

Draft I.S. Constitution

Introduction

Two assumptions are basic to this Constitution:

1. A workable Constitution results from applying general democratic principles to the special needs and circumstances of an organization. As an organization changes, so must the organizational rules. Brief explanations of method are included so that the spirit and democratic intent can be maintained in changing circumstances.

2. A working Constitution can only be a summary and codification of the actual political and organizational agreement commonly held by the membership. A Constitution can help deepen and clarify that agreement but it cannot substitute for it.

Article I. Political Principles.

The basic principles of the IS are:
[Insert *We Stand For* column from Changes.]

Article II. Membership.

All persons in general agreement with our Political Principles and willing to meet the other requirements of this Constitution are eligible for membership.

The IS is an activist organization. Joining the IS is a serious commitment to work to help build the organization and advance its political ideas.

IS branches may accept persons in their areas into membership by majority vote.

Persons in areas where there are currently no IS branches may be accepted into membership by the national Political Committee.

Article III. National Convention.

A yearly National Convention shall be the highest governing body of the organization, and shall set the political and organizational policies to guide the organization. The Convention may amend the Constitution by majority vote and shall elect the Political Committee. The Convention shall set membership dues requirements.

All members of the IS are encouraged to attend the Convention and each shall have one vote. The Convention may be changed to a delegated Convention by a membership referendum.

Article IV. Political Committee.

The Political Committee is elected by the National Convention and between Conventions has full authority to act for the organization on all political or organizational questions except otherwise specified in this Constitution.

All officers of the national organization shall be elected by the Political Committee, shall be responsible to it and may be replaced by it.

Between Conventions members of the Political Committee may be added or replaced by $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the National Meeting if the membership was notified of the proposals prior to the meeting.

Article V. National Meetings.

The Political Committee shall call one or more National Meetings each year between Conventions. These meetings are for purposes of communication and discussion. All members may attend and all branches should see to it that they are represented. The meeting has no official power to make political or organizational decisions for the national organization except to change the PC as described above.

Article VI. Membership Rights.

The PC shall publish an information and discussion bulletin where political and organizational questions may be discussed fully. The PC may establish reasonable space and technical requirements and may refuse to publish any article which gives names or actions of specific individuals or which would seriously impair the political functioning of an individual or organization.

The rights of the majority shall be protected:

All decisions except as otherwise specified shall be by majority vote.

All members of the organization shall be guided in their politically relevant actions by decisions of the IS. We believe that political discipline—all members of the organization, minorities as well as majority, actively carrying out the decisions of the organization—is a necessary and important democratic tool. We believe that like all tools its application must be appropriate to the circumstances, including, the nature of the political work, the current political questions and the depth of political agreement. Currently, the IS is not organized as a disciplined organization nationally. However, national and local work committees as well as branches adopt a level of discipline appropriate to their work.

The rights of minorities shall be protected:

Individuals and caucuses are free to publish their own viewpoints for distribution within the organization except that the security restrictions which apply to the discussion bulletin also apply here.

Members are free to discuss their differences with IS positions outside the organization and in other publications where this does not violate the political discipline adopted by a section of the organization and does not violate the security restrictions described above.

The IS seeks to recruit new members and grow. But we are a voluntary organization which is organized to further its beliefs. No one is forced to join nor is anyone forced to remain a member. The organization has the democratic right and responsibility to protect itself and to effectively carry out its democratically determined program. A branch (or the PC in the case of members at large) may suspend or expel a member for violating the rules of the organization or for actions which seriously threaten or discredit the organization. Individuals may be dropped from membership for inactivity or nonpayment of dues.

Article VII. Leadership.

We believe that strong leadership is a necessary part of any strong democratic organization. We seek to train all members in leadership skills and to encourage strong leadership within the organization. We believe that the membership's check on the leadership is for the leadership to function openly, for the membership to be active and knowledgeable rather than passive, and have the means to hold the leadership responsible for its actions.

Leadership committees should function as collaborative bodies rather than as collections of individuals. Nominations and elections of leadership bodies shall be by slates. Alternatives shall be in the form of alternative full slates or amendments to a slate.

Minority political views shall have full rights of representation on all committees of the organization. If any political grouping believes that it may be under-represented on any committee of the organization, it is entitled to that proportion of the seats on the committee as the proportion voting for a "resolution as the basis of representation."