
Statement of Principles of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party.

A document of the National Convention establishing the FFLP
held at Chicago, July 3-5, 1923.

A copy of this mimeographed document is in the Lement Harris papers, University of Iowa.

“The government of the people, for the people, and by the people,” which has in the past been the boast of American political life, no longer exists in this country. Today the government of the United States is a government of, for, and by Wall Street and the financial and industrial system it represents.

During the course of industrial development of the last half century in this country the industries — the mines, railroads, the factories and mills — have come into the ownership and control of a small group of great capitalists who use these instruments of production and distribution to exploit and oppress the tens of millions of industrial workers and farmers who are dependent upon their use to earn for themselves and their families the necessities of life. These capitalist exploiters of the industrial workers and farmers have fastened their grip upon the government and made of it an instrument to maintain and uphold their special privileges and to aid them in levying ever greater toll upon the producers of wealth.

Since the end of war, out of which was to come greater opportunities of well-being and happiness for the people of this country, the use of the powers of government against the industrial workers and farmers and the aid of their exploiters has been more open and shameless than ever before.

In 1919, the federal government sent soldiers into the steel centers to help the great Steel Trust put down the strike of the workers struggling

against the twelve hour day, for a living wage and the right to organize.

In the miners’ strike of the same year the Wilson administration secured an injunction against the United Mine Workers of America denying it the right to use its own funds in the struggle of the miners against the coal barons. Since then the government has sought to have the United Mine Workers of America destroyed through declaring it a conspiracy in restraint of trade.

The government created the Railroad Labor Board as a weapon of the railroad owners against the railroad workers. This Railroad Labor Board forced the railroad shopmen to strike in 1922 through reducing their wages below the standard of existence. When the railroads found themselves in a desperate condition during the strike, the government rushed to their aid with the infamous Daugherty Injunction, which at one blow took from the industrial workers the right to freedom of speech, press, assemblage, the right to organize and to use their organized strength to better their conditions of life.

In the miners’ strike of 1922 the administration used all its strength to help the coal barons destroy the organization of the miners and to establish the “open shop” in the coal industry. At the call of President Harding the governors of numerous states filled the mines with soldiers to help suppress the demand of the striking workers.

The courts have been equally diligent in serving the interests of the financial and industrial

rulers who control the government. In every strike of any moment the industrial workers are face to face with injunctions through which the industrial masters seek to prevent them from using their organized strength to secure more of what they produce. In the Coronado decision the Supreme Court has given the

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Legislation supposedly in the interest of the farmers is turned into means of further enrichment of the bankers. Farm credit bills are so drawn as to aid the great banking institutions and their smaller parasites and give them new means of taking for themselves the product of the workers of the land. The government refused to take any action toward establishing government-owned marketing facilities and helps the railroads to maintain high railroad freight rates.

The Federal Reserve Banking System has served the masters in permitting extravagant over-expansion of city industries so that the farm is robbed of its labor supply. This is repeatedly followed by drastic depressions and unemployment that reduces the city worker to servitude and poverty. Millions are forced into idleness every few years. This condition likewise spells ruin to the farmer, for in 1921 it reduced the purchasing power of the city worker by \$6 billion in wages alone. More than five millions of workers were forced to walk the streets in search of jobs that were denied them.

In a depression farm prices drop to ruinous levels; still the farmers and consumers are forced to continue to pay peak prices. This is made possible because of the factory's superior control of production. Industry now forces unemployment onto the city worker to reduce wages and at the same time it keeps its prices high by curtailing its output. The present banking system is largely responsible for the high prices the consumer now pays.

The power of the government is openly used by the financial lords of Wall Street to open up weaker countries for their investments and to protect these investments. Since the Spanish-American war, American Imperialism, "Dollar Diplomacy," has overthrown the governments of Haiti and Santo Domingo, reduced Nicaragua to vassalage, and made Cuba a protectorate of the United States in the interest of the Sugar Trust. The Mexican Government is refused recognition and coerced in the interest of oil and banking capital. Soviet Russia is outlawed because it has abolished the exploitation of the worker and farmer by capitalists.

These are but a few of the outstanding facts which prove that Republican and Democratic administrations alike are the instrument of the financial and industrial masters who own the industries of the nation and use them to amass great fortunes for the few capitalists at the expense of happiness and well-being of the masses of industrial workers and farmers.

In the face of these conditions only one road lies open for the industrial workers and farmers to protect themselves against the exploitation and oppression of the financial and industrial lords who rule this country — to organize a political party representing the interests of the industrial workers and farmers and enter into the political arena to wrest control of the government from the hands of the financial and industrial masters who now rule in this country.

The Federated Farmer-Labor Party declares that to be its purpose. It calls upon all organizations of workers, whether in the industries or upon the land, to make common cause with it, to join in the struggle to free the farmer and industrial worker from greedy exploitation of those who now rule in this country and to win for them the right to "life, liberty, and happiness" which their exploiters now deny them.

Public Ownership.

There can be no genuine Public Ownership of industry until the workers and farmers control the government. But in order to make more clear the conflict of interests between the employing class and the working and farming classes and thus aid the masses in their struggle against exploitation and oppression, we propose an immediate program of public ownership of all public utilities. It must at all times be remembered that only to the extent that there is a strong workers' and farmers' representation in the government and only to the extent that the control of operation is in the hands of workers and farmers can even this partial nationalization be realized today. The FFLP therefore proposes the following program:

(1) We stand for the nationalization of all public utilities and all social means of communication and transportation.

(2) Industries must be run on the basis of the workers and farmers steadily increasing their control of the management and operation through their own economic organizations.

(3) Industries must be operated in such a manner as to afford the working and farming masses the maximum security against destitution, unemployment, sickness, and high prices.

Program for Social Legislation.

(1) That the Federal Government enact a Maximum 8-Hour Workday in industry, making any violation of the same by any employer a criminal offense punishable by imprisonment.

(2) That the Federal Government enact a law that will make the Federal Reserve Bank system

serve the farmers and workers.

Industry should be encouraged to discontinue its reckless "hiring" and "firing" practices by compensating the unemployed worker temporarily when he is thrown out of employment through no fault of his own.

(3) That the Federal Government enact a Child Labor Law prohibiting the employment of children under eighteen and making the violation of this law punishable by imprisonment.

(4) That the Federal Government enact a law providing for a minimum living wage for all workers — the wages to be fixed in cooperation with the representatives of the trade unions.

(5) That the Federal Government enact a law providing for the compulsory education of all under eighteen. Special attention must be paid to the erection of new and adequate schools in the rural regions.

(6) That the Federal Government enact a law providing for adequate compensation to the ex-soldiers — a soldier bonus — funds for same to be obtained through the levying of [taxes upon] inheritance, excess profits, surtaxes, and taxes on unearned income.

(7) That the Federal Government enact a Social Insurance Law providing for adequate sick, accident, and death insurance for all city and rural workers. Funds for the same to be secured through the taxation of income, excess profits, surtaxes, and inheritance taxes and taxes from unearned income.

(8) That the Federal Government enact a National Maternity Insurance Law providing for full trade union wage compensation to all prospective mothers for a period covering one month prior and one month after childbirth.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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