

Constitution

of the

**Socialist Party of Canada**

04 July 1995

## **Object and Principles**

- **Rule 1.** The OBJECT and PRINCIPLES of the Party shall be as follows

### **Object**

*The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.*

### **Declaration of Principles**

The Socialist Party of Canada holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.

7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

- **Rule 2.** The Object and Principles of the Party, as outlined in Rule 1, may be amended only in conjunction with the Companion Parties of Socialism.
- **Rule 3.** The Companion Parties of Socialism shall be recognized as only those Parties subscribing the Object and Principles outlined in Rule 1.

## **Membership**

- **Rule 4.** (a) Each applicant for membership shall complete and sign an **Application for Membership** form (including a **Membership Questionnaire** containing questions designed to assist the Local or General Administrative Committee in determining the applicant's suitability for membership) expressing agreement with the Object and Declaration of Principles (Rule 1). This form shall be submitted to the Local Secretary or General Secretary.

(b) If practical, a reviewing committee of the Local or General Administrative Committee shall be appointed to meet and discuss Party views with the applicant and to report its findings to the following regular business meeting.

(c) The application shall be voted upon at the following regular business meeting of the Local or General Administrative Committee, to which the applicant shall be invited. A majority vote of the members voting shall be sufficient to admit the applicant, unless a protest against admission is entered, in which case the applicant may be admitted only by a two-thirds vote of the members voting.

(d) The admission or rejection of applicants for membership is subject to approval by the General Administrative Committee, which must be provided with all particulars relating to same.

(e) The **Application for Membership and Membership Questionnaire** may be altered only by Party Conference or a vote of the general membership.

(f) A member of a Companion Party, becoming resident in Canada, may transfer membership to the Socialist Party of Canada by applying to the nearest Local or to the General Administrative Committee, the Secretary concerned to contact the Companion Party and arrange transfer.

(g) All members shall have equal rights in the Party, except that members of the General Administrative Committee must be at least 18 years of age, with the power under law to contract.

(h) Each member shall belong to a Local.

- **Rule 5.** Each member shall pay annual Local dues, determined by the Local. Members withholding payment of dues for more than six months may be suspended until such payment is made, the regular business meeting to decide upon acceptance of same. Payment of dues may be waived in the case of members sick or unemployed or for any reason deemed satisfactory to the Local, upon written, annual request by the member.

- **Rule 6.** A member may attend and speak at meetings of any Local or Committee.

- **Rule 7.** (a) A member shall not belong to any other political party.

(b) A member shall not speak from any political party platform except to present the views of the Socialist Party of Canada.

- **Rule 8.** (a) Any member may resign from the Party by delivering to the General Secretary, or the Secretary of the member's Local, a written resignation. A copy of any resignation received by a Local Secretary shall be forwarded to the General Secretary as soon as possible.

(b) Any violation of the pledge of membership, Constitution or Declaration of Principles shall be considered warrant to suspend or expel a member, notice of motion of special meeting to deal with charges being duly given. A charged member is suspended immediately following a majority vote of the Local to recognize the charges until the special meeting, which must be held within six weeks.

(c) The charges, with evidence to substantiate same, against any member shall be submitted in writing to the Local and a copy supplied to the member accused who shall be given 14 days to enter a defense.

(d) It shall require a two-thirds majority of all members in a Local to officially suspend or expel a member.

(e) The suspended or expelled member shall have the right of appeal to the general membership by referendum, which must be organized by the General Administrative Committee within a three month period from the date of request.

(f) A member suspended for withholding dues will be automatically lapsed after one year of suspension.

(g) All suspensions or expulsions shall at once be reported to the General Administrative Committee. No suspended, expelled, or lapsed member shall be accorded party privilege by any Local or Committee unless the bar of suspension, expulsion or lapse has been removed by the Local imposing same or by a two-thirds vote of the membership.

## **Locals**

● **Rule 9.** (a) The Local shall be the unit of organization. Five or more members may form a Local. Written application must be made to the General Administrative Committee which will forward to them an **Application for Local / Questionnaire** and if satisfied with the answers will authorize formation of the Local.

(b) The **Application for Local / Questionnaire** may be altered only by Party Conference or a vote of the general membership.

(c) The National Local shall be comprised of all members who are not members of any other Local.

(d) Rules 8(b,d), 10 through 16 and 22(f) do not apply to the National Local.

(e) The National Local shall be administered by the General Secretary.

● **Rule 10.** The Local shall elect from its members, a Secretary and such other administrators as it may deem necessary. Administrators shall be elected for a term of not less than one year and not more than three years, and may be

reelected at the expiration thereof. The election of administrators shall take place during the month of December, the term of office to be from the first of January following. An officer of a Local may be recalled at any time by a majority vote of the membership. The result of every election of administrators within a Local shall be at once communicated to the General Administrative Committee.

● **Rule 11.** Each Local shall provide for the auditing of its accounts annually. All accounts and records of the Party shall be open to any member upon due notice to the officer in charge.

● **Rule 12.** The Local shall hold at least one business meeting each calendar quarter. Special meetings shall be called at the request of one-third of the members of the Local. Such request must be in writing to the Secretary, who shall notify all members of such special meeting giving not less than one week's notice. Minutes of all meetings must be sent to the General Administrative Committee.

● **Rule 13.** Each Local shall provide per capita payments to the General Administrative Committee at a rate approved by Party Conference or general vote of the membership, no payment being required for members excused under Rule 5.

● **Rule 14.** Party rules and practices must be adhered to by all members and Locals and where a difference in viewpoint occurs between a Local and the General Administrative Committee on any matter not specifically covered in the Constitution, the General Administrative Committee viewpoint must be accepted until such time as a different viewpoint is decided upon by the membership.

● **Rule 15.** The General Administrative Committee may suspend or dissolve a Local for reasons which it considers sufficient, but must, at the Local's request, submit for approval its defence of this action, together with a statement of the Local's case to Party Conference or general vote of the membership.

● **Rule 16.** In case of dissolution of a Local all property of same shall become the property of the General Administrative Committee.

## General Administrative Committee

● **Rule 17.** (a) Every two years, in even numbered years, the headquarters locality shall be determined by Party Conference or general vote of the membership.

(b) The membership in or accessible to the headquarters locality shall elect seven of their number as the General Administrative Committee (GAC), of whom four shall constitute a quorum. A member of the General Administrative Committee must be at least 18 years of age, with the power under law to contract.

(c) The election shall occur during the first half of December, the term of office to be not less than one year and not more than three years, beginning on the first of January following. Members in and accessible to the locale of the General Administrative Committee shall at a special meeting held during the first half of November nominate more than seven of their number to stand for election. The election shall be conducted by the General Administrative Committee in office, the seven members receiving the highest number of votes to become the General Administrative Committee-elect.

(d) No General Administrative Committee member shall receive remuneration from the Party for acting as such. Reasonable expenses incurred while executing the duties of a General Administrative Committee member shall be compensable.

● **Rule 18.** The General Administrative Committee shall elect from its members, a General Secretary and such other administrators as it may deem necessary. It shall be its duty to suspend any member of the General Administrative Committee who may be guilty of neglect of duty and, upon the request of any member, to submit such action, with reasons therefor, to a general vote of the membership.

● **Rule 19.** The responsibilities of the General Administrative Committee shall be to manage the Party, and specifically:

(a) To carry out the wishes of the Party as expressed in this Constitution, by Party Conference, and by general vote of the membership.

(b) To supervise Party work throughout the country.

- (c) To employ organizers and other administrators to further the work of the Party.
  - (d) To publish and control Party literature and supervise the circulation of same.
  - (e) To establish and maintain communication with the Companion Parties of Socialism in other countries.
  - (f) To ensure that Locals, and members of the National Local, are provided with General Administrative Committee minutes and other reports and all members are given the opportunity to vote on all Party referenda.
  - (g) To receive and consider any proposition relating to Party affairs from any Local or member. To submit propositions to a vote of the general membership when appropriate.
  - (h) To make preparations for the establishment of Provincial Administrative Committees when appropriate.
  - (i) To make all necessary arrangements for national Party Conferences.
  - (j) To present to the general membership a yearly financial statement.
  - (k) The General Secretary and other administrators shall have general and active management of the Party, and shall be responsible to the General Administrative Committee to carry out all orders and resolutions of the General Administrative Committee under the supervision of the General Administrative Committee.
- **Rule 20.** (a) The General Administrative Committee shall meet at least once per calendar quarter. Reasonable notice of meeting shall be given.
- (b) A written resolution signed by all General Administrative Committee members entitled to vote on the resolution is as valid as if it had been passed at a meeting of the General Administrative Committee. Mail ballots and proxy voting are not allowed.
  - (c) The General Administrative Committee shall send minutes of its meetings to all Locals. These minutes to contain the names of members present and how they voted on matters of policy and principle.



## Party Conferences

- **Rule 21.** (a) All members shall be entitled to attend Party Conferences as voting members of the Conference.
- (b) Reasonable notice of meeting, in writing, shall be given to all members.
- (c) A Party Conference shall be held annually, subject to rule 21(h) below, and at the written request of any 10 members.
- (d) The Party Conference shall be the governing body of the Socialist Party of Canada.
- (e) Any member attending the Party Conference may demand that any resolution of the Party Conference be submitted to the general membership in a referendum. The demand may either be made as a motion from the floor (requiring no second and allowing no debate), or in writing to the General Administrative Committee within 30 days of the Party Conference.
- (f) The Party Conference shall appoint an auditor to report to the next annual Party Conference.
- (g) Only the Party Conference, or a mail referendum per (e) above or (h) below, or a resolution per (i) below, shall be authorized to amend this Constitution.
- (h) A mail referendum may replace a Party Conference at the discretion of the General Administrative Committee except that for a requisitioned Party Conference, a request by 10 members may explicitly exclude a mail ballot.
- (i) Written resolutions signed by every member have the same force as a resolution of a Party Conference.

## Referenda and Voting

- **Rule 22.** (a) The General Administrative Committee shall be required to take a vote of the membership on matters in dispute within the Party, at the request of any five members.
- (b) Referenda shall be taken not more frequently than once per calendar quarter.

(c) At the discretion of the General Administrative Committee, it shall be the responsibility of the petitioner(s), to prepare all material required for a referendum, and supply it to the General Administrative Committee for mailing and tabulation. The General Administrative Committee is responsible for reasonable material expenses required to process referenda.

(d) A majority decision of a vote is necessary to validate a referendum or motion, except in the following circumstances, in which case a two-thirds vote is necessary.

- the suspension or expulsion of a Local or member, or
- a change in the headquarters locality, or
- a change to Rules 1, 2 or 3 of this constitution.

(e) To be valid, all ballots must be signed and ascertainable as being from a member. Ballots must be returned to the General Administrative Committee within six weeks from date of issue.

(f) Locals shall be called upon to hold at least one membership meeting to discuss a referendum.

## **Electoral Action**

● **Rule 23.** Candidates for political office shall be subject to endorsement by the General Administrative Committee. A candidate of the Party shall not be permitted to accept any nomination or endorsement from any other political party or organization, and those receiving such endorsement shall disclaim responsibility for same from the public platform.

## **Miscellaneous**

● **Rule 24.** Administrators, committees and committee members are subject to removal by their constituents. (See Rules 10 and 17.)

● **Rule 25.** The rules contained in Roberts Rules of Order (revised) shall govern the Party in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the by-laws or the special rules of order of the Party. The order of business, at all business meetings of the Party, shall be modelled after the following:

- (1) Election of Administrators.
  - (a) Each meeting shall elect a chair for that meeting.
  - (b) Election of other administrators as required.
- (2) Adoption of the Minutes of previous meeting(s).
- (3) Applications for Membership.
- (4) Correspondence.
- (5) Matters Arising.
- (6) Reports of Administrators and Committees.
- (7) Good of the Movement.
- (8) Unfinished Business.
- (9) New Business.
- (10) Adjournment.

● **Rule 26.** In the event of the dissolution of the Party, all assets shall become the property of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London, England, SW4 7UN.