
To the Members of Section Greater New York, SLP from L. Abelson, Organizer, June 20, 1898

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Comrades:—

We consider it our duty to address yo some earnest words on the state of our party organization in Greater New York.

We are this year to go through the most critical and therefore the most important campaign that the SLP has had to undertake since it became a recognized party. If we want to come out of this campaign with a creditable showing, we must enter upon it with a force that is not hampered in its work by internal disturbances.

The part of this city HAS been hampered in that respect. Let our comrades be reminded of some facts.

In the beginning of 1896 the Sections of New York and Kings Counties endorsed the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance. In the old Section New York this decision was reached after a thorough discussion carried on in general Section meetings and through all the branches. the question was not decided at a Section meeting, but by a general vote.

That ought to have settled the question for at least a reasonable time. The minority in a democratic organization is in duty bound to respect the decisions of the majority and to assist in carrying them out successfully. And most of the comrades who had voted against affiliation with the ST&LA were willing to act in this truly democratic spirit. But the minority contained an element which absolutely refused to accept the decision of the Section.

Within two months after the first general vote the irreconcilable minority element forced a reopening of the question on the occasion of electing a fraternal delegate to the National Convention of the ST&LA. There was again an extensive discussion: only it became more acrimonious, as was to be expected. The result was a confirmation of the former vote in favor of the ST&LA.

Two general votes should have amply satisfied everybody. The irreconcilable opponents of the ST&LA were not willing to acquiesce. Under various claims they continued not only to oppose, but to obstruct the carrying

out of the policy twice affirmed. One of these claims was that Section New York alone could not determine so important a question, but that it must be passed upon by the whole party of the United States; that therefore the matter was to be considered in abeyance until the National Convention of the party should have decided and until that decision had been passed upon by a general vote of the whole party.

The National Convention Decides.

The National Convention met in July 1896, and by a vote of 71 against 6 endorsed the Alliance, calling upon the party members "to carry the revolutionary spirit of the ST&LA into all the organizations of the workers." This resolution was, like all other decisions of the National Convention, passed upon by the entire membership of the party, and it was ratified by an almost unanimous vote, only 64 votes being cast against it throughout the country.

Section New York, voting for the third time on this question in the year 1896, cast ONLY TWO negative votes.

Did the irreconcilable minority element now think it proper to fall in line? On the contrary. That element now adopted the policy, which is generally the last resort of a disloyal and desperate opposition, namely to bother and weary the majority to the point of making it knuckle under to the minority.

These tactics became apparent on almost all questions on which a difference of opinion arose in the section. Such differences — natural in themselves and not at all harmful — were widened by the injection of the Alliance question.

The party officers, the committees, and all who were charged with carrying out the policy of the party were stigmatized as a "machine," as "bosses," and everything that was done in line with the will of the majority was denounced, no matter how useful or needful it might be for the party. The organization of Section Greater New York, which was made necessary by the law creating the Greater New York municipality, was described as "a scheme to fasten the rule of a clique" upon the party. Every step taken by the majority to make the new organization effective was impeded.

When the plan of organization was discussed, the majority of the members recognized from the start that general Section meetings would not only be impractical but impossible.

Such general meetings had become impracticable in the old sections, both of New York and Kings County. In both Sections the general meetings had, with the growth of the membership, become less and less representative. they were attended by but a small fraction of the membership, made up either from those subdivisions located in the immediate vicinity of the meeting place or from some element in the party particularly interested in a

pending question and brought to the meeting for the purpose of packing it. the non-representative character of the Section meetings and their liability to being packed had, even before the organization of Section Greater New York, led the old Section New York to decide on a change contemplating the substitution of a delegated body for the general meeting.

In the enlarged sphere of a section extending over several counties general meetings would necessarily be still more exposed to the play of accident and intrigue, still more non-representative and undemocratic. If the meetings of the old Section New York were seldom attended by more than 100 members (out of a total of 1,100) and those of Kings County seldom by more than 40 (out of a total of 400), a joint section meeting could not be expected to attract more than 120 members. And as many of those in attendance leave before protracted debates come to a close, decisions affecting 1,500 members would be left to a minority of 50 or 60 members, largely consisting of those living most closely to the meeting place.

There could be no doubt that a delegated body of 130, not selected by accident but by the choice of all the branches of the Section, was a more democratic party meeting than any of the so-called general meetings held for years by either of our two principal Sections. And it was so recognized by the overwhelming majority vote cast in favor of a delegated body.

Superiority of General Committee Demonstrated.

The superiority of the General Committee over the old Section meetings in dealing with serious party matters was demonstrated in the case fo the Jewish *Vorwärts* conspiracy, which had been organized by [Abraham] Cahan, [Louis] Miller, [Morris] Winchevsky, and [Michael] Zarnetkin, because of their inability to secure control of the Hebrew [Yiddish language] party press. Those conspirators had, since the spring of 1896, kept the old Section New York in constant disturbances which had later on begun to extend to Brooklyn. The Section meetings, the Central Committee, and a number of Assembly Districts were prevented through this conspiracy from doing their proper party work. And it was this conspiracy that had first given a demonstration of the ease with which general Section meetings can be packed.

The General Committee could not be packet, it could not be prevented from handling the affair in an orderly and decisive manner. Two meetings of the General Committee and a thorough exposure of the conspiracy through the investigation of the Executive Committee relieved the party of this disturbance. Had the Section been compelled to deal with this matter in general meetings, the prolongation of the disturbance and great injury to the movement would have been inevitable.

The conspirators found no support among the rest of the membership except on the part of the disloyal element that would under no circum-

stances be reconciled to the party's affiliation with the Alliance. This element gave the conspirators all the encouragement it could. In the districts where this element predominated, resolutions were put through calculated to create the impression that the conspirators were being treated unjustly and that a large portion of the membership was in sympathy with them. And this element was by no means satisfied when it became apparent that the disposition made of the conspiracy by the General Committee was received with approval by the membership.

On the contrary, the determined stand taken by the majority of the members in behalf of a strict adherence to party principles, party policy, and party discipline, appeared to make the party still more damnable in the eyes of that minority and caused it to go a step further in its disloyalty — always under the pretense of democracy.

It formed an organization to attack the party from outside. This organization — the so-called Mohren Club — brought out more clearly the make-up and aims of the opposition. Its vicious nucleus could now be located in the same districts which had given the most encouragement to the Jewish *Vorwärts* conspirators, namely the 24th, the 32nd, and the 23rd Assembly Districts in New York County. It was in this club that Julius Dolinski, who had been only a few months in this country, first made himself known as a reckless traducer of the party, as a violent opponent of the party's policy, and as an ally of the party's enemies. How far he and Ingerman and their supporters were willing to go in antagonizing the party was shown not only by the speeches they made in the Mohren Club, but by their open affiliation in this club with avowed enemies of the party, including Debsites, Labor Fakirs, and Anarchists. (One of the principal Mohren Club spokesmen, Carl Arnold, has just been discovered in the primary enrollment list entered as a Democrat.) It became apparent that the purpose of these men was to estrange as many members from the party as possible. They tried to create a sentiment in favor of the Debs party. They slandered the party's officers, they misrepresented the doings of the General Committee. And as a means to further their ends, they enlisted national prejudice by telling the German comrades that they were being deprived of their proper influence in the management of the party through the use of the English language in the meetings of the General Committee.

Assembly Districts Outposts of Enemies.

The same warfare against the party was also carried into the Assembly Districts, where the disloyal element was represented; and these districts were used to supplement the work of the Mohren Club by undermining the party from within.

Howe these districts were made to serve as outposts of the party's enemies was shown by the manner in which the last general vote on the alliance

question was brought about. The demand for this vote originated at a meeting of the 32nd Assembly District, and the reason given for again opening this question (that had been voted on three times in the preceding year) was the alleged misconduct of the Alliance in chartering a printers' union. The 32nd Assembly District derived its false opinion on this matter from a slandering circular of Typographical Union No. 7. The circular was even endorsed by the District, although its contents were directed against the party and the party's press. The action of the District was instigated by Dolinski, who is a member of Typographical Union No. 7.

A new general vote upon a policy established by the whole party as the party policy was in itself a disloyal action. It would have been scandalous if Section New York had placed itself in opposition to the national party. But the general vote was also a useless waste of time, because there was no prospect of the vote having any other result but the confirmation of the three previous votes.

The whole proceeding could serve no purpose but to throw the party's policy again in doubt, to furnish a new pretext for a refusal of the disloyal element to acknowledge it, to give new occasions for violent attacks on it, to rekindle sleeping dissensions and cause ill-feeling.

Under the circumstances all this should have been avoided as injurious and senseless. The party should have refused to reopen the question. But it had to be undergone. The General Committee devoted two meetings to the question (occasioning neglect of other business for which it was denounced by the very element that had opened the discussion); and after the General Committee had, by a large majority, refused to change the policy so repeatedly affirmed, the debate had to be carried into all the subdivisions of the Section. After occupying the Section about three months, the question was once more settled by an overwhelming refusal to make a change.

While this debating and voting was going on, the disloyal element was working its double mine, the one outside and the one inside the party, in charming harmony. They attacked the party's policy in the Mohren Club and they attacked it in the party meetings.

The Misconduct of Dolinski.

It was on one of these occasions when Dolinski committed the flagrant misconduct that led to the proceedings taken against him.

Dolinski, while speaking on the party's platform at a public meeting on the West Side called to gain members for the party, made an attack upon the management of the party, which produced so disagreeable an impression that Comrade Meyer, the chairman of the meeting, then and there rebuked Dolinski and that Comrade Mittelberg brought the facts to the attention of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee ordered charges to be preferred against Dolinski, and these charges were tried by the Grievance Committee. After a full trial, the Grievance Committee reported its findings to the General Committee to the effect that Dolinski was guilty of the breach of discipline charged against him, in that he had both at the meetings of the Mohren Club and at the West Side party meeting publicly attacked the party. After hearing this report and after a thorough discussion of the same, the General Committee decided that Dolinski be suspended from the party for one year.

This decision was adopted by a vote of more than three-fourths of the delegates present at the General Committee and the minority was by no means of the opinion that Dolinski's conduct was blameless. The facts laid before the General Committee left but very few in doubt as to the fact that Dolinski deserved being disciplined; wherein the minority differed from the majority was the measure of punishment, the minority holding that a slighter punishment would be sufficient. the judgment was not predicated on one occurrence alone. Dolinski's remarks at the West Side meeting might have been overlooked as an act of momentary thoughtlessness, if that fact had stood alone. But Dolinski's activity in the Mohren Club and some of his statements before the Grievance Committee showed that he was of a spirit of impudent insubordination. These statements were to the effect that he would not allow himself to be dictated to, and that, no matter what the party's decision would be, he would continue to criticize the party in public.

Dolinski's conduct subsequent to his suspension confirmed the impression given of his character by these statements.

Instead of taking the steps provided by our constitution for reviewing the decisions of a Section (i.e., appeal to the Board of Appeals), he has sought to cause disturbance, to induce branches of the Section to likewise violated the party discipline, and he has more openly than ever hostileized the party. Among acts of the latter category we will mention here that at a meeting called by the Debsites he appeared on the platform of a public meeting together with James Carey, who had been branded as a traitor to the party by the National Executive Committee. He also, at a meeting of his union, Typographical Union No. 7, opposed the acceptance of an invitation fro the party to participate in the May Day demonstration, and by his attacks on the party he was instrumental in bringing about the decision of that union not to participate. And more recently he signed his name, as Secretary of the Mohren Club, to a scurrilous leaflet attacking the party.

24th District Branch Suspended.

The almost unanimous opinion of the delegates to the General Committee as to Dolinski's guilt should have ended the incident as long as Dolinski did not mean to avail himself of his right of appeal. That, notwithstanding this, the case has occupied a good deal of the attention of the

members is largely due to the attitude of the disloyal element previously characterized.

That element used this case as a means to continue its policy of obstructions. It raised the charge of tyranny against the General Committee, claiming that the General Committee was not equivalent to a Section meeting and had therefore no right to suspend members. The claim was palpably groundless; because, if it were otherwise, there would have been no Section Greater New York, that Section being unable to hold general Section meetings; if the claim was true, the General Committee could not admit members and could not have suspended members, as it did, without protest, in the cases of Blumler and Balischweiler, who were suspended in July 1897, and of Krinski, who was suspended in January 1898.

But the element that used this claim as a weapon of attack against the General Committee did not care whether the claim was well founded or not. If it had cared about having that constitutional question properly decided it would have caused an appeal to be taken to the National Board of Appeals. That method would have done away with any further wrangling about the question, and the element in question was not anxious to avoid wrangling. The case was forced to a general vote of the section, and this vote, which the members are now called upon to take, will not settle the legal question whether under the party' constitution the General Committee is authorized to suspend, but it will simply settle the correctness of the punishment adjudged against Dolinski.

But while the said element was denouncing the alleged violation of the constitution by the General Committee, it showed that it did not itself feel any respect for the constitution.

The 24th Assembly District [branch], which is dominated by Ingermann and the Mohren Club element, insolently violated Article 2, Sec. 11 of the constitution, forbidding any Section or branch of the party to extend the privileges of membership to a suspended member. The District invited Dolinski to speak at a public meeting under its auspices, and the motion, when made by Ingermann, was accompanied with the remark that it was necessary to show defiance to the General Committee.

When the Executive Committee was informed of this action, it called a special meeting of the 24th Assembly District and delegated four of its members to explain to the District the impropriety of its conduct. The delegation of the Executive Committee appeared at the special meeting so called and pointed out that the District might express its disapproval of Dolinski's suspension by either causing an appeal to be taken to the National Board of Appeals or by securing a sufficient support for a demand for a general vote. The spokesmen of the majority of the District answered in an abusive manner, telling our delegation that they did not care to adopt any such method but claimed the right to ignore the decision of the General Committee. The members showed during the debate that they had been wrought up in their

spirit of disloyalty to such a point that they did not care whether they were expelled from the party, some saying that that — suspension or expulsion — was what they wanted.

The Executive Committee submitted these facts to the General Committee, and when a debated was then held, a delegated from the 24th District [branch] boldly asserted that the District would persist in its defiant attitude and that it was justified. The General Committee thereupon suspended the 24th District.

The case was so plain that this decision must be recognized by all intelligent members to have been the only action that was compatible with the discipline and the dignity of the party.

In a latter meeting of the General Committee a sufficient number of subdivisions demanded a general vote upon the suspension of the 24th District. At the same time it was decided to give the suspended district a chance to explain its side of the case at the expense of the Section, for which purpose the district might use two octavo pages in print. The district gave a new demonstration of its spirit when it was notified to send in its explanation. Instead of doing so, it sent the following reply.

New York City, April 15, 1898.

To the City Executive Committee, Section Greater New York, SLP.

We herewith acknowledge receipt of your communication of April 5th, according to which the District is permitted to submit an explanation of our affair. Referring to the above we would state that it seems to us very strange that such a request should be put to us after we have, without receiving a hearing, been sentenced; that is, unlawfully suspended by a decree of the General Committee. Had our case been submitted to the proper authorities, and had these authorities put up a well-founded charge, we would gladly have taken advantage of the opportunity to defend ourselves. We hold fast to our demand: let us have the charge, and the defense will be there! Why were we thus unlawfully suspended? Because we invited an old party member, Dolinsky, who was likewise unlawfully suspended, to hold a speech.

We do not believe that this was a breach of the constitution of the party, but we do believe that the districts should be allowed a little more freedom in arranging of their agitation and discussion meetings, and in the selection of their speakers.

By the authority of the 24th Assembly District,
Andrew Brey, Secretary.

This letter is simply a piece of impudence. The District was not only aware of the breach of discipline charged against it, but it sent a new delegate to the General Committee with the special instructions to affirm the adhesion of the district to its attitude of defiance.

More recently two other districts dominated by the disloyal element have shown their utter disregard of the interests and decisions of the party.

Both the 32nd and the 23rd Districts have openly taken the stand that they will rather have none of the party than have the party with its present policy.

The 32nd Assembly District [branch] not only repeated the breach of discipline for which the 24th District had been suspended, but it openly declared its sympathy with the party's enemies. On March 21, 1898 a report, sent in by the Secretary, appeared in the NY *Volkszeitung*, giving an account of the proceedings of the business meeting of the 32nd District, held on March 19 [1898]. It appeared that most of the time of this meeting had been devoted to motions expressing hostility to the party. Three motions of this character were adopted: firstly, a motion to extend to Dolinski the privilege of representing the party on its platform at a public meeting of the District; secondly, a motion was carried not to recognize a decision of the General Committee forbidding members of the party to assist in the work of the Mohren Club; and, thirdly, the District voted to lay upon the table 10 tickets of Section Denver, the sale of which was urged by the General Committee in behalf of our Wester sister section. The spirit of the majority was well characterized by the different attitude they assumed on one hand towards the organization of fellow members and on the other towards the combination of enemies. While they treated the Denver party section with insulting antipathy, some of the majority boastfully proclaimed their affiliation with the Mohren Club and their determination to continue the same, no matter what the party would do. They were warned that by their action on Dolinski and the Mohren Club they were inviting suspension, and they answered that they would like to see that done.

The action of the 32nd Assembly District [branch] was laid before the General Committee and a very full discussion was there had on the matter, in the course of which the correctness of the facts reported was confirmed by the District's delegate. After the debate the Executive Committee was directed to make a further investigation, and if the district was found guilty of the acts of defiance reported, the Executive Committee was authorized to suspend the District.

The Executive Committee first called upon the officers of the District organization to appear before it and give what explanation or information they might have to give about the case. The officers refused to appear, claiming that they could not give information to the Executive Committee unless the District gave them permission. This position was clearly wrong; members and more particularly officers of the subdivisions are bound to assist the Executive Committee in any investigation it may make, irrespective of what their District may say about it. But the Committee, in order to meet any future excuse, gave the District an opportunity to decide as to whether its officers should answer the call of the Executive Committee. The District defiantly declared that there was nothing to investigate; but if any information was wanted, the Executive Committee might come to the

meetings of the District. Only two member of the District appeared of their own accord.

The Committee heard the testimony of these and other witnesses; but before coming to a decision, it wished to give the District one more opportunity either to justify itself or change its attitude. We went to the trouble of sending a sub-committee to a meeting of the District. The experience was the same as in the case of the 24th District. The majority reaffirmed their previous actions, boastfully asserted their right to defy any decisions of the General Committee that they considered invalid, and showed their utter recklessness as to the results their action might bring about. Some repeated in the presence of the Committee the statement that they would not mind being suspended, that on the contrary they would like to see the suspension of the District ordered.

What is at the bottom of these statements is apparent from the evidence at hand of the disloyal purposes of the element in control of the 32nd District, as well as of the 24th. One of the leaders of this element in the 32nd District, Joseph Cohen, was proven to have boasted that he merely came into the party for the purpose of bringing members of our party over to the Debs party [Social Democracy of America]. It was also shown that the membership is constantly under Debsite influences through the Mount Morris Educational Club, which was originally formed to provide a clubhouse and headquarters for the party, but which is now officered and controlled by Debsites.

The direct influence of the Mohren Club on the District was illustrated by the manner in which the District was used to come to the assistance of Rudolph Modest, a notorious enemy of the party and associate of the Fakirs [trade union bureaucracy] and Anarchists. When the General Committee demanded the removal of this Modest from the Board of Trustees of the Volkszeitung Publishing Association on the ground that his election was a menace to the interests of the party, the 32nd Assembly District published a denunciation of the General Committee for interfering with the Publishing Association in an action that was proper.

The intrigues of this element kept the District busy antagonizing the party and left no time, even if there had been any inclination, for proper party work.

After obtaining such evidence, the Executive Committee suspended the 32nd District, as it had been authorized to do by the General Committee. No action towards reorganization was taken, however, until after the suspension had been ratified by the General Committee. This was done, by almost a unanimous vote (only a few delegates voting in the negative) on May 28th, whereupon a call for reorganization was published on June 2nd.

This suspension has also been ordered to be submitted to a general vote, and the suspended District has been allowed to have a statement of its case published together with the statement of the Executive Committee. The

statement of the District was sent in in German, of which we herewith submit a translation:

June 11, 1898.

To the Member of the Socialist Labor Party.

Comrades:—

As against the procedure of the party management, the 32nd Assembly District feels impelled to place before the party members the following declaration in justification of our actions.

When Comrade Dolinsky, a member of the 32nd Assembly District, was, in February [1898], suspended for one year by the General Committee, we, as a branch, expected that this would be done in accordance with the constitution until then in force.

According to the clause of the constitution bearing upon this, which constitution was adopted by the convention of 1897, the General Committee has no authority to decree suspension, but can only recommend it. It would, therefore, have been the duty of the General Committee to submit this decision to a general vote in the form of a motion, instead of peremptorily imposing the same.

It is also demanded by another clause of the constitution of 1897 that the election of the Executive Committee and of the organizer he had every six months through a general vote (as in the case of the National Executive Committee), but in no case as is done now through the delegated body of the Central Committee of Section Greater New York.

But since we are not — any more than any other branch — in possession of the constitution in question, because it was never sent to the districts after the adoption of the proposed clauses, we can only fall back upon it by means of hypothetical indications.

How sad is it that a Socialist organization is not even in possession of its own constitution!

The party management evidently sought to apply Section 10 of the national constitution of 1896 to the Dolinsky case, where indeed it is said: "...a simple majority at a business meeting shall be sufficient to suspend."

We then requested the General Committee — again in accordance with the constitution — and in conjunction with three other Assembly Districts for a general vote. When after some time no steps were taken in this direction, the 32nd Assembly District resolved of course not to recognize the suspension so long as the constitution was not lived up to, for we are of the opinion that we have in the party neither bureaucrats nor outlawed members.

When later on the 32nd Assembly District arranged for an agitation meeting, Comrade Dolinsky was chosen as the speaker.

Thereupon followed, on April 20 [1898], a rescript of the General Committee in which we were requested to send delegates to the City Executive Committee to represent the district at the investigation of this action. At the same time, we were informed, to the astonishment of all, that there was also a charge against us because of our connection with the Mohren Club. We replied that as a branch we had nothing to do with it, and in regard to Dolinsky there was nothing to investigate, as it was a fact that he had been invited as a speaker. Otherwise we instructed our delegates to the General Committee to insist upon the enforcement of the constitution.

In May the investigation took place in our district by Comrades Fiebigger and Moren.

The District declared that not they, but the General Committee, were acting contrary to the constitution, and that until the constitution was enforced, they would insist upon their standpoint. Our attitude towards the Social Democracy of America — which was also ventilated — was explained that we, as members of the SLP, desired that if criticism be applied to this young and active party, it be done in a magnanimous manner.

On June 4th [1898], the District was officially notified that the General Committee had resolved to submit the suspension and reorganization of the 32nd Assembly District to a general vote together with an explanatory statement by the said district.

And as the 32nd Assembly District makes moderate use of this, we would, en passant, and as an illustration, call to the attention of the party members that we have already been officially expelled or dissolved by the Executive Committee and disfranchised in this vote, and that on June 5th or 6th, a call of the organizer appeared in the *Volkszeitung* decreeing the reorganization of the 32nd Assembly District.

Pay attention, comrades: While or even before the action of the 32nd Assembly District is submitted to you for examination and decision, the Executive Committee executes the final verdict. According to all conceptions of justice hitherto in vogue, the case in question must remain in status quo — i.e., in its former condition — until the general vote — the jury — have decided. With the maneuvers accomplished by the Executive Committee, one involuntarily thinks of the absolute state with the beautiful motto: *Sic volo, sic jubeo* (Thus I will it, thus I order).

May the party members pass a cool and unbiased judgment upon the standpoint taken by the 32nd Assembly District in the best understanding of loyalty to the constitution and the principle of solidarity.

With Socialist greeting,

The Thirty-Second Assembly District.

As the comrades will perceive, the District repeats its previous contention that it has a right to defy decisions of the General Committee, if — according to the District's opinion — they are unconstitutional. At the same time the District complains that it does not know what the constitution is. In its ignorance it might claim anything to be unconstitutional that it may dislike. The District assumes, for instance, that the election of officers by the General Committee is unconstitutional; according to its contention, it therefore has a right to ignore the Organizer and the Executive Committee as not rightfully elected and to disregard every action they take. If members were denied the right of thus acting on their individual assumption and interpretation, they would be — according to the Thirty-Second — “outlawed.”

That position is self-evidently absurd. Decisions of the whole section can only be overruled either by the whole section or by a superior body, which we have in the National Board of Appeals.

The point made to the effect that the by-laws were not accessible to the Districts is wrong in fact. After the by-laws had been adopted, they were published in the party press. Information about them could also have been

obtained from the General Committee or from the Executive Committee. But the Thirty-Second District apparently preferred its assumption about the by-laws; it made no effort to inform itself about them.

The other matters contained in the statement of the District are irrelevant and partly incorrect. After what we had said before, our comrades can form their own judgment.

The last of the openly disloyal districts is the Twenty-Third, in regard to which no action has been taken. But since attempts are made to alarm the party members over the great loss that would be involved in taking action against these insubordinate subdivisions, we might state one fact. The majority of the Twenty-Third has sought to procure the withdrawal of the district from the party. This plan was, however, abandoned for the time being and instead a club was organized, to which the property of the district is gradually being transferred. The library has already been transferred, \$25 from the treasury have been donated to the club, leaving but little for the purposes of the party. The district has been ordered by the General Committee to reconsider this illegal disposal of the party's property, but the district disregards the party's authority.

The facts here outlined clearly bring out the character of the opposition with which we have had to deal. They show that it was a disloyal opposition, the opposition of a minority unwilling to either actively comply with the expressed will of the party or to even passively accept the same; an opposition determined to do everything in its power towards preventing the party from working according to the majority's will. It is shown to be a minority with which there can be no peace except by the majority bowing to its will and abandoning its own policy.

How shall such a minority be treated? Shall its tactics of obstruction be allowed to be successful? Shall the national party policy be overthrown? Shall Section New York place itself in open rebellion to the national party? Shall the majority of its members who are true to that policy trample it under foot, in order to reconcile this minority?

It is obvious that nothing would be gained by such yielding, while a good deal would be lost.

Nothing would be gained, because the opposition has no program except to prevent the party from following out its uncompromising revolutionary policy. Being allied with the party's enemies, the trade union fakirs, the opposition solely aims to hinder the party from attacking these enemies. It has no plan of action to propose, unless the purely abstract preaching of Socialist ideas, to which the party confined itself during the '80s, can be called a plan of action. At the time when that course was followed (a time to which the opposition sometimes points as the glorious age of the party) the party was in a state of inaction and gave so little promise of progress that it was looked upon by most of its own members as a mere preparatory school for the real Socialist Party of America to be born in the future. Is any sensible

Socialist anxious to undo the work of the last eight years of vigorous attack on all things and all men standing in our way and to return to the previous period of humiliation?

But while nothing would be gained by yielding to this minority, much would be lost. The party would show its incapacity to carry out any policy, its inability to enforce the majority rule. And such an exhibition would necessarily make it impossible for the party not only to maintain any confidence among the working class at large, but to maintain the zeal and vigor of its own membership. The conciliation of these disloyal few would cause many loyal comrades to retire in disgust from active party work, as has already been the case in every one of the districts which fell under the sway of the disloyal minority.

If then the opposition is of such a character that any yielding to it cannot be thought of, is it sensible to give it any encouragement by a lack of determination to deal with it vigorously? Is it sensible to proceed in a way that would lead such an element to suppose that it might succeed in bothering the majority into submission, if it would only go far enough and be noisy enough in its policy of bothering? Is it sensible to permit this bothering to disturb the whole membership?

That is certainly not a sensible way of dealing with disloyal tendencies. It is on the contrary to be recognized that such tendencies will be least likely to creep into an organization or become harmful where they have the least hope of even the temporary success of causing disturbance and disquiet.

On looking back over the last two years our comrades must admit that the disloyal element in Greater New York has been given too much chance for causing disturbance and disquiet. And that was due firstly to some of our local by-laws that are capable of great abuse, and secondly to the weakness of some of our loyal members who hesitated to prevent such abuse.

We think the time has now come when the party must put its foot down upon this weakness that inevitably plays into the hands of disturbers.

Internal troubles cannot be prevented, but their annoying effects can be circumscribed in the narrowest limits compatible with the rights of each member.

All considerations of fairness will be satisfied if charges of misconduct are investigated, and after investigation receive one thorough discussion in the party. After such discussion, which is possible only in the General Committee, the matter should there be finally decided and ended, as far as the Section is concerned. If that decision is not satisfactory to the party or parties against whom it was rendered, there may be an appeal to the National Board of Appeals. Thus the Section will be relieved of all further disturbance, and the decisions of last resort will be looked forward to without the bitterness which is inseparable from the canvass of all the Branches for the purpose of a general vote. This course is furthermore the only one which will bring constitutional questions to an authoritative determination.

We, therefore, recommend the adoption of a by-law, to the effect that in all matters of discipline the decision of the General Committee, whether ordering suspension or expulsion, shall be final and remain in force until reversed by the National Board of Appeal on an appeal taken to the same.

We furthermore think that it is necessary to protect the Section against the abuse of the referendum for mere purposes of obstruction. The present law, which enables three branches to force a general vote upon the party, makes it possible for a very small number of disloyal men to constantly keep in abeyance the policies and resolutions adopted by the majority. The members will realize the dangers of that provision if we remind them of the fact that more than 30 of the branches of Section Greater New York average an attendance at their meetings of less than 10 member, so that 15 members, evenly distributed, would control three branches and could bring to a general vote a proposition which finds no support among the rest of the 1,500 members of the Section. The very fact that such a possibility exists encourages obstructionists. We think that any demand for referendum should require the support of at least one-fifth of the branches of the Section. this minimum, which at present means 12 branches, can be secured for any meritorious proposition.

These are the considerations and recommendations which we have deemed it our duty to urge upon the membership of the Section. We leave them to its action, trusting that the course will be adopted which, we are thoroughly convinced, is imperatively demanded for the welfare of the party.

The Assembly District organizations, Ward organizations, and branches are called upon to take a vote upon each of the following questions and report the vote to the undersigned organizer not later than July 23rd, 1898, stating in each case the number of members voting "Yes" and those voting "No."

1. Shall the suspension of Julius Dolinski be upheld?
2. Shall the suspension of the 24th Assembly District be upheld?
3. Shall the suspension of the 32nd Assembly District be upheld?

The City Executive Committee of Section Greater New York, SLP.
L. Abelson, Organizer,
64 East 4th Street, New York City.

Dated New York, June 20, 1898.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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