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# Bylaws of the Federation of Russian Branches of the Communist Party of America

Adopted at the 5th Convention of the Russian Federation, held at Detroit, Michigan, August 20-27, 1919.  
Printed according to a Department of Justice translation of the Russian original, edited for grammar and style.

## (1) Name: FEDERATION OF RUSSIAN BRANCHES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA.

### (2) FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES.

1.— The Federation shares the platform of the Communist (Bolshevist) Party of America and adopts its point of view and principles in solving all principles and tactical questions that are arising before it.

2.— The realization of the dictatorship through the seizure of the government as the only means toward the creation of a new communist order.

3.— The conditions for the realization of this change are the sharpening of the class struggle between the workers and the capitalists, and the adoption by the workers of the fundamental idea that between these two classes there can not and must not be peace or even a temporary truce.

4.— The revolution forces the proletariat to use all the means of struggle in which its energy can be concentrated, namely, mass activity with its logical result — direct encounter with the government machine in an open battle. All other methods, such as revolutionary utilization of bourgeois parliamentarism, will have only a second class significance.

5.— All wars that have taken place up until now were contrived by the [ruling] classes on the one hand for the purpose of plunder and enslavement and on the other hand for the purpose of inciting the workers of different nationalities against each other and spreading amongst them the false view that workers and capitalists of the same nation have the same interests. The workers of different nationalities have nothing for which to fight each other. The employers and capitalists are their enemies. Against these enemies they must conduct a merciless war. In such a war the workers

must fight for the victory of the working class; in such a war lies the key to the transformation of the working class from the state of enslavement in which it now exists to a state where there will be no bosses and no workers. This victory is only possible in such a case, when in response to an appeal of the capitalists to enter into a war with some other nationality, the workers will reply that they have no other enemies besides the capitalists, and that the slogan of the workers is “Proletariat of all countries unite!” and that for the realization of this slogan they are ready to risk their lives.

### (3) MEMBERS OF THE FEDERATION AND MEMBERSHIP DUES.

1.— A person can be a member of the Federation who stands on the point of view of the Third (Communist) International, who shares the program and principles of the Communist Party of America, who accurately pays his membership dues, who subordinates himself to party discipline, and who is an active member of one of the branches of the Federation.

*Remark:* A person living on the exploitation of hired labor cannot be a member of the Federation.

2.— A candidate for member of the Federation must pay a 50¢ initiation fee when he makes out his application for membership.

3.— For two months from the day of acceptance, a member is still considered a candidate for membership and as such can only have an advisory voice. At the end of such probationary period, the members of the branch shall decide by majority vote the question of whether to affirm the candidate as a fully fledged member.

*Remark:* This paragraph does not relate to newly organized branches.

4.— Every member of the Federation and every

candidate for membership pays monthly dues, in confirmation of which a stamp of standard model is pasted in his membership book.

*Remark A:* Besides such regular monthly fees, the members of the Federation, from time to time, must acquire such special stamps issued by the Communist Party and the Federation to cover a special fund.

*Remark B:* For unemployed comrades there will be special free-of-charge stamps.

5.— A member of the Federation who for three months fails to pay his membership fees is considered as dropped from the list of members; he can be reinstated as a member by the decision of a general meeting after paying in full all fees that he owes, if during this time he was not deprived of the right to belong to the Federation.

6.— Comrades who are in the Federation less than a year cannot be elected to party offices in branch, state, or district organizations. (Newly organized branches are excepted).

#### (4) FORM OF ORGANIZATION.

1.— The branch is the main organizational cell of the organization.

*Remark:* A branch is considered a party cell, consisting of not less than seven members.

2.— Branches geographically belonging to one district are united into a district organization.

3.— At the head of the district organization is the District Committee, which is composed of seven persons, elected at the regularly convoked district convention.

4.— In cities in which there are two or more branches, these must unite their common activity by organizing municipal committees, composed according to proportional representation.

5.— The supreme organ of the district convention in the interval between district convention, is the District Committee.

*Remark:* The activity of a district organization must be confined to the given district.

6.— Branches of one district and belonging to one state are united into a state organization of the district.

7.— The head of the state organization is the State Executive Committee, composed of five members elected by the periodically convoked state con-

ventions of that state.

8.— City, State, and District organizations in their activity must subordinate themselves to all proclaimed and tactical decisions of the supreme organs of the Federation.

9.— The assignment of branches by districts is left to the supreme organs of the Federation.

10.— The supreme organs of the Federation are:  
(a) ANNUAL CONVENTIONS OF THE FEDERATION.

(b) THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FEDERATION.

*Remark:* In particularly important cases the Central Executive Committee can transfer one or another question for a decision of all members of the Federation through a referendum vote.

#### (5) CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

1.— The Central Executive Committee is the supreme organ of the Federation, acting in the interval between its conventions. Its decisions are obligatory for all members of the Federation and for all its composite parts.

2.— The Central Executive Committee consists of 15 persons, elected by the regular convention of the Federation for a period of one year. Candidates for the Central Executive Committee can be selected from the members of any branch of any district, but after they are elected and after the Central Executive Committee begins to function, they must live in a city where the Central Office is situated and where the central press organ of the Federation is published.

*Remark A:* In case the comrade nominated for member of the Central Executive Committee is not present at the convention, the delegate who nominated him must show a written statement of the consent of the nominated to accept the candidacy and that, if elected, he will live in the city where the Central Executive Committee is located. This statement must be vised and signed by the Secretary and by the seal of the branch to which he belongs.

*Remark B:* The nominated candidate for the Central Executive Committee must be a member in good standing in the Federation and have been in the Federation not less than one year.

*Remark C:* In particularly unusual cases, by the decision of not less than two-thirds of the votes of

all delegates present at a convention, comrades who have been in the Federation for less than one year can be nominated and elected members of the Central Executive Committee, this on condition that they have taken part in the Revolutionary Socialist (Communist) movement outside of the Federation for not less than one year.

3.— In case members of the Central Executive Committee dropping out, a special election of five candidate members takes place. This election is conducted in the same manner as the elections to the Central Executive Committee. The replacement of members who have dropped out of the Central Executive Committee is made from the list of elected candidates according to the number of votes received by them.

4.— The first to be elected by the convention for the Central Executive Committee is the Secretary of the Federation, who gives all his time to the Federation and receives a weekly salary established by the Federation for his services.

*Remark:* In case the Secretary of the Federation resigns his post, a candidate for this position from the members of the Central Executive Committee is provided by the convention.

5.— The paid Secretary, being a secretary of all the Federation and of the Central Executive Committee, convenes the sessions of the latter and conducts all its current affairs in the interval between these sessions.

*Remark:* In order to conduct the routine office work of the Central Office of the Federation, the Central Executive Committee hires one Assistant Secretary of the Federation, who receives a remuneration established by the Federation for its employees.

6.— The Central Executive Committee unites all the activity of the Federation; represents the Federation in its relations with general party institutions and with other Federations of the Communist Party of America; it directs the activity of the Federation and its separation demonstrations (??); it controls and manages the central press organ of the Federation, publishes literature, and conducts enterprises that have a common party significance; it distributes the forces and means of the Federation and has charge of its central funds.

7.— The Central Executive Committee meets once every two weeks.

8.— The Central Executive Committee convenes the annual convention of the Federation, notifying all branches about the day of the convention and about the proposed business of the convention not less than six weeks before the convention.

9.— Extra conventions of the Federation may be convened by the Central Executive Committee through its own initiative or through the demand of a majority of branches of any district. In the latter case of convoking the extra convention, the Central Executive Committee must let the entire Federation decide by a referendum vote.

10.— Only those who have been members of the Federation for no less than a year can be elected as delegates to the Federation convention.

*Remark:* This point has nothing to do with newly organized branches.

11.— All decisions of the Federation convention are final and can only be changed by a referendum vote of all members of the Federation.

12.— All decisions and resolutions of the convention and other supreme organs of the Federation are obligatory for separate organizations and for all members of the organization. The infraction of these rules by institutions and individuals will lead to their exclusion from the Federation.

13.— The Central Executive Committee settles conflicts not only between institutions and branches but also their inner affairs. All conflicts must be preliminarily decided by local organizations (branches) and City, State, and District Committees and [appealed] only in case of disagreement of one of the parties with a declared decision. The question is then transferred to the Central Executive Committee for final adjustment.

*Remark:* Copies of decisions of all local conflicts must be sent to the Central Executive Committee.

14.— In all infractions and conflicts that are sent to the Central Executive Committee for examination and which may lead to exclusion from the Federation, the Central Executive Committee must first take the necessary measures to hear the accused side before it renders its decision.

### (6) TRANSLATOR-SECRETARY.

1.— The convention selects a Translator-Secretary.

tary of the Russian Federation (and candidate) for the Communist Party of America.

2.— The Translator-Secretary has an office with the National Bureau of the party and receives a salary from the party. The Translator-Secretary is a representative of the Federation at the National Bureau of the party and acts as a mediator between the Federation and the party. In his intercourse with the Federation, the Translator-Secretary acts through the Central Executive Committee of the Federation and under its direct control.

#### **(7) MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRAL PRESS ORGAN OF THE FEDERATION.**

1.— The central press organ of the Federation in the economic and editorial sense is under the full control of the Federation realized through its Central Executive Committee.

2.— The convention selects a responsible editor, who is, at the same time, a paid contributor of the paper and a member of the Central Executive Committee with an advisory voice.

3.— The paper is edited by an editorial staff of three persons: one responsible editor, selected by the Federation convention and two other members whom the Central Committee selects from its own members.

4.— The editorial staff is duty bound to publish all official party correspondence with the seal of the Russian Communist Branches, without changing their true meaning, if this does not contradict the arranged and principal ordinances of the Federation.

5.— The editorial staff is duty bound to publish in the Letter Box column all unaccepted official correspondence.

6.— All decisions of the editorial staff may be repealed or changed by the Central Executive Committee.

7.— The Central Executive Committee has a right to change editors at its own discretion.

8.— All questions pertaining to the editing of the paper must initially be discussed by the editorial staff. The editorial staff's report is given by the responsible editor at the session of the Central Executive Committee.

9.— Any person holding a paid position in the editor's office or in the office and printing shop of the central press organ can not at the same time be a mem-

ber of the Central Executive Committee.

10.— The Central Executive Committee has a right to hire paid workers for the fulfillment of different work at the central press organ of the Federation.

11.— All paid employees of the editor's office and printing shops are under direct control and supervision of the Central Executive Committee and may at any time be replaced by another person.

12.— Publishing of literature at the central press organ of the Federation is under direct supervision of the Organization Committee of the Central Executive Committee.

#### **(8) TRAVELLING AGITATORS AND ORGANIZERS.**

For the purpose of organization and agitation work, the Central Executive Committee has a right to appoint the necessary number of paid travelling organizers and agitators.

#### **(9) EMPLOYEES OF THE FEDERATION.**

1.— All employees of the Federation must be members of the Communist Party.

2.— All officials of the Federation who are giving all their time for party work are entitled to a remuneration of \$25.00 for single persons and \$35.00 for married persons.

#### **(10) DEFENSE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS.**

1.— A general fund to aid political prisoners is established with the Central Executive Committee.

2.— Special committees and funds for the defense of political prisoners are established with each District Committee and are under its direct control. Fifty percent of the sum collected by these committees are to be transferred to the general fund of the Federation.

3.— In extraordinary cases the Central Executive Committee has the right to obtain all or part of the funds [accumulated by] the districts for the defense of political prisoners.

4.— No branch has a right to issue contribution lists for the collection of money for the defense of political prisoners without special permission from the District Committee.

**(11) REFERENDUM.**

For the realization of any voting through a referendum, the Central Executive Committee designates six weeks; at the expiration of this time the Central Executive Committee begins to count the votes and takes into consideration the number of votes.

**(12) RECALL.**

At the demand of not less than seven branches of the Federation, the Central Executive Committee turns the question of recalling any official over to all members of the Federation for referendum vote.

**(13) ACCOUNTS.**

1.— The Central Executive Committee is duty bound to publish monthly bulletins in which full accounts should be given of the activity of the Central Executive Committee as well as financial statements of the Central Committee and of the central press organ of the Federation.

2.— The monthly bulletins issued by the Central Executive Committee must be sent to the branches not later than the 7th of each month, with not less than three copies sent to each branch.

3.— The Secretary of the Federation, the Translator-Secretary, the official staff, the Revision Commission, and other officials and institutions of the Federation must present to each convention of the Fed-

eration printed reports of their activity, copies of which must be handed to each delegate to the convention.

4.— It is the duty of District and State Committees to furnish full monthly reports to the Central Executive Committee and to their branches about the activity of those branches which are composite parts of the district and state.

**(14) REVISION.**

1.— A complete review of Federation official affairs and its organ is made every six months.

2.— A Revision Commission, composed of one representative from each district organization, selected by its convention, makes the review.

3.— The following members cannot be elected to the Revision Commission:

(a) Members of the Central Executive Committee.

(b) Members of the Editor's office or the office and printing shop of the central press organ of the Federation.

(c) Paid employees of the Federation.

(d) Members of the branch or branches of the city in which the central press organ of the Federation and the Central Executive Committee is located.

4.— All branches, State, and District Committees must keep their books and accounts according to a standard model.

*Text Edited by Tim Davenport*

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