
Report of the Secretary of the Central Caucus to the National Conference of the Communist Party of America, December 25, 1921.

by John J. Ballam

Document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 60, l. 65.

Comrades:—

In July 1921, when it was becoming apparent that the CEC was going much further in projecting the ALA [American Labor Alliance] than was necessary for the establishing of legal machinery, a conference of representative comrades was called together to consider the situation. To this meeting Comrade Morris [J. Wilenkin] was invited and at this meeting Morris [Wilenkin] definitely repudiated his obligation to his constituency, refusing to confer further with us or be bound by any decisions which might be made. This left the CP members of the CEC in a minority of 4, Riley [Joseph Stilson] then being opposed to the formation of the ALA.

In August 1921, after Marshall [Max Bedacht] returned and proposed the changing of the A [ALA] into an LPP [Legal Political Party], a caucus was organized with representative comrades from the Lettish [Latvian], Lithuanian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish Federations and the 3 CP members of the CEC [Charles Dirba, John Ballam, George Ashkenuzi]. This caucus was informal and acted merely as a deliberative body for the exchange of information and opinion and was not bound by any unity of policy,

being formed before the Language Federation Conferences had all been held. This caucus existed until September 10th [1921] when it was decided that each language federation should organize a central Federation caucus from which should be elected a representative to the Central Caucus, which was to be composed of these elected representatives and the 3 CP members of the CEC.

On September 17th the present Central Caucus was organized and has held 15 regular weekly meetings since. John Moore [Ballam] was elected Secretary and Dobin [Dirba], Treasurer; Henry [Ashkenuzi] in charge of technical work [printing and distribution]. The policy which was decided upon at this meeting, and upon which all the actions of the CC [Central Caucus] were based since, was (1) to work within the CP of A and under its discipline; (2) to compel the calling of an emergency convention of the party; (3) to resist the crushing

policy of the CEC; (4) to organize the opposition for defensive action; (5) to do all in our power to prevent a split in the CPA or expulsion by the Comintern; (6) to take any measures necessary to prevent the liquidation of the CPA.

On the first 2 points our strategy was unsuccessful; we have gained out points 3, 4, and 5; and on



point 6 the National Conference was called for this purpose.

Regular weekly bulletins were sent to each district caucus; and "Statement No. 1," the "Appeal of 3 CEC Members to the Comintern," and the statement of the CEC members on the party situation were published and translated into several languages and distributed. Two appeals were sent to the Comintern, one on the LPP and one on the Workers Council and the new party, which is attached hereto. Our representative in Russia [Oscar Tyverovsky] was kept informed of the party situation here by letters and by cable. With the exception of the letter and information brought here by Comrade Wood [=???] we have received no information or communications from Comrade Baldwin [Tyverovsky].

With the announcement of the joint call for the convention of the Workers Party wherein our CEC definitely united with the Centrist elements on terms of equality to form a new party, the Central Caucus was faced with a situation totally different from that which originally called it into existence. By the time this report will be read to the National Conference [Jan. 7, 1922], the National Convention of the Workers Party will be over, and those elements of the CPA who have affiliated will have been already liquidated within it. The policy of the Central Caucus being to work within the CPA and not to lead a split made it necessary for us to call the present Conference of the representatives of the CPA before whom we now lay down our mandates.

Every delegate is in possession of all the information relating to the present crisis in the affairs of

our party, and your Central Caucus can make no detailed recommendations in the situation except the general and fundamental charge incumbent upon all who have the interests of the communist movement at heart, namely, to maintain the CP of A as at present constituted.

To accomplish this end two courses are open to this conference:

1) To remain organized as an opposition faction with a Central Caucus connecting the district caucuses and attempting to maintain contact with the membership now affiliated with the Workers Party, pending a decision of the whole question by the present Executive Committee of the Comintern; or

2) To reorganize the Communist Party with a Provisional Central Executive Committee, District Executive Committees, etc.; publishing Official Organs and carrying on all the work of the Communist Party, thereby maintaining that the membership now affiliated with the Workers Party have in effect left the CP of A, and claiming before the EC of the CI that we are the only party in this country that can be recognized as the American section of the CI, and carrying our appeal from a possible adverse decision by the EC of the CI before the 4th World Congress of the Comintern, if necessary.

With fraternal greetings,

John Moore [John Ballam],
Secretary of the Central Caucus.

December 25, 1921.

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