
Letter to the Central Executive Committee of the United Communist Party in New York from Max Bedacht [“James A. Marshall”], Representative of the UCP to ECCI in Moscow, May 16, 1921.

Document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 39, l. 46.

Moscow, May 16, 1921.

Dear Friends:—

I hope that by the time you get that letter the amalgamation [between the UCP and CPA] will be completed. The fellow of the competing concern [CPA], a Lett [Latvian] that came a few days ago, had a mission to prevent the inevitable. But Nicol [Nicholas Hourwich] has already informed him of the altered circumstances which demand an alteration of tactics.† I spoke to the new man today and he tells me that he expects the amalgamation to take place not later than the middle of May.‡ That would be fine and by the time this letter would get in your hands I would already know the results of the operation and the state of health of the patient.

By the way I have found out that our competitor [CPA] was a beneficiary of the same will that left us 25 last year, and received like sum in spite of their protest that they did not.§ I have it from Mr. Nicol’s [Hourwich’s] own mouth.



Tonight I have a conference of the members of our firm [UCP] for the discussion of the report to the

†- Simply put: unless unity between the squabbling United Communist Party and old Communist Party of America was achieved by June 1, 1921, the Executive Committee of the Communist International said that no delegates from either organization would be accredited to the forthcoming 3rd World Congress and a new American Communist organization would be constructed from scratch, without regard to either already existing organization. This decision of ECCI, dating to March 1921, was deemed “final.” Thus, unity was “inevitable” and no delegate coming from America was going to be able to change these “altered circumstances.”

‡- The Joint Unity Convention bringing together the UCP and the old CPA to form the unified CPA was held at the Overlook Mountain House hotel, near Woodstock, NY, from May 15-28, 1921 — finishing its work just before the Comintern’s deadline.

§- Reference is to \$25,000 of Comintern funding provided to each organization in 1920-21. The UCP was actually budgeted to receive \$110,000 in the year, but one \$25,000 allocation in gold went missing and it seems that only \$25,000 of the remainder was actually received — \$10,000 of which was passed along to the IWW to aid in the legal defense of its political prisoners. The old CPA always had claimed that it never received any such funding, with Nicholas Hourwich vehemently declaring in a Sept. 20, 1920, speech to the ECCI that “*the Communist Party of America has never received a single cent from Russia, not once.*” [In Russian, emphasis in the original: Comintern Archive, RGASPI f. 515, op. 1, d. 19, ll. 1-18.] Whether Hourwich was lying at the time or whether funding was received in hand after he made his speech remains an open question; the latter seems most likely.

RTUC [Red Trade Union Congress — the 1st Congress of the Profintern]. I have serious objections to the same. First it is in a language and in a spirit which would make it fit as a report of our concern [UCP] to our general stockholders' meeting [the CI World Congress]. But it certainly is not a report written by a mere TU [trade union organization] to the stockholders' meeting of that firm [to a World Congress of unionists]. Secondly the spirit is a controversial one, and, peculiarly enough, not controversial to the Right but toward the Left. But all these matters will be discussed tonight. Should the amalgamation take place then it will be necessary for me and for us to take into our conference, before the great event, also the representatives of the other side.

Yesterday I received the [answers?] you signalled in your last letter. I think the mentioning of certain names in these <illeg.>, as well as the description of certain plans of action in regards to TU [RILU] is not a very wise thing. The names in the matter of the ac-

tion of the AA [American Agency] should have certainly been avoided.†

Nothing has happened here. I have much to do. Yesterday I was asked to give reports bout the state of affairs there for the purpose of publication in the *Praw.* [*Pravda*]. I will write the desired articles. I am still very busy with translations that are supposed to be ready and printed by the time of the general stockholders' meeting [June 22, 1921].

Noting that there also everything is OK,
I remain

Yours as ever,

James A. Marshall [Max Bedacht].

Duffy [Alfred Wagenknecht]:—

Please hand the enclosed to Mrs. James [Mrs. Bedacht]. I still have not received a word from there.

†- The American Agency of the Comintern consisted of 3 members: Karlis Janson [“Charles Scott”], Louis C. Fraina [“Carter”], and Sen Katayama [“Yavki”]. The group was originally envisioned as a body to coordinate the development of unified Communist Parties in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Although originally given authority to mediate and determine the results of the American factional situation, the American Agency proved insufficient for the task. In the end, AA member Janson played a significant role as the representative of the Comintern at the May 1921 Joint Unity Convention held near Woodstock, NY, although he seems to have had no plenipotentiary authority in the meeting.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport.

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