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September 30, 1974

TO POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Attached is a memorandum Peter Camejo has asked the PC to consider prior to the time we send out our next convention call this spring.

Comradely,

Jack

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PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHING PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION AS THE  
BASIS OF DELEGATE SELECTION FOR PARTY CONVENTIONS

The present system titled PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION for the selection of delegates for party conventions is not based on proportional representation nor does it on the average approach proportional representation. It would be more correctly titled "Requirements for the Selection of Minority Delegates." What it does is establish a system for the selection of minority delegates. The present method provides for less than proportional representation for minorities.

The degree to which it under represents a ~~minority~~ minority depends on three factors, the number of branches, the membership to delegate ratio, and the geographic spread of a minority. The present system is furthest from proportional representation if the number of branches is increased, the ratio of members to delegates increased and/or if a minority has wide geographic spread. Thus ~~the~~ under the present system the degree of under representation for a minority will oscillate but even under best of conditions ( low ratio and entire minority concentrated in one branch) a minority will still be under represented.

With the present situation of 21 branches and a ratio of 1 to 15 a minority will be substantially under proportional representation.

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The most extreme example would be an evenly distributed minority of ~~say~~ 250 members which although representing over 20% of the party would receive no delegates. This is a rather small possibility. Why do I mention it? Because the possibility under the present system that a minority would receive proportional representation is even less than the above example.

To understand why this is let us look at how the present system works. For purposes of simplicity let us use the example of a branch having a membership of a multiple of 15, let us say 75 members and that all vote without any abstentions.

A minority with 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13 or 14 members would be under represented. If the minority had 15 votes it would receive proportional representation. If it had 16,17,18,19, 20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28, or 29 votes it would again be under represented. At 30 votes it would again have proportional representation. At 31,32,33,34,35,36 or 37 votes it would be under represented. At 38 votes it would become the majority and be over represented. For the majority the reverse would be true. It would be over represented for all votes except exact multiples of 15.

Thus it is obvious that a minority will in all probability be under represented. Roughly speaking it will be under represented anywhere between 0-14 votes, or on the average approximately 7 votes per branch. This under representation is accumulative, there is no counter balancing possibility unless in one or more branches the minority is a majority and is therefore in turn over represented.

The only other possibility of a counter balance is the rather odd rule under the present system that should a branch have an even number of delegates and a minority reach 40% of the vote it should be over represented and be given 50% of the delegates. What rationale ~~is~~ there<sup>is</sup> for not dividing a branch's delegation which votes 60% to 40% by giving the majority 60% and the minority 40% is unclear to me. This rather curious rule can lead to rather odd circumstances. For instance if a minority receives 40% of the votes in a branch having ~~6~~ the right to 6 delegates it would receive 3 delegates but in a branch having the right to 7 delegates it would have only 2 delegates even though it would require more votes to get 40% of the vote in a branch having 7 delegates. In cases where there are more than one minority it

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can lead to a position with less votes receiving more delegates  
then another position.

### Is Proportional Representation Possible ?

Can we have a system based on proportional representation?  
Before answering this we should really ask ourselves if we want  
porportional representation ? Was the present system consciously  
devised to deny a minority proportional representation or is it  
an historical fluke ? Possibly some of the older comrades could  
clarify how the present system was decided upon. In any case if  
we believe the best system is not one based on proportional  
representation then we should not title it "PROPORTIONAL  
REPRESENTATION."


For the purpose of this proposal I will assume that we favor

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proportional representation because if there are differences on this then they would have to be discussed and settled before any specific proposal for choosing delegates could be discussed.

The answer to the question can we have proportional representation is yes, on the average. That is to say we can have a system that is based on proportional representation and that tends to give minority and majority proportional representation.

The ~~xxx~~ reason for qualifying my answer is related to our concept of a party congress. We believe that a party convention should be based on delegations from branches where the political questions before the party are discussed and voted on. We also believe that once such delegates are elected they become members of an independent body, the convention, and there they are free and equal agents to make political decisions.

If we were to use a system, for instance, of weighted votes where delegates cast different number of votes exact proportional representation could be established. Although such a system is not ruled out on principle it is too cumbersome for our needs and tends to place emphasis of the delegate "representing" those electing him or her. Raising the number of delegates by lowering the ratio



of members to delegates would make the present system come closer to proportional representation. But even at our present size such a solution would result in a very large convention cutting across our need for the convention to be a working body where each delegate can participate atleast to some degree.

Another possibility would be to chose delegates not on the basis of branch votes but on the national vote. But this would go directly against our concept of branch delegations.

How then can we have a system based on proportional representation but which maintains our norm of delegations and election by branches, and maintains our standard of each delegate carrying one vote ?

The answer is rather surprising. Divide the delegates as near as possible to proportional representation. It sounds simple because it is simple. Such a selection will make the delegations tend towards proportional representation on the average. The tendency to average out to proportional representation is independent of the membership to delegate ratio and actually improves as the party grows adding new branches.

Here is how it would work. Let us take our previous

sample branch with 75 members. The present ratio is 1 to 15 so this branch has the right to five delegates. Five delegates can be divided between a minority and majority in only three ways; 5-0, 4-1, and 3-2. (For the moment we need not concern ourselves with 2 or more minorities, that does not create any problem as we will show later.) Now let us list these three possibilities noting the percentage of delegates involved.

The three possibilities for dividing 5 delegates:

- |    |                   |                 |
|----|-------------------|-----------------|
| A. | 100% (5) for Maj. | 0% (0) for Min. |
| B. | 80% (4)           | 20% (1)         |
| C. | 60% (3)           | 40% (2)         |

After the vote is taken in a branch the percentage for majority and minority are figured out. Delegates are divided on the basis of which of the above three possibilities A, B or C is the closest. Thus, for instance, if a minority received 13 votes and the majority 62 the percentages would be 82.7% for the majority and 17.3% for the minority making division 4 for the majority and 1 for the minority or B the closest. If the minority received 17 votes and the majority 58 the percentages would be 77.3% and 22.7% respectively. Again the delegate division would be 4 to 1 or selection B. In the



first example the minority was slightly over represented and in the second example slightly under represented. On a national scale this will tend to average out to proportional representation. That is the error factor will tend to cancel out rather than accumulate as under the present system.

Another way to see this is to repeat our listing of what happens at each different vote for a minority. Under a system based on proportional representation a minority would be under represented with 1,2,3,4,5,6 or 7 votes. But for 8,9,10,11,12, 13, or 14 votes it would be over represented. At 15 votes it would have exact proportional representation. At 16,17,18,19,20,22 or 23 it would again be under represented. From 24 through 29 it would be over represented. At 30 it would again have exact proportional representation. Thus it would go from being at worst 7 under represented to 7 over represented. It would ~~then~~ be represented from -7 to +7. That is on the average it would have 0 over or under representation. Our present system we should recall gives a minority from 0-14 under representation averaging out to 7 under represented.

A good way to visualize the proposed system is to imagine

streets numbered one to one hundred on which there is a bus route. The number of bus stops are evenly placed depending on how many delegates there are. In our previous example there were five delegates or in other words five bus stops. These are placed at equal distances, 20th, 40th, 60th, 80th and 100th street. Unfortunately our bus stops at

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any street number. What we do is look to see which bus stop is the nearest to where the bus ~~xxx~~ stopped. Thus if the bus stops at 17th street we would say the nearest bus stop is 20th street. If it were to stop at 39th street we would say 40th street not 20th street and so on. The present system works like this. The minority bus has stopped at a given street. Now note if it has passed any bus stops. If it has give it a delegate for each one. Thus ifx the bus stopped at 17th street it has not passed any bus stops so it is ~~bx~~ not given any delegates. If it stops at 39th street and is only one block from 40th street it has only passed one bus stop and is given one delegate.

Taking the last example under the present ~~xxx~~ system we should note that the minority bus reaches ~~30~~ 39th street and the majority bus reaches only 61 street, yet the delegates are based on bus stops 20 and 80 rather than the much closer 40 and 60. Under the present system a minority is penalized and a majority favored under all circumstances unless the bus stops exactly at a bus stop.

Let us look at a more complicated example to see how proportional representation works. Let us assume a branch with 85 members. It is allowed 6 delegates by our present and my proposed regulations. Let

us suppose we have three different positions in the branch and they receive the following votes 40, 27, and 11 with 7 abstentions.

Under the present system and my proposed system we forget about abstentions to calculate percentages taking into account only votes for a position. In this case 40 votes equals 51.3%, 27 equals 34.6% and 11 equals 14.1%. How should the delegates be divided? Even though it is easy to figure out the division without listing all possibilities let us make such a list.

Possible division of 6 delegates with three positions:

A. 100% (6) for Maj.	0% (0) for larger Min.	0% (0) for smaller Min.
B. 83 $\frac{1}{3}$ (5)	16 $\frac{2}{3}$ (1)	0 (0)
C. 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ (4)	16 $\frac{2}{3}$ (1)	16 $\frac{2}{3}$ (1)
D. 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ (4)	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ (2)	0 (0)
E. 50 (3)	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ (2)	16 $\frac{2}{3}$ (1)
F. 50 (3)	50 (3)	0 (0)
G. 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ (2)	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ (2)	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ (2)

A through G are all the possible ways to divide 6 delegates between three positions. Our example of 51.3%, 34.6% and 14.1% clearly comes closest to E. Thus the majority gets 3 delegates, the larger minority 2 and the smaller minority 1. (By the present system the majority would get 4, the larger minority 2 and the smaller ~~minority~~ minority none.)

If the vote in our branch of 85 were 34, 32 and 14 with 5 abstentions the percentages would be 42.5, 40 and 17.5. This would

again come closest to E thus the delegates would be divided 3,2 and 1.

If we were to try and apply the present system a rather curious thing would happen which is rather humorous. According to the present rules for dividing 6 delegates a minority receives one delegate if it had at least 16 $\frac{2}{3}$  percent but receives 50% if it reaches 40%. Here are the exact words:

"If six delegates, a minority with 16 $\frac{2}{3}$  percent gets one delegate, a minority with 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  percent, two delegates, but a minority with 40% gets one-half the delegates."

If we were to apply this to our example here is what would happen. The ~~min~~ smallest minority would get one delegate. The larger minority being over 40% would get 50% of the delegates or 3. This would leave the majority only 2 delegates !

#### Proposed Change in Call

My proposal reduces itself to changing the call for the next convention to the following under the section titled "PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION" :

"In the case of political differences ~~defining~~ defined ~~by~~

by conflicting resolutions, the election of delegates in the branches is to be on the basis of the vote on resolution or resolutions voted on at the meeting at which the delegates are elected. Members voting for a given resolution are entitled to designate the delegate or delegates to which they are entitled on the basis of proportional representation or as near to proportional representation as possible, the designations to be ratified by the branch. Abstentions in no case count as votes. When two different divisions of delegates are equally close to proportional representation the benefit goes to the position with the larger vote."

All other sections under PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION which explained the old system would be deleted. No other change in the call would be necessary.

October 1, 1974

Peter Camejo