in his District at least once a month.

*Section 3.* District Conventions shall be held at least

every six months. Every Section shall send delegates to the District Convention in proportion to the membership. The District Convention shall elect five members to the District Executive Committee. These five members, together with the District Organizer and the Sub-district Organizers, shall constitute the District Executive Committee. The District Executive Committee shall supervise the activities of the District Organizer and shall regularly submit the minutes of its meetings to the Central Executive Committee. All actions of the District Executive Committee and the District Convention are subject to approval by the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 4.* District Organizers shall appoint Sub-district Organizers subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 5.* Sub-district Organizers shall make remittances, financial statements, and reports to the District Organizers once a week.

*Section 6.* The Sub-district Organizer shall call meetings of the Sub-district Executive Committee at least every two weeks. He shall make a complete report to the Sub-district Executive Committee, and transmit and carry out the decisions and the instructions of the Central Executive Committee, the District Organizer, and the District Executive Committee.

*Section 7.* The Sub-district Executive Committee shall consist of the Sub-district Organizer, the Section Organizers, and the Organizers of isolated Branches having direct connections with the Sub-district.

*Section 8.* The Section Executive Committee shall consist of Branch Organizers and shall elect Section Organizers.

*Section 9.* Branch Organizers shall be elected by the group captains. They shall work under the direction of the Section Organizers and shall meet at least once a week.

*Section 10.* The Branch Executive Committee shall consist of the Branch Organizer and the group captains of the Branch. The Branch Executive Committee shall meet at least once a week.

*Section 11.* District Organizers, Sub-district Organizers, Section and Branch Organizers shall have been

members of the Party not less than one year. Group captains, six months.

*Section 12.* Executive Committees of the various Party units have authority to act within their jurisdiction, subject to the decisions of the higher Party units.

*Section 13.* Each group shall meet at least once every week under the direction of the group captain, who shall make a complete report to his group on all Party work, on the activities of his Branch, and of all other Party units.

### **Article VII: Language Federations.**

*Section 1.* Language groups shall consist of members speaking the same language. Language groups in the same locality shall be formed into Language Branches; all Branches of the same language shall be united into Language Federations, provided they have at least 250 members.

*Section 2.* All language groups and branches shall be integral parts of the Party structure in their localities, and shall perform and carry out all Party functions and obligations.

*Section 3. (a)* Shortly after Party Conventions, National Language Conferences shall be held. The expenses of these conferences shall be paid out of the regular Party treasury.

*(b)* These National Conferences shall formulate plans for education and propaganda in their respective languages, both legal and illegal, and shall elect National Language Bureaus consisting of not less than five and not more than seven members each, subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee. All actions of these conferences shall be in strict conformity with the decisions of the Party Convention and the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 4.* National Language Bureaus shall elect editors for their legal and illegal publications and shall supervise all legal and illegal activities of their respective Federations, subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 5.* The minutes of the National Language Bureaus shall be regularly submitted to the Central

Executive Committee and all their actions shall be subject to the direction, control, and approval of the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 6. (a)* For illegal work, the National Language Bureaus shall connect with their respective Branches through their Language Federation Channels or, if necessary, through regular Party channels of communication.

*(b)* They shall have the right to appoint Organizers, including District and Sub-district Language Organizers, subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

*(c)* All Language Organizers shall work under the supervision of the Party District Organizers in the various districts.

*Section 7.* National Language Bureaus shall translate and transmit all statements, circulars, and communications addressed to the membership by the Central Executive Committee within one week after their receipt. They shall issue at least once a month an underground official organ in their respective languages, subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 8. (a)* Language Groups and Branches shall pay all their dues and assessments through the regular Party channels to the Central Executive Committee.

*(b)* By the 10th of each month the Central Executive Committee shall remit 20 cents of the dues receive from each member of the Language Branches to the respective National Language Bureaus.

*(c)* Additional expenses of Language Bureaus, authorized by the Central Executive Committee, shall be paid from the regular Party treasury.

*(d)* The National Language Bureau shall account to the Central Executive Committee regularly for all funds entrusted to them and shall make regular financial reports to the Central Executive Committee regarding all the legal institutions in their respective languages, subject to the audit of the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 9. (a)* Special assessment for language work may be recommended by the Language Bureaus and may be levied by the Central Executive Committee

upon the entire Party membership.

(b) Special assessments may also be levied by the National Language Bureaus on the membership of their Federations, with the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 10. (a)* Language Bureaus and Federations shall have no power to suspend, expel, or reorganize affiliations. All disciplinary powers are vested exclusively in the regular Party organization machinery.

(b) Language Bureaus and Federations may recommend such suspension, expulsion, or reorganization to the party units having jurisdiction.

*Section 11.* District Language Conferences shall be called by the District Executive Committee to discuss educational and propaganda needs of their languages in the district and to elect five members to the District Language Bureau. These, together with the Federation District Organizer and the Federation Sub-district Organizers, shall constitute the District Language Bureau. The District Language Bureau shall carry on the work in their respective languages under the direction of the District Executive Committee.

### **Article VIII: Discipline.**

*Section 1.* All members and Party units shall maintain and enforce strict Party discipline. All decisions of the governing bodies of the Party shall be binding upon the membership and subordinate units.

*Section 2.* The following offenses are breaches of Party discipline:

- 1) Violation of the fundamental principles of the program and Constitution of the Party.
- 2) Refusal to accept and carry out the decisions of the Party.
- 3) Willfully to block and disrupt Party work and the cooperation of the various Party units.
- 4) Knowingly and unnecessarily to endanger the underground work of the Party.
- 5) In any way to betray the Party trust.

*Section 3.* A Formal charges must be presented against any member or unit accused of breach of discipline, and these must be investigated by the next

higher unit before discipline is enforced.

*Section 4.* Members deliberately accusing any member or unit of the Party, after accusation has been found groundless by the investigating committee, are subject to discipline.

*Section 5.* Members may be suspended or expelled by the Branch Executive Committee subject to approval of the Section Executive Committee.

*Section 6.* Groups may be suspended, expelled, or reorganized by the Section Executive Committee subject to the approval of the Sub-district Executive Committee.

*Section 7.* Branches may be suspended, expelled, or reorganized by the Sub-district Executive Committee, subject to the approval of the District Executive Committee.

*Section 8.* A Section or Sub-district may be suspended, expelled, or reorganized by the District Executive Committee subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 9.* Districts may be suspended, expelled, or reorganized by the Central Executive Committee subject to the approval of the Convention.

*Section 10.* Members or groups suspended or expelled may appeal to the District Executive Committee before final action is taken.

*Section 11.* Any higher unit in the Party may present charges against any subordinate unit or member within its jurisdiction.

*Section 12.* Every member of the Communist Party elected, or appointed to an official position in a labor union or any other organization shall be under strict Party control and the immediate instructions of the Party nucleus of his labor union or other organization.

*Section 13.* No delegate to the National Convention shall be bound by decisions of the units by which they are elected. Delegates are obliged to present instructions as recommendations to the Convention.

*Section 14.* The Central Executive Committee shall maintain discipline over its members. It may suspend or expel one of its members by a vote of eight to one, accused member not voting.

*Section 15.* Any suspended or expelled member of the Central Executive Committee shall have the right to appeal in writing to the next National Party Convention.

### **Article IX: Finance.**

*Section 1.* Applicants for membership shall pay an initiation fee of one dollar, which shall be forwarded to the National Organization.

*Section 2.* Monthly dues shall be sixty cents and shall be receipted for by dues stamps issued by the Central Executive Committee and paid into the National Party treasury through the regular Party channels.

*Section 3.* Special assessments may be levied by the Convention and the Central Executive Committee. No member shall be considered in good standing unless he pays such assessments.

*Section 4.* Members unable to pay dues and assessments on account of sickness, unemployment, imprisonment, strikes, or for similar reasons shall be granted exemption upon application to the Branch Executive Committee. Group Organizers shall include such requests in their reports, and Branch Organizers shall report all exemptions granted every time they make their remittances for dues.

*Section 5.* Dues shall be paid monthly. No advance payments shall be made, and members who have not paid dues by the first of the month for the previous month shall be considered in bad standing. A member who is two months in arrears shall be dropped from membership, unless within one month after notification by the Group Organizer he places himself in good standing.

### **Article X: Party Press.**

*Section 1.* The Central Executive Committee shall publish the official underground organ of the Party, which shall be issued at least once a month.

*Section 2.* The Central Executive Committee shall issue a bi-weekly Party bulletin which shall be distributed to the membership free of charge.

*Section 3.* Literature issued by the Party shall be under the supervision of the editorial committee and under the control of the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 4.* No subdivision of the Party may publish papers or books without the permission of the Central Executive Committee. Over their own signature, Sections may issue leaflets dealing with matters in their locality, subject to the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 5.* All legal and illegal Party press and publishing machinery, including Federation press and establishments, shall be unconditionally and fully subject to the Party through its Central Executive Committee or such other Party units as may be expressly authorized by the Central Executive Committee.

*Section 6.* No member of the Party shall contribute articles or editorials of a political or economic nature to the bourgeois press except by permission of the Central Executive Committee.

### **Article XI: Party Nuclei.**

*Section 1.* The Central Executive Committee shall provide for the organization of Communist Party nuclei, composed of Communist Party members only, in the shops, in the unions, and in other workers' organizations; within the army and navy, and ex-soldiers' organizations.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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