

REPORT ON CONSTITUTION

Introduction

The Constitution is a key public document of the Party. It lays out the Party's basic organizational principles and the duties and the responsibilities of Party members.

The Programme states that the Party reflects and concentrates the organization and discipline of the working class itself and steels it with an iron will in the struggle against capitalism.

The Constitution reflects the Party's basic orientation: that it is the working class that is the only revolutionary class, and it is in the working class that the Party must be firmly rooted. This means that the organizational principles as well as the line and Programme of the Party must be a weapon in the hands of the class to advance the struggle.

Historically, changes in constitutions have reflected the advances made from one Congress to the next. The organizational and ideological advances in the Constitution reflect the leap to forming the Revolutionary Communist Party of the U.S. working class. They reflect the fact that the struggle of the masses of people, in particular the working class, has produced this Party after twenty years without one represents a qualitative advance towards accomplishing our inevitable historical mission.

General Line of the RCP

The RCP in the section on the general line sets the Party off on the right foot in stating that it is the Party of the working class of the U.S. It makes clear that we represent no class other than the proletariat. It establishes the correct orientation toward the proletariat, that we are part of the class and stand determined to lead it and the broad masses of people in overthrowing the bourgeoisie. This is the greatest contribution that the Party of the U.S. proletariat can make to the struggle of the whole international proletariat for the emancipation of all who labor. It is in accordance with this basic principle that the Constitution states that the Party is the "vanguard of the working class of the U.S.A., and stands with the working class worldwide."

Membership

Members of the RCP "must stand with both feet firmly in the working class, give our hearts completely over to the masses, our heads to the study and application of the revolutionary science of the proletariat, and our whole selves, body and soul to the struggle of the working class to emancipate itself and all humanity." In light of this, the Party places extreme importance on who is in the Party and what the duties and requirements of all Party members are.

The Party must be active in recruiting the best fighters for the working class, particularly from the working class itself. It does so on

Report on Constitution, 2

the basis of applicants fulfilling the requirements for Party membership as stated in Article 3. Key among these are "putting the interests of the masses above all else" and being "activists" among the masses--that is, active in linking up with and leading the struggle of the masses to overthrow the bourgeoisie.

Putting the interests of the working class above all else is primary, it is the principle around which the others unfold. However, all these principles hinge on the orientation of the Party toward leading the proletariat in accomplishing its historic mission. It is the adherence of Party members to these principles that allows the Party to act as the advanced detachment, the iron fist of the working class, to unite with the aspirations of the masses of workers and concentrate these into lines and policies to lead the struggle of the working class to its revolutionary goal.

Neither the Constitution nor any other Party document lays out specific rules of conduct for Party members. Instead the Constitution correctly sets forth the principles of Party membership flowing from the basic principle, "put the interests of the working class and of the revolution above everything else." This must guide all Party members in determining their conduct.

In the past the development of rules of discipline represented a sharp break by the genuine communist forces with a mountain of petty bourgeois self-indulgence that was passing as "revolutionary"--even "proletarian." The Party is firmly and thoroughly opposed to all such self-indulgence, and to self-cultivation, which is nothing but the mirror image of self-indulgence and flows from the same bourgeois ideology of putting self above the interests of the working class.

The Party Constitution, in Article 3, sharply formulates the basic principles that the whole Party and all of its members must practice and promote. It puts these six principles together as a whole--not as a list of "do's" and "don'ts"--but as the basis for orienting the Party and all of its members to carrying out and leading the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat.

Therefore, the RCP is uncompromising in demanding adherence to every one of these principles. It fights against every attempt to weaken the Party as the proletarian vanguard. To enforce this, Article Four contains procedure for disciplinary actions.

Besides other steps of discipline, the Constitution provides for a period of probation in which the violators remain in the basic units without vote. This is opposed to the policy of suspension because suspension denies that transformation can only take place in the conditions of continuing participation in and collective summation of the class struggle, under the discipline and with the guidance of the Party.

The RCP is the vanguard Party of the U.S. proletariat. Its unwavering stand is to sweep from its ranks proven opportunists, enemy agents, degenerates and anti-working class elements, to prevent them from sabotaging the work of the Party and the struggle of the working class. In doing so

the Party strengthens itself, and steels itself even further as an iron fist, a weapon in the hands of the proletariat.

Organizational Principles

The Constitution correctly reflects the organizational principles of the Party of the proletariat, democratic centralism. Article Five in the Constitution lays out what democratic centralism does in practice.

The principle of democratic centralism and its functioning is extremely important in connection with the basic orientation of the Party-- that the Party has no interests separate from those of the whole proletariat.

Democratic centralism is a unity of opposites. It has two aspects, democracy and centralism, but one is generally principal, democracy. It is principal because the source of correct ideas is the masses of people in general, and within the Party, the cadre, who have the closest ties with them. This conforms to the correct relationship between practice and theory-- that you learn to know the world by changing it. Democratic centralism is the form of organization that best enables the Party to be able to forge ever closer links with the masses through struggle, and constantly deepen and advance its understanding of how to achieve the historic mission of the proletariat.

Releasing the initiative of cadre to go out among the masses to carry out the line, and bring forward the new is also key in the entire Party being able to keep the chain of knowledge and chain of command constantly advancing. This is why it is stressed in Article Five that "leading bodies on all levels must constantly listen to the opinions of the masses, both inside and outside of the Party, accept their supervision and encourage their criticism. Party members have the right to criticize leading bodies or members of the Party at all levels and make proposals to them." But this alone, releasing the initiative of cadre, bringing forward new ideas, etc. is not enough. The process must be constantly deepened at every level, so that when the Party systematizes these ideas, the general ideological and political line is at a higher and more advanced level than before. The unity of opposites, one aspect laying the basis for the other, keeps the gears in motion so that there is constantly, "criticizing up, while carrying out down."

Democratic consultation combines the participation of the Party membership in selection and supervision of leadership with the broader overall view of the proletariat as summed up and systematized by leadership bodies. While the Party branches at all levels elect their leadership, it is subject to the acceptance by the next highest body. The rejection of leadership on the next higher level is an extremely serious matter, and can only be done on the basis of serious struggle with the lower unit concerned. Democratic centralism, functioning correctly, keeps Party life vigorous, and, by having the correct principles of organization, allows for the Party to become the iron fist the proletariat needs to lead it in smashing the bourgeoisie.

The Party of the working class has now been founded on the basis of a correct ideological and political line based on the valiant struggle of the working class. The Party is the advanced, conscious detachment of the working class. To carry out its goal of arming the masses with the correct

line to fight the class enemy, the entire membership of the Party must unite under the centralized leadership of the Party as a whole. The Party, including its leadership, must be organized and united to carry out its tasks, sweeping aside all vestiges of the past such as federalism, departmentalism and localism, which separate any section of the Party from the Party as a whole and the proletariat and the broad masses.

Central Organs

This section is important in reflecting how the Party as a whole will be able to accomplish its tasks. In Article Six, it makes clear that the highest body of the Party is the Central Committee between Party Congresses. The Central Committee sets up various standing bodies to accomplish its tasks efficiently. The standing bodies, however, are subordinate to the Central Committee as a whole, and exist only in order to better develop its work. Standing bodies cannot bind themselves in going into the Central Committee (and smaller standing bodies cannot bind themselves in going into larger ones), except in matters of security, of course, because this would have the effect of stifling discussion, establishing a bureaucratic hierarchy and inhibiting rather than releasing the initiative of all the cadre. While the standing bodies are responsible and can make decisions between meetings of the CC, the CC is the higher body, and has the task of developing the Party's general line and tasks. The same principle applies to standing bodies, in relation to the general bodies that select them as their standing bodies, on all levels.

Article Ten

The Party of the proletariat must organize from the point of view that its task is to turn every factory into a fortress of the proletariat. To do this its basic units must be organized along the lines that production in society is organized and which reflect the basic contradiction in society between socialized labor and private appropriation. The Party has to mobilize the masses along the lines in which they are naturally organized to carry on production, in which the working class has its essential character as a class, and in which, after the seizure of state power, it is best able to reorganize society.

This also reflects the way in which the work has to be organized among the employed workers concentrated in large scale industry.

Our Party, whose roots have spontaneously developed first along the lines of geography, must reorganize its forces in a systematic way, concentrating in the industries most important to the overall class struggle.

The point of all this is that the proletariat is organized along the lines of production--where it works and struggles against class exploitation. To unite with this struggle, to forge our links with the masses in their millions, to release their revolutionary initiative, our Party must be organized in the heart of their strength and struggles. There is no way that the Party is going to mobilize the masses in their millions unless we are right in there too.

This principle is directly opposed to the revisionist and social-democratic line of organizing a party along electoral lines. It reflects the difference between building for proletarian revolution and accommodation to capitalism. It is a key part of the dividing line between revolution and reformism, between Marxism and revisionism.

Article Twelve

The tasks of branches and their relation to the unified centralized Party structure is a key point of the Constitution.

The basic units should sum up the situation among the masses, collectively discuss the development of the work, have political education which ties theory to practice in a living way based on common knowledge of the most important work the members are engaged in (the work in the factories, fields, etc.) as well as the major events in the country and the world and the main questions facing the Party and the working class as a whole. They should discuss Party campaigns and the correct methods for mobilizing masses around these campaigns.

In all this, education around the overall ideological and political line of the Party must guide the work. The basic units must constantly educate their members concerning the general line of the Party. Not grasping the general line leads to narrowness and pragmatism, concern only for the immediate tasks confronting the unit in a particular plant or union, etc., the tendency towards seeing only your own branch and not the whole Party--only your own industry and not the whole class.

CONCLUSION TO REPORT ON CONSTITUTION

Comrades:

The Revolutionary Communist Party of the U.S. working class has been founded with a correct line and Programme. This is a victory for our class, and a product of its struggle. Our ideological, political and organizational line reflect the strength and advances of our class.

We are confident of the future.

Let our Party, under the leadership of the Central Committee, together with the masses of workers in their millions, move forward toward the goal of revolution, socialism and communism!