
**Extract from the Justice Department
Memorandum Brief
“The Origin, Growth, and Activities of
the United Communist Party of America”**

[July 13, 1921]

by Warren W. Grimes

Document in DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA M-1085,
reel 928, document 202600-391-276.

I. Pre-Convention Conditions (1919).

Prior to September 1919, the elements which now form the various Communist groups in the United States were chiefly in the foreign language federations of the Socialist Party of America — which, augmented by the many radicals in the English-speaking branches already composed a well organized “Left Wing.” There had been a definite movement to split the ranks of the Socialist Party if the Left Wing should fail to gain control of the national organization. Socialist parties in every country have had their “Left Wings” and the term is well understood today by laymen.

The First Russian All-Colonial Convention in 1918 [New York: Feb. 1-4, 1918] had given birth to the unity of action within the Left Wing in the United States. Here the attempt to force into the Socialist platform the more aggressive principles directed toward Communism was determined. On November 7, 1918, there was formed the “Communist Propaganda League” and on November 9, 1918, the organ *Revolutionary Age* was established — both for the dissemination of propaganda against the conservatives in the Socialist body, the recruiting of opponents to the social reform planks of the party, and to stimulate interest in the adoption of revolutionary tactics.

In February 1919, the Left Wing was definitely organized and on February 14th the foreign language and a few of the English-speaking

branches issued a manifesto. The Left Wing secured the immediate adhesion of the Lettish [Latvian], Russian, Lithuanian, Polish, Ukrainian, South Slavic [Croatian/Slovenian], Hungarian, and Estonian Federations of the party, representing about 25,000 members. The Left Wing delegated S.J. Rutgers to represent it at the convention of the “International” called by the Russian Communist Party in January 1919, following the Berne Congress.

The Manifesto of the Left Wing has been published in full by the Department of Justice in the pamphlet entitled *Red Radicalism*¹ and is referred to particularly in my brief in the Gregory Weinstein case, Weinstein having been active in the organization. Suffice it to say the manifesto plainly advocates and attempts to show the necessity for

- The abolition of the “capitalist state” (its “capture and destruction”).
- The seizure of the instruments of production and distribution.
- The “dictatorship of the proletariat.”
- Revolutionary mass action, etc., etc.

The principles as adopted by the Third International were embodied in the Manifesto of the Left Wing. These were the principles the Socialist Party, through the influence of the Right Wing, consistently had refused to adopt or sanction. The hand of Soviet Russia is seen in the very fingering of the clay from which the figure of American Communism was shaped. The agents of Lenin — co-workers and companions in exile even during the revolution of 1905 — were not only on the ground, but in the councils of the young movement. At first it was the Russian All-Colonial Convention, which in itself gave birth to the Union of Russian Workers, an organization more anarchistic than communistic, and which brought together the Russian colonists of the United States and Canada. When this first convention met, Lenin’s agents looked upon it and found it was good. The Russians would be used as the nucleus; and when the All-Colonial Conventions in effect miscarried, the “Left Wing” [was born].

¹ A. Mitchell Palmer (ed.), *Red Radicalism as Described by Its Own Leaders: Exhibits Collected by A. Mitchell Palmer, Attorney General: Including Various Communist Manifestoes, Constitutions, Plans, and Purposes of the Proletariat [sic.] Revolution, and its Seditious Propaganda*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1920.

The National Convention of the Socialist Party was set for September 1919 at Chicago, and the Left Wing went to the convention fully determined to either capture complete control of the Party or split. The prospects for success in the former aim were considerably reduced by the action of the Party itself in the expulsion of certain foreign language federations, and by a widening split in the Left Wing itself. Following the almost inevitable split in socialist and related movements, two opposing factions had arisen in the Left Wing — one headed by John Reed of New York and the other by [Louis] Fraina, Nicholas Hourwich, [Alexander] Stoklitsky, and others.

* * *

II. The Socialist Convention and the Split.

[page missing from filmed document]

* * *

Our present interest in the Communist Labor Party is that it constituted one of two communist organizations in the United States — both inspired by and operating under the Third or Communist International, both fighting for complete recognition and using every means for gaining ascendancy over the other. The history of the party is the story of internal discord and administrative strife. The composition of the organization was different from the Communist Party, and in fact, the controlling elements appear to have been English-speaking. In the second issue of *Communist Labor Party News* (October 1919) the Russian Federation of the Communist Party was accused of frauds and the national officers of the party openly attacked — particularly Charles Ruthenberg. L.E. Katterfeld took the lead for the Communist Labor Party, being a member of the National Executive Committee, the other members of the committee being Alexander Bilan, Jack Carney, Edward Lindgren, and Max Bedacht. A. Wagenknecht was Executive Secretary.

The Communist Labor Party took the lead in endeavoring to effect a unity of the two parties, but of course on both sides there was a juggling of membership and other figures in the effort to impress Moscow and procure control. This was the great “bone of contention” which was carried down to the very unity conferences and in fact cause the first unity conference to break up without accomplishing anything other than the rubbing of the old sore. The Communist Party, split into language federations which continued to be more or less autonomous, could not, of course, develop the discipline which Moscow expected. In addition it was easier to “pad” figures and there

developed a big-headedness which did not stop even at the attempted supervision of the affairs of the Soviet Bureau in the United States. The Communist Labor Party, on the other hand, representing the elements which would appeal more strongly to the native Americans as well as the aliens — and making no distinction between the two classes — promised the better disciplinary organization and incidentally had the favor of Ludwig Martens, the Soviet Envoy.

The contention of the two organizations was carried direct to Moscow by Fraina for one party and Reed for the other. Moscow ordered an immediate “unity conference” with a view to consolidation of both parties and sent a representative to America to supervise the proceedings [Samuel Agursky].

There already had been established a Pan American Sub-Bureau of the Third International with headquarters in Mexico City, and this Bureau played an important part in the affairs. Both parties had drawn heavily from the membership of the Socialist Party.

III. Preparations for the First Convention of the United Communist Party of America.

On January 3, 1920, a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America was held in the city of Chicago and a favorable decision on the question of affiliation was adopted. E. Lindgren and Wagenknecht were elected as members of a committee with instructions to immediately get in touch with officials of the Communist Party of America for the purpose of working out an agreement. On January 13, 1920, this committee had a conference with Isaac Ferguson, of the Communist Party of America, and were informed by him that he would take the initiative and bring about a conference for affiliation. On January 17th, 1920, an unofficial conference was held in Chicago, the Communist Party of America being represented by Shoenbron of the Lettish Federation of the Communist Party of America, and Carl [*sic*] Ruthenberg, Secretary of the Communist Party of America. The Communist Labor Party was represented by L. Katterfeld, A. Wagenknecht, and E. Lindgren. At this meeting Ruthenberg emphasized that unity between the two organizations can be brought about provided that both parties accept the

Program, Manifesto, and Constitution of the Communist Party of America as their basis of unity.

The representatives of the Communist Labor Party consented to this proposal, amending the same so that the future organization plan of the United Communist Party should be worked out so as to suit the now existing conditions.

On January 22, 1920, the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America held a meeting and notified the Executive Committee of the Communist Labor Party that a committee of authority to act upon the question of affiliation had been duly elected. On January 24, 1920, a meeting of both committees was held, the three members representing the Communist Party of America being unknown to us, and on Ballam, L. Katterfeld, and Lindgren representing the Communist Labor Party. Isaac Ferguson, Ruthenberg, and Wagenknecht were at this meeting in an advisory capacity. The following resolution was adopted:

We recognize that between the Communist Labor Party and the Communist Party of America no difference exists in principles and agree to call a combined convention on the basis of the Program, Manifesto, and Constitution of the Communist Party of America, and elect a committee to arrange such convention. We recognize that the constitution of both organizations, under existing conditions, cannot be adopted when the new organization forms. We stand for an immediate unity of work, as much as possible prior to the convention. For that purpose both Executive Committees and both offices must be united, propaganda and organization work and defense must be carried on together, but the foreign federations of both organizations shall continue to exist on the old basis until the next convention.

On February 14th, 1920, the newly formed Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America accepted the proposition and the first meeting of the Committee on Unity was held on March 1st. This committee was in charge of all preparatory work and was instrumental in bringing about the *first convention of the United Communist Party*.

* * *

IV. The First Convention of the

United Communist Party of America.

The first convention of the United Communist Party of America was held in Jefferson Woods (Chicago), May 27th to June 3, 1920.²Fifty-seven delegates were present, 32 from the Communist Party and 25 from the Communist Labor Party. The membership represented was fixed as 6,725 in good standing. From the start the plans were underground and not only was the place of meeting secret but “party names” were adopted and used by both officers and members.

Then Central Executive Committee as elected consisted of 10 members. The United States was divided into 11 districts, as follows:

District No. 1.— New England (headquarters Boston).

District No. 2.— New York state, Northern New Jersey (to Trenton), Panama, Puerto Rico (headquarters New York).

District No. 3.— Eastern Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and District of Columbia (headquarters Philadelphia).

District No. 4.— Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, New York state (west of Syracuse) (headquarters Pittsburgh).

District No. 5.— Ohio, Kentucky, and the Southern States (headquarters Cleveland).

District No. 6.— Michigan and Indiana (except Lake County) (headquarters Detroit).

District No. 7.— Northern Illinois, Lake County Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota (headquarters Chicago).

District No. 8.— Missouri, Kansas, Southern Illinois, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana (headquarters first Kansas City, later St. Louis).

District No. 9.— Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Southern Idaho (headquarters Denver).

District No. 10.— California, Nevada, and Hawaii (headquarters San Francisco).

District No. 11.— Oregon, Washington, Northern Idaho, and Alaska (headquarters Portland).

² This is erroneous. The convention establishing the UCP was held at Bridgman, Michigan, May 26-31, 1920.

Funds held by the Communist Labor Party were turned over to the new party — including \$25,000 received by them from the Third International (Loula, 6/21/20).

Isaac Ferguson was first reported as the active head of the new party³ and high officers included: Omelianovich (Melichansky?), Kolchinsky, [Edgar] Owens, Sam Hankin, Jack Carney, [Charles] Krumbein, Morris Stollar, John Voronin, W. Shavlich, Miran Bliznuk, Doris Sklar, Morris Korolko.

The following are the “party” or code names of the officers: Secretary, “Meyer” [Wagenknecht]; Treasurer “Flynn” [Lindgren]; Party Editor “Damon” [Ruthenberg]; Associate Editors: “Brown” [Max Bedacht], “Caxton” [Ferguson], and “Dawson” [Jim Cannon]; Educational directors: “Damon” [Ruthenberg], “Brown” [Bedacht], “Caxton” [Ferguson], and “Dawson” [Cannon].

The Central Executive Committee:

Damon [Ruthenberg]
Scott [=???, ex-CPA, not Janson]
Reinhart (CP) [=???)
Delion (CP) [Louis Hendin]
Caxton [Ferguson]
Brown [Bedacht]
Dawson [Cannon]
Klein [Katterfeld]
Flynn [Lindgren]
Meyer [Wagenknecht]

Alternates:

Zemlin (CP) [S.M. Krunislav]
Dubner (CLP) [Abram Jakira]
Stone (CP) [=???)
Jones (CLP) [Edgar Owens]
Korker (CP) [=???)
Hill (CP) [=???)
Ford (CP) [=???)
Malcom (CLP) [=???)
Kasbeck (CP) [Alex Georgian]

³ Executive Secretary of the UCP was Alfred Wagenknecht, not Isaac Ferguson.

Logan (CLP) [Walter Brustor]

Other members and delegates:

[A.] Raphailoff (CLP) [actual name]

Speck (CP) [=???

Barry (CLP) [=???

Fisher (CP) [Leonid Belsky]

Raphailoff was reported as “fraternal delegate from Russia.” (Pannell, 7/30/20).

Executive Committee:

Paul Holt [Wagenknecht], Executive Secretary.

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

Karl Rose [Ruthenberg], Editor.

Tom Alden [Katterfeld], Technical Director.

L. Simon [Max Bedacht?]

Joseph McGee [Lindgren]

Ed Victor [Louis Hendin]

S.C. Salsoff [=???

M.A. Temple [=???

Also the following:

Isaac E. Ferguson, whose aliases are G.E. Haskins and “Caxton.”

Charles E. Ruthenberg, alias *Paul Holt*.⁴

James P. Cannon, aliases Burton Clemens,⁵ and “Dawson.”

Max Bedacht

Alexander Bilan, alias “Dubner.”⁶

(Solanka, 12/6/20)

⁴ “Paul Holt” was almost certainly the pseudonym of Wagenknecht, with the remote possibility of being Katterfeld; it was certainly not Ruthenberg.

⁵ The identification of “Burton Clemens” as Cannon is dubious.

⁶ “Dubner” was the pseudonym of Abram Jakira, not Bilan.

The official organ of the United Communist Party is *The Communist* and Vol. 1, No. 1, dated June 12, 1920, contains an account of the convention, under the heading "At Last!" The Constitution and Program of the new party appear in the same issue...

* * *

V. The Constitution of the United Communist Party of America.

* * *

VI. The Program of the United Communist Party of America.

* * *

VII. The Press of the United Communist Party of America.

The Communist, official organ of the party, is published in 9 editions: English, Russian, Hungarian, Yiddish, Polish, Lithuanian, Finnish, Croatian, and Ukrainian.

This organ is the recognized "illegal" paper of the party and no attempt is made to openly use the mails or otherwise distribute it in the usual manner. The "legal" organ of the party is *The Toiler*, published in Cleveland and New York. The latter paper, of course, makes no mention of the party in a way to connect it directly with the paper. However, *The Toiler* not only is [an] official organ but the offices are used as headquarters for reports of District Organizers.

The Communist is distributed either by messenger or in packages through the Sub-District Organizers. At times copies are mailed in small quantities from suburban or outlying town post offices.

In its preparation aliases are used and localities and meeting places, as well as addresses, camouflaged, as are also the names of some of the locals — as, for instance, "The Workers' Defense of New England," which is the party organization for that locality.

A complete file of the official organ is maintained in the General Intelligence Library, and several of the references herein contained are taken from its columns.

In addition to the many leaflets, circulars, and posters, which are covered in detail under title XII, the party either has assisted in the distribution of, or approved, the following publications:

Arnu, R.: "The Dead of the Commune" (Russian)
Arsky, R.: "Paths of the Russian Revolution" (Russian)
Bosny, D.: "Promised Land" (Russian)
"Break the Blockade of Russia" (English)
Bukharin, N.: "The Church and the School" (Italian)
Bukharin, N.: "Organize!" (Russian)
Bukharin, N.: "Program of the Communists" (6 parts) (Russian)
Bukharin, N.: "Program of the Communists" (6 parts) (Ukrainian)
"The Capitalists Challenge You, Workingman" (English)
"Communist Song Book" (English)
"Constitution of Soviet Russia" (Russian and Lithuanian)
"Declaration of Laws and Obligations of Toiling Humanity (Russian)
"Decrees of the Soviets" (Italian)
"Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (Italian)
"Down with the Blockade" (Russian)
"Education and Art in Soviet Russia." (English)
Engels: "Principles of Communism" (Russian)
Engels and Marx: "Principles of Communism and Communist Manifesto" (Russian and Italian)
Engels: "Origin of the Family" (Ukrainian)
Fraina: "Social Revolution in Germany" (English)
Fraina: "Revolutionary Socialism" (English)
Fraina: "Bolshevism Conquers" (English)
"Freedom and Revolutionary Songs" ([Yiddish])
"Free Song" (Russian)
"Fundamental Law of Land Socialization" (Russian)
"German Spartacists" (English)
"Hail to the Soviets!" (English)
Horyig, J.: "The Paris Commune" (Russian)
Ilin, VI.: "Songs of the Ploughman" (Russian)
Kamenev, L.: "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (English)
Kamenev, L.: "Imperialism and the Balkan Republic" (Russian)
Karelin, A.: "The Question of Communism" (Russian)
Kollontay, A.I.: "The Working-Class Mothers" (Russian)
"Labor Calendar, 1919" (Ukrainian)
"Land Distribution" (Russian)
Lapot, G.: "The Soviets" (Russian)
Larvrov, P.L.: "Propaganda Through Example" (Croatian)
"Law of Land Socialization" (Russian)
Lenin: "State and Revolution" (Russian)
Lenin (and Trotsky): "Proletarian Revolution in Russia" (English)

Lenin (and Bukharin): "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (English)
 Lenin: "Proletarian Revolution" (English)
 Lenin: "Foreign Policy of the Soviets" (Italian)
 Lenin: "Letter to American Workers" (Lithuanian and English)
 Lenin: "Russia" (English)
 Lenin: "Soviets at Work" (English)
 Lenin: "Biography" (Russian)
 Lenin: "Thesis" (English and Russian)
 Lenin: "New Letter to Workers of Europe and America" (English)
 Lenin: "Lessons of the Revolution" (English, Russian, and Lithuanian)
 Lenin: "Regular Problems of the Soviet Government" (Russian)
 Lenin: "Problems of the Proletariat" (Russian)
 Lenin: "Political Parties in Russia" (English, Russian, and Yiddish)
 Liebknecht, K.: "Militarism" (English and Lithuanian)
 Liebknecht, K.: "Crisis in German Social Democracy" (German and English)
 Lire: (Songs) (Russian)
 Lissagarey: "History of Paris Commune" (Polish)
 Lissin, A.: "Military Intervention in Russia" (Russian)
 "Long Live Soviet Russia" (Polish)
 Lozovsky, A.: "International Council of Trade Unions" (English)
 Lukin, N.: "Revolution and the Church" (Russian)
 Melato, C.: "Luisa Michel" (Italian)
 "Manifesto of the Communist International" (Russian, German, English, Polish, Croatian, Ukrainian)
 Marx: "Wage Labor and Capital" (English)
 Marx and Engels: "Communist Manifesto" (English, Croatian, German, Yiddish, Ukrainian, Polish, Russian)
 Molinari, A.: "The Banner of Karl Marx" (Italian)
 "New Songs of Revolutionary Russia" (Russian)
 "Note of Russia to President Wilson" (Russian and English)
 Nuorteva, S.: "The Soviet Republic" (English)
 Nuorteva, S.: "Open Letter to American Liberals" (English)
 "Our Weapons" (Serbian)
 Praviobjub: "Workers' Revolution" (Croatian)
 Praviobjub: "Solidarity and the Struggle for Existence" (Croatian)
 Praviobjub: "Priests, Answer!" (Croatian)
 Price, M.P.: "The Old Order in Europe and the New Order in Russia" (Polish, English, and German)
 Price, M.P.: "The Soviet, The Terror, and Intervention" (English)
 "Principles of Russian Labor Organization" (Russian)
 "Proclamation of Petrograd Soviet" (Yiddish and Russian)
 "Program and the Celebration of the 'Shilka'" (Russian)
 Radek and Ransome: "Russia" (English)
 Radek: "Socialism" (Lettish [Latvian])

Radek: "Development of Socialism from Science to Action" (English)
 Rakovsky: "The International and the War" (Russian)
 Ransome, A.: "On Behalf of Russia" (English)
 Reed, J.: "What is Soviet?" (Italian)
 Reed, J.: "Structure of the Soviet State" (English)
 Reed, J.: "Truth about Russia" (Russian)
 Rhys-Williams, A.: "Russian Soviets — 76 Questions" (English)
 Rhys-Williams, A.: "Soviet Russia" (English)
 Rhys-Williams, A.: "The Bolsheviks and the Soviets"
 (Yiddish)
 Rogov, H.: "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (Yiddish)
 "Russian Soviet Constitution."
 Steklov, J.: "Who are the Communists?" (Russian)
 "To All Russian Workmen in America" (Russian)
 Trotsky (Bronstein): "Bolshevism" (English and Italian)
 Trotsky: "October to Brest-Litovsk" (English)
 Trotsky: "The War and the International" (German)
 Trotsky: "History of the October Revolution" (Russian)
 Zetkin, K.: "The Woman" (Lithuanian)
 Zinoviev (Apfelbaum): "Plekhanov" (Russian)
 Zinoviev: "Lenin: His Life and Work" (Russian and English)
 Zinoviev: "International Socialism" (English)
 Zinoviev: "The Communist Party" (English)

According to "Flynn" (Edward John Lindgren) the Russian Soviet government appropriated \$120,000 yearly in support of the United Communist Party of the United States, the money being sent in large part to *The Toiler* (Cleveland, Ohio), which attends to the printed propaganda for the organization. He says also that the membership does not have to be relied upon for the financing of the party. (Exhibits with Hess, 3/4/21.)

The Communist for some time past has carried a special department for the benefit of "study classes." It is conducted by the "Educational Department" of the party and each week covers an analysis and discourse on the constitution, program, history, etc. of the United Communist Party. These studies clearly show again the indispensability of actual armed force against the government of the United States.

The Communist (Vol. 1, No. 6, p. 3) carries an editorial entitled "Armed Force and the Class Struggle," which refers to an attack made by the *New York Call* upon that clause in the program of the United Communist Party which claims the use of armed force against The State as the final tactic. It quotes that section of the program...and defends the program and tactic in the following (among other) terms:

At an advanced stage of the class struggle the capitalists realize the futility of other means and resort to widespread use of the armed power of the state. The capitalist government then functions openly as a military dictatorship. The working class must then answer force with force. The class struggle, which so long appeared in forms unrecognizable to the millions of the workers actively engaged in it, develops into open combat, civil war. The United Communist Party will systematically and persistently familiarize the working class with the inevitability of armed force in the proletarian revolution. The working class must be prepared for armed insurrection as the final form of mass action by which the workers shall conquer the state power and establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

* * *

... History gives us a conclusive answer. Every struggle for power between contending classes has developed into civil war. In every historical epoch there has been open, armed conflict between exploiter and exploited. From the slave uprisings of Athens and Rome down to the Russian and German revolutions, force has been the final arbiter in the struggle between the classes.

Even those weak-kneed "Communists" (of course they are not Communists in any sense of the word) who opposed joining the United Communist Party because its program contained the clause quoted — and therefore must have been written by agent provocateurs — would have to admit that history gives no example of the struggle for power of the rising class against the ruling class being won without an appeal to force. They would have to admit that before their very eyes in Europe at the present moment force and force alone is the final arbiter in the struggle to emancipate the workers from the exploitation and oppression of the capitalists.

But, they object, in the United States things are different.

Are things different in the United States? In the United States at the present moment the capitalist class and the working class are already engaged in an armed conflict...

* * *

The armed struggle which the program of the United Communist Party speaks of is not a theory. It already exists. The first skirmishes in this struggle are going on under the very noses of those who raise their hands in holy horror at the idea of "armed insurrection."

If the struggle between the capitalists and the workers over wages and working conditions cannot be fought without armed

conflicts resulting, is there any likelihood that political power can be wrested from the capitalists and the whole system of exploitation abolished without armed conflict?

Possibly the objectors to this clause will answer that they admit the truth of the argument, but why put such a statement in the party program? We cannot work openly with such a program? We will get arrested and be put in prison!

A Communist Party must not shrink from declaring the truth to the working class, regardless of the consequences. To refuse to assume the burden of educating the workers to the necessity of preparing for such armed insurrection as the final phase of the struggle for power, is to betray the working class. Unless the workers understand that they cannot win without the use of armed force, they will not prepared for the use of armed force. When the hour for the decisive struggle arrives they will be unready and wavering and prove easy victims for the capitalist military machine. The working class must be educated on this point in order to save the workers from slaughter, in order to make the bloodshed during the revolution as little as possible.

* * *

As for being arrested and put in prison, that is what it means to be a Communist. Weak-kneed persons may be deterred from speaking the truth by that threat. Their place is not in the United Communist Party but in the ranks of the Yellow Socialists.

* * *

Many additional citations can be given from the official organs as well as from what Mr. [Louis] Post was pleased to call the “organic law” of the party, especially from those expositions of the same appearing in *The Communist*, proving conclusively that armed force against the state, particularly the government of the United States, is not only advocated by the Communist Party, but held to be indispensable.

* * *

VIII. Financial.

The finances of the party appear to have been in better shape than those of the Communist Party. In fact the Communist Labor Party was managed on a more businesslike basis than the Communist Party. This very probably is due chiefly to the Communist Labor and

United Communist Parties being more centrally organized and the Communist Party — with its various federations and the incidental confusion of funds and duplication of administrative detail — being necessarily a more difficult business to handle. Again, the first two were not involved in the heavy burden of official organs (foreign language) for its constituent bodies.

It has been shown that the United Communist Party inherited the funds of the Communist Labor Party and in addition that the Third International on one occasion alone made an appropriation of \$25,000 and on another \$110,000. (See Lindgren documents; refer also to “Press.”)

Additional sources of income include the usual party dues, voluntary contributions, sale of newspapers and literature, “picnics,” dances, amateur theatricals, and other “entertainments,” at which admissions are charged or a collection made. There are organization, relief, dues, and other stamps of different shades and shapes as well as amounts. The present party dues are 60¢ per month. The organization stamps are usually \$1.00. Special stamps to cover convention or other special funds range from 10¢ to \$1.00. Contributions for “general defense” vary the same as in all other voluntary contribution or donation schemes — from a few pennies to several hundred dollars. Donations come in from individuals and from party and independent organizations as well as from collections made at meetings where speakers are supplied. Reference to that portion of this paper entitled “The Press” will result in some idea of the amount of business involved in the subscriptions and sales.

Mimeographed copies of the financial statement of the party are sent into each district to be read to the various groups and, of course, find their way to the Department of Justice. The financial statement for November 1920, for instance, shows the receipts for the month of \$28,429.78. The business of one of the District Organizers for September 1 [1920] to March 15, 1921 — only one official independent of the groups or the National Office — amounted in receipts to \$12,468.55. (Lenon, 4/5/21.)

Organizers are now paid \$45 (formerly \$50) if married men, and \$35 (formerly \$40) for single men.

Regarding financial assistance from the Third International, it has been shown that when “Morgan” [Alexander Bilan] and “Flynn” [Edward Lindgren] attended the Second Congress in August 1920 at Moscow, a report was made and it was decided to place all financial

support matters for other nations into the hands of a committee composed of Kobetsky, Beika, Bukharin, Rudiansky, and Rosmer, which called upon the various delegates for a written statement as to needs. The statement of the United Communist Party showed the following amounts needed:

For general organization work	\$25,000
For "Defense"	25,000
For publishing specific literature	25,000
For establishing a printing plant	25,000
For a daily paper	100,000
For IWW defense	10,000

Total asked	\$210,000

The committee decided to grant all of these items except the one for establishing a printing plant, but cut the figure for the "daily" from \$100,000 to \$25,000. This made the total \$110,000. An immediate advance of \$25,000 was asked. This was the \$25,000 which was handed to the Norwegian delegate for transmission to America, instead of to "Flynn" [Lindgren] and "Morgan" [Bilan], and which amount was confiscated by the Norwegian authorities. "Flynn" [Lindgren] wrote a detailed report showing the American delegates could not be charged with this amount, and the report is in the possession of the Department of Justice. (Tucker, 5/28/21.)

"Comrade Esther," whose real name is Esther WENKUSERI [?] (Weissman?), Assistant Defense Director for Philadelphia, is paid \$25.00 per week. The party there, through the "defense" organization, pays the wife of every comrade arrested \$10 a week and \$4 a week for each child. (McDevitt, 8/18/21.)

IX. Activity of the United Communist Party in Specific Instances.

The activity of the party in particular instance is shown in the propaganda leaflets which are referred to under title XII and which appear in full in the supplement. The dissemination of this propaganda has been marked during such disturbances as the railroad and

similar strikes. Efforts to influence persons to boycott the election in November 1920, and to strike instead of voting, also will be noted.

Of particular interest are the pleas and activities of the party on the unemployment question. Of course unemployment is an important factor in recruiting, intensive propaganda is being and has been indulged in among the many thousands of unemployed throughout the country — particularly among the aliens. The party has adopted a definite “unemployment program” which calls attention to the splendid opportunity for communistic activity and urges communists to “seize hold of those as yet unorganized masses, organize them and give them revolutionary expression.” The membership is urged to elect a temporary committee under the name “Ex-Service and Unemployed League” or some similar *legal* name, arrange mass meetings of the unemployed in all industrial centers. Every effort is to be made to “consolidate all unemployed for concerted action.” The program further states “since the purpose of the organization is *action* and the development of *action*, demonstrations of every description must be arranged to create a sense of solidarity and power in the minds of the masses.” The following demands are to be made:

a. *Maintenance of the unemployed by the government at trade union rates of wages.*

b. *Remission of all rents.*

c. *Provisioning by the municipalities.*

[d. omitted in document.]

e. *Immediate conscription of all profits.*

f. *Recognition of Soviet Russian and resumption of trade relations at once.* (This is the telltale of the whole party plan. It is the “cat out of the bag.”)

g. Stopping all expenditures for armament. (This is another “telltale” — for expenditures for armament mean work for the unemployed. To stop them while Soviet Russia, for instance, is making such enormous expenditures for the Red Army and for revolutionary plans here, means but one thing — to minimize preparedness for resistance.)

h. *Reduction of working hours with no loss of pay.* (This, of course, is a direct attempt at the paralysis of industry through bankruptcy. It is sabotage when applied by the IWW, which aims to accomplish the same end through each working doing as little as possible while at work and what he does to do badly.)

i. *Control of production through shop committees*, so that unemployment may end. (Incidentally unemployment did not end in either Soviet Russia or England under such a system and the actio of the syndicalists of Italy recently gives the lie again to the argument. It is the “soviet idea” simply expressed and when applied “kills the goose.”)

j. Strike of the *employed to end unemployment*. (This is too ridiculous to comment upon, and it is believed would not even appeal to the most extreme.)

k. *At a later stage the unemployed must be encouraged to take possession of all food supplies.*

l. *Seize all unoccupied houses and buildings.*

m. *Take possession of all factories, maintaining rigid discipline.* (These last three demands mean nothing more than the usual tactics of the Bolsheviki. They are found many times expressed by Trotsky and others in their definitions of “mass action.”)

A copy of the original document, signed by Paul Holt [Wagenknecht] as Executive Secretary, appears in the supplement to this paper.

The party has issued instructions to certain members to endeavor to procure positions as subordinates in the Americanization movement where, because of their ability to handle foreign languages, they probably will be called upon to work among foreigners and therefore would have opportunities to spread communistic propaganda. (Grimes, 3/23/21.)

Instructions also have been given to endeavor to enter the postal and express services where exceptional opportunities exist for work along two lines — information and recruiting. (Smith, 12/10/20.)

It has been indicated several times that the United Communist Party was spending considerable money in connection with the “outlaw railroad strike.” On Labor Day, 1920, Wagenknecht and Ruthenberg had a conference with the outlaw labor leader D’Arcy and others connected with the movement, at Philadelphia, and arranged to back D’Arcy financially and to supply special organizers for the Outlaw Yardman’s Associations. D’Arcy did not accept the propositions until later, when he was approached by Fred Biedenkapp. (McDevitt, 11/23/20.)

Plans were made to send the “Program” of the party to all persons applying for positions through the “Want Ad” columns of newspa-

pers. The subject of enlistment in the National Guards also has been considered. (McDevitt, week 7/31/20.)

On April 29, 1921, at New York City, the local authorities took into custody Edward J. Lindgren, referred to several times already as one of the most active officers in both the Communist Labor and the United Communist Parties — in the latter party known as “Flynn.” They also took possession of several truck loads of papers from him, at 170 Bleeker Street, where were found two of his associates, [Israel] Amter and [Abram] Jakira. Some of the most important documents examined by the government were included in the material taken. They include the verification of those previous allegations of the government that the United Communist Party is financed from Moscow. They also include exceptionally fine reports prepared by Lindgren and others for him on instructions from Moscow and evidently the originals were forwarded there. There are two such reports which are of sufficient importance to include in passing reference, viz: “The American Agrarian Problem” and “The Trade Union Movement.”

“The American Agrarian Problem” is excellent, both in the scope of the study and the form in which the material is arranged, the maps and tables of statistics being exceptionally good. A photostatic copy of this report appears in the supplement, but it should be kept in mind that the original maps appear in many colors, which will not photostat. The most interesting portion of this report refers in detail to the race question — the Negro farmers and farm laborers and to the small farmers. The entire question is “studied from the point of view of the proletarian revolution.” Particularly interesting portions are underscored. Special reference is made to the agricultural press and its possible use in the dissemination of propaganda. Farmers’ organizations are given particular treatment, it being stated that there are 2,000 farmers’ organizations of state scope, 143 interstate farmer organizations, and 410 national and regional.

The following excerpt is from that portion of the report entitled “The Negro Farmer”:

The Negro farmer, working under this system, is the man which the United States census has classified as a tenant; in reality there is only one difference between his old slavery and his present condition — his present condition is worse, for his boss in bad years can profitably set him adrift, as many did when the bollweevil began to sweep through the cotton districts.

The most interesting portion of the report from our point is “An Outline of Policy” and the outline of the program. These contain too many details for quotation here and reference should be had to the document as it appears in a supplement.

* * *

A report on the Trade Union Movement of the United States was prepared for and under the instructions of the American Council of the International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions, which was the agency of the Communist International, established in the United States for the purpose of bringing into the Red Labor Union International at Moscow all of the syndicalist and radical trade unions in America. This report was prepared with the assistance of Joseph Dickson [Earl Browder] and Wanda Haynes [=???]. It contains excellent maps and charts, also refers to William Z. Foster’s book. It recommends a change of policy toward the American Federation of Labor and in place of the present intention to smash the trade unions, to adopt a more conciliatory attitude and attempt to win it over. A significant statement is:

In spite of other influences, the objective conditions for a strong labor movement with a revolutionary leadership do exist, and the reasons for its failure to appear must be sought in the tactics and attitude of the revolutionary minority. No revolutionary movement in a capitalistic country can hope to grow in power, politically or industrially, unless it has sound program in relation to the labor unions, and can obtain the actual leadership of the masses in their unions. Here lies the failure so far of the movement in the United States — not in underestimating the importance of the unions so much as in adopting the fundamentally wrong tactic.

It is my urgent recommendation that both of these reports (the American Agrarian report and the Trade Union report) be studied carefully, particularly those portions which refer to the proposed policies to be used by the Communists and the application of these policies.

Delegates “Morgan” [Bilan] and “Flynn” [Lindgren] made a report to the Executive Committee of the Communist International on the loss of the \$25,000 given them for the immediate needs of the

party on their departure for America after attending the 2nd Congress. This money had been given to Matson of Norway for transfer to the United States and due to carelessness it was confiscated by the Norwegian authorities. (File 202600-2126-1.)

A convention [of the National Defense Committee] was held in a room back of a saloon at 228 Oak Street, Chicago, January 9-10, 1921, with 63 delegates from the United States and 2 from Canada. It lasted 13 hours and none were permitted to leave. Progress was reported on recruiting and the Finnish Socialist Federation was announced to have affiliated, while the South Slavic [Federation] was expected before June [1921]. Details for propaganda work were perfected and included boring into civic and church clubs as well as trade unions. Edgar Owens, Harry Keas, Charles Branson, and one Lee English were among those present. Resolutions included one charging the Soviet Russia Medical Relief Committee with being controlled by dishonest reactionaries and pledging the United Communist Party to opposition to the committee. Another connection showing the "Defense Committees" as agencies of the party appeared at this convention — it being decided that thereafter the local divisions of such committee should be supervised by the District and Sub-District Committees of the party, and shall make financial and other reports to them. (Ex. 6 and 7; Hess, 3/4/21.)

As indication of the precautions taken by the party and also as an additional admission of its illegal or underground character, the Executive Secretary [Wagenknecht], during January 1921, sent to District Organizers the following rules:

The DOs are [committing] serious mistakes in their correspondence with the NO (National Office). Hereafter, you will follow these rules:

1. Do not write the NO address upon the envelope in your own handwriting.
2. Do not write the letter in your own handwriting or sign the letter in your own handwriting.
3. Do not place your own safe address as the return address upon the envelope. If the envelope contains important contents which you decide to safeguard with a return address, then secure some other return address for this purpose. You must not use your safe address as your return address in case the NO address is *discovered by the authorities*, your address would also become known.

4. Do not use an envelope which you have had to open and reseal. If, after sealing an envelope, you find that you have forgotten to enclose something and are compelled to open it, then use a new envelope in mailing. We have enough trouble keeping our eyes upon the envelopes the authorities open and reseal without wanting to look after those the DOs open and reseal.

5. Be careful and seal all your mail properly.

6. Never do this — never write legal names of persons belonging to the party in your correspondence. Several DOs have done this and mail recently opened by the authorities connected these persons with the party. Also never connect the defense or any other legal organization with the party in your correspondence. (Original with Tucker, 5/28/21.)

* * *

The party has two codes used in correspondence. Both codes are of the numerical type and copies are on file. (Reddy 5/18/21.)

Party Bulletin No. 2 [c. Sept 1, 1920] states the party is admittedly “illegal” and the regular receipt of official organs and literature of an “illegal” nature are subject to periodical investigation by the authorities, therefore all comrades are advised to keep in mind the fact that the party functions illegally. (Spolansky, 4/26/21.)

In its underground work of course it is necessary to camouflage even the name of the organization and for this purpose several names are used — “Workers Defense,” “Workers Relief,” “New England Defense Society,” “Council of Action,” etc., etc. We find verification of the official status of these organizations in the United Communist Party in the official statements, the organs and particularly in the financial reports. The camouflage serves a good purpose for the holding of the “picnics,” dances, amateur theatricals, and entertainments.

X. Continued Conflicts with the Communist Party and the Renewed Efforts Toward Unity.

It is not surprising that the old contentions for control of the communistic movement in America should continue. The United Communist Party followed closely the Communist Labor Party in endeavoring to wean away from the Communist Party its membership. In this attempt several tactics were used — representations di-

rect to Moscow, others to [Ludwig] Martens and covert attacks in the party press. Both parties freely indulged in “padding” membership and falsifying records, particularly when reports were made to Moscow or conferences were held to endeavor to effect unity. The Russian Federation of the Communist Party was the particular offender and therefore the object of open attack, and *The Communist* frequently used such arguments to members of the Communist Party to win them over, as:

Did anyone ever see the true figures on the Russian Federation?

How would you like to see a sworn statement of the actual membership in the Russian Federation? (See: *The Communist*.)

For some time past, both parties have been represented at Moscow — and this paper already has shown the direct connection with the Third International, which plainly showed impatience at the increasing contention and lack of party discipline, particularly in the failure of every attempt to effect unity.

Finally, instructions from Moscow took the form of an ultimatum that unless the unity was effected by January 1, 1921, the Communist International would withhold future recognition.

As a last resort, the American Agency of the Communist International was appointed by Moscow — with absolute authority over the unity preparations. This committee consisted of Fraina, “Scott” [Karlis “Charley” Janson], and “Yavki” [Sen Katayama]. Yavki is Katayama, the Japanese Communist who has supervised matters for the International in Mexico. This committee, through the organs of both parties, announced its purpose and outlined the plans for the final attempt to effect unity. It called upon both parties to prepare for the unity conference. Each party was to have representatives on the governing board, which would control the unity convention — but the board would be under the direction of the American Agency representative, who, however, would have no vote, but could break any deadlock even when he had to make a decision of critical import to either or both parties. It was decided finally to place on this “Central Executive Committee” 5 delegates from each party.

In the meantime, however, the Communist Party had made strenuous protests and even preferred charges to Moscow against the “interference” of the American Agency in party affairs, claiming the

Agency should confine itself to the unity proceedings and refrain from participating in purely administrative or tactical matters. However, protests were of no avail and both parties became reconciled (at least outwardly) to the iron discipline of Moscow, and proceeded to the selection of delegates for another unity conference.

The Communist (No. 11) contains the Bulletin of the Third International on Unity, as well as an acknowledgment of the receipt of the unity instructions and the action taken by the party in following the same. (McDevitt, week 1/1/21.)

The Central Executive Committee issued two statements entitled “Special Convention Call” and “Constitutional Changes Proposed by the CEC for Discussion Before the Convention.” Both are on file. (Rooney, 1/18/21.)

Moscow ordered that in the unity convention, representation was to be based upon the dues-paying membership for July, August, September, and October, 1920. (Lenon, 12/17/20.)

XI. The “Last” Unity Convention “Successful” and the United Communist Party Ceases to Exist.

On May 15, 1921, the delegates assembled at Kingston, New York and proceeded by auto to Overlook Mountain House, on the top of Overlook Mountain, Ulster County, New York state, where the conference was held under the direction of “Scott” [Janson], who also used the name “Charles E. Stewart.” “Swift” (who is Dr. Hartman of the staff of *Soviet Russia*) was first chairman. There were 60 delegates in all — 30 from each party.

The results of this convention are reported in No. 1 of the *Official Bulletin of the Communist Party of America (Section of the Communist International)* — the unified organization having taken the new name — and the United Communist Party of America, as such, having ceased to exist, or rather, having merged into the new party. According to this “Bulletin ” (page 2), the new party framed and adopted a new Constitution, which bears the earmarks of the parent body in Moscow. It is printed in full (in English) in the organ, which is made a part of this paper and appears in the supplement.

The United Communist Party appears clearly to have been the more successful in the proceeding, as the Constitution leans more in form to that party. The “illegal” and “underground” features plainly

follow the United Communist Party — and of course the “Conditions for Admission to the Communist International.” * * *

* * *

**[XII. Samples of Propaganda by the
United Communist Party (Excerpts).]**

* * *

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport

1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR · April 2014 · Non-commercial reproduction permitted.