

## INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS CONSTITUTION (June 1975)

### Article I. Name

The name of this organization shall be the International Socialists (I.S.).

### Article II. Political Principles

The basic political principles of the I.S. are those contained in the "Program in Brief." The Program in Brief may be amended only by the National Convention by majority vote. Proposed amendments must be circulated to all chapters at least 60 days prior to the National Convention which is to act on the amendments.

### Article III. Membership

All individuals who are in general agreement with the Political Principles and meet other requirements of this constitution are eligible for membership in I.S.

The I.S. is an activist organization. Its members are expected to maintain a high level of activity, and joining the organization should be seen as a serious commitment to work either within the organization helping to build it, or in arena work, helping to advance its politics. Members are expected to accept political assignments on a regular basis, taking into account their personal situations.

A chapter may accept into membership by majority vote any applicant meeting the requirements herein. Members at large who live in an area in which the I.S. does not have a branch may be accepted into membership by the National Secretary or by other procedures adopted by the EC, subject to the approval of the NC. In the event that a Chapter refuses membership, the applicant may appeal to the EC and NC.

Members who are unable to maintain regular political activity for periods of time may apply to the chapter executive committee for a Leave-of-Absence. Members on leave-of-absence are not entitled to vote at membership meetings but retain speaking rights. Members who do not meet chapter requirements for political activity may be placed on an involuntary Leave-of-Absence by the membership. Such decisions may be appealed to the EC and NC. Members on leave of absence must pay full dues, must still coordinate their political activities through the I.S., and are still subject to its discipline.

### Article IV. National Convention

The National Convention shall be the highest governing body of the Organization.

The NC shall call a National Convention every year.

The NC shall issue a call for the National Convention 90 days prior to the date set for the Convention. This period may be shortened by a 2/3 vote of the NC.

Special Conventions of the Organization may be called by the NC or by 25% of the membership.

Delegates for the Convention shall be determined as follows:

Apportionment of delegates from the chapters and unorganized areas shall be proportionately determined by the EC on the basis of the size of chapters and the Organization as a whole as of 90 days prior to the opening of the Convention.

The NC shall determine the delegate-membership ratio. Each chapter and organizing committee shall be entitled to at least one vote. Chapters may elect as delegates members of the I.S. who are not members of that chapter.

If the delegate-member ratio is 1 to n (so that each delegate represents n members) then each MAL who attends the Convention shall have 1/n votes. Or, what amounts to the same thing, each delegate shall have n votes and

I.S. Constitution, page two

each MAL 1 vote.

Major documents for decision at the Convention shall be distributed to branches at least 4 weeks prior to the Convention. Counter documents shall be distributed at least 2 weeks prior to the Convention.

#### Article V. National Committee

The National Committee and alternates shall be elected by the National Convention. No more than 1/3 of the members may be from any specific chapter.

The National Committee shall meet at least three times per year or upon call by the EC, or upon request of 1/3 of the membership of the NC.

A quorum of the NC shall be equal to a majority of the NC and shall consist of members and alternates with written designations from absent NC members. Remaining vacancies shall be filled by alternates present in the order of election except where political division shall have been used in election in which case vacancies shall be filled only with alternates from the same political grouping.

Between Conventions the NC shall be governing body of the Organization and may make all political and organizational decisions for the organization in between Conventions except those specifically excluded by this Constitution.

The NC shall appoint all national officers and the Executive Committee by majority vote and may remove them in the same way.

Any member of the NC who fails to attend two consecutive meetings of the NC is automatically removed from office unless action to the contrary is taken by the NO.

#### Article VI. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be elected by the NC and may be replaced or changed at any time by the NC.

The EC may act for the organization on all political and organizational matters except as otherwise provided for herein between meetings of the NC.

Any two members of the EC or five members of the NC may request a mail vote of the NC on any action of the EC within 10 days of the action.

#### Article VII. National Officers

The NC shall at its first meeting following a convention elect a National Secretary, Publications Editors, and any other national officers as it may deem necessary. These officers, if not elected members of the NC, shall be Fraternal members of the NC with voice but no vote. These officers may be replaced by the NC at any time. Officers shall be politically responsible to the EC between NC meetings, although recallable only by the NC.

#### Article VII. Organization.

Members at Large shall be responsible to the EC for the conduct of political activity.

Five or more members in any locality may be chartered as a chapter upon application to the NAC. Chapters have the right and duty to perform all I.S. activity in that locality. The National Organization retains the power to supercede any decision of a local branch regarding its external functioning.

Three or more members in an unorganized area may be constituted an organizing committee upon application to the EC and carry on activities subject to review by the EC.

Where more than one chapter exists in any locale, a district organization\* shall be the highest governing body within the locale. This district organization will be elected by a district convention called at the initiative of the chapters in the locale.

\*(insert) may be chartered by the EC in which case the district organization

I.S. Constitution, page three

National fractions of members involved in common political work may be initiated by the members themselves or by the NC or EC. These fractions may elect their own officers and committees. These fractions are responsible in their political work to the National Organization as a whole through the National Convention, NC, and EC. The NC and EC may establish any procedures deemed necessary to insure political responsibility.

#### Article IX. Finances

The NC shall have the power to set national dues. Chapters shall be responsible for the national dues of their members.

Local chapters and districts may assess such additional dues as deemed necessary.

The NC may set special assessments and organize special fund drives.

Only members in good standing may vote or hold office at any level in the I.S. A member who is more than three months arrears in dues and has not made satisfactory arrangements with the appropriate executive committee shall be deprived of the right to vote or hold any office. Members who are more than 6 months arrears in dues and who have not made satisfactory arrangements with the appropriate executive committee shall be dropped from membership two weeks following a letter or warning.

#### Article X. Referenda

Motions, proposed constitutional amendments or resolutions to be voted on by referendum shall be submitted to the membership upon request of 1/3 of the NC, 25% of the membership of the organized chapters.

The vote on each referendum shall close 30 days after submission to the membership. A majority vote of those voting (not including abstentions) shall determine the result except that no referendum shall be valid unless 1/3 of the membership in good standing vote.

#### Article XI. Membership Rights

The EC shall establish a year-round information and discussion bulletin where all political and organization disagreements may be expressed fully. Reasonable space and technical requirements may be imposed by the editor of the discussion bulletin. The EC may refuse to publish in the discussion bulletin any article which lists the names or actions of specific individuals or groups when publication would subject them to repression from the state apparatus or seriously impair an individual or organization's political functioning. Such decisions by the EC may be appealed to the NC.

There shall be no secret balloting on any committee of the I.S. All votes shall be recorded and minutes of meetings except those in executive session shall be made available to all members who request them. All meetings of the NC and EC are open to all members except when the bodies vote by 2/3 to go into executive session.

The rights of the majority shall be protected:

All members of the organization shall be guided in all of their politically relevant actions by the decisions of the I.S. No members shall externally organize against or oppose through public activity in any mass work any decision of the I.S. which has been specifically determined by the organization to be a disciplined matter. If a member disagrees with a decision of the organization, he may abstain from activity on that question.

No votes, substantive or procedural, shall require more than a simple majority of those voting (not including abstentions) for determination except for those specified in this Constitution.

The rights of the minorities shall be protected:

There shall be no restriction on the formation of caucuses within the Organization.

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There shall be no restriction on the rights of individuals or caucuses to publish their own points of view for distribution solely within the organization, except that the editorial restriction applying to the discussion bulletin also apply to all other publications.

Minorities are free to express their differences with an IS position outside the organization. This includes the right to publish opposition bulletins or journals. Specifically, members or caucuses may publish their own point of view in non-IS publications except in particular cases where such publication would in a substantial, immediate, and concrete way undermine the effectiveness of the organization's action program. This decision shall be made by the appropriate group, fraction, or leading body and may be appealed to the EC or NC. Also, members may publish in external IS publications without limitations. Pamphlets and special supplements of the IS may be limited to the majority point of view.

No individual or chapter may be suspended or expelled from membership in the IS for political positions. The only basis for suspension or expulsion shall be political activity contrary to the decisions of the organization or actions which seriously threaten or discredit the organization. Disciplinary proceeding against an individual must be sent in writing to him and notification of discipline proceedings must be sent to all chapter members and the EC at least two weeks prior to the general chapter meeting called to act on the discipline. A member has full rights to defend himself at the chapter meeting. An individual may appeal disciplinary action of a chapter to the EC and NC.

The EC may initiate disciplinary proceedings against Members-at-large or chapters. The EC shall notify the individual or chapter of charges and evidence and allow reasonable time to arrange for the individual or chapter to be present at the EC meeting which will consider disciplinary action. The individual or chapter has full rights to defend himself at this meeting. The decision of the EC may be appealed to the NC. In the case of disciplinary action against chapters, the decision may be appealed to the National Convention.

During the entire proceedings and appeal procedures, individuals and chapters have full rights to the use of the discussion bulletin and other procedures for internal communication.

Minority political views shall have full rights of representation on all committees of the organization. The outgoing NC and the executive committees shall submit in nomination a slate of candidates for the election of the new committee after consulting the different political tendencies within the organization. If any political tendency believes that it is or may be unrepresented or underrepresented on any committee of the organization, it is entitled, by submitting a motion or resolution as the basis for political representation, to that proportion of the seats on the committee as the proportion of those voting in favor of the motion or resolution as a basis for political representation, to those voting at the meeting where the election is carried out.

Political tendencies also have the right to the procedure of political division in the election of delegates to the National Convention.

No member shall be denied full rights of electoral participation in all internal IS affairs, or be denied full due process in any and all questions concerning discipline

I.S. Constitution, page five

(including expulsion,\*because of the length of his or her membership in the IS.

Article XII. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by membership referendum as described above, or by Convention in the same manner as the Program in Brief.

\*Insert "nor be denied the right to run for any position of office in the I.S."