

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Opening to National Committee, May 5, 2001

Report of Constitution Committee

By Tim Yeager

I thank the members of the Committee for their work over the past three months, especially Arnold and Emil who submitted full-length drafts for our consideration, and Elaine and Debbie, who together with Arnold, Emil and myself, were there for nearly every conference call, and for the other comrades who weren't able to be there every time, but who contributed their ideas and their support.

Over the past several months we have racked up some significant phone bills on conference calls, and my email archives show more than three hundred (300) email messages, both incoming and outgoing, that passed through my computer during the work of the committee up to this point.

Discussion of the Party's Constitution has already been extensive and lively throughout the Party. In January, I retyped the existing Constitution into electronic format and sent it the National Board, chairs of Convention committees, the Constitution Committee, and other comrades who had contacted our Committee with ideas. In late January, this electronic version of our Constitution was posted on our Party's website, which made it available for discussion by the

membership and the world. The Internet pre-convention discussion list features a large number of posted comments, suggestions, and debated points on various aspects of the Constitution, beginning shortly thereafter. The Constitution Committee took into consideration the Internet discussion, received other input from various members, and held numerous meetings by telephone conference. We completed our initial draft on April 30, and sent to members of the National Committee in advance of the NC meeting. It was the goal of our Committee to make our initial draft available to the Party organization at least two months before voting takes place at the National Convention. We are pleased that this goal was met.

On May 3rd, following discussion in the National Board, a slightly revised draft was prepared. This draft was posted on the Party's web site and distributed to a large number of comrades by email. Following a discussion in the NC, in which 25 comrades spoke, the Committee made some additional revisions. It is that revised draft, dated May 17, 2001, which accompanies this introduction.

At the beginning of our work, the Committee was not given any

guidelines, or charged with any particular mission, other than to review the Constitution and to recommend changes, if any. We struggled with one another about emphasis, formulation, or finding the right word, but early on we found ourselves in general agreement as to the direction in which we wanted to go. I think this points to the correctness of some of the changes the Party has made in the recent period toward openness and a mass style.

This is a genuinely collective draft. The spirit in the meetings was good; disagreements were resolved in a comradely fashion, and it was even fun at times. While the Committee members all feel good about this draft, and we recommend it to the membership, we are certainly not resistant to the idea that further discussion can improve on it.

The Committee's view is that our Constitution needs to do basically two things: (1) It needs to set down the basic organizational structure and rules by which we operate. This is the "meat" of the Constitution, set forth in the various articles. (2) It needs to state succinctly what we are about. This is set forth in the **Preamble**, which is more a work of literature. We felt that, while the Articles should clearly define rules and structure, they must allow for a certain amount of flexibility in how we implement them. And while the Preamble should define our goals, it should not substitute for a Party Program or other programmatic or theoretical literature, where there can be a much fuller and longer discussion of our science, strategy and tactics in the current period.

The last time our Constitution was updated was in 1987. A lot has happened since then. In reviewing the document, we felt that it was basically a good document that had served us well, but that it needed updating to reflect changes in the world, current struggles and current terminology, and to further our efforts to build a mass party.

Article II (Principles of Organization): We took a look at the style, and have proposed some changes in language to set forth our basic organizational principles, such as democratic centralism, in what we hope to be more working-class, familiar language, without changing the essence of those principles.

Article III (Membership): We took in consideration the discussion over the basic requirements of membership, and the process by which someone joins the Party. We have attempted to have a more consistent national approach on this question, confirming Leninist standards of what it means to be a Communist, while at the same time removing unnecessary obstacles to becoming one. The Draft clarifies that one need not to be a U.S. citizen to be a member of the Party, and does not require applicants to be supported by two members in good standing, or to be subject to a vote of the club in the applicant's area. There are many ways to drop someone from the Party if they don't work out. The real struggle is to open our ranks to new members and then promptly to help them become fully integrated into action, and developed in education. Our new language in Article III attempts to set the stage for that.

We have finally written into our basic document our commitment to full civil rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Articles IV and V (Club, District and National Organization): We have proposed some changes to conform with the needs and possibilities of today. There are some large geographically-spread districts in which it has been difficult to hold at least four district committee meetings per year, and frankly some districts have not met that goal. Our draft provides that district committees must meet at least four times per year, but that larger geographic districts are permitted and encouraged to use telephone conferencing for up to three of those meetings, provided that there is at least one face-to-face meeting per year. The goal is to encourage the meetings to occur, and thereby to strengthen the district organizations where meetings have not taken place. Language pertaining to District Conventions is amended and clarified, to give districts flexibility in ensuring good composition, and participation of members who are not yet in functioning clubs due to geography.

In line with recommendations presented by the Party Structure Committee to streamline the National Committee and increase its role as a policy making body, our draft proposes at least three (3) meetings of the National Committee per year.

The Review Commissions on the District and National levels were effectively abolished as standing committees at our last convention. Our draft proposes to delete references to them from the

Constitution. Comrades should understand that the both the National and District bodies of the Party may create review bodies and other committees as they deem advisable, from time to time, but as standing bodies, this proposes that they are dropped. The National Council is also deleted, per decisions from the previous Convention.

In **Article VI (Rights and Duties of Members)** we made a number of changes with the intent of making our concepts more accessible and understood by potential members, and to update references to our multi-racial, multi-national working class to reflect current usage and struggles. In previous Constitutions, members had an obligation to organize unions at their workplaces if no unions existed. For some reason that no one could explain, that obligation had been dropped in the 1987 edition. We have restored that. As part of the working class, all comrades should join and be active in their unions, and to organize new ones wherever possible. We also have modified the language concerning criticism and self-criticism. It was felt by some on our committee that the words "criticism" and "self-criticism" were understood by many in the movement to be negative, and not constructive. We propose to retain and support the concept and the practice of criticism and self-criticism, and the right of review of the work of Party bodies and leadership, but to modify the language to clarify that this process is intended to improve the work of the Party, that it is not necessarily negative, but contains both negative and positive evaluation.

Article VII (Discipline): We dropped the language of "control" because we felt it was susceptible of being misunderstood and misinterpreted by people in the movement generally, and we use other language to describe the giving of assistance to comrades to overcome weaknesses. We dropped references to the Review Commissions, and added language to the due process provisions in disciplinary hearings.

Articles VIII, IX and X, pertaining to dues, amendments and authority to issue publications are retained without modification.

The work on the **Preamble** took the longest time and most discussion. We wanted to make it a brief statement that could be used independently in our literature. We wanted it to be good literature, without being too "lofty" or academic, or too long. We wanted to identify our roots in the historical experience of the working class in the United States, to update references to our people and reflect recent developments in the world history, and to address the main struggles today. In the process, we have produced a Preamble that is longer than the last one. None of the Committee members claim to be a Lenin, a Paine or a Jefferson when it comes to inspirational writing. In the event that any comrades produce something that accomplishes the aims set for ourselves, and is more eloquent or inspirational, we would welcome that contribution. In the meantime, let this draft of the Preamble be a touchstone for discussion.

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*Revised Draft Prepared by the Constitution Committee
Including Most Changes Suggested in National Committee Debate*

With Editorial Revision Marks Displayed

Additions are shown as double-underlined.

Deletions are shown as ~~stricken through~~.

(NOTE: Most deletions are shown as stricken through. However, some deletions were simply replaced by new text, and the changes marked as double-underlined. There are no revision marks displayed in the Preamble, as it was substantially re-written. Text in the Articles which is not marked is existing text which is proposed to be retained without modification.)

May 17, 2001

PREAMBLE

The Communist Party USA is a political party of, by and for the working class of the United States. Founded in Chicago in 1919, it traces its roots to Communist, Marxist, and labor organizations organized before the Civil War. Guided by the scientific principles of Marxism-Leninism, and building upon the historic struggles and progressive traditions of the U.S. working class, it is dedicated to advancing the interests of working people and all specially oppressed peoples. It fights for their interests and empowerment, and has as its ultimate goal the establishment of a broadly-based people's government led by the working class, whose aim will be to replace capitalism with a socialist society.

Capitalism today is the domination of society by those who own and control the immense global corporations and banks. Their thirst for maximum profits and power is at the expense of all who must work in order to live, at the expense of all who are oppressed, and presents a constant and growing threat to democracy and people's rights and needs. Imperialism, the web of global corporations, banks, and the governments they control, demands unfettered freedom to move capital anywhere in the world, seeking the most exploitable labor, resources and environment, leaving in its wake unemployment, despoiled landscape, and abandoned communities. It secretly bargains for ever expanding "free trade agreements", and imposes treaties upon whole nations which overturn hard-won legislation protective of workers' rights. In order to force its policies down the throats of the peoples of the world, imperialism maintains an enormous, expensive and increasingly high-tech military machine, which squanders resources needed to fulfill human needs.

In order to weaken popular opposition to their plans, the capitalists actively promote divisions among the people. Racism, national oppression, anti-Semitism and the unequal treatment of women are major weapons in this divide and conquer strategy. ~~rule and profit game.~~ The ~~its~~ sting of oppression is most sharply felt by African-American, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, Native American Indian, Asian-Pacific and all specially oppressed peoples, the foreign-born, immigrants, and women in their fight for equality and dignity.

Under capitalism, democracy is limited. The economy, the government, the laws and political institutions are designed to promote the interests of the few at the expense of the many. The institutions of government are dominated by the wealthy, the global corporations, and their paid representatives. Through organization and struggle working men and women and have won political reforms and have improved the quality of their lives. But these gains are never secure while the global corporations remain dominant, and there must be a constant struggle to defend the gains that have been made.

As we enter the 21st century, democracy in our country is under growing threats from monopoly capital. Real political power is becoming concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. Basic rights, including the right to vote, are under attack by forces of the ultra-right. The Communist Party advocates a vigorous struggle to defend and extend the democratic rights of working people, as a necessary precondition to social and economic progress in the United States.

Ultimately, however, it is only through abolition of the capitalist system and the social reorganization of society that ~~the~~ exploitation of one human being by another can be ended, and with it, the evils of oppression, war, racism, and poverty. Socialism is a system which acts in the interests of the people rather than for the private profit of capitalist corporations. It is a revolutionary expansion of democracy, with working people in the leadership of government.

The Communist Party advocates socialist democracy with an expanded Bill of Rights: the right to a job at union wages, free education through the university level, free health care, decent housing, child care and security in old age. In place of the corporate-dominated economy, the socialist economy will be based on public ownership and operation of the means of production, with the wealth generated by the labor of the workers going to benefit them and society as a whole, not a handful of super-rich. By submitting production and economic development decisions to the democratic control of society as a whole, socialism strengthens the ability of communities to protect the environment and to begin to reverse environmental damage caused by the private greed and social irresponsibility of capitalism. In eliminating private profit, socialism will end the root cause of national and racial oppression of the African-American, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, Native American Indian, Asian-Pacific, immigrants and all other specially oppressed peoples, as well as the cause of anti-Semitism, and of special oppression of women. The socialist government will be made up of representatives elected from among working people, and the state apparatus will be serve the interests of the people.

On a principled basis the Communist Party USA fights for the broadest unity of all sections of the working class, together with all people whose interests are threatened by monopoly capital. Unity is essential ~~vital~~ to advancing the interests of working people. Without unity, the people cannot win. Our Party ~~We works~~ in solidarity with all who fight for peace, democracy, equality, against militarism, aggression, repression, racism and for improvement in the living conditions of all working people. We fight for:

- peace and cooperation among nations, for the right of all people and states to determine their own path without outside interference by U.S. or other imperialist powers;
- jobs and full employment, for a living wage and other improvements of workers' living and working conditions, for organizing the unorganized and defending their unions against attack by monopoly capital and its corporate dominated government;
- equality for all peoples suffering from racist and national oppression, and affirmative action to counter the impact of racism. This is indispensable to all social progress, and central to the fighting unity of the working class.
- full equality of women, including reproductive rights and the right of choice;
- full civil rights and an end to discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people;
- improved living conditions and better housing, free and universal health care, ~~free public education through college~~, child care, cultural and recreational facilities. We struggle for the special needs of ~~youth~~, senior citizens, farm laborers and family farmers;
- free, high quality public education through college, job training and employment at

union wages for our youth:

- full access to housing, medical care, education, employment and culture opportunities for disabled persons:
- fair trade agreements among nations, which protect the hard-won gains of the people, safeguard the environment, and promote labor rights and economic development which are beneficial to the working people of the nations involved.

The working class, because of its indispensable role in production, is the only class capable of leading the people to victory. Thus, in the course of daily struggle, our Party works to increase the class and socialist consciousness and the political independence of the working class, to unite the class to defeat the main instruments of capitalist division, racism and anti-communism, and to bring the workers to the leadership of a growing people's alliance of all class and social strata who have common cause in breaking the grip of global monopolies on our economic and political life. Only such a popular majority alliance is capable of curbing the power of the monopolies and opening the path to the socialist reorganization of society.

Our Party strives for socialism through peaceful expression of the majority will. Whether this will be possible depends on the workers' ability to prevent the U.S. ruling class from using violence to block the people's will. In the struggle against U.S. imperialism, the world's most powerful imperialism, our Party works to build the solidarity of the U.S. working class with the developing countries, the national liberation movements and especially with the victims of U.S. imperialist aggression, exploitation and domination. In particular, we stand in solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands struggling against U.S. colonialism and for full independence. Only through world working class solidarity and anti-imperialist unity can peace be assured and the world saved from the danger of nuclear war.

Our Party cherishes its fraternal ties to the Young Communist League, the Marxist-Leninist youth organization of the United States. The Party values highly the contributions of youth and students to the anti-monopoly alliance. Working with the YCL, the Party seeks to involve youth in the fight to build a more humane, socialist future.

The Communist Party USA is an integral part of the U.S. labor movement. We cherish our roots in, and ties to, the working people and the labor unions which constitute this movement. We seek the greatest possible unity of action with the AFL-CIO and unaffiliated unions, and strive to advance the leadership of organized labor within the anti-monopoly coalition. We seek to strengthen the solidarity of U.S. labor unions with unions in other countries, and call new levels of global labor unity and organization as the only sure way to defeat the growing oppression of global imperialism.

The Communist Party USA is an integral part of the world Communist and workers movement. Our Communist Party recognizes and fights for identity of interests among workers of all lands, an identity which is also in the true national interests of each country. In this spirit of working class internationalism, the Communist Party works with all peoples fighting for freedom and seeking to build socialism. We seek the closest bonds with the working class in other countries, and with the Communist and Workers Parties throughout the world. Our science of Marxism-Leninism helps us to draw lessons from both the victories and the defeats,

the successes and the failures experienced by the international working class movement. We are optimistic about the future.

For these purposes the Communist Party USA is constituted and establishes its basic rules in this Constitution.

ARTICLE I - Name

SECTION 1. The name of this organization shall be the Communist Party of the United States of America.

ARTICLE II - Principles of Organization

SECTION 1. The system of organization of the Communist Party is based upon the principle of democratic centralism, which means that decisions and policies are made through democratic procedures, and that once a final decision is made, all members are obligated to carry it out, guarantees the unity of will and action of the membership and leadership. Collectivity is the basic concept of the style of work of the Party. Democratic centralism combines the maximum involvement of the membership in determining policy and in the democratic election of leading committees with responsible direction from one national center coordinating the activity of the entire Party along commonly agreed-upon lines of policy.

Unity is the strongest weapon working people have in the struggle to advance their interests. By making a commitment to unite around a program of action, members strengthen the Party and help unify the working class and peoples' movements.

Collectivity is the basic style of work of the Party. Through group discussion and action, we seek to develop and apply the best possible plans to advance the interests of working people.

SECTION 2. Each Party body is subordinate to the next higher body, with central authority vested in the National Convention, the highest body of the Party, which not only has the authority to act on all aspects of Party policy and activity, but elects the national leadership to carry through its will and decisions between conventions.

SECTION 3. After a thorough discussion in any club, committee or convention, decisions are arrived at by majority vote. All members, including those who disagree, are duty bound to explain, fight for and carry out such decisions, as long as they do not conflict with national policies and decisions.

Decisions of leading committees on major questions shall be reported to all other Party bodies. Any member, club or committee, disagreeing with a decision policy, has the right to appeal thea decision to the next higher body and request that the decision be reopened, and to express their views through the channels established for that purpose during pre-convention discussion periods. But no member or leader has the right to violate such decisions or to combine with others to conduct an organized struggle for their point of view. Factions are

impermissible in the Communist Party. While the appeal is pending, the decision must nevertheless be carried out by all members of the Party.

All appeals of decisions made to the next leading committee shall be heard by the respective body with 90 days or at the next regular meeting of the committee. Appeals may be made to successive leading committees up to and including the National Convention, provided that the appeals are made at least 30 days before the National Convention. Decisions of the National Convention are final. While the appeal is pending, the decision must nevertheless be carried out by all members of the Party. Once a final decision is made, no member, club, committee or leader has the right to violate the decision or to combine with others to conduct an organized struggle against the decision.

SECTION 4. Policies and decisions established by leading committees are open to review during the pre-convention discussion period set forth in Article V, Section 4, below. Members may express their views through the channels established for that purpose. All previous policies and decisions remain in full force until or unless they are changed by majority vote of the responsible committee or Convention.

SECTION 54. The principle of democratic centralism includes the obligation of all members and leaders to fulfill the decisions arrived at by the majority. Both leaders and members are bound by a common discipline.

Discipline is voluntarily assumed by members upon joining the Party and based on conviction, understanding and devotion to the cause to which the Party dedicates its efforts.

SECTION 65. The election of officers and leading committees at all levels shall be carried out with the fullest participation of the members of the elected Party bodies.

Elections shall be on the basis of a critical review and evaluation of the work of the elected body and of the individuals proposed for office. In elections to all Party committees, conventions and conferences steps shall be taken to maximize the representation of industrial workers, specially oppressed peoples and women.

Officers and leading committees are responsible both to the bodies which elected them and to the higher leading committees. All officers and members of leading committees may be released or removed from office by majority vote of the committees to which they are responsible.

SECTION 6. The Party as a whole, and each of its bodies including every club, shall plan and work for the mass circulation and use of our press and literature.

ARTICLE III – Membership

SECTION 1. Any person living in resident of the United States, 18 years of age or over, regardless of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, or religious belief, who subscribes to the principles and purposes of the Communist Party shall be eligible for membership. The age requirement for admission to membership may be waived in individual

cases by a majority vote of the State or District Committee, when, in its judgment, special circumstances warrant.

SECTION 2. An application for membership may be received by any Party member, club, State (or District), or National body. The member or Party body receiving it shall promptly refer the application to the club (if known) and the State or District Committee where the applicant resides. The club and State or District leadership shall promptly confer about the application, and shall assign one or more members to meet or communicate with the applicant as soon as possible. Unless the club or State or District leadership have information indicating that the application was false, or that admitting the applicant would be harmful to the Party organization and its goals, the applicant shall be promptly notified that he/she has been admitted to Party membership, and he/she endorsed by at least two members of the Communist Party in good standing. Such application shall be subject to approval by a majority vote of the club to which the applicant is presented and shall be referred to a Party club where possible. In unorganized territory, in the absence of a club, the new member application shall be referred presented for processing and approval to the next leading committee having jurisdiction. It shall be the responsibility of the club, if any, or the next leading body jurisdiction, to assist the new member in becoming involved in Party education, mass work and other activities.

If an applicant is not admitted to membership, the club and State or District leadership shall notify the club having jurisdiction (if any), the State or District Committee, and National Committee of the reasons why the applicant was not admitted.

SECTION 3. A Party member shall study and accept the Party Constitution and the Party Program as determined by the Convention, belong to a Party club where possible, be willing to carry out its decisions and pay dues. Membership in the Communist Party is a voluntary act of the individual.

SECTION 4. Party members three months in arrears in payment of dues cease to be members in good standing, and shall be so informed by their club (or district) leadership. Members who are six months in arrears shall be dropped from Party membership after effort has been made by the club (or district) leadership, through personal interviews to bring such members into good standing. They may, however, apply for readmission within six months, and upon approval of the club (or district) be permitted to pay back dues and regain their former standing.

SECTION 5. A member in good standing changing his or her place of residence from one state (or district) to another, shall request task the state (or district) of origin to transfer his or her membership to the new state (or district). The request for transfer normally should be made before the member changes his or her place of residence, but in any event, not more than thirty (30) days after moving to the new state (or district). This is to be done within 30 days. The transfer, accompanied by a collective evaluation of the comrade's work, may shall be submitted by the state (or district) of origin through the National Committee office to the new state (or district); or it may be submitted simultaneously to the new state (or district) and National Committee. The new state (or district) shall accept such comrade as a member only after receipt of the transfer.

~~The The National Committee office and the states (or districts) sending and receiving states (or districts) and clubs involved shall have responsibility for processing the transfer request/application as quickly as possible, and the new state (or district) shall promptly assist the member in getting situated in the new state (or district).~~

ARTICLE IV — Club and State (District) Organization Structure

SECTION 1. The basic unit of the Communist Party shall be the club. The two basic forms of the Party club shall be based on: (1) place of work or industry, with ~~the shop clubs being the goal as the highest form~~ and (2) place of residence, with the neighborhood clubs being the goal as the highest form. All other forms are transitional.

Each club shall have officers and an executive committee which shall be elected at the time of the annual club conference. Elections shall be by secret ballot if such method is requested by any member of the club.

The purpose of the annual club conference shall be to project the plan of work for the coming year based on: (1) policy as established by the national and state (or district) conventions, and further refined and developed by the National Committee and state (or district) committee; and (2) a thorough and critical examination of the club's work in the previous year.

All clubs should have officers who fulfill the following functions, ~~where possible~~: chairperson, financial secretary, educational director, labor secretary, press director, literature director, and a secretary who records all decisions. Two or more functions may be performed by one person. Additional officers and committees may be elected by the club.

Officers and committees are responsible to the club, and shall report on their work to the club from time to time. Financial reports shall be submitted to the club annually. Additional financial reports must be submitted when requested by a majority vote.

SECTION 2. State and district organizations may be established by the National Committee, and may cover one state, part of one state, or more than one state. They shall be known as the "~~-----~~ State Committee, Communist Party USA", or the "~~-----~~ District, Communist Party USA", or the "Communist Party of -----, CPUSA". Where there is more than one district in a state, the National Committee may establish such forms as are necessary to deal with questions of statewide importance.

The state (or district) organization shall comprise all clubs in one state (or district). The State (District) Committee shall have the power and duty to establish whatever subdivisions best fulfill the needs of Party work, such as state, county, city or section organizations.

The highest body of the state (or district) organization is the State (or District) Convention, which shall meet at least once every four years during the pre-convention discussion period prior to the National Convention. Each club in the state (or district) shall elect delegates to the convention in such number as the State (or District) Committee may determine, provided that the number of delegates to which each club is entitled shall be in proportion to its membership. Where there are members not attached to clubs due to geography, the State (or District) Committee may make special provisions for their representation at the State (or District) Convention. Class and national composition shall be considered in the election of delegates to

the State (or District) Convention. To be eligible for election as a delegate, a member shall have been in good standing for at least six (6) months.

Members of the State (or District) Committee shall be elected in such manner and number as the State (or District) Convention may determine. All elections to the State (or District) Committee shall be by democratic process, including secret ballot.

To be eligible for election as a state or district officer or member of the State or District Committee, a member shall have been in good standing for at least one year preceding the date of the election.

The State or District Committee shall elect such officers as it deems necessary. Officers so elected shall be members of the State or District Committee by virtue of their offices, and shall be responsible to the State or District Committee. The State or District Committee may elect an executive committee and any other committees it deems necessary.

A vacancy among members of the State or District Committee may be filled until the next Convention by secret ballot and majority vote of the members of the State or District Committee.

Special State or District Conventions shall be called by a majority vote of the State or District Committee or upon the written request of clubs representing one-third of the membership.

The State or District Committee shall name a committee to administer the finances of the organization, which shall be responsible to the State or District Committee. The State or District Committee shall make a financial report to all regular State or District Conventions.

The State or District Committee shall meet at least four times a year. In districts covering large geographic areas, this requirement may be met up to three times per year through teleconferencing. A request by one-third of the members of the State or District Committee, or by one-third of the clubs, for a review of a state or district policy or adoption of a new policy requires that such a discussion be held by the State or District Committee.

~~Where there is no established State or District Review Commission, the State or District Committee may establish one. Once it has been established, its members shall thereafter be elected at the State or District Convention in a manner similar to the election of the State or District Committee. Its responsibilities shall be consistent with those given in Article V, Section 14.~~

~~The State or District Review Commission may fill vacancies and release or remove members on approval of the State or District Committee.~~

~~The State or District Review Commission, working under the general guidance of the National Review Commission, is accountable to the State or District Convention, and between Conventions, to the State or District Committee.~~

ARTICLE V – National Organization

SECTION 1. The highest authority of the Party is the National Convention, which is authorized to make political and organizational decisions binding upon the entire Party and its membership.

Regular National Conventions shall be held every four years. A National Convention may be postponed beyond the four-year limit due to extraordinary circumstances by both a three-

fourths vote of the National Committee, ~~and a majority of the State and District Committees.~~

SECTION 2. The National Convention shall be composed of delegates elected by each State and District Convention by democratic process, including secret ballot, and in such number, in approximate proportion to the membership it represents, as the National Committee may determine. To be eligible for election as a delegate, the member shall have been in good standing for at least one year prior to the date of the Convention.

SECTION 3. Special National Conventions shall be called when there is an affirmative vote of 40% of the members of the National Committee or a majority vote of all State and District Committees. The office of the National Committee shall circulate any official request from any State or District Committee for a special National Convention to all other State and District Committees for their action. The time and place of special conventions shall be fixed by the National Committee. The basis for representation shall be determined in the same way as that for regular conventions.

SECTION 4. Prior to regular National Conventions, at least four months shall be provided for a pre-convention discussion period in all Party clubs and leading committees on the main resolutions and problems, reports, resolutions and other documents coming before the convention. During this discussion all Party members and organizations have the right to express their views and propose changes, including changes to amendments and change to the draft resolutions, the Party Program and amendments to the Constitution, to adopt resolutions on all questions of policy and tactics and on the work and composition of leading committees for consideration by the Convention. All policies and decisions, however, remain in full force during the pre-convention discussion.

SECTION 5. Each National Convention shall determine the number of members of the National Committee. Election of the National Committee by the National Convention shall be by secret ballot.

In the election of the National Committee, in addition to individual merit, such factors as class and social composition, wide geographic representation and political importance of the state or district organizations shall be considered.

SECTION 6. Vacancies in the National Committee may be filled by majority vote of the National Committee. Members may be released or removed by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of the National Committee.

SECTION 7. The National Committee shall elect from its own membership a National Board ~~and executive committee~~ and such officers as it decides upon.

The National Committee shall establish such other committees or commissions as it deems necessary.

All such officers, ~~and committees and commissions~~ shall be responsible to the National Committee.

SECTION 8. To be eligible for election as a national officer or member of the National Committee, a member shall have been in good standing for at least the three years preceding the

election.

SECTION 9. Between National Conventions, the National Committee is responsible for the enforcement of the Constitution and the execution of the general policies adopted by the National Convention. The decisions of the National Convention shall be binding on all Party organizations and members.

Between National Conventions, the National Committee is the highest authority of the Party, representing the Party as a whole, and as such has the authority to make decisions and take action necessary and incidental to the good and welfare of the entire Party, and to act upon all problems and developments occurring between conventions. In the fulfillment of its duties, and in the exercise of its responsibilities, the National Committee shall guide and direct all of the political, organizational and educational work of the Party and organize and supervise its various departments and committees. The National Committee shall organize and direct all undertakings of importance to the entire Party, and administer the national treasury. The National Committee shall submit a financial report to each National Convention.

The National Committee and the State and District Committees shall encourage the widest discussion by the membership on all questions of theory and general line of Party policy. They shall provide organs to facilitate such discussions, provided that in the opinion of the National Committee such discussions do not hinder or impede execution of Party policy and decisions or weaken the unity of the Party in action.

The National Committee shall not make any major policy change until it has submitted the proposed change in draft form to the Party organization for debate for specified periods and for recommendations thereon. In an emergency, which must be affirmed by a two-thirds vote of the National Committee, the National Committee may adopt another procedure for making a major policy change, including a referendum vote of the entire membership or the calling of special enlarged, delegated conferences on a national or regional basis.

In the discussion of such major policy changes, rules for pre-convention discussion shall apply in regard to the proposed policy change only, except that the period of discussion may be determined by the National Committee.

SECTION 10. The National Committee shall meet at least three times per ~~twice~~ a year. The officers or one-third of the members of the National Committee may call additional meetings.

SECTION 11. Summaries and reports of National Committee meetings shall be made available to State and District Committees and shall appear in digest form in publications available to the Party membership. Such reports may be published when the National Committee so determines.

All departments and leading committees shall submit reports regularly to the National Committee.

SECTION 12. The officers of the National Committee shall make known to the members of the National Committee any request of any member of the National Committee for either a review of a policy or the introduction of a new major policy question.

A request by one-third of the members of the National Committee for review of a policy or for adoption of a new policy requires that such a discussion be held by the National

Committee.

~~SECTION 13. The National Convention shall elect a National Council. The National Council shall work with the National Committee in developing policy and participate in broadening the implementation of National Committee policies among working people and in the Party organization. The National Council shall be convened by the National Board of the National Committee.~~

~~Vacancies in the National Council may be filled, and members released or removed by a majority vote of the National Committee.~~

~~The National Council shall be elected by secret ballot. It shall be elected in a manner and with considerations similar to the election of the National Committee except that eligibility for membership shall be two (2) years in the Party prior to the election.~~

~~SECTION 14. The National Convention shall elect by secret ballot, in a manner similar to the establishment of the National Committee, a National Review Commission.~~

~~The National Review Commission is charged with the responsibility of reviewing the observance of revolutionary working class Party standards in the conduct of all Party bodies and members. It shall work to guard and preserve Party unity, adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles, practice of democratic centralism, Party security and financial integrity.~~

~~Membership eligibility shall be at least three years in good standing prior to election. The National Review Commission may fill vacancies and release or remove its members on the approval of the National Committee.~~

~~The National Review Commission shall elect an executive committee to conduct its work between meetings of the full Commission. The latter is to be convened at least once a year.~~

ARTICLE VI – Rights and Duties of Members

SECTION 1. Every member of the Party who is in good standing has the right and duty to participate in the making of its policies and in their execution, and to participate in the elections of the Party bodies to which he or she belongs.

A member has the right, within the Party organization, to express openly and uphold his or her opinion or differences on any question as long as the Party organization has not adopted a decision. This may be accomplished in meetings of the Party organizations and in authorized publications. After a decision, a Party member who disagrees has the right to appeal successively to the next higher body, including the National Convention. At the same time every member has the duty to carry out the majority decision.

Members may critically evaluate ~~criticize~~ the work of all leading committees and individual leaders, irrespective of the positions they hold, ~~for shortcomings, errors or unbecoming conduct,~~ provided it is done in appropriate Party meetings, conferences, conventions or other Party bodies. No one may interfere ~~An officer who interferes with this right of critical evaluation, criticism shall be subject to discipline.~~ Any member may address a question or statement to a leading committee at any level. Leading committees must respond as promptly as possible.

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During pre-convention discussion members have the right and duty within Party organizations and publications designated for the purpose, to discuss any and all Party policies and tactics, and the right to critically evaluate~~criticize~~ the work and composition of all leading committees.

SECTION 2. A member shall strive to attend all club meetings. Members shall continually strive to improve their political knowledge and their understanding of Marxism-Leninism, to take part in the discussion of Party policy, to initiate activities, to work of the aims and policies of the Party, and to seek to win new members to its ranks. They shall also read, circulate and help improve Party publications. All members shall circulate the press and make work with the press central to their mass activity.

Each member shall ~~practice critically evaluate the work of Party collectives and his/her own activity, criticism and self-criticism with the aim of improving the work of the Party, its bodies, and his or her own activity, and shall fight against shortcomings, violations of democracy, unconstitutional procedure and manifestations of bureaucracy.~~ The National Committee and leadership at all levels shall take the initiative and give the lead for the development of the fullest critical evaluation ~~criticism and self-evaluation~~ examination in regard to improving its work, shortcomings and resolutely strive for their correction.

SECTION 3: It shall be the obligation of all Party members to struggle for the unity ~~and other needs~~ of the working class, against all forms of national oppression, national chauvinism, discrimination and segregation, against all racist ideologies and practices, such as white chauvinism and anti-Semitism. It shall be the duty of all Party members to fight for the full social, political and economic equality of the African-American, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, Native American Indians, Asian and Pacific Islanders, other oppressed minorities, immigrants and the foreign born, and to promote the unity of all people ~~Black people and promote the unity of Black and white as essential to the advancement of their common interests.~~

~~It shall be the obligation of all Party members to fight for social, political and economic equality for Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native American Indians, Asian Pacific peoples, other oppressed national minorities, and the foreign-born in the United States.~~

It shall be the obligation of all Party members to struggle against all manifestations of male supremacy and discrimination against women, and to fight for the full social, political and economic equality for women.

It shall be the obligation of all Party members to struggle against homophobia and all manifestations of discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people, and to fight for their full social and civil rights.

SECTION 43. All leading committees shall seek a maximum of consultation with other committees, Party clubs and the membership in policy formation, and especially with those comrades directly involved. In the period between conventions, the various Party organizations, from Section Committee to National Committee, may organize delegated conferences to evaluate Party work in a given field or to develop a position on new issues which may arise.

Other forms of consultation may include membership referendum.

SECTION 54. All Party members who are eligible must belong to their respective trade labor unions. If no union exists at a Party member's place of employment, he or she shall strive

to organize, or help to organize, a labor union whenever possible.

SECTION 65. All Party members working in coalitions and mass organizations (such as trade labor unions, farm, community, civil rights, fraternal, religious, etc.) shall promote and strengthen the unity and leading role of the working class, and fight for the broadest possible unity and needs of the working class and its allies, in the course of fighting for their needs.

SECTION 76. All members who are eligible shall register and to vote in all public elections, in public office, wherever possible.

SECTION 7. The Party shall give full aid in the acquisition of United States citizenship to those of its members who, because of unjust and undemocratic laws and practices, are deprived of this right.

ARTICLE VII – ~~Control~~, Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals

SECTION 1. Subject to the provisions of this Article, any member or officer of the Party may be reprimanded, put on probation, suspended for a specified period, removed from office, dropped or expelled from the Party for actions detrimental to the interests of the Party and the working class, for factionalism, for making false statements in an application for membership, for financial irregularities, or for advocacy or practice of racial, national or religious discrimination, or discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation.~~sex~~

No action, including dropping, may be taken against a member without notifying him or her of the action and the reason for it. ~~Control tasks Assistance should~~ may be given assigned to help comrades to overcome weaknesses and shortcomings, when possible.

SECTION 2. Subject to the provisions of this Article, any member shall be expelled from the Party who is a strikebreaker, a provocateur, engaged in espionage, an informer, or who advocates force and violence or terrorism, or who participates in the activities of any group which acts to undermine or overthrow any democratic institutions through which the majority of the American people can express their right to determine their destiny.

SECTION 3. Charges against individual members or committees may be made by any member or Party committee to the club of which the accused is a member or to the appropriate higher committee having jurisdiction.

All such charges shall be handled expeditiously by an elected trial committee of the club or appropriate higher body. The trial committee shall hear charges, make recommendations and then disband.

SECTION 4. All accused persons concerned in disciplinary cases, except publicly self-admitted informers and provocateurs, must be notified of the charges against them, shall have the right to appear, to bring witnesses, including non-members if agreed to by the trial committee, and to testify. The burden of proof shall be on the accusers.

SECTION 5. After hearing the report of the trial committee, the club or leading committee having jurisdiction shall have the right to decide by a two-thirds vote upon any disciplinary measure, including expulsion. Disciplinary measures taken by leading committees shall be reported to the club of each accused member. Higher bodies must be informed of all disciplinary actions above a reprimand. There shall be an automatic review of all expulsions by the next higher body.

SECTION 6. Any member or committee that has been subject to disciplinary action has the right to appeal to the next higher body up to the National Convention, whose decision shall be final. The National, State (or District) or other leading committee shall set a hearing within 60 days from the date of receipt of the appeal and notify the appellant of the hearing date. When, however, the appeal is to a State, District or National Convention, the appeal shall be acted upon by the Convention following the filing of the appeal, provided that such appeal is made at least 30 days prior to the convention.

~~The National Review Commission shall review appeals from decisions in disciplinary cases and refer its conclusions to the National Committee for its decision.~~

ARTICLE VIII – Initiation Fees, Dues and Assessments

SECTION 1. Initiation fees and dues shall be paid according to rates fixed by the National Convention. Between National Conventions, the National Committee may revise the rates of initiation fees and dues by a two-thirds vote of the National Committee.

SECTION 2. The income from dues and initiation fees shall be apportioned among the various subdivisions of the Party as determined by the National Convention, or by a two-thirds vote of the National Committee between conventions.

SECTION 3. Special assessments may be levied by the National Convention or by a two-thirds vote of the National Committee.

All local or state (or district) assessments are prohibited except by special permission of the National Committee.

ARTICLE IX – Amendment

SECTION 1. This Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of any regular or special National Convention, or by membership referendum initiated by the National Committee or one-third of the state and district organizations. It may also be amended by three-fourths vote of the National Committee and a majority vote of the majority of the State and District Committees. This vote must be preceded by a minimum of a two-month discussion period in the Party organization.

ARTICLE X – Authority

SECTION 1. The Communist Party is not responsible for any political document, policy, book, article, or any other expression of political opinion except such as are issued by authority of the National Conventions and the regularly constituted leadership of the Party.