

Socialist Resurgence Interim Constitution*

passed at SR Founding Convention

Humankind has enormous potential. We collectively have much creativity, intelligence, and ability to make the world a better place. But instead, we are held back by a parasitic ruling class, which divides us with fear and prejudice, and exploits and oppresses us for its own gain.

Socialist Resurgence (SR) is a group of revolutionary Marxists dedicated to overthrowing this rotten system that holds us back. We strive to mobilize the working class, to build effective social movements, and support the struggles of the oppressed here, and around the world. Our organization is a space where revolutionaries can share ideas, learn skills and coordinate their organizing efforts. While we don't pretend to be THE revolutionary party, we do hope to make a meaningful contribution to the creation of the kind of workers' party, and international movement, that can facilitate a socialist revolution.

1) Membership

Membership in the organization is to be based on: 1. A commitment to the basic aims and program of the organization. 2. Engagement in the political activities of the organization as decided by the decision-making processes of the organization — though comrades level of activity may vary during their period of membership. 3. Promotion of the publications of the organization. 4. Payment of regular dues, and an additional regular sustainer, when possible, to SR. The monthly dues shall be \$10 or as decided by the National Convention. Dues are paid to the national organization. Local or statewide units may collect funds for their own activities on a regular basis, if they so decide.

Recruitment should be by decision of the local branch of the organization. Where no branch exists, membership applications should be dealt with by the NC or by the national convention. New members will serve a 3 month provisional membership, which entitles them to full participation and voice in all SR proceedings, national and local, but their vote is consultative only. Applicants for provisional membership shall pay a \$5 initiation fee. Provisional status may be waived by the NC. Membership in any other socialist organization requires the permission of the National Committee.

2) Membership rights and responsibilities

Members have the right and a responsibility to play an active role in the organization, including in its decision-making processes through the various bodies the organization established for this purpose.

We strive for the fullest possible participation of our membership in our discussions and decision making process, followed by the greatest possible unity-in-action afterwards. This doesn't mean unity-in-thought or the obligation to say things one does not agree with, but it does mean a commitment not to speak in public against or to undermine an agreed upon SR project.

A member in arrears in dues for more than 3 months must be notified in writing by their branch treasurer. Branch treasurers must also notify the national treasurer of a member in arrears. Branch treasurers, or the national treasurer, will make every effort to arrive at a payment plan to help the member become paid up to date.

Members who are more than six months in arrears of dues shall be held to be in bad standing, and are liable to be removed from membership by the decision of the branch or the NC. A member removed from membership for arrears of dues and without prejudice in this way must be given adequate notice (at least one month) to be present and to state their case or raise objections. Appeals can be made first to the NC and then to the convention.

No member shall be subject to sanctions inside the organization for the orderly expression of opinion or the exercise of any other right laid down in the constitution.

3) Organizational structure

The basic unit of the organization is the branch. A branch will be established by at least 4 members in a local area. The NC will regulate the establishment of branches, which may be either in a geographic location or workplace. The task of the branch is to apply and elaborate the line of the organization as defined by the national convention, the quarterly membership meeting, or the NC between

conventions. It is responsible for organizing educational activities among its members.

Members who join, but do not live in an area where there is a local branch will be asked to join to the nearest branch, as specified by the NC. They will pay their national dues and sustainer to this branch. They may use other funds for the effort to build a new branch in their area of residence.

Members of a branch, who live in another geographic area that precludes actual participation in the branch's political activity, will have a voice and vote on national and international reports to the branch. They may cast consultative votes on their branch's local activity. Similarly, branch members resident in the main center will hear area reports from those living afar, but only cast consultative votes on them. The National Committee and branches will work together to maximize opportunities for all members to participate in organizational tasks and activities. Branches shall set up video links for the participation of members in other geographic locations.

Branches shall organize a branch meeting within two months following a national convention in order to discuss the local or regional implementation of the decisions taken and to re-elect the branch leadership.

Branches should elect an organizer and a treasurer, and a branch executive committee if they are of sufficient size to warrant it, to organize their activities. Branch officers and branch executive committees will be responsible to the branch and subject to recall by majority vote. Except in the case of newly-organized branches, members of a local branch executive committees must be full members of SR.

Fractions, working groups, or commissions may be established by the NC to organize and elaborate particular areas of work. Local areas and branches may establish work fractions as needed.

4) Quarterly Membership Meeting and National Committee

Between national conventions, the authority of the convention, subject to the convention itself, is vested in quarterly membership meetings. The membership meetings may decide questions of policy, in accord with the decisions of the

convention. In between conventions, the membership meetings constitute the final functioning authority of Socialist Resurgence.

The NC is the sovereign body of the organization between membership meetings. It will be elected by a convention of the organization. The quorum for voting in membership meetings is half of the full membership, plus 1.

The convention shall choose the size of the NC and accept nominations from the floor to fill these positions. Members of the NC must be members of SR for at least one year. People nominated to the NC should have demonstrated their ongoing commitment to the daily and ongoing functioning of the organization. The convention shall also determine the number of NC alternates necessary and elect these through a secret ballot.

Voting for the NC and alternates will be by secret ballot. Delegates will only vote for the number of NC members and alternates set by the convention. (A nominations commission elected at the beginning of the convention may be utilized to configure a national committee slate.)

The composition of the NC shall be such as to ensure a working majority based on proportional representation of members who support the political line determined by convention on the main documents. The NC should also broadly reflect the numerical weight of different tendencies or factions in the organization.

The primary task of the NC is to implement the line and the decisions of the convention in regard to current political events and internal campaigns. It should prepare quarterly membership meetings and propose the agendas and reporters for these meetings.

The NC should normally meet weekly, or as needed, and should elect such officers as it regards necessary. Any NC member, branch, sub-committee, tendency or factions can submit a resolution to the NC. The minutes of the NC shall be circulated to all members. Key documents, both majority and minority, from NC deliberations and discussions shall be provided to the members in a timely fashion. The national treasurer will make available regular financial reports to the NC and the membership.

Any matter of discipline concerning a member of the NC shall be investigated by the Control Commission.

NC members, for flagrant violations of discipline in accordance with the statutes of this constitution, may be dropped from the National Committee by a secret ballot vote of the National Committee. They are also liable to face disciplinary measures, such as censure or expulsion from the organization, by either the National Committee, the national convention, or their local branch (in a local matter). In all such disciplinary cases, the accused NC member has the due process rights that all members are entitled to — including the right to a hearing, the right to call the Control Commission, and the right to appeal their case to the national convention.

5) NC Organizers

The NC shall choose from its ranks an organizer and an assistant organizer, who will consult with members to the end of proposing a draft agenda and reporters for each meeting, and to ensure that approved activities are implemented between meetings. NC organizers will be rotated annually, or as needed.

6) Full timers

Any political or administrative full timers employed by the organization should be appointed by the NC after appropriate interviewing procedures; the appointment is subject to review by the membership meeting. The NC will be responsible for the terms of employment of full timers.

The recall of a full timer may be carried out by the NC at any time by majority decision, providing the full timer concerned is given the opportunity to be present. Such recall would not be regarded as a disciplinary action. A full timer may also be subject to recall upon petition of the majority of members in good standing.

8) National convention

The national convention is the highest policy making body of the organization. Its decisions override any other body of the organization. The convention has the

right to determine its procedures, order of business, and other matters relating to its deliberations.

The NC will be responsible for organizing a democratic pre-convention discussion of normally 90 days, giving every member an equal right to participate.

The NC, in consultation with the membership meeting, may call an open convention that will be open to all full members in good standing on a one-member, one-vote basis. Convention voting rules will be elaborated by the NC. The convention may also be a delegated convention at the decision of the NC, or by a referendum of the members organized by the NC.

Conventions will ideally be convened every twelve months, but no longer than every 18 months. The NC is responsible for convening and organizing the convention. A special or emergency convention may be called by the NC, or through petition of the majority of members in good standing.

The NC will normally open the pre-convention discussion with a text or texts on the most important issues facing the organization. However, the opening of the pre-convention period should not be contingent on such texts. The NC is also responsible for producing membership and financial reports to the convention

If the convention is delegated, delegates should be elected in the branches and not more than two weeks before the convention. The NC will propose the apportionment of delegates per branch to a membership meeting to be held before the convention. Branch delegates should be elected so as to reflect the support for the various line documents and for any existing tendencies or factions that may exist within the branch. Voting in branches is for this purpose only. Delegates are not bound by such votes in the course of the convention.

At the start of convention the outgoing National Committee is dissolved. If the convention is non-delegated, outgoing NCers may speak and vote like any other member. If the convention is delegated, outgoing NC members who have not been elected delegates by a branch will still be given voice and consultative vote.

A presiding committee should be elected at the start of the convention for the running of the convention. Its composition should broadly reflect the weight of different tendencies as reflected in the voting in the branches.

8) Rights of tendencies and factions

Members of the organization shall have the right to constitute themselves in organized tendencies and factions on the basis of a political platform available to all members of the organization. Their activities shall be transparent to the whole organization. Tendencies and factions shall have the right to distribute their views to the membership.

The rights of such tendencies or factions should include: a) the right to meet and organize around their views in the organization; b) the right to collectively present these views to the organization; 3) adequate opportunity in pre-convention discussions and at convention to explain and develop their views in counter position to other tendencies, factions, or organized points of view. 4) the right to present their views to international groupings in which SR takes part.

9) The rights of the oppressed

The organization recognizes that various forms of oppressive social relationships are present in capitalist society and that they act as a block to the unity of the working class in its struggle for socialism. SR therefore views all oppressive behavior such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, domestic violence, or violence between members of the organization as against the interests of the working class. Such behaviors are incompatible with membership in SR.

Any oppressed group has the right to caucus if they feel the necessity. The leadership has a duty to positively facilitate such caucusing. The purpose of such a caucus is to discuss the situation of the particular group and report back to the appropriate level of the organization.

10) Discipline

Any member or group of members shall have the right to bring charges against another member. A branch, NC, or convention may invoke disciplinary measures. The basis for such charges shall be that a member is consciously acting against

the interests of the organization, abusing its resources, strike breaking, or engaging in oppressive behaviors.

Charges should be made to and heard by a branch unless the accused is a member of the NC, in which case the charge should be made to the NC. A branch, the NC, or a member who is a party to the charges, all have the right to ask the Control Commission to investigate the case. The CC shall then provide a report and recommendations to the appropriate decision-making body.

The accuser shall have the right to present their case and to call and question witnesses.

All accused shall have the following rights in the course of the procedure:

- a) To receive at least one week's written notice of the charges.
- b) The right to have another member with them at the hearing and, if they wish, have this member present their defense.
- c) The right to call and question witnesses and hear all the evidence against them. Parties to any disciplinary action may request that the inquiry be conducted in writing instead of in person. An accuser may opt to have witnesses questioned by a proxy or the CC.

When a hearing is conducted by a branch and disciplinary measures are invoked, the accused has the right of appeal to the NC, and if the discipline is upheld, to the national convention. Accusers also have the right to appeal a branch decision to the NC, and then to the national convention.

(The Constitutional Commission suggests the formation of a women's commission to suggest procedures to deal with sexual harassment and assault.)

11) Control Commission

A 3-member Control Commission (CC) shall be elected by the convention. None of its members shall be members of the NC and the body shall operate independently of the NC.

The CC is charged with overseeing all aspects of party democracy and discipline. It shall have full authority to investigate any matters within that

category and to convene on its own initiative. It has the right to attend any meeting of the organization in respect of CC business or to require any member or body to produce any material it deems necessary for its work. It must be notified of any disciplinary proceedings initiated against any member or members.. A CC inquiry may be initiated by a branch, the NC, or at the request of an individual member or members. CC members have the right to attend NC meetings in a non-voting capacity.

Once it has concluded an investigation, the CC shall present a report of its inquiries, including any recommendations for action to the NC, convention, or other appropriate body of the organization. It has the right to make a written report to the membership if it considers this necessary.

12) Amendments

Amendments to this constitution shall be made by majority vote of the national convention. Amendments may be presented during a pre-convention discussion.

13) Publications

All organs of Socialist Resurgence are subject to and under the direction of the convention, membership meeting, and National Committee.

*This Interim Constitution is conceived as a living document and not as the finalized document. We hope that this document and accompanying discussion documents will serve to initiate an in depth discussion in the ranks of SR on revolutionary organization -- its history and future.