
Answers to Questions. †

[Oct. 13, 1921]

by Steven Ross [“Charles Wallace”/“Stepan”]

A document in the Comintern Archive f. 515, op. 1, d. 39, ll. 251-252.

Questions to International Delegates.

1) Have you received any instructions or advice from the CI or any members of the EC of CI as to the activities to be followed by the CP of A, especially on the question of political activities?

Yes. A copy of the complete set of instructions and advice of the CI (the most correct, printed in German). I handed to the CEC October 5th [1921].

2) Have you been present at any meetings of the EC of CI or of its Small Bureau where the tactics to be followed by the CP of A were discussed, and where the matter of LPP [Legal Political Party] was mentioned or taken up for discussion? If so, what were the opinions expressed on the above questions?

No.

3) Were you present at the conference of the American delegation with Lenin previous to Marshall's [Max Bedacht's] leaving for America? Who else was present? Have you attended any other conference with Lenin, or do you know of any other conference held at which you may not have been present?

Yes. — Baldwin [Oscar Tyverovsky], Ballister [Robert Minor], [Big Bill] Haywood, Andrew [Nicholas Hourwich], Gorny [*Polish-American; ???*], and Marshall [Bedacht]. — No.

4) What sort of conference was it? One of giving instructions or advice to delegates leaving for America, or just an informal conference?

It was an interview, a friendly conversation among comrades; without any formal or informal chairman, without secretary, without minutes taken or resolutions handled.

5) Who called the conference?

I was told that Lenin wishes to see the American delegates before their leaving Moscow.

6) Did Lenin make any statement as to whether he had any instructions from the EC of CI or its Small Bureau to call this conference for the purpose of giving instructions or advice for the CP of A?

He did not.

7) Did Comrade Marshall [Bedacht] at this conference present a written document concerning party activities and the organization of LPP? What opinion did Lenin express on this document, if any?

Lenin took from his desk a copy of Marshall's lengthy report on situation in the USA; and putting it back again jokingly told, referring to some paragraph of it, that Marshall [Bedacht] is more radical than him (Lenin).

†- This is the response sheet of Steven Ross (a Scandinavian-American from the old CPA, possibly a pseudonym, other party names “Stepan” and “Charles Wallace”) to a mimeographed questionnaire entitled “Questions to International Delegates” (l. 251). This was apparently circulated in an effort to rectify the testimony of Max Bedacht and Ross over the significance of a Fall 1921 conference of American party leaders with Lenin over the necessity for a Legal Political Party. The questions and responses have been integrated by the editor into a single document to enhance readability.

8) What instructions or advice did Lenin give in general on the question of legal activities and LPP?

In Lenin's opinion the American comrades did not use all possibilities of legal propaganda and agitation. He pointed out, for instance, that we neglected to give attention for propaganda purposes to the Farmer-Labor Party and the Non-Partisan League, especially to the antagonism and conflict between the League and Wall Street; — the utmost necessity of publishing in the USA a really legal workers' daily newspaper in the English language. Also he was positive of the necessity of a legal communist organization; he told us to be very careful organizing it: to set a two or three month probation period for the workers and two to three year probation period for the intelligentsia. Further on he considers as a really bolshevik work the publishing of leaflets for individual shops, unions, strikes — thus providing active work for each and all of our comrades in the nuclei; bringing them in close contact with the masses of the workers; creating their confidence to the CP as to the real leader of the working class in its struggle against capitalism.

9) What did Lenin say, if anything, as to the calling of an emergency convention of the CP of A?

Nothing. The American delegates were unanimous on the question of utilizing all the legal possi-

bilities. From their midst opinion was expressed that a convention in America for the sole purpose of considering the decisions of the Third Congress might not be of *immediate* necessity.

10) Was the matter of legal activities and LPP ever discussed by the American delegation, and, if so, what was the opinion of the delegation?

Once it was on the order of business, as far as I remember, but the discussions were very brief on account of the late hour, and no tangible results were achieved.

11) Is it true that Ballister [Minor] declared at the 3rd Congress of CI, on behalf of the American delegation, that they are in favor of the organization of a LPP in America?

I don't remember. See the stenographic report. Com. Ballister [Minor] was not instructed by the delegation to make such a declaration.

Ch. Wallace [Steven Ross].

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