
Minutes of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party of New York County, Meeting of March 25, 1919

Compiled by Isaac Weitz, Secretary

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A regular meeting of the Central Committee [of the Socialist Party of New York County] was held on Tuesday, March 25 [1919], at the Labor Temple, 247 East 84th Street [Manhattan].

The following resolution was adopted:

Whereas, the workers of Hungary by the force of necessity and in the wisdom of their class consciousness have made use of their inherent right of taking possession of the means of production; and

Whereas, the workers of Hungary have declared their intention to join with their brothers of the Federated Soviet Republic of Russia in order to establish firmly the new world of the workers; and

Whereas, our comrades, by taking these actions have merited the eternal gratitude of the working class; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Socialist Party of New York County, assembled in the Central Committee, sends its greetings to the struggling masses of Hungarian workers, and wishes that their historical action be followed by the greatest possible success.

Credentials were received from the following branches: 12th A[ssembly] D[istrict], J. Kindman in place of Paul Michelson, resigned; 22nd-23rd A.D., J.W. Hartmann, additional delegate; 6th A.D., Robert Goldberg and Samuel Cohen in place of I. Alexander and D. Silverman, resigned; Hungarian Branch, A. Klein in place of L. Lichtschein. These delegates were seated.

Credentials from the 8th A.D. for Maximilian Cohen, Hyman Goldberg, and Fanny Horowitz in place of S. John Block, Algernon Lee, and Louis Waldman, were received, as was also a communication

from Hugo Pollock protesting against seating of these delegates on account of the irregular manner in which the delegates were withdrawn and the others elected, claiming that the recall was planned by caucus meeting of the so-called Left Wing of the 8th A.D. On motion, it was decided that delegates of the 8th A.D. be not seated until the 8th A.D. shall have an election at a meeting called for that purpose.

The following message was adopted and sent to L.C.A.K. Martens:

The Central Committee of Local New York, Socialist Party, greets Comrade L.C.A.K. Martens, recently appointed the representative of the Russian Soviet government in the name of the United States, and in his name the victorious Russian proletariat.

We sincerely hope that his work in behalf of the Socialist government of Russia will be crowned with success. We pledge him our aid, and promise that we shall not rest until the government of the United States has ceased to be a party to the economic and military isolation of Russia and the military occupation of territory of the Soviet republic.

Communication from S. John Block was read, and on motion it was decided to take up the same as the first order of business at the next meeting of the Central Committee.

The committee appointed by the Central Committee to investigate the troubles at the 2nd A.D., Jewish [Yiddish-language] branch, submitted the following report:

Your committee elected under the provisions of a motion passed on February 11, 1919, and reading as follows, "Motion to elected a committee of 5 to investigate the whole matter of the Jewish Branch, 2nd A.D." respectfully submits the following report:

You committee proceeded throughout on the theory that it was not a district attorney conducting the prosecution of one faction or the other, nor a court passing upon charges and counter-charges, nor a jury called to render a verdict of guilty or not guilty upon one or the other group involved. Rather did it conceive its functions be that of hearing the four parties involved — the Executive Committee of Local New York, the Executive Committee of the Jewish Socialist Federation, the "old" branch, and the "new" branch — and, after heard them and having examined individual witnesses on specific points, to recommend a solution

of the difficulties which, in its opinion, would eradicate the trouble and further the Socialist movement among the Jews within the territory covered, roughly speaking, by the Jewish 2nd A.D. branch. The committee, therefore, did not use existing charges or existing reports on the minute books of Local New York as the starting point of its deliberations, but, rather in its first hearing invited representatives of the four parties involved, each to state their view of the situation in the presence of all the rest. After that it conducted four additional hearings of both sides, and held two executive sessions, as a result of which it makes the recommendations which follow below.

In the opinion of your committee, the chief difficulty at the moment is one of personalities, which have so clashed with each other as to make harmonious future work almost impossible. Whatever may have been the differences of viewpoint while the Great War was on, we believe that both factions can now be reconciled, once personalities are eliminated. The recommendations of your committee, therefore, are:

1. (a) That only such members of the party be permitted to belong to the Jewish Downtown branch as reside within the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Assembly Districts.

(b) That members of the original 2nd A.D. Jewish branch who do not reside within the territory above described be given the choice of joining either the Jewish branch within their own territory or of affiliating with an English branch in their section.

(c) That Local New York be instructed, as a matter of general policy, to define clearly the territorial limits of the various foreign language branches, not only within the Jewish Socialist Federation, but also within the other federations, insofar as they are branches of Local New York.

2. (a) That all members of the Jewish Downtown branch who fall within the above definition of eligibility be invited to a meeting for the purpose of reorganization and of electing officers, committees, and delegates to the Central Committee.

(b) That such reorganization meeting be conducted by a committee of 3 elected by Local New York, who shall invite two delegates representing the Jewish Socialist Federation to cooperate with them in this work. This committee should be instructed to have the reorganization meeting take place before the next meeting of the Central Committee.

3. (a) That all members eligible to the branch thus to be reorganized be restricted to purchase their dues stamps from this special committee.

(b) That the other members whom it may be necessary to transfer because of the above territorial ruling be instructed to

purchase their dues stamps from the branch with which they choose to affiliate.

(c) That members who shall have paid their dues up to the month of December [1918] be declared members in good standing.

Considerable evidence points to the fact that an unusual number of transfers took place from the Russian to the Jewish [Yiddish] branch. We call attention to the fact that during the 6 weeks previous to December 5, [1918] 11 recorded transfers and at least 5 [more], the records for which were inaccessible, took place from the Russian to the Jewish branch — a thing unheard of in the history of Local New York. Your committee sent letters to all the 11 on two different occasions, asking them to appear. Only 3 appeared. Of these, 2 stated frankly that they had transferred in order to take part in the fight.

There has been considerable confusion as to the records of transfers. Your committee tried to examine the books of the Russian and the Jewish branches as well as of Local New York, on this point, but it is unable to apportion the blame for the fact that the record of transfers is not on file in the office of Local New York.

Your committee believes that the Executive Committee of Local New York exceeded its authority in its first decision, arbitrarily ruling that members who had joined after October 1 [1918] were to be excluded from participation in the elections. At the same time, those members of the Jewish branch who voted to table the communication of Local New York concerning this question are to be severely censured. Recourse should have been had to the regular channels provided, and not to defiance of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee appears further to have neglected to inform the members that the October 1 clause was later eliminated. Whether or not this would have changed the situation is a matter of conjecture on which your committee could not obtain evidence to warrant an assertion.

Isaac, Weitz,
Secretary.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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