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## **Prologue**

### **Report of the General Secretary**

For those who fight on the progressive side of human affairs, the struggles present their own awards and honors. And at critical turning points history presents its awards of approval.

Holding our Inaugural Congress here in New York at Arrow Park, the home of the American-Russian Organization of Workers (AROW) is such an award; such an honor. It is history's recognition of approval. It is also history's way of tweaking the nose of the corporate structure.

Ninety-three (93) years ago the corporate establishment saw a specter. U.S. capitalism mobilized for all-out war against it. They pulled out all the stops to prevent the birth of a working class revolutionary party that advocated socialism.

They mobilized the police force and the courts. They trained a stable of provocateurs and stoolpigeons. They launched the most intensive and vile campaign of slander and falsehoods. They passed laws making Marxist thought illegal. They sent hundreds to prison, conducted mass raids, deported thousands and created a caste system of unemployables. They promoted and pushed racism on a mass scale. And yes, they murdered and maimed.

In spite of all their efforts, 93 years ago a group of heroic men and women – the best thinkers, the most advanced revolutionary minds – gathered in Bridgman, Michigan to attend a convention of the newly born Communist Party. This was a bold move. It was a small gathering. But the capitalist class saw it as the handwriting on the wall. They attacked with full force – federal, state, and city – the FBI, the police. The Mayor of Bridgman joined the vigilantes. They arrested the leaders and confiscated the draft resolutions. They celebrated, believing that the specter was buried in the sand dunes near Bridgman, Michigan.

After 93 short years, after McCarthy, the Smith Act, the Communist Control Act, after Leavenworth, Atlanta, and Terre Haute – here we are – at Arrow Park. We are here because the

Communists are on the progressive side of human affairs, on the working side of the class struggle.

This is a special – most glorious occasion, as the PCUSA continues the tradition of American Communists who formed a party in September, 1919.

American Communists came into existence as a party, at a turning point in world affairs and in the international working class movement, created by the development of imperialism, the catastrophic First World War, and the outbreak of the great Russian Revolution that gave birth to the first workers' socialist state, the Soviet Union. These history-making events *affected every* part of the world, including the United States. These events had their influence on, and contributed to the founding of a Communist Party.

Contrary to the red-baiting slander, American Communists formed a Party that was not formed from “the outside.” It was created by the conditions and the world forces within our own country. It was a response to the sufferings caused by WW I, of the masses of our people. It was a response to the corporate juggernaut of exploitation, to racism, high prices and lowered living standards – all while the bankers and industrialists made fabulous profits.

The war and the economic conditions led to big strikes, mass discontent and growing radicalism. Capitalism was leading the United States into a dead-end alley.

Our origins really date far back to the first Marxist groups formed in the 1850's. The early Marxists helped nominate Abraham Lincoln as a candidate for the presidency, fought in the Civil War, prodded Lincoln to a bolder strategy in organizing African-Americans of the North and removing the racist obstacles to their full participation in the Civil War; they also helped to work out a strategy which hastened the victory and crushed the rebellion of the slaveholders. In fact, Joseph Weydemeyer was a General in the Union Army and was a member of the International Workingman's Association who corresponded with Karl Marx.

The work of Communists, despite severe repression and periods of illegality, has been considerable. There is not a single

important issue or struggle since 1919 that the Communists have failed to take part in or to lead.

Communists helped bring about unemployment insurance through tremendous mass struggles. We were in the forefront in the fight for Social Security. Communists contributed to the movement and tactics of the CIO for the organization of the unorganized in the basic mass production industries.

We have fought in the civil rights battles against racist oppression of Black Americans, Chicanos, and other oppressed nationalities.

We fought to save Republican Spain from Franco fascism. The majority of the 1,500 U.S. volunteers who died on that battlefield were Communists.

We fought against the fascist threat to our country by the Nazis, who were aided by the most reactionary sections of U.S. monopoly capital. And we fought side-by-side with our countrymen in the war against Hitler fascism and Japanese imperialism.

We made contributions to the struggles for the independence of Cuba and Angola, China, and the Philippines, Nicaragua, and Puerto Rico, and all who fight to break the stranglehold of U.S. imperialism.

We participated in the struggles against U.S. aggression in Korea and Vietnam, Nicaragua, El Salvador, S. Africa, Angola, and Mozambique, and generally in the intense struggles of our people to defeat McCarthyism and defend the democratic rights of all Americans.

In all of these, and other significant daily struggles of our people, Communists have been, and are diligent, heroic, earnest, and intelligent forefront fighters. We can truly be proud of our history.

Government bodies are in a state of paralysis. The two parties of Big Business are in disarray. The U.S. trade balance continues heavily on the deficit side.

The economy suffers from a mixture of short range cyclical and long-range chronic problems like income disparity and a worldwide crisis of over-production. There continues to be a deterioration in not only the overall structural framework of United

States capitalism, but a worldwide capitalist structural crisis fueled by over-production. There is a new spontaneous explosiveness among the masses that keeps surfacing, even in unexpected sectors, among immigrants, and the Occupy movement.

There is much confusion and the developments are uneven. But the overwhelming sentiment of the people is anti-corporate and anti-establishment. The people rate the president and the presidency at an all-time low.

This is but a reflection of the fact that the public is giving the lowest possible ratings to corporations, to Congress, to federal, state, and local governing bodies. Further, they are increasingly giving a low rating to the whole capitalist system.

Excluding the corporate executives, of course, there is a shift in a radical direction. It is a growing mood that reflects a declining confidence in the system. There is a growing mood for more than the usual run-of-the-mill reforms. It is a shift toward support for more basic radical structural changes. The mood is now overwhelmingly and solidly anti-corporate, anti-monopoly and anti-state.

We are again living at one of those major crossroads. State monopoly capitalism has developed to a level where the usual reform measures have little effect and the anti-monopoly movements have not yet reached a level where they can compel more radical measures.

To this point, the responses of state monopoly capitalism – in spite of the crises – are measures that are at the expense of the people, and policies that continue to feed and fatten the corporate golden calf.

We are in a period when masses have lost confidence in the old ruling structure, including the two old parties, but have not yet placed their trust in new political formations. We are at a moment when the majority are dissatisfied and are not willing to go along with the way things are, but not yet clear how things should be.

We are in a phase where the masses are angry and ready for action, but are not yet clear as to how and where to direct their anger. This manifests itself in the campaigns of Donald Trump from the right, and Bernie Sanders from the left.

As we all know, the Republican and Democratic Parties represent and work for the basic interests of capital, the large stockholders of General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler. This is their sole purpose in life. We in the PCUSA represent and work for the workers of GM, Ford, and Chrysler, and the other large capitalist conglomerates. What irony – that the big three automakers received a “bailout” from the taxpayers at the same time they were closing unionized assembly and parts plants, and demanding huge takeaways from the workers, replacing defined pension benefit plans with 401 (k) plans.

The Republicans and Democrats will say the corporations have a right to make a profit, and therefore the right to close plants and relocate them because they don’t produce *maximum profits*. We say private corporate profits are not a right, any more than is highway robbery.

We say there is only one fundamental right, and one responsibility. That is for the workers and their families to be able to live – feed and clothe their families, and to be able to send their children to school. There is nothing in life that can supersede that.

Moreover, we are proud of the fact that the PCUSA is part of the world Communist movement, which now exists in over 100 countries. Marxist-Leninists are the greatest political force in the world because they are on the right side of history. We therefore call for an international ideological conference with the widest possible participation to develop an international position with regard to Marxism-Leninism and the struggle against imperialism, most especially U.S. imperialism. We believe that without a strong Marxist-Leninist party of the working class in the USA this task will be formidable. We will need the assistance of all Communist Parties that believe as we do. We will need to hear comrades’ ideas and experiences so that we can implement an effective class struggle strategy for the USA. We will need to link the struggles of American workers with the world and reverse the damage done by the theory of American exceptionalism.

The PCUSA is a party of the class that is on its way up because we have the science of Marxism-Leninism to guide us. We

are for a socio-economic system that will put an end to exploitation of the workers – forever; an end to plant closings, job insecurity, and unemployment – forever; an end to war and war production – forever. *How this works can be explained as follows: “To each according to human contribution is a principle of distribution considered to be one of the defining features of socialism. It refers to an arrangement whereby individual compensation is reflective of one's contribution to the social product (total output of the economy) in terms of effort, labor and productivity. This is held in contrast to the method of distribution and compensation in capitalism, where those who own private property receive unearned income in the form of interest, rent, or profit by virtue of ownership irrespective of their contribution to the social product.”* We understand the scientific analysis by Marx: “In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to [human] ability, to each according to [human need]. \* [Marx, Critique of the Gotha Programme, 1875] *Stalin's most famous use of the concept is in the 1936 Soviet Constitution. There it is written that “The principle applied in the U.S.S.R. is that of socialism: “From each according to [human] ability, to each according to [human] work.” It is especially noteworthy that Stalin's formulation says the principle of socialism, and not full communism.”* That is why we are for socialism at this point in the development of society. We seek a change from capitalism to socialism. Socialism is a temporary stage of development, a necessary transition on the road to Communism and the complete liberation of the working class. That is why we are Communists! Long live the PCUSA! Long live the proletarian revolution!



# I

## POLITICAL ECONOMY

Capitalism is based on production by wage labor. That means that all value is produced by the workers and other laboring classes working collectively. The product is the property of the capitalist owners, while the actual producers only receive wages that amount to the minimum they need to support themselves and their families so that they can return to work the next day. Moreover, as capitalism develops, these wages are continually forced down. Thus the fundamental contradiction of capitalism is between the social character of production (many workers working together to produce a product) and the private character of appropriation (the products produced are the property of a constantly shrinking number of capitalists). Under this system, the capitalists, the rich, get richer, while the workers, the poor, become poorer. Our chief economic aim is to remove the capitalists from ownership, as our chief political aim is to remove the capitalists from power.

For over 150 years, this system has produced cyclical crises. This means that as production increases, the working people with their limited wages cannot afford to purchase the mass of goods produced. Production slows to a recession or depression, workers are thrown out of work, until the point is reached where production is able to slowly increase again. This was the case in the Great Depression of the 1930s and in the smaller recessions before and since.

In more recent decades, the government and finance capital have turned toward a vast expansion of credit to artificially stimulate demand. But this has only led to increased overproduction crises when the credit bubble burst. This is what happened in the “sub-prime mortgage” crisis of 2007-2008. Many people who were granted credit to buy homes were unable to pay their mortgages. This led to the bankruptcy or near collapse of many major banks and other financial institutions. The government was only able to get out of this crisis by bailing out these institutions with trillions of dollars of taxpayer money. They thus put the burden of the crisis on the backs of working people. We must make the rich pay for the crisis that they created.

## II LABOR

### **Historical background**

The working class is the principal one that will carry out the socialist revolution. It is the class that holds the power of production in its hands, it is concentrated in the workplaces (whether factories, mines, offices or service industries). As the Communist Manifesto states: "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie to-day, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product." It is destined to be the gravedigger of capitalism.

The CPUSA had a long and glorious history of organizing the working class. Even before its formation, many of its future leaders took a major part in the strike wave following World War I and the October Revolution, the CPUSA led the Bonus March of veterans in 1932, it organized the Unemployment Councils during the Great Depression, it led in forming the main industrial unions of the CIO (longshore, auto, rubber, steel, etc.), and it helped in the building of a United and Popular Front against fascism before and during World War II.

After World War II the U.S. emerged as the chief imperialist power on a world scale. The U.S. government used a two-pronged strategy of repression and bribery against the working class in order to preserve peace at home while carrying out war and aggression abroad. It attacked the most progressive forces in the trade-union movement, especially the Communists, driving out most of the revolutionary elements during the period of McCarthyism. It should be noted that the right made use of forces in the trade union movement that had been willing to ally with the CP in the building of the CIO, such as Reuther in auto, Murray in steel, and Carey, who eventually led the anti-communist attack inside General Electric.

The government also bribed and made concessions to some of the better-paid workers, often through the social-democratic union leaders. Examples of this were the GI Bill, allowing some workers to try to escape from their class by going to college, or

the provision of low-interest loans to purchase housing coops, such as much of the housing in Coop Village through the ACWA and ILGWU on the Lower East Side of New York City. As Lenin pointed out in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*: “The receipt of high monopoly profits by the capitalists in one of the numerous branches of industry, in one of the numerous countries, etc., makes it economically possible for them to bribe certain sections of the workers, and for a time a fairly considerable minority of them, and win them to the side of the bourgeoisie of a given industry or given nation against all the others.”

With this, the progressive forces in the trade unions were reduced to a small number of independent unions (such as the ILWU and the UE), as well as rank-and-file caucuses in other AFL unions and CIO unions. [The two labor federations merged in 1955.] Thus the labor movement, and much of the popular movement as a whole, was relatively quiescent during the Korean War. The living standard of much of the working class rose during this period, but at the cost of its political independence.

There were mass protests, particularly of the civil rights and human rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and of the movement against the Vietnam War in the mid-1960s to mid-1970s. These involved masses of people (including workers) from the oppressed nationalities, and of mainly petty-bourgeois students and others (including workers drafted into the imperialist army), but not the working class as a whole. It is no accident that President Johnson was able to wage war against Vietnam at the same time as he carried out the “Great Society” at home.

It is also no coincidence that the year 1975 marked both the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam and the beginning of the slow decline of the standard of living of the working class at home. Unfortunately, the subjective consciousness of the working class lags behind the change in its objective conditions. The leadership of the major AFL-CIO union still objectively tails behind U.S. imperialism.

Changes in the objective situation of the working class

In the 1950s, the U.S. was an industrial powerhouse. It was the major producer of autos, steel, oil, coal, textile, etc. in the capitalist world. The working class was concentrated in large

factories, with thousands of workers. The largest companies in 1955 included GM (with over 550,000 workers), US Steel (over 265,000 workers), GE (over 210,000 workers), etc.

In the 60 years since then, there have been great changes in production and in the productivity of labor. The U.S. monopoly corporations, in pursuit of maximum profit, have shifted much of their manufacturing industry to other countries with much cheaper labor power, whether to Mexico, south Korea, China, India, etc. Also, the introduction of new machinery, robotics, etc. allows the remaining U.S.-based industries to produce more commodities with fewer workers. Many factories have been closed down or shrunk in size, converting the old Steel Belt into the Rust Belt. Many petty-bourgeois people are becoming increasingly more proletarian; teachers and nurses for example. Office workers, once a relatively privileged adjunct to factory workers, have become a low-paid clerical workforce. At the same time, low-wage service industry has vastly increased. Among the largest industries today are Wal-Mart (about 1,400,000 workers in the US), McDonalds (some 760,000 workers), etc.

Many of the major economic struggles over the last few years have been in these service industries. One has been the fight for \$15/hour and a union. This struggle is still in its early stages, as there must still be a turn towards actual organizing of these workers into unions.

Another major fight is against the privatization of public services. This includes the fight against the closing of post offices throughout the country and the provision of postal services in non-union private companies such as Staples and Wal-Mart. So far, the postal workers have only fought this with a boycott campaign. In our view it can only be fought effectively with a nationwide campaign to unionize these industries. There is also the fight against the increasing number of charter schools, and against state aid to private education. There is also a major struggle against increased tuition in public colleges, and the fight of professors, adjuncts and teaching assistants there, who need to join forces with students and their advocacy organizations.

We cannot by any means ignore the continuing fights of industrial workers to maintain and improve their standard of living

and working conditions. There was the important strike of oil refinery workers represented by the USW, the fight of the ILWU longshore workers on the West Coast against the use of scab labor, and the fight by the UFCW that organized meat packing workers in the Smithfield plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina. This latter struggle highlighted the importance of African-American workers and immigrant workers and their unity in struggle.

Finally, we need to point out the key role of transportation workers. Transportation worker militancy can be seen, for example, in the strikes of TWU bus and subway workers in New York City in 1966, 1980, and 2005. The 2005 TWU strike effectively shut down the city for 2½ days. It can also be seen in the important role of the Teamsters port truck drivers, whose solidarity with West Coast longshore workers was an important assist to their struggle. This was true even though these drivers are not organized for the most part, and many are fraudulently not even considered workers, as they are officially classified a “owner operators,” who have to buy off their rigs from the big trucking firms.

### **PCUSA labor plan of action**

- \*Unite to oppose all anti-worker, anti-union trade deals.
- \* Support for low wage workers and the fight for \$15 and a union campaign
- \* Campaign to repeal Taft-Hartley section 14 (b)
- \* Campaign against right to work laws
- \* Support effort to overturn the CWA vs. Beck decision
- \* Build Labor Today caucuses in each local union
- \* Build support for the anti-imperialist, principled trade union positions of the World Federation of Trade Unions and active support and build the WFTU in North America.

## **III PEACE AND SOLIDARITY**

### **The Fight Against Fascism and War**

The Peace & Solidarity Commission of the Party of Communists USA is responsible for our party’s work in building our understanding of the “United Front Against Fascism and War”

detailed in Georgi Dimitroff's Main Report to the Communist International on August 2, 1935. In our view, the greatest threat to peace in today's world is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which operates worldwide as an imperialist army against the working class. NATO involves more than the capitalists of one country. Finance capital is international now. The imperialist powers, led by the United States, provoke military conflict to achieve strategic objectives that benefit the few, at the expense of the many. The working class is divided by artificial differences like skin color and religion that are exacerbated by these imperialist governments that provoke nationalistic and jingoistic feelings that keep the working class from uniting. It is our job to work to build unity across all these differences. Dimitroff explains it this way: "Comrades, fascism in power was correctly described by the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International as the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital". This is the classic definition. It is our job to unite all of the major peace organizations in the United States with the labor movement, to combine all of our resources against NATO imperialist aggression, and to demand that our government reduce its military expenditures and spend our tax dollars on the people's needs. To do this requires an anti-monopoly strategy, and a rejection of the two party system that Americans have been accustomed to. It means coming together around a simple, anti-war, anti-corporate agenda.

### **Demands:**

1 We support the need to oppose fascism wherever capitalism imposes such regimes which espouse this menace to humanity.

2 In particular the use of fascist allies in Ukraine by the United States, the EU, and NATO to seize the Ukrainian government and to wage war against anti-fascist, patriotic people who refused to bend to the government in Kiev, the brave defenders of the Lugansk and Donetsk, has outraged the world and call all people to rally behind these freedom fighters. We call all progressive to unite in a massive popular front to defend these

people and to end the blight of anti-Semitic, Pro-Hitlerite reaction in Ukraine.

## IV YOUTH

*“In dealing from this angle with the tasks confronting the youth, I must say that the tasks of the youth in general, and of the Young Communist Leagues and all other organizations in particular, might be summed up in a single word: learn.” – V.I Lenin*

### **Preamble**

The League of Young Communists (LYC) actively assists the Party of Communists USA (PCUSA) as an allied, yet independent organization. The LYC is led by youth with the guidance of party officers. The LYC is a strong supporter of the policy of the party in all areas; the strength of the League of Young Communists comes from its ideological conviction and dedication to Marxism-Leninism and a conscious Bolshevik discipline cultivated by the unity within its ranks. LYC members must learn that a Leninist party lives, works, fights and wins collectively. The main task of the LYC must be to educate young people on the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism, the heroic traditions of revolutionary struggle, the many examples of selfless work of youth in developing and strengthening their generation’s approach to class struggle and all phenomena of social life, and to prepare a persistent, educated, enthusiastic cadre of future builders of scientific socialism and eventually communism. The LYC educates the younger generation to respect the heroic history of the Communist Party in the United States, the power and greatness of the world communist movement, and the historical achievements of 20th century socialism as exemplified by the 1917 October revolution in Russia, the building of the People’s Democracies in eastern Europe as well as the socialist revolutions in China in 1949, and in Cuba in 1959. A Leninist League of Young Communists must undertake a sustained covenant with the defenders of scientific socialism as Lenin’s statement expresses, that the union of communist youth “must be a shock

group that approaches every task with assistance and displays initiative and enterprise,” to ensure that each member of the league is an example for young people at work, at school, and in the military. In this spirit we put forward the following demands:

### **Free Education K – College**

We demand free public education from kindergarten through college. We believe that well-funded comprehensive public education is essential to the positive development of the youth. Education must be provided by public institutions rather than private for-profit institutions that have ulterior motives conflicting with proper education and rearing of youth. We stand in solidarity with striking teachers and support their demands unconditionally, we believe that it’s impossible to put students first without putting teachers first. We believe crushing debt associated with higher education is a serious obstacle to unlocking the potential of youth and demand this debt be canceled immediately.

### **Right to a Job**

We demand the right to full employment for youth in the United States. The youth unemployment rate is over 12% according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. We believe that stable employment is essential for the development of young adults into young workers, productive members of our society. Youth unemployment seriously impacts the development of young adults in this country and must be dealt with accordingly.

### **Right to an Adequate Wage & A Union**

We demand that all working youth have the right to organize a union in their place of work without fear of retaliation and receive an adequate wage adjusted annually according to the costs of living in each region. We believe a wage should reflect the Marxist concept, “from each according to human ability, to each according to human work.” This principle is key to the transformation of youth into young adults, the costs of developing into an adult must be accounted for. Furthermore, we resolve that union representation is the cornerstone of any democratic society. Youth participation in organized labor teaches fundamental lessons in democracy and collective work to young people.



## **Right to Healthcare, Food, & Housing**

We demand a free full coverage healthcare program for all people, especially youth. Furthermore, we demand a comprehensive housing assistance program and the extension of food-stamp benefits to everyone under 21 where necessary. We believe that healthcare, food, access to clean water, and housing are essential rights that should be guaranteed to all peoples regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation or national origin.

## **Anti-Imperialism, Internationalism**

We demand an immediate end to the imperialist adventures of the US government and resolve to stand in solidarity with all movements at home and abroad fighting against US imperialist aggression. We believe that imperialist war is the wholesale slaughter of international youth for profit, which runs counter to our demands for peace and fraternity.

## **Solidarity with Oppressed Peoples**

We demand an end to oppression wherever it may be found. We believe nothing short of full equality is acceptable for all people; no matter their race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or national origin.

## **Fight for Socialism**

We demand a socialist society. Historically, revolution is the sole means of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and a scientific socialist society. We hold that class conscious struggle to revolution is the only means of achieving liberation for the working class and international youth. Furthermore, we defend current and former socialist countries from defamation.

## **Revolutionary Youth Unite!**

We demand a united front of revolutionary youth organizations. We believe that only with the discipline and resources of a centralized revolutionary youth movement can we fight to win a better future for young people in the United States and around the world.

## **V LGBT**

The Party of Communists USA rejects all discrimination and harassment of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people. We harken back to Lenin and the Communist repeal of Tsarist Russian anti-homosexual laws. We ground these demands in the determination of the working class to abolish all forms of discrimination. We unite with American Communists like Harry Hay, the founder of the Mattachine Societies (1951-76), to end the bourgeois prejudice and discrimination against LGBT people.

## **VI DISABILITY, HEALTH AND SENIORS**

The PCUSA stands firmly behind a revolutionary change in American health care. No longer can the health of American workers be dependent on a system where the rich have the means to demand quality health care and the overwhelming majority must survive with minimal care or outright denial of their need in order to provide capitalism always with massive profits. The time for change is now. The profits of the corporations and the obscenely expense of an American war machine must be made available to provide quality health for all Americans. Older Americans must choose between food and medicine each month because they lack the necessary income to afford both.

1. We stand for the creation of a national health plan and socialized medicine. No more private medicine, no more health insurance companies, no more private hospitals – profit or non-profit, no more hospital monopolies, no more profit pharmaceutical companies! Salaried physicians, nurses, medical care persons employed by government at reasonable rates of compensation with the full protections available to working people under a scientific socialist system! No more rationing of health care for the profits of others. Full health care for all Americans without health insurance, paid for by the American working class because it is their just due. No one excluded. No one forced into bankruptcy. Genuine health care for all Americans.

2. We need a full, national program in the training of physicians, nurses and other health care professionals. We must have

an educational system which has such training, with full federal funding, to all who are committed to serve where there is need. We must return control of pharmaceutical research and development to federal control and fund research without concern for profits. We must return to the people the basis for a national health care system, the hospitals, mental health care facilities, and community clinics.

3. The workplace must be made safe for workers; we must fund national programs to ensure that all have the best possible information on safety and health. We must take control to provide what working people need. This is our right and responsibility.

4. We must guarantee pensions for seniors and the disabled. Right now there is a movement to privatize their benefits, and to turn defined benefit plans into 401 (k) plans. This must **never** be allowed to happen. We must work and participate fully in the older adult and disabled workers' organizations to solidify a movement against privatization of Social Security and other earned benefits.

## VII FAMILY AND WOMEN'S ISSUES

*“There can be no real mass movement without the women “-  
Vladimir Lenin*

Women's rights affect not only women, but men, children, the disabled, and the elderly, too. Though we commend much of what the bourgeoisie and left parties did in the 1960's and 1970's in helping women gain greater equality in the workforce and over their reproductive rights, we equally understand there was much that not been addressed and should have. In the struggle for women's rights, many left parties following bourgeoisie parties like NOW, so narrowly defined working-class women as workers, they failed to realize women are not just workers, but also mothers, sisters, daughters, caregivers, and just plain human beings. The same of which can be said of men.

Thus the PC USA calls for a new women's agenda. Unlike many other parties we understand that we cannot deal with women's issues without adequately discussing the family and its

class base. In the past, disability used to be the leading cause of poverty in the US; today it is having a child. Therefore questions relating to the high rate of inflation along with the rapid increase in automation that have made the 40 hour work week superfluous also need to be addressed.

The high cost of living has created a situation where all working people are overworked, burnt out, and incapable of becoming fully realized human beings with free time to devote to themselves, their partners, or their extended families and friends. This situation is especially hurtful to small children, because how can a parent, male or female, be able to provide any proper emotional or physical care if they are forced to continuously work and are devoid of any free time? Bad as the economic situation is for men, it is even worse for women.

Whereas in the past, a major stumbling block in the fight for women's equality may have been the inability to enter the workforce, today the situation is completely opposite. Not only do women work, but they work more than ever; often working two full time jobs – one paid outside the home and the other the unpaid housework, which includes childcare, and oftentimes eldercare as well at home afterwards. Even when women are not working, they are so busy trying to find a job or hustling for money and so stressed out that they might as well be working full-time. This represents a radical shift from the 1950's. Moreover, women in American society unlike their European counterparts are not covered by federally mandated maternity leave, childcare, eldercare, and sick days to take care for children or other family members.

All of this has contributed to a breakdown of society and a high divorce rate. This situation today is further aggravated by the fact many American families are headed by one parent; predominately women in a society where one income is often not enough to sustain a household.

### **The Social and Economic Impact on Men and the Family**

Women are seen as a caste in our society. The caste that does the domestic work as well as child care. Even when women work outside the home it is expected they will still perform the majori-

ty if not all of the housework and childcare in the home. Domestic work in the home is never acknowledged as work in our Capitalist society although it is work; necessary work. After all, the raising of children represents tomorrow's workforce. During the 1950's and 1960's a man's wages were supposed to cover the raising of children in the home. Today this burden has shifted from large corporations to the family itself. Devaluation of service-centered and domestic work performed by women in the home has had a disastrous effect on the economy and society.

As we have moved from an industrial-centered economy to a service-centered one, women have replaced men in the workforce as women are seen as being docile, desperate workers easy to exploit. Employers know that women, especially single women with children will take the worst paying jobs just to support their children. Therefore, in order to maintain a low-wage worker pool for the service industry, it has popularized divorce on TV and the media, made it easy for men to walk away from marriages without paying child support, and has continuously made birth control and abortion more and more difficult to access. This is also why men find it impossible to gain custody of their own children.

All of this has created high unemployment among the male population and has caused a steep decline in overall wages. Today women comprise 2 out of 3 minimum wage workers and still earn an average of 77 cents for every \$1 a man earns. Minorities and women of color suffer even more from income inequality. In fact, corporations like Walmart have used the devaluation of women's work in the service industry to shift the burden of paying women a fair wage to the taxpayer who is subsidizing Walmart by providing SNAP and Medicaid benefits. The lack of acknowledgement that domestic work in the home is work has led, not only to a lack pay, but also child-rearing and eldercare credits.

### **Our Demands:**

The capitalist system pits workers against each other in order to have groups fight for the lowest wages. Until Capitalism is

replaced with Socialism, a system based on human needs rather than profits, we make the following demands:

1 Guaranteed 20 hr/week employment with full medical, retirement, vacation, and sick leave benefits, which includes sick leave to take care of other family members.

2 Passing the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) guaranteeing equal pay for equal work.

3 The right for a woman to control her body which includes access to free birth control and the right to terminate pregnancy; free of government interference, such as mandatory waiting periods.

4 Guaranteed maternity & paternity leave at full pay of at least 4 years.

5 Recognition and guaranteed financial assistance for housework; which includes childcare of both small children and disabled children, and eldercare.

6 Access to free childcare.

7 The expansion of Title IX guaranteeing equal financial support for women's sports, which should include support in economically disadvantaged areas.

## **VIII ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS**

Modern capitalism is being engulfed by an environmental crisis of its own making. Without concerted effort and global economic planning the crisis of global climate will mean a world with a 6-8° C rise in average temperature within a century. Associated with this change will be a general worsening of weather with unpredictable drought and storms which will turn what was once fertile agricultural land into desert. Seas will rise with the melting of the arctic ice-cap, covering exposed costal lands.

Climate change is an irrefutable fact of our time. The monthly average temperature worldwide has been higher than the twentieth century average for 329 straight months. Global annual mean temperatures have broken records in 11 out of the last 13 years. By 2012 the polar ice cap was smaller than it has ever been in recorded history. Even now, 97% of the ice cover in Greenland is melting. The scientific community is essentially

unanimous in its call for immediate and sustained action on the part of the world community to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, gases that are driving the increasingly calamitous extremes in the Earth's climate. The U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change already projects that much of the United States will no longer be arable for food crops by the end of this century if current trends continue.

Industrial capitalism has profited greatly from the emergence of the machine; its entire system of production and distribution has arisen through the application of human work to the technological succession of increasingly great machines and their proliferation. As Marx observed, it is only through application to nature (and the increasing technologizing of it) that human work has brought forth value. For centuries capitalism has collected great profits while producing greenhouse gases which has slowly, gradually been transforming nature and not to the benefit of mankind. Greenhouse gases have been the great externality – the most persistent pollution arising from capitalism – now this pollution has affected the carrying capacity of the earth. One might think that capitalism might have taken this danger to heart, but the ruthless need to extract as much value from production has blinded capitalism to the danger. Capital will poison the last producer with its pollution, carefree only to extract enough value until the entire edifice of humanity is consumed.

In this way is the dilemma presented: the slow descent to barbarism provided by capitalism or socialism, because only the concerted effort and economic planning of socialism will allow us to escape the environmental crisis.

First and foremost, we must reduce the level of greenhouse gases. A significant portion of this results from the coal and other fossil-fuels we use to power factories, to heat our homes. Only a fundamental commitment to vastly reduce dependence on coal and other fossil-fuels.

The elimination of coal production will have an effect on U.S. miners. We propose the establishment of a national “green jobs” program which will help place workers in new jobs. Among the most urgent need is a program to weatherize Ameri-

can homes and business;’ this will produce millions of jobs in the intermediate terms.

We must also acknowledge that the developing world is only beginning to achieve the first benefit of industry. We cannot condemn the developing world to a future without the benefit of industry. The industrial world must shoulder the burden of reduced greenhouse gases. We solemnly commit to use our technology to assist the developing world to reach the full prosperity of socialism.

## **IX OPPRESSED NATIONALITIES**

There are two different positions put forward for the program on oppressed nationalities:

### **First position**

#### **Racism and Capitalism**

Racism in its many forms continues to play a negative but central role in every aspect of U.S. capitalism, including keeping the bourgeoisie in power, producing increasing profits, and developing, justifying, and maintaining institutional discrimination.

The working class must fight against racism, for full equality of all nationally oppressed, and for affirmative action, if it is to unite internally and enter lasting alliances with the organizations and movements of racially oppressed peoples. By the same token, the nationally and racially oppressed groups must support labor’s demands in order to unite internally and to ally with labor.

The U.S. is perhaps the most multiracial and multinational country in the world, with about 300 million people including almost every race, nationality, and ethnic group on the planet. Racially and nationally oppressed people live and work in every region, in every state, and in every major city. They are primarily working-class and generally occupy the lowest-paying, most exploitative jobs. Among the nationally and racially oppressed are African Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Arab and Middle Eastern peoples.



From its inception, the United States was built on racism, from the displacement and near genocide of Native Americans, to the enslavement of African Americans, to the theft of huge sections of Mexico, to the racist workers. The ability of employers to pay workers differently based on skin color, country of origin, immigration, exclusion of Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants, to the current xenophobic hysteria against Arabs and South Asians, racism has been a convenient tool for the maintenance of power and profits by the ruling class at the expense of oppressed people and all workers.

Racism affects the unity of the working class at all levels. Racism is a tool that not only exploits racially oppressed people; it aids in the exploitation of white workers as well. Racial discrimination in hiring, racist wage and salary policies, and racial stratification of various industries and trades undermine the interests of all status; the hire date in two-tier wage systems exerts downward pressure on the wages of all workers. It allows bosses to extract even higher profits from racially oppressed workers. Racism is good for capitalism, but is bad for working people of every race. White workers have a powerful self-interest in fighting racism; white workers will gain greater victories to the degree that they unite with nationally and racially oppressed workers. Multiracial unity in the workplace and on the shop-floor is the key to winning victories for all, to lifting wages, conditions and dignity for every worker.

White people must take an initiating role in combating all instances of racism and national oppression wherever and whenever they occur and provide support to people of color who are in leadership of movements and organizations. These acts are the building blocks of grassroots unity and trust. They prove the struggle against racism is not for racially oppressed people to combat alone. It is in the self-interest of all workers, leading to greater unity, respect, and strength for the labor movement and all other movements.

### **National Minorities and the National Question**

Attention to national minorities in Austro-Hungary and Russia even before the revolution in 1917 led Lenin and other Bol-

sheviks to judge that national independence was essential for multi-ethnic participation in the democratic transition after the success of the Revolution. However, these leaders recognized that such revolutionary-socialist national would be conditioned by economic and other factors which would determine whether specific people would best served by national determination. Stalin, using a definition eagerly embraced by Lenin, defined a nation as an “historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.” Whether a case had reached such conditions would involve extensive discussion of relative theoretical issue applicable to each national minority. Additionally general efforts to deploy *Korenizatsiya*, a kind of Soviet administrative action, to depute advantage to members of national minorities into Soviet government and industry.

### **African-Americans and national Self-Determination**

While the Communist Party abhorred racism, it was not until the 1920s that a unified Communist strategy was adequately adopted, particularly toward African-Americans in the Deep South. Bolstered by the emergence of the Third Period adopted by Comintern in 1928, the American party enthusiastically endorsed the national self-determination of African-Americans:

“While continuing and intensifying the struggle under the slogan of full political and social equality for the Negroes, which must remain the central slogan of our party work among the masses, the Party must come out openly for the right of Negroes to national self-determination in the southern states where Negroes form the majority of the population” (ECCI 1928).

By 1930 the Communist Party and the Comintern had made black belt self-determination in the American south an integral part of political work:

“Owing to the peculiar situation in the Black Belt (the fact that the majority of the resident Negro population are farmers, and agricultural laborers and that the capitalist economic system as well as political class rule there is not only of a special kind, but to a great extent still has pre-capitalist and semi-colonial fea-

tures), the right of self-determination as the *main slogan* of the Communist Party in the Black Belt is appropriate” (ECCI 1930).

A number of Communist cadres, particularly Harry Haywood, made this struggle for black belt self-determination for African-American the central core of their lives. This was very much an effect of economic and political events of the 1920s and 1930s. At the time a large minority of several states had a largely rural African-American population in what amounted to peasant subjugation, tied to the land by sharecropping, debt peonage, and Jim Crow legalization of a corrupt racist culture. Under these conditions national self-determination made sense. There remain Communists today who conclude that black belt self-determination is the appropriate strategy. However, other Communists believed that the black belt area, and African-Americans, had completed under capitalism an evolution which made an actual black belt state irrelevant. Certainly war plants in WWI and WWII forged a massive relocation to cities throughout the U.S., and the integration of African-Americans as trade unionists and enthusiastic defenders of labor rights. The question of national self-determination for African-Americans led to the question of whether African-Americans in any sense were still a peasantry. Furthermore, the Communist Party had been making self-determination less a part of Party doctrine with the emergence of the 1935 Popular Front. This resulted in a controversy until the Communist Party made abandonment of black belt self-determination in the 1950s as a matter of a judgment that in the struggle for African-American rights that political and economic events had advanced by making African-American and white American laborers ever more unified. A great deal of the motivating of the policy announced by the Communist Party was done by such African-Americans as Benjamin Davis, W.E.B. DuBois and Henry Winston, which occurred as the Civil Rights Movement began its multicultural activist mission.

It is thus the case that the Program of the Party of Communists must now decide whether the struggle of African-American should revert to self-determination or continue to another theoretical-revolutionary plan.

## **Self-Determination for Other National Minorities**

There remain national minorities about which there has never been any dissension among Communists. The Party of Communists U.S.A. enthusiastically endorsed self-determination for Native Americans and for Pacific Islanders, and for the immediate liberation of Puerto Rico as a free and independent state.

### **Second position:**

The U.S. today is a prison-house of nations, as was tsarist Russia a century ago. This is the result of the historical development of the country.

It began with the expulsion of the native peoples from their lands, and their subsequent genocide through forced marches, purposeful introduction of diseases and outright wars of extermination. This even continues today whenever the capitalists find natural resources that they want to exploit on the reservations to which they have confined the native peoples.

U.S. history (and that of the earlier colonies) continued with the kidnapping and enslavement of Africans, and the mass rape of kidnapped African women, and their transportation particularly to the plantation areas of the South (the Black Belt). The production of cotton and other cash crops (sugar, tobacco, indigo) provided the basis for U.S. industry and its export to Europe. (U.S. cotton was the basis of the British textile industry.) Slavery did not only benefit the Southern plantation oligarchy, but also the Eastern shipping magnates who produced the slave ships, and the Northern bankers who financed the cotton trade. Marx pointed out that: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production." (*Capital*, Vol. I, Chap. 31.)

It took the Civil War (also considered the Second American Revolution), some 250 years after the introduction of slavery into the colonies, to put an end to chattel slavery. But after the defeat of the Confederacy, the U.S. government did not generally break up the plantations or distribute the land to the tillers, the

Afro-American freed people. The defeat of the Reconstruction governments marked the end of the possibility of a democratic solution to the Afro-American national question under the rule of the U.S. capitalist class. Instead, Afro-Americans in the plantation South became an oppressed nation under U.S. rule. Despite the later dispersal of many Blacks to the major U.S. cities, and the decline of sharecropping, this situation continues today.

The U.S. ruling class, in its drive for Manifest Destiny to expand its rule “from sea to shining sea,” conquered the northern half of Mexico, first conquering Tejas (Texas) in 1836 and then California, Arizona, Nuevo Mexico, Colorado and more in the war of 1846-48. These wars, particularly for Texas, were largely to extend slavery into new territories. The ruling class quickly abrogated the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which promised to respect the rights of the inhabitants to their land and language. Thus the Southwest (called by some Aztlan) became an oppressed Chicano nation within the U.S. borders. As family members and others crossed the “falsa frontera” (the phony border) from Mexico, this area became a Chicano/Mexicano nation.

With the transformation of U.S. capitalism from “free competition” to monopoly capitalism, the ruling class continued its expansion. It occupied Alaska, which it purchased from tsarist Russia in 1867, and then occupied Hawai’i and overthrew its monarchy in 1893, adding two more territories to its list of oppressed nations. Hawaii, first treated as a Del Monte pineapple plantation, has now largely become a tourist destination, with many native Hawaiians forced into the low-paid “hospitality” industry.

In one of the first inter-imperialist wars, the Spanish-American War of 1898, the U.S. monopoly capitalist ruling class took over the former Spanish colonies. Cuba became a Protectorate and only gained genuine independence with the victory of the revolution of 1959. The Philippines gained formal independence in 1946 but remains a neo-colony of the U.S. Puerto Rico, Guam and Samoa remain open colonies of the U.S., as do the Virgin Islands, which the U.S. purchased from Denmark in 1917.

All these territories remain oppressed nations under the rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class. We must also recognize

the national oppression of immigrant workers, mostly from Latin America, Asia and Africa but also from some areas of Europe (particularly Eastern Europe), who form a source of cheap labor for the capitalists.

Thus the U.S. has developed into a multinational state with a long history of national oppression. Unfortunately, this has led some whites (Anglo-Americans), including white workers, to develop attitudes of white chauvinism towards their class brothers and sisters. This has at times led to “race riots” and acts of individual terror of whites against blacks, not just in the far-off past, but in the Civil Rights movement in the South, in the struggle against racist attacks such as in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn in 1991 and the murder of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida in 2012.

Let us be clear. These attitudes of white chauvinism, besides deepening the oppression of our comrades from the oppressed nationalities, are against the class interests of the white workers. To take one simple example, the South and particularly the Black Belt has historically and still today been the region with the lowest wages and least rates of unionization (“right to work” for less) for both blacks and whites. There is of course some reactionary nationalism among blacks and people of other oppressed nationalities, but this is overwhelmingly a response to the racist attitudes of some whites, and it is fanned by both the black and white bourgeoisie.

It is the special responsibility of white workers to take up the fight against white supremacy, and to join with their black brothers and sisters against the special oppression of black people (such as against police violence, discrimination in all forms, etc.). We also recognize the historic leading role that black workers have played in the class struggle. Moreover, all workers must take up the call to organize (unionize) the South.

The CPUSA in its revolutionary days and under the influence of the international communist movement in the Comintern, took up the fight for the right to self-determination of the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt South. They connected this with the day-to-day struggles, whether it was for the defense of the Scottsboro youths, the demonstrations of black and white

workers for unemployment insurance (for which black communist leader Angelo Herndon was sentenced to several years in prison), and for organizing industrial workers into integrated unions. In the January 1944 issue of *The Communist*, the revisionist Browder stated that “the Negro people in the United States have found it possible to make their decision once and for all. Their decision is for their complete integration into the American nation as a whole, and not for separation.” Although the position on self-determination was officially revived, together with the CPUSA itself, at the end of the war, it was merely given lip-service to (though some revolutionary members of the party, including Claudia Jones and Harry Haywood, fought for the demand to be taken seriously); it was finally dropped at the 1957 CP conference (after Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin).

There is no doubt that conditions today are quite different from those of the 1930s. For one, there is practically no sharecropping in the South, and farming as a whole has shrunk there as well as in the rest of the country. (However, this is not different from the situation in many of the dependent countries, particularly in Latin America, including the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico, where the majority of peasants have moved into the big cities and many have migrated to the U.S.) Maybe most importantly, many blacks and members of other oppressed nationalities have become workers in the major cities of the country. But even here, they generally have the lowest pay and the hardest jobs. Thus blacks and members of other oppressed nationalities now form a large section of the working class, and an even larger share of the trade union movement. It is quite possible that the criminal rule of U.S. imperialism will be brought to an end by the united struggle of the multinational ruling class, and we must do everything possible to bring this about. But we cannot exclude the possibility that the struggle may break out first in the Black Belt South, or in the Chicano/Mexicano region of the Southwest, among the native peoples on the reservations, or among native Hawaiians or Alaskans. (Here we are not discussing the open colonies of Puerto Rico and others, whose struggle is for independence and socialism, which we must support.) Thus, it would be totally incorrect to ignore the right to self-

determination for the oppressed nations within the U.S. borders. We must also connect this to the day-to-day struggles, such as against police brutality, against mass incarceration, for higher wages, etc.

There are some who want to deny any special demands for people of oppressed nationalities, by saying “we are all oppressed.” All workers are exploited under capitalism, but they do not all suffer from national oppression. As a simple example, white workers have been shot and killed by police, but because they were workers, not because they were white. Moreover, these special demands are in the interest of the whole working class, black as well as white, since they will help lead to the unity of the whole multinational working class.

## X HOUSING

There is a crisis in housing for working people, who are often forced to live doubled or tripled up in apartments or houses. Many people without sufficient income are forced to live in the streets. This is a consequence of capitalism, under which housing is a commodity built to make a profit for the capitalists, not for the use of the working people. In the capitalist scheme of things, housing is not considered something that is a necessity of life. Housing is built for profit, not because people need somewhere to live.

This shortage crisis of affordable housing is the worst in the major cities, where the big real estate interests can monopolize the land and sell or rent homes at high prices. (Marx deals with this in *Capital* under the topic of Ground Rent.) The crisis is getting worse as the capitalists and their government are encouraging gentrification, pushing the working people into the outskirts of the cities and the suburbs while the capitalists and the upper layers of the petty bourgeoisie move into the centers of the cities. They are rezoning residential areas for commercial purposes to add retail space in what should be set aside for housing units. Shopping malls replace apartment houses.

**The demands of the PCUSA are:**



1. Establishment or strengthening of rent regulations that allow all working people to be able to live in quality public housing at no more than 15% or less of their income.

2. An emergency public construction program to build public housing, which has hardly been built in 60 years (and in fact, has instead been destroyed) to allow low-income families to have decent housing, which includes adequate heat for the winter, air conditioning for the summer, and adequate ventilation. Older housing should be retrofitted for energy saving reasons. A program of this kind will add thousands of jobs to our economy.

3. A moratorium on evictions and foreclosures.

4. The taking over of private real estate by the government by eminent domain for the purpose of securing adequate public housing. No one should be forced to live without shelter in the country with the richest economy in the world.

## **XI**

### **ELECTORAL POLITICS**

#### **(The Three-Legged Stool)**

The PCUSA proposes a realistic policy that is neither sectarian nor set in stone nor just latches on to the Democratic Machine:

1) running our own candidates where and when feasible.

2) running with other forces in a formation that is independent of the 2 Party set-up, where possible.

3) where appropriate, supporting local progressives who are pro-labor, pro-worker, anti-racist and anti-war who run in primaries of other parties (to reach more workers).

## **XII**

### **MEDIA AND CULTURE**

This section is largely excerpted from John Howard Lawson's book titled "Film in the Battle of Ideas." The PCUSA found ourselves in agreement with the book's presentation of culture. We decided to adopt it as part of our program.

John Howard Lawson, the great communist screen writer wrote, "It is the communist view that a GUIDE TO understanding the function of culture is provided by the Marxist-Leninist analy-

sis of the economic base of society and the superstructure of institutions and ideas erected upon it. Marx states the principle in his preface to *The Critique of Political Economy*:

‘In the social production of their means of existence men enter into definite, necessary relations which are independent of their will, production relationships which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The aggregate of these production relationships constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis on which a juridical and political superstructure arises, and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of the material means of existence conditions the whole process of social, political and intellectual life.’<sup>1</sup>

‘In the course of his discussion of linguistics, [Joseph]Stalin elucidates the relationship between the base and the superstructure:

‘Every base has its own superstructure, corresponding to it. If the base changes or is eliminated, then following this its superstructure changes or is eliminated; if a new base arises, then following this a superstructure arises corresponding to it.

‘The base creates the superstructure precisely in order that it may serve it, that it may actively help it to take shape and consolidate itself. The superstructure has only to renounce its role of auxiliary, it has only to pass from a position of active defense of its base to one of indifference toward it, to adopt the same attitude to all classes, and it loses its virtue and ceases to be a superstructure.’<sup>2</sup>

‘The ruling class of the United States, desperately seeking to maintain its rule, will of course not permit the superstructure ‘to renounce its role of auxiliary ... to adopt the same attitude toward all classes.’

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<sup>1</sup> *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.

<sup>2</sup> *Marxism and Linguistics*, New York, 1951, pp. 9-10.

All forms of communication, all phases of art, science and thought, are coordinated in “active defense” of the threatened interests of the bourgeoisie. But many intellectuals remain under the spell of old illusions concerning the function of culture. Artists and writers insist that their work remains unaffected by class pressures, that it is born of their own inner consciousness, dedicated to purely aesthetic values. Formalist tendencies, growing out of and fortifying these illusions, are frequently championed by artists whose social and political views are progressive.”

“The conception that art in class society is “free” has an understandable appeal to cultural workers. Artists who accept the fiction are able to deny in their own minds the forces which shape their thought and work, to avoid their full social responsibility and to blur the class character of their art. The enormous pressure exerted by the ruling class on cultural activity, expressed most directly in the threat that intellectuals conform or risk exile from their professions and possible imprisonment, impels many artists and writers to seek some fiction which will at least *lessen* their responsibility, placing them on the fringes of the battle and not in the center of the fray.”

“It is not surprising that theories of the “special role” and “democratic function” of culture tend to cluster around the motion picture—precisely because the film is today an important part of the superstructure, utilized with special care and attention by the ruling class. It is an area of maximum pressure for total conformity to the ruling class program; at the same time, the belief that Hollywood provides “pure entertainment” is assiduously cultivated by propagandists for the *status quo*. We are constantly told that the subject-matter of films is designed solely to meet the tastes of the mass audience, and that “the people” are the arbiters of the entertainment they receive.”

Lawson describes the communist approach this way: “A cardinal principle in the Marxist approach to culture is the recognition of the class character of all culture in class societies. The dominant class controls education, philosophy, religion, science and artistic expression, using these various disciplines and systems of belief and forms of art and communication to advance its interests and consolidate its power.”

Since the dominant class in the USA is the bourgeois class, they control the media. They decide which television programs will be seen, which movies will be made, and what music will be played on the radio. They also decide what news will be reported on in the media.

*“The artist must elect to fight for freedom or for slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative.”* Paul Robeson (1898-1976)

It has been a goal of the communists in the USA to be as involved as possible with cultural presentation. When Lawson wrote his excellent analysis titled “Film in the Battle of Ideas” which appeared in the publication “Masses and Mainstream” in 1953, communists were involved in Hollywood, influencing and trying to change the way Hollywood produced films. Referencing the Lawson analysis, we find the following passage: “The American movie,” wrote Norman Cousins, “is the main source of information about America to most of the people of the world.” Cousins regretted that American films portray our country predominantly as a “nation of murderers, gangsters, idlers, deadbeats, dipsomaniacs, touts, tarts and swindlers.”

“Cousins wanted motion pictures to inspire “respect for the workings of justice and representative government.” Eric Johnston, head of the Motion Picture Producers Association, answered Cousins, arguing that Hollywood is doing a good job making films of “entertainment devoid of ideological lecturing or sermonizing.” He described the Hollywood product as “Light and frothy musicals. Comedies. *Yes, and some ‘bang-bang’ pictures, too, in which rustlers bite the dust when the brave cowboys take after them. Fun stuff. Escape stuff.*”

“Johnston concluded in his inimitable Chamber of Commerce prose: ‘It is our everlasting hope that our motion pictures blend together to transplant before the eyes of others the shimmering, spectral pattern that is America.’ The reference to a ‘spectral pattern’ tempts us to assume that Johnston sees the film reflection of life in the United States as a parade of ghosts. At all events, he is satisfied that motion pictures cross the seas as “messengers of a free country.” This shows us that there were two very different ideas at work concerning the making of motion pictures.

The communist has always sought to bring a sense of hope and optimism to movie making. Mainly the communists tried to instill in Hollywood the idea that the working class was a heroic class. Films like “Salt of the Earth” and “Tender Comrades” show the strength of working class ideas. It was no small feat that a very reactionary studio, Warner Brothers, managed to make Mission to Moscow, starring Walter Huston, about the tenure of Ambassador Joseph E. Davies as the first U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Again Lawson writes, “V. J. Jerome notes that, ‘the tendency to regard the profit-motive as the sole determinant of the content of pictures stems from the one-sided view that film is simply a commodity governed by the laws of commodity production. The film is ideology. Wall Street is unquestionably interested in profits. The monopoly structure of the industry has the effect of protecting the overall rate of profit from production, distribution and exhibition: competition is restricted; monopoly control of the largest and best located theatres enables the producers to squeeze the small exhibitor for the benefit of the big chains, and limits the public’s freedom to choose what it will see on the screen. Box office pressure can be effective if it is based on a well-organized popular movement, led by trade unions and people’s organizations and consciously aware that there can be no real ‘freedom of the screen’ as long as it is under monopoly control.”

“A campaign along these lines can expose the utilization of motion pictures as propaganda for war and fascism, and compel certain changes in film content.”

The PCUSA focus on culture recognizes the technological change that has taken place in the media since the 1950’s. Films and music are now digital. Social media platforms like Youtube can bring movies and other videos into people’s homes at little or no cost. Bourgeois ideas are transmitted very quickly, with limited access to instill class struggle ideas. There are media services like Hulu and Netflix that can show programs on demand.

This is why the PCUSA proposes to place a special emphasis on organizing in the entertainment centers of Hollywood and New York, to become active in helping the entertainment unions stop the flow of union production to non-union, ‘right to work’

areas of the country and around the world. There still remain issues of worker safety in the entertainment business. We must also be cognizant of these hazards and risks involved in manufacturing entertainment. We must begin to add what Comrade Gus Hall referred to as “the communist plus” into our Party work, and we must make the entertainment business one of our areas of special emphasis by forming alliances with people that work in the movies, music, television, radio, theater, and the news media. This will enable us to impact the kinds of media that people see and hear. On Facebook for example, there was recently a debate about the significance of Beyonce’s Super Bowl halftime show. Our Party should have been openly part of that debate.

Comrades, there is a lot to be done to undo the damage done by the Hollywood blacklist. There is still a great deal of fear and paranoia in the business. It is our job as communists to step up our effort to penetrate the propaganda machine of monopoly capitalism. We need communist clubs in Hollywood and New York. One of the goals of our plan of work over the next period should be to accomplish this important task, starting by redistributing the fine “Masses and Mainstream” essay (1953) by John Howard Lawson to our contacts in the entertainment industry.

V.J. Jerome *The Negro in Hollywood Films*, p. 21.

(Originally Published in November, 1953, by Masses & Mainstream, Inc. 832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y.)

#### **XIV FRATERNAL RELATIONS**

The PCUSA recognizes its historical responsibility to maintain and encourage fraternal relations within the international Communist movement in a spirit of international solidarity and support. The PCUSA embraces working class solidarity in all struggles of and on behalf of workers, against international fascism, racism, cop-brutalities, and for the struggle against imperialism’s class threat. In doing so the PCUSA is willing to put aside our disagreements with different forces to build a united front of the middle strata and community organizations to the

extent our common struggle can be maintained without jeopardizing the interests of the working class.

## XIV

### THE PATH TO SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

The PCUSA is the party of socialism and communism.

Constantly involved in the struggles of the working class, we advocate both minimum and maximum demands. Our minimum demands articulate the immediate needs of the class; these include demands for better wages, better conditions, the end of racism and sexism, and an end to the adventures of international imperialism. Unlike social democrats we do not confuse these immediate struggles with the end of our struggle. We do not believe that, regardless of ills amenable by these reforms, these constitute socialism.

We hold that the exploitation of man by man, the brutal reality of wage slavery, the ruthless exploitation of working people by the capitalist class – these must change to allow the creation of a world owned and controlled by the hands of productive labor. Thus, our maximum demand is the revolutionary abolition of human exploitation, the end of capitalism, and the establishment of socialism under the leadership of the working class.

There will be victories and defeats in this long struggle. We bitterly regret the creation of reactionary regimes which has pushed back the cause of socialism in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other democratic, socialist countries. But the demands for revolutionary socialism cannot be stilled by these defeats.

We steadfastly proclaim that with the success of scientific socialism, ending the exploitation of man by man and the planned coordination of economic and social progress, we build a world in which Marx's predication will take place:

*“In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the*

*springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to human ability, to each according to human need.*” [Critique of the Gotha Programme, Marx 1875]

To this end we dedicate ourselves.