

Constitution

of the

Socialist Party of Australia

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Preamble

The Socialist Party of Australia is a political organisation established for the purpose of changing the order of society in Australia from capitalism to socialism. It is a voluntary union of people who support and actively work for the objective of the Party, socialism.

The Socialist Party of Australia is a working class Party based on, and acting in accordance with, the concept that the working class is the only force capable of engaging in, and leading other forces in, the necessary actions capable of wresting political power from the capitalist ruling class and the agencies maintaining its power and achieving the revolutionary changes necessary to build a socialist society.

A socialist society in Australia would establish public ownership of the nation's natural resources, the means of production, distribution and exchange, the means of communication and information, public transport, of large landed estates now controlled by monopolies and large land-owners and of other land used in the course of production.

Thus socialism necessitates a thorough-going transformation in which political power passes into the hands of the working class and the economic domination of the multinational corporations and other big business organisations is replaced by public ownership.

A social transformation having those results can be achieved only by the active involvement of the mass of the people in far-reaching forms of struggle led by the working class and in which a decisive leading role is played by the Socialist

Party of Australia as a political organisation devoted to achieving a socialist Australia.

The Socialist Party of Australia has no interests separate from those of the working class and it serves the interests of all exploited people.

The Party, all its members and organisations, are guided in their work by the revolutionary theories and teachings of K Marx, F. Engels and V.I. Lenin, that is by Marxism-Leninism.

The Socialist Party of Australia seeks to study and apply Marxism-Leninism in practice in the light of conditions in Australia, at the same time as it recognises the universality of the generalities of Marxism-Leninism. The Party opposes and combats all manifestations of right and "Left" opportunism and all forms of revisionism.

The Socialist Party of Australia combines defence of the best interests of the working people and the independence and sovereignty of the nation with international working class solidarity and is an integral part of the international communist and workers' movement. The Party maintains fraternal relations with other Communist and Workers' Parties on the basis of the principles of solidarity, mutual assistance, independence, equality and non-interference.

The Socialist Party of Australia seeks to win extensive influence amongst the working class, to have that class look to the Party for advice and guidance in its many struggles and to have the working class support the aims and policies of the Party and to accept the leadership of the Socialist Party of Australia.

The Party seeks to exercise its leadership amongst the mass of the people directly as between the Party itself and the people and by the Party activities of its members in various non-party class and community organisations to which they belong.

The party establishes its leadership by means of Marxist-Leninist policies and the respect earned by its members in their struggles for the working people.

A political party based upon and acting in accordance with the political economic and ideological concepts and organisational principles of Marxism-Leninism is the highest form of class organisation. The Socialist Party of Australia is such an organisation.

All decisions of the Party must be made on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. On the understanding that the people play the decisive role in bringing about social change such decisions must be made known as widely as possible amongst the people through the Party organisations and the Party's educational and propaganda activities. This is a continuous process taking into account the experience and opinions of the people.

The Party seeks to test in practice the validity of its decisions for the purposes of developing the struggle for socialism.

Decisions of the party are also tested in practice by the process of criticism and self-criticism. That process is an essential part of the function of leadership and necessitates a continual analysis and assessment of the work of the Party organisations and of each member. Criticism and self-criticism is valid only when it is intended to, and in fact results in, strengthening the Party, its functioning and aims, and in relation to individuals, strengthens their conviction and ability as a communist.

Democratic centralism is the organisational principle of the Party. This is a process which entails ascertaining and converting the will of the major of members into policy decisions which become binding on all and establishing centres of leadership whose personnel are chosen periodically by democratic procedures.

Correct development of democratic centralism ensures a vigorous democratic life within the Party, an effective authoritative central leadership, close contact between higher and lower Party organisations, submission of the minority to the majority and lower to higher Party organisations and collective leadership combined with individual responsibility in carrying out decisions.

Proper observance of the process of democratic centralism promotes the activity and initiative of members and unites the Party in which factional and splitting activities are impermissible.

The Socialist Party of Australia opposes the sale or other means of handing over to foreign capital Australia's land, industries and resources. The Party also opposes the establishment of foreign controlled military, naval or air bases on Australian territory or the use of Australia territory for installations related to such bases.

The use of Australian territory for such purposes prejudices the sovereignty and independence of the nation and strengthens imperialism in Australia. Imperialism is the enemy of the peoples of all lands.

The Socialist Party of Australia supports the principles of peaceful coexistence between nations having different social systems and works for political and military detente, the elimination of the use of force as a means of settling disputes between nations and for universal and complete disarmament.

The Party aims to unite the working class against imperialism and state-monopoly capitalism in a struggle for peace, national independence, extensive democratic rights, secure living standards and socialism.

Success in that aim requires that the working class and the Party develop a broad alliance with other forces in society which are exploited and whose interests are prejudiced by monopoly capitalism, that is, small working farmers, professional and technical workers and proprietors of small business enterprises.

The Socialist Party of Australia conceives the process of revolutionary social change in Australia as including a period of transition from capitalism to socialism which period, depending on historical developments, may be protracted or short and during which there will continue to exist certain elements of private enterprise and money-commodity and market relations.

In such a transition period socialist forms will be dominant and will be constantly strengthened.

Socialism will rapidly develop Australia's natural resources and its productive capacities in a planned way, while certain features of money-commodity-market relations will also persist. Socialism enables the steady improvement of living and cultural standards in a peaceful and democratic society thus ensuring for future generations social security, health and happiness.

The Socialist Party of Australia sees the further development of society as proceeding from socialism to the classless society of communism.

The concepts of social change envisaged by the Socialist Party of Australia are based on a scientifically substantiated view that in society, as in nature, nothing is static or everlasting and that everything is in a state of constant change and development. On that basis there are contradictions and forces inherent in capitalist society which inevitably create the necessity for changing the nature of the existing society to a different and higher form of society. Thus capitalism must inevitably give way to socialism.

The Socialist Party of Australia understands that such processes of change cannot be willed or wished into existence and can occur only in circumstances in which certain necessary prerequisites have already developed.

One such prerequisite is a political organisation, differing from existing political organisations and capable of leading the working class in struggle for a change in the order of society.

The Socialist Party of Australia aims to be such a political organisation and this Constitution provides the organisational framework on which such an organisation can be built and developed.

RULE 1 - NAME

The Party shall be known as the Socialist Party of Australia.

Provided however that in any circumstances in which the Central Committee considers a change of name necessary, such change can be made by majority decision of the Central Committee and confirmed by a vote of the State Committees, District Committees and Executives of those Branches directly connected to the Central Committee. The decision of the CC will be confirmed if a majority of those persons entitled to vote and voting at such meetings, taken together, vote in favour of the Central Committee decision.

RULE 2 - MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Socialist Party of Australia is open to any person 16 years of age or over, who normally resides in Australia. The conditions of membership are acceptance of the Party Program and Constitution, membership and activity in a Party organisation, observance of Party decision and payment of dues.

Provided that any Party organisation may, in relation to any member within its area of authority, where in relation to any such member, it is established that special circumstances in fact exist preventing or making difficult, activity in a Party organisation, arrange for such a person to be relieved of such activity for a limited or longer duration but shall make arrangements consistent with the special circumstances concerned, for such a person to be engaged in activity on behalf of the Party where such activity is possible.

RULE 3 - DUTIES OF PARTY MEMBERS

It is the duty of a Party member:-

- (a) To build, strengthen and extend the Party's organisation and its political influence amongst the mass of the people.
- (b) To explain the Party Program and policies to the working people endeavouring to win them to a socialist position and to membership of the Socialist Party; to work in unity in active defence of their vital interests and to extend and to consolidate the Party's connections with them.
- (c) To defend and strengthen Party unity. To raise the level of his or her political understanding and knowledge of Marxism-Leninism; to observe Party

discipline and to carry out the Party Constitution, which is equally binding on all Party members. To seek to win support for and to work to have implemented the Party Program.

- (d) To develop criticism and self-criticism in a manner intended to improve the life and work of the Party and its membership, to develop collective methods of work and the democratic life of the Party with the aim of improving its work.
- (e) To join and help build the trade union, farmer or professional organisation covering his or her calling and to seek to proffer leadership in those organisations based upon the Party program and policies and by these means seek to expand the influence of the Party in such organisations and to win their support for party policies.

RULE 4 - RIGHTS OF PARTY MEMBERS

- (a) To participate freely in Party discussions and in the formulation and application of Party policy in accordance with the Party Constitution.
- (b) To criticise in Party meetings, in a manner which assists the Party, any Party organisation, officer or member.
- (c) To address any proposal, statement, criticism or appeal to any Party organisation, including Party conferences and congresses, in accordance with the Party Constitution and the relevant decisions of the constituted Party bodies.
- (d) To elect and to be elected within the Party in accordance with the provisions of the Party Constitution.

RULE 5 - ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS

Applications for membership must be signed by the applicant and by a nominator who must be a financial member of the Party and approved by the Party organisation admitting the applicant. The signed application shall be submitted to a meeting of the Party organisation dealing with the matter without the applicant being present. Any Party member present at such a meeting may speak either for or against the admission of the applicant. The ground for opposition to the admission of the applicant must be stated at the meeting and be taken into account by the organisation dealing with the application in deciding whether or not the applicant is to be admitted.

An applicant for membership to the Party by a member of the Young Socialist League may be signed, as the nominator, by the Secretary of an organisation of the Young Socialist League of Australia, provided that at a properly constituted meeting of the YSL organisation concerned a discussion on the nominee and the nomination has been held and a decision made by that meeting to support the nomination for membership to the Party. Any such nomination must be submitted to a Party organisation, and dealt with in accordance with other provisions of this Constitution. This rule does not limit the right of a Party member to nominate for Party membership a member of the YSL in accordance with the other provision of this Constitution.

Upon admission to the Party, in accordance with the provisions of this section of the rule, the YSL member concerned becomes subject to the Party Constitution and to the obligations contained in that Constitution.

Any member may appeal against any decision on an application for admission to the Party. Such appeal shall be addressed to the Party body next highest to the organisation making the decision. Any member becoming informed of any

circumstances concerning any person admitted to the Party, putting that admission in question, shall be entitled to refer such information to the Party organisation admitting the member and/or to the next highest Party organisation. Any such reference concerning a person admitted to the Party must be dealt with by the Party organisation to which it is referred at the next meeting of that organisation.

Where the Party organisation considering the application for admission to membership is of the opinion that the applicant is not yet ready to join the Party, the application may be either rejected or deferred for a specified limited period during which the applicant is asked to carry out some activity on behalf of the Party and is asked to attend study circles at which the applicant's knowledge of Party policies and ideology are further extended.

The responsibility to ensure that applications for Party membership are handled with proper consideration and that new members are consolidated and develop their knowledge and understanding, rests on the Party organisations and each individual member's comradely assistance and effective guidance. Having admitted a new member, the executive of the Party organisation should discuss a plan and area of work, ensure the new member's involvement in the life of the Party organisation and organise further political education.

The further development of cadres is a continuing task to ensure that each member maintains the maximum level of activity and an increasing capacity to fulfil the very responsible role of Party member.

RULE 6 - TRANSFERS

(a) Any member of the Party desiring to transfer from one Branch to another shall apply to the Branch of which they are a member for such transfer. The application shall be made in a form prescribed by the Party and the Secretary of the Branch from which the member is desirous of transferring shall be responsible for completing the transfer form in all particulars and submitting it to a meeting of the Branch. In the event of the Branch agreeing to the transfer, the transfer application shall be forwarded to the next higher Party organisation.

Any member refused a transfer and being dissatisfied with that decision may refer the matter to the next higher Party organisation which shall decide the matter.

(b) Branches shall not accept any member from another Branch without the procedure prescribed by this rule being followed and without suitable notification of the transfer being received through the appropriate Party organisation.

RULE 7 - DUES PAYMENT

(A) Party members shall pay dues as determined from time to time by the Party Congress.

(b) It is an obligation on Party members to pay dues as determined in accordance with this rule in full and on time, and any member more than three months in arrears in the payment of dues shall be declared unfinancial. During any period in which a member has been declared unfinancial he or

she shall not be entitled to exercise any right of membership in accordance with this Constitution. Any member unfinancial shall be notified of that fact in writing and efforts made in accordance with decisions of the branch concerned to bring such a member back into good financial standing in the Party. A member who is six months in arrears shall be regarded as having lapsed from Party membership. The member concerned shall be notified in writing and steps taken in accordance with decisions of the branch to bring such a member into good standing. If a former member whose membership was lapsed for these reasons applied for re-admission to the Party within six months of lapsing, such a member may, on the approval of the next higher Party organisation, be permitted to pay up arrears of dues and be granted continuity of membership. In any other circumstances the lapsing of membership stands and any persons thus lapsed and desiring to re-join the Party must apply for admission to the Party in accordance with these rules.

RULE 8 - ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE PARTY

The Socialist Party of Australia is built on, and functions in accordance with, the principles of democratic centralism which combines democracy and centralism to promote a vigorous democratic life in the Party, a cohesive and effective central leadership and ensures Party solidarity and unity. Democracy and centralism are not separate and antagonistic processes and democratic centralism constitutes a dialectical unity of those processes. It is a single integrated whole, and the proper observance of the Party's democratic practices will, and is intended to, strengthen leadership at all levels, including central leadership, and the whole of the Party and its functioning. Proper and full application of democratic centralism will ensure a single line for the Party on all issues, a central cohesive and not a fragmented lead and will significantly increase the unity of Party members and improve the effectiveness of the Party's work.

The main principles of democratic centralism include:-

- (a) The election of the Central, State and District Committees and Branch Executives by secret ballot.
- (b) The studying and learning by all Party organisations from the experiences and views of other Party organisations and the practice of criticism and self-criticism on a basis intended to assist and strengthen the work of the Party and its members.
- (c) The submission by leading Party organisations of reports at regular intervals to the Party organisations which elect them. The reporting by lower Party organisations to higher Party organisations, the proffering of guidance by higher Party organisations to lower Party organisations and the acceptance of assistance by the lower Party organisations on problems arising from and in their work.
- (d) The observance of collective leadership at every level as the principle of leadership of the Party. The decision of all important questions on a collective basis and the allocation of individual responsibility for carrying out such decisions.
- (e) The compulsory observance of decisions properly made in accordance with this Constitution, with lower Party organisations carrying out the decisions of the higher organisations, with minorities submitting to the decisions made by the majority, with decisions of the Party National Congress and the Central Committee being binding upon the whole Party and decisions by District

Committees and State Committees, not inconsistent with this Constitution, or with decisions of higher Party committees, being binding upon the Party membership and the Party organisation in the area of their authority.

- (f) A regular and efficient checking by Party organisations on the decisions made.

RULE 9 - PARTY NATIONAL CONGRESS

- (a) The highest authority of the Socialist Party of Australia is the Party National Congress which shall be convened every four years.

- (b) The functions and powers of such Party National Congress shall include:-

- (i) To determine policies for the Party;
- (ii) To receive, discuss and make decisions on reports submitted by the Central Committee.
- (iii) When necessary to revise the Party Program and Constitution;
- (iv) To decide the number of members to constitute the Central Committee and to elect the Central Committee;
- (v) To elect a Ballot Committee consisting of a Returning Officer and two Scrutineers;
- (vi) To accept and decide upon any matters referred to the Congress by the Central Committee.
- (vii) To discuss and decide upon other matters accepted by a majority of the Congress as business for the Congress.

- (c) Delegates to the Party National Congress shall consist of members of the outgoing Central Committee and of delegates elected by State or District Conferences, or where decided by the Central Committee or directly by Branches.

The basis of representation shall be determined by the Central Committee in accordance with the numerical strength of the organisations electing delegates and such as will ensure the number of delegates elected by Party organisations shall be not less than twice the number of members of the outgoing Central Committee.

- (d) The main document to come before the National Congress shall be prepared by the Central Committee and circulated throughout the Party for discussion in accordance with procedures set out in this rule. The document shall deal with the main problems which have faced the Party since the previous Congress, problems currently confronting the Party and the problems which it is possible to anticipate in the future and before the next Congress. The document may also cover such other matters as the Central Committee considers proper for inclusion in a single Congress document.

The Central Committee shall complete the preparation of such a document in a manner, and under circumstances, enabling its distribution to Branches, not less than six calendar months before the month in which the Congress opening date occurs.

The Central Committee shall take all necessary steps to ensure the convening of appropriate meetings of Branches during the sixth and fifth months before the month in which the opening date of the Congress occurs for purposes of considering the Congress document and deciding upon

amendments, additions or deletions to the document for submission in turn by the Branch to the next highest Party committee, that is, a District committee, a State Committee or where neither of these exist then Branches shall submit their proposals direct to the Central Committee.

The Central Committee shall also take necessary steps to ensure that during the fourth and third months before the month in which the opening date of the Congress occurs, District Committees and State Committees shall meet under circumstances enabling proper consideration of those committees of proposals submitted by the Branches under their direction for amendment, addition or other alteration to the Central Committee's Congress Document.

The Central Committee shall also take the necessary steps to ensure that District Committees and State Committees organise their Conferences to be held prior to the Congress as prescribed by these rules in the third month before the month in which the opening date of the Congress occurs, and such Conferences, in addition to other business which may be properly brought before them, shall consider the outcome of the discussions of the District or State Committee as the case may be of the proposals from Branches in relation to the Congress Document.

All necessary steps shall be taken to ensure that the Conferences referred to here are held at such a time as to enable the outcome of their deliberations on the Congress Document to be forwarded to the Central Committee not less than 56 days before the opening date of the Congress.

The Central Committee shall, during the second month before the month in which the opening date of the Congress occurs, arrange such meetings as are necessary to enable it to consider proposals submitted to it by District Conferences and State Conferences, and where none exist, directly from Branches to make final decisions in relation to the inclusion or exclusion of such proposals from the Congress Document and to forward the final proposals from the Central Committee to delegates of the Congress 14 days before its opening date.

In completing these processes District Committees and State Committees shall take necessary steps to advise Branches of proposals from those Branches which those Committees have not accepted as amendments to the Central Committee document and such as to enable those Branches to press their amendments if need be before the State or District Conference.

- (e) The Central Committee shall, not less than six months before the Congress, fix the date and venue of the Congress. The Central Committee in fixing that date shall make its decision so as to enable the steps provided for in the previous sub-rule to be completed in accordance with the provisions of that sub-rule. At the same meeting the Central Committee shall appoint a Congress Preparatory Committee. The number of persons comprising that Committee shall be decided by the Central Committee.

The Congress Preparatory committee shall be responsible for steps necessary to prepare the Congress in accordance with the decisions of the Central Committee and shall function under the direction of the Central Committee.

In addition to other necessary steps preparing for the Congress the Congress Preparatory Committee shall take the following steps in connection with the election of the Central Committee.

- (i) Invite the leading committee of each of the Party organisations entitled to elect delegates to the Congress to consider and submit to the Preparatory Committee the names of those Party members functioning in the area of the particular organisation, who, in the opinion of that organisation should be submitted to the Congress as candidates for election to the Central Committee. To be eligible for such consideration a person must have at least three (3) years continuous membership of the Party and to be finally selected as a candidate must be financial in accordance with these rules at the time of such consideration. Each organisation must submit, together with the names, their reasons for submitting each individual.

Each such Party organisation shall also be invited to consider the work of any existing member of the Central Committee functioning in their area and submit to the Preparatory Committee any reasons why, in their opinion, any such member should not be considered for submission to the Congress as a candidate for election to the Central Committee.

The Central Committee shall also be invited to make an analysis of its work and to reach conclusions concerning any member of the Central Committee who, in the opinion of the Committee, should not be considered as a candidate for election to the Central Committee. The Central Committee shall also be invited to submit the names of those members of the Committee who should be submitted as candidates for election to the Central Committee. The Central Committee shall be required to provide in writing reasons for submissions they make in relation to members of that Committee.

All such proposals and the relevant reasons must be submitted in writing by the appropriate Party organisation and be in the hands of the Preparatory Committee not less than one month before the date of the opening of the Congress.

The leading committees referred to in this rule are the State and District Committees and the Branch Executives of the Branches which under this Constitution are entitled to elect delegates to the Congress.

The invitation from the Preparatory Committee referred to in this rule may be acted upon by the State Committee, District Committee, or where applicable the Branch Executives existing at the time the invitation from the Preparatory Committee is received.

Provided, however, that any such committee referred to here may, at its discretion, refer the invitation from the Preparatory Committee to any incoming committee which may be elected at the State Conference, or District Conference, or special Branch meeting convened for purposes including the election of delegates to the Congress.

- (ii) Prepare from the proposals received from the eligible Party organisations a complete list of the names submitted and the reasons given for each name by the relevant Party organisation. Prepare this information in sufficient copies for the Nominations Committee to be elected in accordance with this Rule by the Congress.
- (iii) At its first session the Congress shall:

- decide the number of members to constitute the Central Committee;
 - elect a Nominations Committee. Persons for the Nominations Committee shall include members of the Congress and any other member of the Party, both having not less than 3 years continuous membership in the Party at the time of the election of the Nominations Committee and financial in accordance with the Party Constitution at that date, and who is available to function on the Nominations Committee as provided for in the next paragraph number (iv);
 - elect a Ballot Committee, including a Returning Officer.
- (iv) Immediately following its election the Nominations Committee shall meet and elect from its members a President who shall take charge of the proposed names for submission to Congress as candidates and the reasons supporting their submission from the Congress Preparatory Committee.
- (v) The Nominations Committee shall consider the information submitted to it by the Preparatory Committee and shall decide, from the names submitted to it, a list of candidates, equal to the number of members to constitute the Central Committee, for submission to the Congress. This list together with the reasons for the Nominations Committee's recommendations shall be presented to the Congress by the President of the Nominations Committee and that person shall propose endorsement of the list by the Congress. The Nominations Committee decision on the list of candidates to be submitted to Congress shall be made by vote and determined by simple majority. Any Congress member may oppose endorsement of the Committee's recommendations in whole or in part but must state reasons for opposing endorsement of any person whose name is included in the recommendations. The Congress President shall submit the Nominations Committee's recommendations to Congress for vote and that vote shall be decided by simple majority. In the event of the Congress rejecting the Nominations Committee's recommendations the Nominations Committee shall again consider a list of candidates from the names previously submitted to it by the Preparatory Committee and shall compile a list of candidates for submission to the Congress taking into account the views expressed by the Congress members. The previous procedure contained in this rule shall again be followed in relation to the Nominations Committee's second recommendations, and following the discussion on those recommendations by the Congress, the President shall submit the Nominations Committee's recommendations to Congress for vote, and that vote shall be decided by simple majority.

When the Congress has voted to accept the Nominations Committee's list of recommended candidates the Congress President shall invite members of the Congress to submit the names of any other Party members as candidates for election to the Central Committee and to give reasons in support of their proposals. Any member of the Congress may speak against any such proposal. Following the conclusion of this process the Congress shall vote separately on the issue of each of the names submitted from the floor of the Congress being endorsed as a candidate for election to the Central Committee. Voting on each proposal shall be determined by simple majority. The names of those included in the Nominations Committee's recommendations as endorsed by Congress and names proposed from the

Congress floor and endorsed by the Congress shall be included on the ballot paper for election to the Central Committee with the names of the endorsed list from the Nominations Committee appearing first.

The processes referred to in this rule are related solely to determining which members of the Party, qualified in accordance with this Constitution, shall have their names included on the ballot paper for election to the Central Committee itself. The processes referred to in this rule are not the process of secret balloting for the Central Committee itself. Such processes are referred to subsequently in this rule.

- (vi) When the Congress has finalised the process of deciding which qualified members of the Party should be nominated to ballot as candidates for the Central Committee, the Nominations Committee shall hand over to the Ballot Committee referred to in paragraph (v) of sub-rule (b) Rule 9 the list of candidates.

The Ballot Committee shall then prepare a ballot paper containing the names of the candidates approved of by the Congress with the names of the candidates submitted to the Congress by the Nominations Committee and endorsed by the Congress, appearing first in alphabetical order followed by the names of other persons approved of as candidates for the Central Committee by the Congress also in alphabetical order.

A ballot in accordance with these rules must be conducted even in circumstances where the total number of candidates decided upon by the Congress equals the number to be elected to the Central Committee.

Voting for election of the Central Committee shall be by striking out the names of candidates not preferred.

Where the number of candidates appearing on the ballot paper is equal to the number to be elected, any member entitled to vote may strike out the names of any number of those candidates but they must then add further names to the ballot paper, irrespective of whether such names have been submitted to the Congress in accordance with earlier provisions of this rule. The added names must result in a vote for the number to be elected to the Central Committee. Any ballot paper which records a vote for more or less than the number to be elected to the Central Committee shall be treated as being invalid.

Where the number of candidates approved of by the Congress exceeds the number to be elected, any member entitled to vote may strike out the names of candidates not preferred up to the number of candidates in excess of the number to be elected.

Any member striking out names in excess of the number to be elected must, however, write other names on the ballot paper in accordance with the earlier provision of this rule and the same provisions in respect to invalid voting shall apply as stated earlier in this paragraph.

- (vi) To be elected to the Central Committee a candidate must receive not less than 51% of the valid votes cast. In the event of two or more candidates recording a 'tied' vote for final positions and each of those candidates receiving not less than 51% of the valid votes cast a further election shall be conducted to decide the filling of the final positions. The candidates in any

such ballot shall be those who received a 'tied' vote and not less than 51% of the valid votes cast.

In the event of the Congress electing with at least 51% of the valid votes cast less than the number required to fill the positions on the Central Committee a further ballot shall be conducted and the candidates in such a ballot shall be all of those who in the first ballot received less than 51% of the valid votes cast. That process shall be continued until the full number of candidates required for the Central Committee have been elected.

(viii) In addition to electing members to the Central Committee the Congress may, at its discretion, elect alternate members to the Central Committee.

The number of alternate members to be elected shall be decided by the Congress on a recommendation from the Central Committee. The membership qualifications for alternate members of the Central Committee shall be the same as those for full members of the Central Committee.

The number of alternate members of the Central Committee shall, whilst being determined by the Congress, not exceed the nearest number to 20 per cent of the Central Committee itself.

Alternate members of the Central Committee shall be elected by the same processes as prescribed by this Constitution for election of full members of the Central Committee.

Alternate members of the Central Committee shall have the same rights and obligations as full members of the Central Committee except the right to vote and the right to be elected to either the CC Executive or to be members of the Central Committee Secretariat.

Provided further that alternate members of the Central Committee do not become members of the National Congress unless elected as such by a competent Party body in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution."

(ix) The procedures set out in this rule for the election of the Central Committee may be adopted in whole or in part and/or with any variation considered necessary, for election by State and District Conferences of State and District Committees. A decision to adopt these procedures as provided for in this paragraph may be made by the District or State Committee concerned, but must be notified to the Central Committee in time to enable the Central Committee to ratify or veto the procedure and in time to enable the members to be informed of the intention to adopt the procedure.

Rule 9A - Special Congresses

A special Congress shall be convened by majority decision of the Central Committee or upon request received by the Central Committee from Party organisations representing at least one third of the Party membership.

The agenda for any Special Congress shall be determined by the Central Committee and must include the purposes for a Special Congress contained in either the decision of the Central Committee to convene a Special Congress or in

the request received from Party organisations representing at least one third of the Party membership.

The basis of representation at any Special Congress shall be decided upon by the Central Committee.

The Central Committee in convening the Congress shall take all necessary steps to ensure that representation at the Congress comes from Party organisations as set out in Rule 9 covering the convening of National Congresses.

The Central Committee shall take all necessary steps to ensure the convening and proper conduct of Special Congresses without delay upon decision of the Central Committee or request in accordance with this rule.

RULE 9B - Congress delegates

Delegates elected to Party Congresses, including Special Congress, must have at least 12 months continuous membership in the Party and must be financial in accordance with these rules at the time of election and at the time of attending the Congress. Delegates standing for election to Congress must at the time of the election provide the Returning Officer concerned with proof of their length of membership and their financial standing. The State, District or Branch Secretary, as the case may be, must forward to the General Secretary, prior to the Congress, certification of the membership and financial status of delegates elected to Congress.

Delegates to the Congress must provide a Credentials Committee, which committee shall be appointed by the Central Committee, prior to the Congress, with proof of their financial standing at the time of the Congress and their length of membership prior to taking their seats as delegates to the Congress. Upon the provision of such proof accepted by the Credentials Committee, each delegate will be issued with a Congress Card and that Congress Card must be produced by each delegate upon every occasion of entry to the meeting place of the Congress and upon every occasion when a vote is taken at the Congress, including a ballot for the election of Returning Officer, Scrutineers and members of the Central Committee.

Rule 9C - National Conference

The Central Committee may, between National Congresses and for purposes the Central Committee considers necessary for the activity and functioning of the Party, convene a Conference on a national basis. Any such Conference shall not be empowered to exercise any of the powers specifically prescribed for a Congress by this Constitution. Decisions of any such Conference must be ratified by a subsequent meeting of the Central Committee and no Conference decision shall be operative or binding on Party members until and unless it is made a decision of the Central Committee.

The Central Committee shall decide all matters in relation to such a Conference including the basis of representation at the Conference. All members of the Central Committee shall be entitled to attend and fully participate in such a Conference.

Rule 10 - Central Committee

- (a) The Central Committee is the governing body of the Party between National Congresses. It is responsible for the application of the policies adopted by the National Congress and for the necessary implementation of decisions of the Congress. It is responsible for providing political leadership for the Party between Congresses, for upholding the rules and Constitution of the Party and is in charge of the administration of Party affairs and responsible for the direction and development of the Party's organisational structures and the direction of its activities. The Central Committee shall meet at least three times in each year.
- (b) The Central Committee shall decide the size of, and elect, an Executive Committee from amongst the members of the Central Committee. The Executive, subject to the decisions of the Central Committee, leads the work of the Party and administers the affairs of the Party in between meetings of the Central Committee and consistent with decisions of the Central Committee and the Congress, makes further necessary decisions in between meetings of the Central Committee. The Executive is in all respects fully accountable to the Central Committee.

The Central Committee may elect such other committees or departments as it considers necessary. The Central Committee shall determine the size and personnel of each such committee or department and the area of its functioning.

All such committees or departments are subsidiary to the Central Committee and are accountable for their activities to the Executive and to the Central Committee.

The purposes of the committees and departments are to advise the Central Committee on matters relevant to the sub-committee or department and to assist the Central Committee in carrying out its work and in implementing its decisions. The Central Committee must be regularly informed of the activities and functioning of each of its sub-committees and/or departments.

The Central Committee shall decide upon the officers and staffing to carrying out its functions. The Central Committee may elect its officers and the Executive provided for in this rule either at a meeting of the Central Committee following its election and during the period of the Congress, or at a meeting subsequent to the Congress provided that any decision to elect the Executive and/or the officers subsequent to the Congress must be acted upon at a meeting of the Central Committee held not more than 6 weeks after the Congress adjourns.

In the event of the Central Committee deciding to adjourn the election of its officers and/or the Executive to a meeting following the Congress the officers previously existing, and the Executive previously existing, or those of them who are re-elected to the Central Committee by the Congress shall continue in their positions until the adjourned meeting for purposes of electing officers and Executive is held.

- (c) Special levies may be struck by the Central Committee. No levy shall be struck by any Party organisation except with the permission of the Central Committee. Levies decided upon in accordance with this rule are compulsory levies. Failure to pay a levy in full and on time as decided by the body striking the levy renders the member unfinancial.

- (d) The Central Committee may, by resolution, from time to time appoint one or more persons to receive on behalf of the Socialist Party of Australia any property donated to, or the subject of any testamentary disposition in favour of the said Party or of any Branch or committee or organisation thereof, and the receipt of such person or persons shall constitute a full and proper discharge to the person, or persons, responsible for the making of any such gift, or the carrying into effect of any such testamentary disposition. The Central Committee may also by resolution from time to time revoke the appointment of any such person, or persons, and make new appointments in their place.

In addition to the above provisions the Central Committee may from time to time authorise persons as trustees for the Party to borrow, mortgage and purchase property on behalf of the Party.

- (e) The Central Committee shall be responsible for the control in all respects of the Party press including its theoretical organ.

Rule 11 - State, District and other organisations

- (a) State, District and other forms of local organisation may be established as required. State organisation shall be established by the Central Committee, District organisation by the State Committee and other forms of local organisation by the State or District Committee. Where no State Committees exist District and/or other local organisation may be established by the Central Committee. Such organisations shall have tasks as determined by the bodies authorised to establish them; they shall give leadership to Party organisations under their direction, assist to apply in the area in which they function the decisions of higher Party organisations and assist to develop the mass work of the Party in the area concerned.

Organisations established in accordance with this rule may be amended, restructured in any manner or disbanded by the Party body which established the organisation. Provide, however, that any such proposal for amendment, restructuring or disbandment must be reported to the next highest Party committee and be subject to endorsement, or veto, by that higher Party body.

- (b) The leading organisation in the state is the State Conference where state organisation has been established.

In any state where a state organisation is not established, the Central Committee shall be empowered to establish any necessary form of organisation for the purpose of co-ordinating and further developing Party work in that state and such organisation shall function under the direct control of the Central Committee. The Central Committee shall also be empowered to convene meetings of Party members in any state and on any basis decided by the Central Committee.

The first State Conference shall be called by the Central Committee. Subsequent State Conferences are held as decided by the State Committee.

State Conferences shall be held once in every two years.

One such State Conference must be held in the period preceding a National Congress as provided for elsewhere in these rules.

The Central Committee shall convene a State Conference at any time in any state when such Conference is deemed necessary by the Central Committee.

The State Committee shall be the leading organisation of the Party in the state between State Conferences.

Where state organisation is established, the State Conference shall elect a State Committee.

State Committee members must have at least one year's continuous membership in the Party except where a State Conference is convened for the first time in that state.

The State Conferences shall consist of member of the out-going State Committee and delegates elected from District or other Conferences or from Party Branches as decided by the State Committee.

Delegates shall be elected according to numerical strength on a basis decided by the State Committee.

Delegates to State Conferences must have at least six months continuous membership in the Party.

The provisions in this Constitution in relation to a Credentials Committee for a National Congress and certification of financial and membership status of delegates to a National Congress shall apply in full to a State Conference.

State Committees shall elect an Executive to carry on the work of the Party between meetings of the Committee.

The State Committee, subject to Central Committee ratification, shall decide upon the officers and staffing required to carry out its work.

- (c) District organisations may be formed in cities, town or areas of a State as determined by a State Committee or the Central Committee. The District Conference is the leading Party organisation in the district. The District Conference shall meet prior to each State Conference or more often as directed by the appropriate State Committee or the Central Committee. It shall elect the District Committee, which is the leading organisation in the district between District conferences. The District conference is composed of the outgoing District Committee and delegates elected direct from Party Branches, according to numerical strength on a basis as decided by the District committees. District Committees work under the guidance and leadership of the appropriate State Committee or the Central Committee, and must make regular reports to the organisation leading their work.

The first District Conference shall be called by the next higher Party organisation. Subsequent District Conferences are held as decided by the District Committee.

District Conferences shall be held once in every two years. One such District Conference must be held in the period preceding a National Congress as provided for elsewhere in these rules.

The next higher Party organisation shall convene a District Conference at any time in any state when such Conference is deemed necessary by the next higher Party organisation.

District Committees shall elect and Executive to carry on the work of the Party between meetings of the District Committee.

The District Committee, subject to Central Committee ratification, shall decide upon the officers and staffing required to carry out its work.

Except where a District Conference is being held for the first time and/or a District Committee is being elected for the first time, delegates to a District Conference must have at least three months continuous membership in the Party and members elected to a District Committee must have at least six months continuous membership in the Party. Provisions of this Constitution provided elsewhere in the rules in relation to a Credentials Committee and the certification of length of membership and financial status relating to National Congresses shall also apply to State and District Conferences.

- (d) Other forms of local organisation may be established by a District or State Committee or by the Central Committee in a given area. Such organisation shall work under the guidance of the next higher Party organisation and must report regularly to that organisation on its work. Such bodies shall function in accordance with the decisions made by the body establishing them and generally speaking are responsible for the co-ordination and development of the Party's work in the area concerned.
- (e) In fulfilling the responsibility to report to the membership on their work and help the formulation of decisions by collective discussion the District Committee or State Committee may, in addition to reporting and consulting Branch, District and State organisations, call general meetings of members in their district or state from time to time. The Decisions of such general meetings do not have full force and effect until, and unless, they are endorsed or adopted by the organisation convening the meeting or by the Central Committee or by the National Congress. A quorum for a general meeting shall be 25 per cent of the district or state membership as the case may be. All such meetings shall be convened under circumstances which enable the maximum attendance of Party members possible.
- (f) Party organisations in any district representing one third of the membership in that district may request the convening of a Special District Conference. Such District Conferences may also be convened by decision of a majority of the members of a District Committee.

Party organisations in the area of a state representing one third of the membership in that state may request the convening of a Special State Conference. A Special State Conference may also be convened by a decision of a majority of members of the State Committee.

Other provisions in relation to the convening of a Special National Congress provided for elsewhere in these rules shall apply to the convening of Special District Conferences and Special State Conferences.

Rule 12 - Party Branch

- (a) The basic organisation of the Socialist Party of Australia is the Party Branch.

Party Branches shall be established in accordance with decisions of District or State committees or the Central Committee.

Branches shall be organised in factories, workplaces, or on an industry, professional or locality basis. Branches may be organised on any other basis which will help strengthen and advance Party organisation and influence.

Decisions by the authorised Party committees to establish or re-organise Branches may be acted upon when made but all such decisions must be reported to the next higher Party committee and be subject to veto by such higher committee. This provision does not apply to decisions of the Central Committee concerning the establishment of Branch organisation.

All Party members shall be attached to and shall function as members of a Branch and the allocation of members to a Branch shall be the responsibility of the body that establishes Branches, i.e. District Committees, State Committees and/or Central Committee. In accordance with this provision every effort is to be made to provide the facilities of Branch organisation, thus enabling members to function in a Branch. Provided however, that where the establishment of a Branch is not possible, or for reasons mentioned earlier in this Constitution, members should not be attached to a Branch then special arrangements must be made by the Party organisation concerned to develop means whereby such members can meet other obligations of membership and participate in the life and work of the Party.

- (b) The governing body of a Branch of the Socialist Party of Australia is the general meeting of Branch members. Such meetings shall be held at regular intervals and at least monthly. Each Branch shall hold an annual meeting in the months of November or December of each year. Such annual meetings of a Branch shall consider a report on the work of the previous year, discuss proposals for activity in the coming year and elect the Branch Executive. Annual Branch meetings may also consider any other matters which are referred to it by the Branch Executive or which a majority of Branch members at the meeting assembled decided should be considered.

The Branch Executive shall be responsible for implementing decisions of the Branch, preparing the business for each Branch meeting for the extension, development and strengthening of the Branch organisation and shall also be charged with the responsibility of taking necessary steps to enable and encourage the maximum participation of Branch members in the work and activity of the Branch.

- (c) Except in the case of new Branches, members must have at least six months' membership of the Party to be eligible for office.
- (d) The duties of a Party Branch shall include the following:
- (i) To work among the working people in order to organise action in support of their political, economic and cultural needs, to popularise the Party's Program and policies and to convince working people to support the Program and policy, to endeavour to unite the working people in pursuit of their needs and demands and to strengthen unity between the Party and the mass of the people.
 - (ii) To encourage Party members to participate in non-party organisations and develop Party work in those organisations for the purposes of strengthening the organisation and influence of the Party.
 - (iii) To strengthen the Party's organisational and leadership capacities.
 - (iv) To check up regularly on the carrying out of decisions and to strengthen Party discipline.
 - (v) To win new members to the Party.

(vi) To organise the political education of Party members including attention to individual study.

(vii) To develop criticism and self-criticism in a manner aimed at strengthening unity in the Party, strengthening the Party's organisation and assisting the work of the organisation and the ?(see p.25)

(viii) To raise finance for the Party.

(ix) To distribute and sell Party publications.

Rule 13 - Breaches of rules and decisions

Party organisations at all levels may take disciplinary action against any member of that organisation, e.g. Branches may take such action against members of the Branch; a District Committee may take action against members of that State Committee; the Central Committee may take such action against members of that Central Committee. Disciplinary action against a member of the Central Committee may be taken only by that Central Committee or by the Congress. A higher Party committee may also take disciplinary action against any member of a Party organisation under its direction.

Disciplinary action in accordance with this Constitution may be taken by the appropriate organisation against members of that organisation for breaches of this Constitution, for refusing to carry out decisions properly made in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, for actions which, in the opinion of the Party organisation considering the matter, have already, or a likely to, harm the Party, or if persisted in, would bring the Party into disrepute or weaken support for it.

Disciplinary action included: warning, reprimand; removal from assigned work; suspension from official positions and/or from attending Party meetings pending investigation of charges; removal from office; suspension of Party membership; lapsing of Party membership; expulsion from the Party. Any suspension from membership, or suspension from attending Party meetings pending investigation of charges, shall be for a period not exceeding three months.

Any decision taken for disciplinary action by a Party organisation must be reported to the next higher Party organisation, which organisation may on its own initiative consider the decision notified to it and after such consideration and informing itself of the reasons for the lower organisation's decision may ratify, reject, amend it, replace it by a decision of its own, or take no action on the matter at all.

Any decision made by a higher Party organisation on a disciplinary action reported to it by a lower Party organisation shall replace the decision referred to it and any process of appeal as provided for in this Constitution shall be in relation to the decision of the higher Party organisation. In the event of the higher Party organisation deciding to take no action on the matter at all, any process of appeal shall be in relation to the decision of the lower Party organisation.

Any decision taken for disciplinary action is to be fully operative from the date of the decision until and unless it is superceded by a decision of a higher Party organisation or is set aside on appeal. Any decision of the

Central Committee in relation to any disciplinary matter shall be final and binding except where the matter involves expulsion from membership of the Party. In any such case the decision of the Central Committee shall be final and binding until and unless it is set aside by the next National Congress upon appeal made in accordance with provisions of this Constitution.

Disciplinary actions may be taken by a higher Party organisation against an entire Party organisation under its authority. Such disciplinary actions shall include reprimand; reorganisation of its leading organisation in whole or in part; dismissal of its leading organisation and appointment of an interim leading organisation; dissolution of the entire Party organisation concerned and reorganisation of its membership. Disciplinary actions as provided for in this Constitution may be taken against organisations of the Party for breach of this Constitution by the organisation concerned, for failure or refusal of the Party organisation to carry out decisions made by higher Party organisations, provided such decisions fall within the authority of that body in accordance with this Constitution, or if a Party organisation makes decisions or carries out activities which in the opinion of the higher Party organisation are likely to bring the Party into disrepute or weaken support for the Party.

Where disciplinary actions taken against a Party organisation involved more than reprimand such decisions shall be immediately reported to the next higher Party organisation.

The procedures in connection with such decision shall be as prescribed earlier in this rule in relation to individual party members.

Rule 13A DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Notwithstanding anything elsewhere contained in this Constitution disciplinary action may be taken by any meeting of the Party bodies constituted by this Constitution against any member attending that meeting for behaviour, which in the opinion of the meeting concerned constitutes special circumstances warranting disciplinary action without adherence to the procedures provided for in rule 13 and in the by-laws of this Constitution. These circumstances shall include, but not be limited to disruption of any meeting, behaviour which, in the opinion of the majority of the members attending the meeting, is offensive to the meeting, or detrimental in any way to the Party, refusal to carry out decisions of the meeting requiring implementation at the meeting and any form of misdemeanour which the meeting considers lowers standards necessary for the proper conduct of the business at the meeting concerned.

Disciplinary action under this rule may include any of the penalties prescribed by Rule 13, disallowance of any further participation in the meeting concerned and/or suspension from further attendance at the meeting.

A decision in accordance with this rule may be made by a majority vote of Party members attending the meeting.

Nothing contained in this rule shall enable the penalty of expulsion from the Party to be applied to any member except in accordance with Rule 13 and the By-laws to this Constitution.

Where a meeting makes any decision, in accordance with the provisions of this rule, the person presiding at that meeting must immediately report the matter to

the next higher Party committee. Except in the case of further participation in, or further attendance at, the particular meeting the higher Party committee may, for any reason it sees fit, review any decision made under this rule and replace it with a decision of its own.

The latter decision shall then prevail and all further processes under this rule—notification to a higher Party committee and appeals—shall related to that decision.

Any member against whom disciplinary action is taken in accordance with this rule may exercise rights of appeal as provided elsewhere in this Constitution. Provided that any disciplinary action shall apply until and unless it is set aside on appeal.

An appeal shall not lie against any decision made under this rule in relation to further participation in, or further attendance at, any particular meeting.

Any decision by the Central Committee in relation to any matter provided for by this rule shall, unless subsequently rescinded by the Central Committee, be final and binding.

Rule 14 - Member's rights of appeal

Any member against whom disciplinary action is taken, and any organisation against which disciplinary action is taken, has the right to appeal to the next highest organisation of the Party as prescribed by these rules up to and including the Party National Congress, provided that the appeal at each stage of the process is lodged within 28 days of the date on which the previous decision was made.

The process of appeal by individuals against disciplinary actions taken against them shall be from a Branch to a District Committee, from a District Committee to a State Committee, from a State Committee to the Central Committee, from the Central Committee to the National Congress provided, however, that where there is no District Committee or State Committee, then the appeal shall be from the Party body that made the decision to the next highest Party body provided, however, that other provisions of this rule in relation to appeal processes when a decision is ratified shall be observed in the process of appeal by individuals.

The process of appeals by organisations against disciplinary action shall be by way of appeal to the next highest body above the body that ratifies any decision.

Where the disciplinary action involves expulsion and appeal rights are exercised up to and including the Central Committee any further appeal shall be dealt with at the next Party National Congress.

Rule 15 - Returning officers and scrutineers

In any ballot conducted for purposes of electing any committee provided for in these rules, no person who is a candidate for election shall act as a Returning Officer or Scrutineer for purposes of such a ballot.

Rule 16 - Control Commission

At its first meeting following each National Congress the Central Committee shall elect a Control Commission.

The number to constitute the Control Commission shall be decided by the Central Committee meeting making the election and decided before the election is conducted.

The Central Committee may elect to the Control Commission any member of the Party having not less than three years continuous membership in the Party and who is, at the time of the election, a member in good standing.

The Central Control Commission shall have the following duties and, subject to ratification of its decisions by the Central Committee, exercise all the authority necessary to fulfil those duties:

- (a) To protect the unity and ideological purity of the Party, and to fight against hostile influences and against factional activity. It shall fight against opportunist, revisionist and dogmatic distortions and misrepresentations of the Party's Program. It shall uphold Leninist norms of Party life, Party morality and the rights of members. It shall check on the maintenance of Party discipline and the fulfilment of decisions.
- (b) To supervise, and for that purpose investigate, the proper payment of Party dues, the honouring of other financial obligations of Party membership, the fulfillment of properly made decisions of constituted Party bodies in relation to Party finances, to supervise methods of, and proportionate expenditures of, Party bodies. To make such recommendations and/or decisions on these matters as the Commission considers necessary for the Party's interests.
- (c) To hear, and to adjudicate, appeals against decisions of State Committees and where no State Committee exists against decisions of District Committees and where neither State or District Committees exist against decisions of Branches relating to expulsion from the Party and to other disciplinary measures. In dealing with appeals the Central Control Commission shall act for, and on behalf of, the Central Committee.
- (d) In carrying out its duties the Central Control Commission may make such recommendations and/or decisions as it sees fit in the interests of the Party except that it may not initiate disciplinary action. It may recommend to the appropriate Party organisation that disciplinary action be taken.
- (e) In carrying out its duties the Central Control Commission may act on its own initiative or on reference to it of any matter coming within its jurisdiction by any constituted Party body or any member of the Party.
- (f) All decisions and recommendations of the Central Control Commission shall require ratification by the Central Committee and shall not be operative until such ratification.
- (g) Notwithstanding anything elsewhere contained in these Rules, the Central Control Commission may, whenever it considers it necessary for purposes of protecting the Party, exercise disciplinary action prescribed elsewhere in this Constitution. Any decision taken in accordance with this clause shall be final and binding until and unless set aside by the Central Committee.
- (h) The Central Committee shall in consultation with the Control Commission decide the methods of the functioning of the Control Commission.

Rule 17 - Party Groups in Non-Party Organisations

Where three or more Party members are active participants in the work of a non-party organisation a Party group of the members concerned must be for made by the appropriate Party body for the purpose of strengthening the work of the

organisation and the influence of the Party among the members of the organisation concerned.

The Party groups are subordinate to the appropriate Party bodies, the Central Committee, the State Committees, the District Committees and where appropriate, to Branch organisation.

In all matters the groups must strictly and unswervingly abide by decisions of the leading Party bodies.

By-Laws

- (a) The process of disciplinary action against individual Party members and/or Party organisations must be associated with the formal laying of charges, a formal process of dealing with the charges, proper opportunities for the individuals or Party organisation concerned to answer the charges and properly made formal decisions with the Party Constitution.
- (b) For the above purposes the following procedures must be followed:
 - (i) Disciplinary action against individual Party members or Party organisations may be initiated by individual Party members, or groups of members or by appropriate Party organisations.
 - (ii) The person or persons making the charges and calling for disciplinary action must provide to the appropriate Party organisation, and in writing, a formal statement setting out the grounds on which disciplinary action is called for.
 - (iii) The Party organisation receiving the formal statement of charges and grounds must take the necessary steps to provide a copy of that statement to the members of the organisation concerned or to the individual or individuals being charged.
 - (iv) The appropriate Party organisation must make arrangements for an appropriate form of meeting at which the charges are to be considered. The persons or members of the organisation concerned must be given the opportunity of being present and for that purpose the meeting to deal with the charges must be held under circumstances where there is not less than 7 days between the date on which the copy of the formal charges is handed to the person or persons concerned, or the organisation concerned or posted to them under circumstances calculated to obtain early delivery, for example priority paid post, and the date of the meeting concerned.

In addition to, or instead of, attendance at a meeting arranged in accordance with the provisions of this By-law a person, or persons, or an organisation concerned, may submit a statement or statements in writing and such statement or statements shall be given full and proper consideration at the time of the meeting referred to in this By-law.
- (v) At the meeting at which the charges are dealt with the person per persons, or organisation making the charges, or somebody acting on behalf of the organisation, must state their grounds and submit reasons why the disciplinary action should be taken and those against whom the charges are levelled must be given ample opportunity to rebut the charges if they are not admitted to.

- (vi) After the charges are dealt with the persons, or organisation concerned or its representatives, must leave the meeting and any decision on action to be taken must be made by the organisation authorised to deal with the charges.
- (vii) Once such a decision is made it must be notified in writing to the person or persons, or organisation making the charges to the persons or organisation against whom the charges are made and to the next highest Party committee.
- (viii) The absence of any person or persons, or the members or representative of any Party organisation against whom charges are made must not prevent the Party organisation concerned from proceeding to deal with the charges and from making a decision thereon despite any such absences.

Furthermore, there must be no delay in initiating the process of meeting and dealing with charges after the charges have been formally laid and no delay on the part of the Party organisation concerned in reaching a decision on the charges.

The procedures to be followed at any meeting dealing with charges made in accordance with this Constitution are to be determined by the Party organisation dealing with the charges.

- (ix) Nothing contained in these By-laws, or elsewhere in this Constitution shall be read as requiring the Party to meet any costs associated with the processes of disciplinary action or appeals against any decisions arising out of these processes.
- (x) In so far as they are applicable the provisions of these By-laws shall with any modifications required by the Party committees concerned apply to the hearing of appeals by members of Party organisations against decisions in the form of disciplinary action.