

STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO AMENDMENT OF NLG CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE 5.5

This amendment attempts to overturn a decision made by the whole Guild two years ago. We decided then that committees should be elected to the NEC by the full NLG membership, rather than by other elected leaders. The NEC is a significant part of our organization's leadership, and we decided against having that leadership make the decision about who should be in a significant portion of that leadership.

Committees are an important element of the Guild, its programmatic work and its development of direction and strategy. The whole membership—not just national officers, RVPs and the committees already on the NEC—should decide which committees will help in directing the organization. We, the entire membership, should be empowered to decide what committees/areas of work are priorities for us. We should also be able to decide when a weak-but-important committee should be on the NEC to help it in moving forward and becoming stronger by helping the Guild to become stronger.

My committee, the MLTF, has had a seat on the NEC for two decades. We'd like to think this is because our work against US imperialism and for GI resistance is important to the Guild's strategy and goals, and because we help in the organization's leadership. And it may be that this amendment would actually strengthen our ability to stay on the NEC, since we'd be one of a small group of people voting on us. But that seems undemocratic and a bit elitist, and we would rather abide by the wishes of the full organization.

One other thought. The current constitutional provision calling for voting by the whole membership is only two years old, and as of this writing it hasn't been carried out. Last year, despite the current provision, the election of committee seats on the NEC was done only by the NEC. As of this writing, it isn't clear how the 2020 election of committees is being handled. We should, at a minimum, give the current method, which was developed after much debate, careful drafting, and full Guild voting, a chance to work before folks propose that it is a bad idea.

Please vote against this amendment, and the corollary bylaw amendment, to retain the most democratic approach to selecting NEC membership.

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(title for identification only)