
Constitution of the Social Democracy of America: Adopted in Chicago on June 21, 1897 [partial]

Constitution of National Council

[section missing] ¹

Constitution of State Unions

Name and Headquarters.

Section 1. This organization shall be known as the — State Union of the Social Democracy of America, and its headquarters shall be located at — the capital city of the state.

Section 2. The — State Union of the Social Democracy shall consist of five members and shall have general supervision of the state union. It shall be empowered to provide such rules, issue such orders, and adopt such measures as may be required to carry out the objects of the organization, provided that no action shall be taken which conflicts with this constitution, the constitution of the national council, or the declaration of principles.

Section 4 [sic]. The officers of the board shall consist of a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer, and organizer, and such others as may be determined, who shall be elected at each annual meeting of the board and serve until their successors are elected and qualified. They shall perform such duties as appertain to their several offices and for their services shall receive such compensation as the state union may determine. The board shall hold stated meetings on the second Tuesday in May of each year and such special meetings as may be required.

Section 5. A majority of the board shall constitute a quorum.

Section 6. Any member of the board may be removed by a two-thirds vote of all the members, provided that all charges shall be reduced to

¹ The first part of the SDA constitution was published in the previous issue of this paper.

writing and that the accused member shall be entitled to a fair trial. The board shall be authorized to fill all vacancies.

Section 7. Any member may be removed at any time by the state union.

Section 8. No member of the board shall hold political office.

Section 9. All questions not provided for in the constitution and all questions of appeal from local branches shall be decided by the chairman, such declaration to be final and in full effect unless otherwise ordered by the board.

Section 10. At each annual meeting the officers of the board shall submit complete reports of the transactions of their several offices and transmit a copy to each local branch.

Revenues.

Section 11. The revenues of the organization shall be derived from such sources as the state union may determine.

The State Union.

Section 12. The state union shall meet annually at the headquarters of the organization on the first Tuesday in May. The chairman of the executive board shall preside over its deliberations. The secretary of the executive board shall serve as secretary of the state union and keep a correct record of its proceedings, submitting a copy of the same to each local branch in the state.

Section 13. At each annual meeting of the state union an executive board of five members and a representative to the national council shall be elected, who shall serve one year, or until their successors are elected and qualified.

Section 14. The state union may enact such laws as may be necessary, determine the policy of the state organization, and do all other things required to carry out the objects of the organization, provided that no action is taken inconsistent with this constitution, the constitution of the national council, or the declaration of principles.

Constitution of Local Branches.

Name and Location.

Section 1. This organization, located at —, county of —, shall be known as Local Branch No. — of — of the Social Democracy of America and shall hold a charter duly issued by the national council, which may be suspended or reclaimed by the national executive board in case of violation of the laws, principles, or regulations of the organization.

Membership.

Section 2. Any reputable person subscribing to the principals of this organization shall be eligible to membership.

Section 3. A local branch shall consist of not less than five, nor more than five hundred members, — members constituting a quorum.

Section 4. A person desiring membership shall make application to a local branch, recommended by a member of said branch, and if accepted by a majority vote shall be enrolled as a member.

Section 5. A member may be transferred from one local branch to another by obtaining from the secretary a transfer card and depositing the same with the secretary of the branch desired to be joined.

Section 6. A member in good standing may terminate his or her membership by obtaining from the secretary a card of withdrawal.

Section 7. Each member shall be entitled to a card of membership, such cards to be furnished by the national council and issued to members by the secretary of the local branch.

Executive Board.

Section 8. The executive board shall consist of five members, elected annually on the first Tuesday in April, and shall have general supervision of the local branch. It shall be empowered to provide such rules, issue such orders, and adopt such measures, subject to the local branch, as may be required to carry out the objects of the organization, provided that no action shall be taken which conflicts with this constitution, the constitution of the state union, the constitution of the national council, or the declaration of principles.

Section 9. The officers of the board shall consist of a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer, and organizer, and such other officers as may be determined, who shall be elected at each annual meeting and serve until their successors are elected and qualified. They shall perform

such duties as appertain to their several offices and as the local branch may direct. The board shall hold stated meetings on the second Tuesday in April of each year and such special meetings as may be required.

Section 10. Any member of the board may be removed by a majority vote of the local branch, provided that such charges shall be reduced to writing and that the accused member shall be entitled to a fair trial. Vacancies in the board shall be filled by the local branch.

Section 11. No member of the board shall hold political office.

Section 12. The local branch shall hold regular meetings at such times as the members may determine. The chairman of the executive board shall preside and all the officers of the executive board shall be ex-officio officers of the local branch. The chairman shall decide all questions of appeal, subject to the approval of the local branch.

Section 13. At each annual meeting of the local branch, on the first Tuesday in April, the officers shall submit complete reports of the transactions of their offices for the preceding year.

Dues and Fees.

Section 14. The Admission fee, which shall accompany each application for membership, shall be such an amount as may be determined by the local branch, provided it shall be sufficient to include 25 cents to be forwarded to the national council.

Section 15. At the close of each meeting the treasurer shall transmit to the national council the names of all members admitted at said meeting, their post office addresses, and a remittance by postal money order of their admission fees.

Section 16. The dues of a member shall be payable monthly in advance, on or before the first day of each month in such an amount as the local union may determine, provided it shall be sufficient to include 15 cents per month to be forwarded to the national council. A member admitted on or before the 15th day of the month; a member admitted after the 15th day of the month shall be exempt for said month.

Section 17. On or before the 5th day of each month the treasurer shall remit by postal money order the monthly dues for the current month to the national council and each local branch shall remit the full amount due for the entire membership of the branch.

Jurisdiction.

Section 18. Local branches shall be subject to the state union and national council, and the state union shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the national council.

Elections.

Section 19. At each annual meeting of the local branch, on the first Tuesday in April, or as soon as practicable thereafter, an executive board of five members and a representative to the state union shall be elected, who shall serve one year, or until their successors are elected and qualified.

Initiative and Referendum.

Section 20. Upon application of 10 percent of the membership any matter relating to the amendment of the constitution, the calling of a special meeting of a state union or the national council, or the removal of an officer, state or national, shall be submitted to a direct vote of the membership through the initiative and referendum, and a majority vote shall determine the result.

Trials.

Section 21. Any member violating any of the laws or principles of the organization may be suspended or expelled by a two-thirds vote of a local branch, provided that any charge against a member shall be preferred in writing by a member in good standing, and the accused shall be entitled to a fair trial.

Appeals.

Section 22. Any member having been suspended or expelled may appeal to the executive board of the state and if the decision of that body is not satisfactory he may appeal to the executive board of the national council.

By-Laws.

Section 23. A local branch may adopt such by-laws as a majority may determine, provided they do not conflict with this constitution, the

constitution of the state union, the constitution of the national council, or the declaration of principles.

Amendments.

Section 24. The constitution of the local branches, state unions, and national council is the organic law of the organization and can be altered or amended only by the national council in meeting assembled or by the general organization through the initiative and referendum.

Constitution of Colonization Department

Section 1. On or before August 1st, 1897, the executive board of the national council shall select three persons of sound business judgment and unquestionable integrity, who shall constitute the colonization commission of the Social Democracy of America.

Section 2. As soon as practicable after their appointment they shall meet and elect from their number a chairman, a secretary, and a treasurer, who shall hold office for one year, or until their successors are elected and qualified. They shall receive for their services not to exceed \$3 per day and railroad fare and hotel expenses while in actual service in their official capacity.

Section 3. The commission shall, in conjunction with and subject to the approval of, the national board, as soon as practicable, examine into the advantages of the several states for the colonization of the unemployed members of the organization and decide without unnecessary delay upon some state or states for that purpose and make due report thereof to the organization.

Section 4. The commission shall, as far as practicable, cooperate with other cooperative organizations having similar objects in view.

Section 5. The object of the colonization shall be the establishment of the state cooperative commonwealth and ultimately the national cooperative commonwealth upon the principles set forth in the declaration of principles of the Social Democracy of America.

Section 6. The commission shall give special attention to the unemployed and shall as soon as possible establish cooperative industries for their employment.

Section 7. The commission shall, subject to the approval of the national board, adopt proper measures and regulations for this selection

of applicants for employment and for assisting them in reaching the state or states selected for colonization.

Section 8. The colonization fund shall be in the custody of the treasurer, who shall file such bond as the executive board may require for the faithful performance of his duties. He shall receive all contributions, giving his receipt therefor, and issue a monthly report of the transactions of his office and transmit a copy thereof to each local branch.

Section 9. At each annual meeting of the national council, a committee of three shall be appointed to examine the books and accounts of the commission and submit a report, including a statement of receipts and disbursements, to each local branch.

Section 10. The revenue for the support of the colonization department shall be derived from voluntary monthly contributions of members and voluntary contributions from other sources. Each local branch shall elect a collector for the colonization fund, who shall collect the monthly and other contributions and forward the same to the treasurer of the commission on the first day of each month, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Section 11. In carrying forward the work of colonization, the board shall proceed in an orderly, systematic manner, according to carefully prepared plans, made in advance, placing working men and women of such occupations and in such numbers as will be required in the course of industrial development of the state.

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