

Internal Bulletin 118

How Should the NC be elected? - Hughes/A response to Hughes - Kinnell/NC minutes May 5/NC minutes March 31/Reject the Appeals, support the NC, build the WSL - Entwistle/Some briefing notes on 'world Trotskyism' - Kinnell

How Should the NC be elected?

The forthcoming conference will determine how we build the League and what kind of organisation we will be building. An important part of this will be the leadership we elect to carry out these decisions. How we elect these comrades will inevitably reflect the kind of organisation we are trying to build.

Any tendencies or factions at conference will have the right to minority representation guaranteed by being allotted NC places in proportion with their size. The question is how will the 'majority' portion of the NC be elected.

STV or Multi-X-vote

If we are to continue with an NC which reflects the broad spectrum of politics in the League - and that means more than just comrades who closely agree with Carolan or Kinnell plus faction members - it is important we elect it by STV. The other option - the multi-X-vote system, each member has as many votes as there are people to be elected and then its first past the post - could completely fill all the 'majority' NC places with comrades from a slate proposed by the current NC majority. All that would be needed to guarantee this is 51% of non-faction members to vote solidly for such a slate. This means that 51% of 80% of the organisation (NCs currently account for about 20%), or 40.8% of the total could elect 80% of the NC. The other 49% of non-faction members may have voted for only part or none of the majority slate.

Why STV is better is explained very well in the following extract from the report carried at the April conference recommending electing the NC by STV.

"STV is more complicated to count than the X-vote system. But it also has many advantages. The crucial political (emphasis in original) advantage for our purposes is that under X-vote even large minorities tend to get wiped out. In a conference where 51% support group A and 49% support Group B, if each group votes solidly for a group slate, then group A will sweep the board and group B will get no representation on the committee.

"This cannot happen under STV. STV produces proportional representation. As long as members of a 49% group vote for candidates on their own group as top preferences (in any order they choose), they are bound to get about 49% of the places on the committee."

(Report on the Single Transferable Vote, IB 53, Ounliffe, Kinnell, Smith)

An example of a comrade not on the majority slate but attracting enough support at conference to justify election to the NC is Callaghan. It is unlikely that Callaghan would have been elected at the April conference if the X-vote had been used. This is because if some members broadly supporting the majority slate decided to vote for him they would have been splitting the majority vote and probably would have only achieved letting an extra supporter of the Smith group get elected instead. So STV avoids intensifying factionalism. The necessity to whip comrades into line to vote solidly for your faction or risk splitting the vote is removed.