
UCP Membership Bulletin #1

[Aug. 14, 1920]

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UCP BULLETIN #1

**One Copy to Every Group Organizer — To Be
Read at Next Group Meeting.**

August 14, 1920.

To all members of the UCP,
Comrades:—

Your CEC has just had a meeting. Here's an account of its decisions and actions.

Information of this character will no longer be published in the Official Organ [*The Communist*], but will be sent you in Bulletins like this. After reading to the group members, destroy the Bulletin.

VERY special information will not even be published in Bulletins, but conveyed verbally through organizers. Unless you attend EVERY group meeting you may miss something important. Moral: BE THERE.

Still more important is it for your organizers and committeemen to attend all committee meetings. If any refuse to do this, fire them, and put comrades on the job who'll attend to business.

Here are several specific matters for your action:—

Soviet Russia Resolution.

The last page of this Bulletin contains a resolution for support of Soviet Russia. Bring it before your unions.

Raise Defense Funds.

The Party has accepted proposition from the

National Defense Committee. Dispose of as many Defense stamps as you can to outsiders. Push collection of Defense Fund among non-members in every way you can think of, so that regular receipts can be used for organization work. Forward all funds collected BY MEMBERS through the regular Party channels, whether from stamps or lists.

\$50,000 Organization Fund.

The tremendous campaign mapped out by your CEC is based on expectation that you will raise the \$50,000 Fund necessary to carry it through. Remember that EVERY group should raise \$50, or \$5 per member, by September 1st [1920].

Intensive Propaganda.

There are in this country at least 100,00 Left Wing Socialists and IWWs whom it is perfectly safe for you to approach with Communist message. Your CEC can not do this. Neither can your organizers. This is a task that You Yourself must do.

For this purpose every member is requested to take 5 copies of each issue of the Official Organ in English or some other language. If possible pay for them in advance. Then sell or give them away. The Party can not afford to distribute this free, except 1 copy to every member. But by this plan you can start a vast propaganda campaign at once. Surely there is not a single member who can not do this: Pick out 5 people to whom it is safe for you to talk. Keep after them with each issue until they are ready for membership in the UCP.

Reports and Orders.

Your group organizer must make financial reports at least twice a month. Ours can be "a party of action" only if YOU act. See to it that he has something to report from you each time. Tell him exactly how many copies of each language organ to order for you on the requisition blank that he has for this purpose. Only if your group does this systematically can your District Organizer make proper orders and reports to the National Office.

Kicks.

If papers you order do not reach you, please KICK to the higher party units until they come through. If we do not hear you holler we take it for granted that all papers and literature reach you OK.

Remember, Comrades: Our Communist Movement is just what YOU make it. Up and AT IT.

Yours in Revolt,

The CEC of the UCP.

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Decisions of CEC at Recent Meeting.

The business was transacted under the following order:

1. Reading of letter from Third International and action thereon.
2. Discussion of form of Industrial Organization.
3. Agitation work of the Party.
4. Communications.
5. Reports of Party Officials and Group Conferences.
6. Review of Districts and their activities.
7. Official Organs. Literature.
8. Labor Organ [*The Toiler*]. Public work.
9. Finances.
10. Unfinished and new Business and Miscellaneous.

Eight members of the Committee were present. It was decided to call Dubner [Abram Jakira] and Zemlin [S.M. Krunislav] as first alternates to the next meeting of the CEC to officiate until the return of 2 absent members.

1. A letter from the International regarding Unity was read. After general discussion motion carried that our reply shall include a statement severely criticizing the current anti-Communism of the IWW officials; the advocacy of industrial unionism in general; and the organization of shop committees and industrial councils.

(This letter from the Third International and the answer of the CEC will appear in the next issue of the Official Organ [*The Communist*].)

Motion carried that International Secretary [I.E. Ferguson] send this Unity letter of the International and the UCP reply to all old CP Federations and the CP Executive Secretary [Charles Dirba]. (The UCP members everywhere should bring these documents to the attention of the CP members.)

2. A detailed program of action for the guidance of Party members in the work of shop committee and industrial council organization was adopted. (This will appear in the next issue of the Official Organ [*The Communist*] and should be studied carefully by every member.)

3. It was decided to issue a leaflet for general distribution once every 2 weeks for a while.

One leaflet is to deal popularly with the shop organization question.

The editorial board was instructed to feature support of Soviet Russia in the Party leaflets.

4. COMMUNICATIONS were read as follows:
From alternate CEC member Dubner [Jakira] protesting action of CEC in not seating alternates this session and requesting to be seated at once. Motion to reconsider previous action of the CEC was lost.

From the CP asking for return of money and records turned over to the UCP by Damon [Ruthen-

berg]. Decided not to answer.†

From the UCP delegates to the Third International Congress [2nd: Petrograd, July 19 & Moscow, July 23-Aug. 7, 1920], notifying the Party that they had arrived safely at ----- [Petrograd] July 16th [1920].

From editor [Alex Bittelman] of former Jewish paper [*Der Funken*] giving financial statement and asking for payment of deficit of \$696.55. Decided to pay only the amount the CEC had promised, \$200, and to notify the editor that publication of the supplement to *The C—* [*Communist*] was not ordered by CEC and can not therefore be paid for by it. Also that the book plates that he lists as assets are the property of the former Jewish Federation and must not be sold by any individual until so ordered.

From Ukrainian group, asking immediate publications of Official Organ in that language. Decided to publish first issue of Ukrainian organ without engaging paid editor.

From SD1, District 2 [New York City], criticizing English Official Organ. Decided receipt of criticism be acknowledged and serious consideration given.

From former Estonian Federation regarding paper [*Uus Ilm*]. Filed.

From Legal Director [I.E. Ferguson?] about control of Labor Organ [*The Toiler*]. A definite plan was adopted to assure Party control over the Labor Organ.‡

From District 5 [Cleveland], about defense lists. Decided to inform all districts that all defense contribution lists and defense stamps sent out through district offices be accounted for through Party channels.

†- During the abrupt split of the Chicago-centered Ruthenberg/Ferguson/Belsky group from the New York-based CPA in April 1920, former Executive Secretary Ruthenberg absconded with the CPA party treasury, to the tune of something like \$8,000. This was a bitter point of controversy between the two organizations, as might be imagined.

‡- This is probably a reference to formal ownership structure of the publication — an obvious problem for an “illegal” political organization with respect to a “legal” weekly newspaper.

§- This is probably a reference to a back-stock of copies of the Marxian Educational Society’s edition of Lenin’s *The Proletarian Revolution* [and the *Renegade Kautsky*]. The Detroit-based Marxian Educational Society seems to have been something of a contract printer of radical material and the book would have been relatively fresh off the presses in 1920. Alternatively, Louis C. Fraina edited a collection of material by Lenin and Trotsky called *The Proletarian Revolution in Russia* in early 1919.

From District 5 [Cleveland], regarding activities of language organizers. Decided that all organizers when entering a district shall place themselves under the direction of the District Organizer.

From Attorney [I.E. Ferguson?] regarding prisoners at Dannemora. Decided to publish his report in the Official Organ, and that CEC send call to all defense committees to agitate against severe punishments at Dannemora.

Bills presented from Ukrainian-Russian Branch of District 2 [New York]. Decided to pay only loans made direct to National Office or assumed by National Office.

Motion carried that District 2 [New York] pay loans made in its district to present UCP members, employing special means to raise the funds.

From District 1 [Boston] regarding 3,000 copies of *Proletarian Revolution*. Decided to secure the books at as low a figure as possible.§

From District 7 [Chicago] regarding lower wages for employees.

From District 1 [Boston] about lower wages and useless organizers.

The CEC unanimously decided upon the following answer:

It is true that the Party has put a large force of organizers to work. But these replace a still larger number of Federation and State officials that existed in the former organizations. No one that sees the great opportunities for successful organization work today will think that we have too many. The demand for organizers is far greater than our ability to supply. If we had twice as many competent Party workers, and sufficient funds to put them in the field, we could double

our Party's activities. The CEC deems it a supreme duty as nearly as possible to harness the talents of every available comrade for the service of our Cause.

It would of course be surprising if among the large number of Party employees there should never appear any shirker. The CEC has adopted a system that will result in his speedy elimination from the Party payroll, should such a one appear. The membership may rest assured that ALL comrades that are retained in the Party's service give the organization full value in work.

The wage for these full-time Party workers had to be governed somewhat by the cost of living. Last year [1919] both the CP and the CLP paid \$45 per week to married men. Since then the cost of living for families has gone up far more than the increase of \$5 made by the CEC of the UCP. The standard that we have set is lower than the pay of skilled workers in the trades. Most of the comrades employed by the Party could receive higher wages in other lines of work.

Comrades should also realize that many little economies practiced by workers in private employment are impossible for Party employees today. It costs much more for an organizer to exist under the conditions under which we now work than it did when we could carry on our organization work in the open.

After due consideration of the entire subject the CEC decided that it would be unfair to its employees to reduce their wages.

From District 7 [Chicago] asking what the CEC would do in case of a tie vote upon the Committee. Decided that according to parliamentary usage a tie vote loses the motion.

From District 3 [Philadelphia] favoring National Propaganda Committees for the language groups. Decided to answer that this could not be permitted, the UCP Convention [Bridgman, MI: May 26-31, 1920] having specifically voted down a motion for it.

From District 3 [Philadelphia] regarding Fraina trial. Decided that after investigation by its own committee the CEC of the UCP endorses the findings of the former CP and will publish them in its Official Organ.

From District 4 [Pittsburgh] asking change of organizer. Decided to comply.

From District 5 [Cleveland] about division of district. Arrangements made.

From District 9 [Denver] proposing establishment of book store. Decided that Secretary ascertain

the probable cost of such a venture.

From District 1 [Boston] asking whether District Organizer has to make financial report to his district. Decided that District Committees audit District Organizers' accounts and that financial reports be made to both, District Committee and National Office.

From District 1 [Boston], about charging former CP and CLP members initiation fee if they did not pay July [1920] dues. Decided that they need not pay initiation fee unless more than 3 months in arrears. Only back dues need to be paid by former members of the CP and CLP until 3 months in arrears, when they shall be dropped from membership and subject to initiation fee the same as other new members. Decided to recommend every member to purchase an organization stamp monthly.

From Secretary of Deportees Defense Committee [=??] regarding charges made against him in District 2 [New York]. Decided to refer grievance to District 2.

From Districts 6 [Detroit] and 7 [Chicago] about publishing Party business in Official Organ. Motion adopted that financial statements, reports of CEC meeting, and similar Party organization matter be multigraphed in sufficient numbers to supply each group with one copy to be read to the members at group meetings instead of being published.

From District 7 [Chicago] regarding control and registration cards. Motion carried to adopt both as printed for general use.

From District 7 [Chicago] recommending free distribution of Official organ, and suggesting changes. Decided that CEC deems these inadvisable.

From Canada, asking for Third International program in English and Russian. International Secretary [Ferguson] instructed to comply with request.

From Mexico, about conditions. International Secretary [Ferguson] to answer.

5. REPORTS were made by the Editor [Ruthenberg], the Secretary [Wagenknecht], the Technical Director [Ludwig Katterfeld], and the Defense Director [Edgar Owens?].

It was decided to purchase multigraph. Also investigate other methods for publishing papers and leaflets economically and safely.

Motion carried to retain I.E. Ferguson as legal counsel for the UCP. He is also to handle the CLP and CP cases in Chicago as well as cases of 9 comrades at Youngstown [Ohio].

Exhaustive plans were adopted for raising of defense funds, giving publicity to the persecutions, etc. It was decided to accept the help of the National Defense Committee.

It was decided to ask the New York Defense Committee to ascertain the needs of Gitlow, Larkin, and Winitsky and supply their relief.

Motion carried that in case married comrades of the Party are imprisoned, the wife shall be paid \$10 per week, and an additional \$2 per week for each child, for maintenance.

A report was heard regarding the Russian Conference. The delegates need money for homeward trip; the Russian comrades want an organizer steady in the field since there is still much organization work to be done, and there are not enough competent local organizers to do it; they elected Dubner [Jakira] as organizer; they also elected a National Propaganda Committee, but no editor; they recommend publication of bi-weekly Official Organ and monthly theoretical magazine.

The CEC voted to pay \$450 to help meet the expenses of the delegates to the Russian Conference, with recommendation to the Russian groups to raise the balance through the sale of organization stamps in their districts.

Motion carried that comrades elected on the Russian National Propaganda Committee by the Conference be notified immediately to disband as a national propaganda committee and not to establish any communication with the Russian affiliations of the party.

That Russian groups be notified not to recognize the Propaganda Committee.

That violation of this decision of the CEC will result in expulsion.

Motion carried that Dubner [Jakira] convey the position of the CEC to the Russian National Propaganda Committee and instruct a delegation from that committee to appear before the CEC.

When a Committee of 2 from the National Propaganda Committee had presented its case to the CEC, after a full discussion, the CEC voted 6 to 2 against the creation of national propaganda committees for language groups, and unanimously for discipline in case this decision is violated.

The Russian Organizer elected by the Russian Conference [Jakira] was confirmed, and instructed to organize an editorial committee to assist him in issuing the Russian Official Organ.

6. REVIEW OF DISTRICTS. A detailed examination of the activities of the districts and the work accomplished by the different organizers was made. The District Organizers in 7 [Chicago, Raymond Baker] and 8 [Kansas City, Jim Cannon] were assigned to other work and new organizers appointed.† Some necessary changes and appointments were also made in Districts 3 [Philadelphia], 4 [Pittsburgh], 5 [Cleveland], and 11 [Portland-Seattle].

The work of the field organizers was also reviewed, including the English, Russian, Finnish, Lithuanian, South Slavic [Croatian], Jewish [Yiddish], and Polish organizers, and plans were outlined for the future.

†- Jim Cannon was moved to Cleveland, where he took over from Elmer Allison as editor of *The Toiler*. It is probably at this same time that the "center" of District 8 was moved from Kansas City to St. Louis.

Motion was adopted that all field organizers, whether working in English or in any other language, shall be under the direct supervision of the Executive Secretary and are to do such work as he may assign to them. When working in a district they shall work in full cooperation with the District Organizer, and make weekly reports of their daily activities in duplicate to the District Organizer and to the Executive Secretary.

It was decided to place an Italian organizer in the field as soon as possible. (Any comrade that knows a competent Italian organizer available for immediate service should notify the Executive Secretary [Wagenknecht] at once through the regular Party channel.)

Motion carried that for the present all District Organizers shall conduct the German and Hungarian organization work themselves.

7. OFFICIAL PARTY ORGANS. Motion carried that the CEC call upon every member to pay in advance and sell at least 5 copies of each issue of the Official Organ in his language. The following will be published:

English — 1st and 15th of each month.

German — once a month.

Russian — 1st and 15th of each month.

South Slavic [Croatian] — once a month.

Polish — twice a month.

Finnish — once a month.

Hungarian — twice a month.

Jewish, Estonian, Lithuanian — occasional.

Lettish [Latvian], Swedish, Ukrainian, Spanish, and Italian translations now being prepared and papers will soon be published.

The Class Struggle: September-October number to be issued. Decided that every member of the editorial board must read and pass every article that is to appear in *The Class Struggle*.

State and Revolution by Lenin to be published at once.

8. LABOR ORGAN. Policy was determined and plans outlined. Decided that names of editors shall

not appear in the paper.

Motion carried that District Organizers must pay for each issue within 2 weeks, or no further copies can be sent.

Arrangements were made for the publication of a special Jewish organ. An editor was elected, as well as a Control Committee to cooperate with him and assure Party control of the venture.

Publication of a pamphlet to be sold openly was decided upon.

9. FINANCES. Motion carried to instruct all organizers to impress upon the membership the importance of the call for a \$50,000 Organization Fund, and to send a letter to each group, asking it to make this a special order of business at next group meeting.

Every member is also to be urged to sell as many defense stamps as possible to non-members, and to take one organization stamp each month for himself.

10. MISCELLANEOUS. Motion carried that International Secretary [Ferguson] send monthly report and articles upon American industrial strife to the Western Bureau of the Third International as asked for.

Voted to appropriate \$125 for subscriptions to labor papers and other necessary periodicals to be sent to the International Bureau.

Motion carried that the Secretary make investigation of amounts due comrades who loaned money to former CLP Russian Federation and that he pay these amounts as he is able.

Simon [=??] and Clemens [=??] were made a committee to study plans for Junior League organization to report at next CEC meeting.

Decided to pay \$250 balance to Chicago Defense when funds are available.

Motion carried that District Organizers be in-

structed to ask Lettish [Latvian] groups whether they desire a National Conference.

Motion carried that Clemens [=???] be made a Committee to investigate agrarian question and report as early as practicable.

For purposes understood by all members, and because of reorganizational needs, your CEC is now composed as follows:

Paul Holt [Wagenknecht], Executive Secretary.

J.S. Haskins [=???], International Secretary and Assistant Editor.

Karl Rose [Ruthenberg?], Editor.

Burton Clemens [=???], Assistant Editor.

Tom Alden [Katterfeld], Technical Director.

L. Simon [=???]; **James McGee** [=???]; **Ed Victor** [=???]; **S.C. Salsoff** [=???]; **M.A. Templien** [=???].†

*Paul Holt [Alfred Wagenknecht],
Executive Secretary.*

†- This seems to be largely a reshuffling of pseudonyms, with only "Holt," "Alden," and "Clemens" carrying forward. This set of names seem to have been short lived as there are very few instances of their use in the documents preserved at the Comintern Archive.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport.

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