

Organizational Norms and Procedures

Socialist Labor Party of America

Adopted at the
Thirty-First National Convention
Philadelphia, May 1978

Amended at the
National Conventions
1984, 1987

Article I

CONVENTIONS

SECTION A. Every SLP member has the right to present resolutions on matters of Party policy, agitation or Constitution for consideration by the Convention.

SECTION B. If a resolution is defeated at the Section level, a member still has the right to submit it for Convention consideration at a lower order of priority.

SECTION C. Conventions shall consider resolutions in the following priority:

1. Resolutions endorsed by Sections.
2. Resolutions from Convention delegates.
3. Resolutions from national members-at-large.
4. Resolutions defeated at Section level.

SECTION D. All resolutions shall be submitted to the National Office at least two weeks prior to the Convention to allow time to make copies for the delegates and save time on the Convention floor. Resolutions that are simple and/or brief, however, may not be reproduced, at the discretion of the National Office. In the event only some resolutions can be reproduced due to time or number submitted, reproduction shall follow the same priority listed above (Section C). Conventions should not entertain substantive resolutions which have not been submitted in time to be reproduced for the delegates. Resolutions that are substantive shall contain adequate argumentation.

SECTION E. Those decisions final with the Convention, and those approved by referendum vote, are binding on all Party mem-

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bers and all levels of organization until reversed or modified. Publicly, all members are expected to represent and defend the majority viewpoint as the Party's policy.

Article II

(NEC)

SECTION A. The NEC shall retain the power of suspension for any period until final judgment is passed by the Convention. Refusal to abide by this organizational process, i.e., refusal to accept NEC decisions until the Convention hears an appeal, shall be grounds for immediate expulsion by the NEC and the forfeiture of right of appeal.

Article III

(THE SECTIONS)

SECTION A. Sections may reproduce literature from any Party publication for local use as they see fit. The National Office shall be provided with a copy of the same.

SECTION B. Where Sections produce new literature it shall be sent to the National Office for review. This includes all radio and TV scripts.

1. Wherever possible this review should be in advance of use.

2. However, where prior review would inhibit the exploitation of an agitational opportunity, locally produced literature may be sent for review after the fact.

SECTION C. If the National Office finds a Section incapable of producing adequate literature without prior review, it shall recommend that the NEC direct said Section to submit all locally produced material in advance.

SECTION D. Wherever possible Sections shall organize study classes. These are to be under the direct supervision and control of the Section.

1. The Section shall select the instructor of the study class and such instructor shall have full authority to conduct the class.

2. The study class instructor shall at all times be subject to the authority of the Section and may, at any time, be recalled by the Section.

3. Any criticism of the conduct of the class or instructor shall be voiced on the floor of the Section meetings.

4. Party members shall not enjoy any more privileges than non-Party members in the study class.

5. Those who attend Socialist Labor Party study classes shall be advised that only Socialist Labor Party principles and program are taught at study class sessions, and it shall be the duty of the instructor of the study class to remind all study class students of this provision.

SECTION E. Wherever possible and advisable Sections shall organize groups of workers who have manifested interest in the Party, to be known as discussion groups. Such groups shall in no sense be confused with the formal study classes.

1. The moderator of the discussion group shall be selected in the same manner as provided for the selection of study class instructor, and shall at all times be subject to the authority of the Section, and may at any time be recalled by the Section.

2. Discussion groups must be kept under the strict control of the Section.

3. If and when any member of such discussion group furnishes reasonable grounds for assuming that s/he is using, or intends to use, the discussion group for ulterior purposes, s/he shall forthwith be eliminated from the group.

4. When a member of a discussion group manifests understanding and qualities which would seem to justify the conclusion that s/he has matured to the point of qualifying for the study class of the Section, s/he shall be encouraged to join such class.¹

¹ Also see *An SLP Member's Guide for Discussion Groups*.

Article IV

(INTRA-PARTY COMMUNICATION)

SECTION A. Sections and members desiring to circulate material throughout the Party shall have access to the *SLP Newsletter*, subject to established guidelines.²

SECTION B. Sections seeking to submit propositions for seconds and possible general vote shall follow the provisions outlined in Article XII, Section 2 of the SLP Constitution.

SECTION C. Sections or members shall not by-pass these two procedures for circularizing the membership.

SECTION D. Sections may communicate directly with other Sections on agitational matters, exchange locally produced material, etc. Copies of such material and related correspondence shall be supplied to the National Office.

SECTION E. Discussions of political and organizational matters of a general nature shall be pursued through the *SLP Newsletter*.

SECTION F. Two or more Sections may hold joint general membership meetings (at their own expense) to discuss and exchange views on specific Party matters.

1. Motions, resolutions or other statements adopted at such meetings are not binding on any of the participating Sections and have no official status.

2. Each Section may subsequently take whatever official action it sees fit on the matters that were discussed at the general membership meeting.

² See page 13.

SECTION G. Sections shall supply copies of all agitational material, letters and/or printed matter prepared locally and circularized among nonmembers to the National Office. A Section shall not circularize such materials in the area of jurisdiction of another subdivision unless special arrangements for it to do so have been agreed upon.

SECTION H. Every member has a right to communicate with the National Office. The National Office may use its own discretion in answering.

Article V

(GENERAL RULES)

SECTION A. A Section at a meeting attended by less than a quorum can transact only routine business and that subject to NEC approval.³

SECTION B. A Section receiving an application from one residing outside its area of jurisdiction shall forward same to the National Office for submission to the NEC, which shall determine how and by whom the application should be processed.

SECTION C. Suspended members remain subject to the Section's authority during the period of suspension.

1. They must keep themselves in good standing.
2. They are deprived of all membership rights.
3. A Section may decide whether a suspended member should be permitted to distribute leaflets, service newsstands, attend Party affairs, etc.

SECTION D. A subdivision may publish and circularize a local publication provided:

1. It deals primarily with matters of local concern.
2. It has been approved by the NEC.
3. Its circulation is limited to the area designated by the NEC.
4. A copy of its mailing list is filed with the National Office and is updated every six months.

³ See guide on determining “routine and nonroutine business” on page 12.

5. At least 15 copies of each issue are furnished for the NEC and the National Office files.

6. Any information requested by the NEC relating to the publication and/or its circulation is furnished promptly.

SECTION E. All provisions of Organizational Norms and Procedures that may be in conflict with the Constitution of the Socialist Labor Party are rescinded.

Rulings

The following are rulings made by the NEC and National Conventions since 1976 which have a bearing on Organizational Norms and Procedures.

RULING 1. (a) Upon receiving the printed proceedings of National Conventions, each Section is to hold a special meeting for the purpose of membership discussion of the various matters raised and to exchange views, raise questions and otherwise study and evaluate those proceedings;

(b) That the Sections arrange special meetings at which discussions are to be conducted on Party activity and theoretical questions;

(c) That the Sections conduct periodic study classes for members using Marxian literature as the basis of discussions; and

(d) That the membership be reminded that it has the duty to remove any elected Party official whom it finds is not fulfilling his or her constitutional obligations. (1976 National Convention Report, page 181; amended 1987)

RULING 2. That whenever possible and considered desirable by the subdivision, at social functions and public meetings conducted by the subdivisions of the Party master-of-ceremonies and chairpersons stress and urge newcomers to participate in our activities and to ultimately join the SLP. (1976 NEC Report, page 90)

RULING 3. That each Section include in its order of business an item to be called “Membership Recruitment” under the heading of which the problems of how to best approach and deal with inducing inquirers and recent contacts to participate in activities of the SLP

and to join our organization are to be taken up. (1976 NEC Report, page 91)

RULING 4. Consolidation of Sections may be initiated by a majority vote of each individual Section in a given area, subject to approval of the NEC. (1977 NEC Report, page 120)

RULING 5. SLP members shall not participate in or appear as speakers at rallies, forums, conventions, etc., held by other left organizations which are intended to build their own organizations. (1978 National Convention Report, page 190)

RULING 6. A summary of the business conducted at NEC meetings, including any roll call vote on important matters, is to be forwarded to the Sections and members by general letter, the matters conveyed to be decided by the NEC. (1981 National Convention Report, page 62)

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The 32nd (1979) National Convention adopted the following “as a guide” in determining routine and nonroutine business:

ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Organizer’s report where no action is necessary.
2. Reading of the minutes.
3. Financial report which states normal bills and expenditures paid and records normal receipts.
4. Correspondence which consists of circular letters, information, etc., which requires no action.
5. The placing of orders for normal *People* bundles, normal amounts of literature or normal amounts of leaflets.

NONROUTINE MATTERS

1. Report of a Membership Committee.
2. Report of a Grievance Committee.

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3. Nomination of an NEC member. (This was adopted prior to present NEC setup.)
4. Election of Section officers and committees.
5. Votes on resolutions to the NEC or National Conventions.

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The following guidelines were adopted by the 1980 National Convention.

GUIDELINES FOR THE SLP NEWSLETTER

A. Responsibility for the editorial content and production of the newsletter rests with the national office staff.

B. All sections and members desiring to circulate material throughout the Party shall have access to the *SLP Newsletter*.

C. Discussion of political and organizational matters of a general nature may be pursued through the newsletter.

D. The national office staff shall be given discretion to decide what contributions are suitable for publication. Articles considered unfit for publication should be returned to the author. An explanation should be included where practical or possible.

The *SLP Newsletter* is open to all members. However, it then follows that the newsletter should not be dominated by a few members. Therefore, in preparation of articles for the newsletter members should be guided by the following:

Any member may submit contributions of six double-spaced pages or three separate articles, each article not to exceed two double-spaced pages submitted within any six-month period. Any contributions in excess of the above will be printed at the discretion of the national office staff.

The number of issues printed within the year and the number of pages in each issue will depend on the quantity and length of the contributions submitted and practical circumstances within the Party.