
Letter to the Bureau of the Jewish Federation, CPA from Abram Jakira, Secretary of the CPA, November 13, 1922.

Document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI f. 515, op. 1, d. 115, ll. 29-30.

Nov. 13, 1922.

To the Jewish Bureau,

Dear Comrades:—

We have received a letter from Comrade Arkadieff [Shachno Epstein]. As a matter of principle we are answering the points raised in his letter and are sending the answer not to him but to your Bureau.

Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] declares that the Executive of the CI sent him for work in America. That is quite true. But thereupon he draws incorrect and unsupported conclusions. He believes that he is not under the discipline of the American party. That is sheerest nonsense. No one can work in the CP of A without being 100 percent under the discipline of the CEC. That a member of the CP of Russia was sent by way of the CI to work in the CP of A does not in the least denote that he is a representative of the CI, or has anything to do with the CI.

His supposed mandate from the CI is no mandate. The CI gave him *no* special mission in America, but only sent him on party work, and especially Jewish work.†

It is time to put an end to the foolish legend that having been given a credential, Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] had any further mission to perform for the CI.

Please inform Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] that he either must work under the discipline of the Party or there will be no room for him in the American Party.

It is a ridiculous reproach when he complains that the CEC does not invite him to its sessions. Only CEC members elected at the convention take part in the meetings of the CEC, and other comrades are invited only when their expert knowledge is required on any special question. Up to the present, we have confronted no situation in which we felt compelled to summon Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] to a meeting.

Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] states in his letter: "I learned from an official party document that a special representative of the Comintern is in charge of the Jewish department of the CPA." This is absolutely untrue. There is no official party document stating that the Comintern had sent a special representative to the Jewish section of the American Party. It would have been absurd. The CI can send representatives to the CPA, but not to the Jewish section. In relation to the Jewish section, the CEC of the Party represents the full authority of the Comintern.

The comrade representing the CEC in the Jewish Bureau never contended that he is the representative of the CI but has only acted as the representative of the CEC. He never maintained that he is at all a representative of the CI, although, despite the false representations of Com. Arkadieff [Epstein], according to the mandate that he brought from the CI to the CEC, he was sent to America not only for Party work, but also as immediate political reporter for the Executive of the CI "which wishes to work in close cooperation with the CEC of the American Party."

It is not only ridiculous but also a remarkable

†- This is incorrect. Shachno Epstein was originally agreed upon in Moscow by Max Bedacht of the UCP and Nicholas Hourwich of the old CPA to serve as non-factional chairman at the forthcoming May 1921 Joint Unity Convention held at the Overlook Mountain House hotel near Woodstock, NY. Epstein was dispatched to America from Soviet Russia for that purpose, under the pseudonym "Arthur Staley." Epstein did not arrive in America in time to fulfill this mission, however, the task instead being performed by Dr. Jacob Hartman. Jakira's point is well taken insofar as Epstein was not sent by the Comintern with plenipotentiary powers.

case of suspicions when Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] maintains that the CEC prevented him from speaking with the representative of the CI.† We were not tutors of the representative of the CI and he could speak with whom he pleased. It is possible that Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] writes truthfully in this matter, viz.: “he appeared not to take notice of all my attempts to see him as if I were not in existence for the Comintern at all.”

Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] writes: “I ask the CEC to seriously consider my position and my place in the Party.... I was sent to the CEC by the Comintern and this entitles me to the same consideration as the other comrades who were sent by the Comintern.” The position and place of Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] is quite clear in the Party: he is a member of the Party and should perform his party work conscientiously. He was not sent to the CEC of the Party but for party work. He has no right to speak in the name of the Comintern and has no right to consider himself as other than a rank and file member of the Party.

We beg you to inform Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] that he is no longer to speak about a mandate from the Comintern, which does not exist.

Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] writes: “The Party has not fulfilled its obligations towards me.” That is a very dangerous conception. The party has no obligation either to Com. Arkadieff [Epstein] or any other comrade. On the contrary, the comrades have their obligations to the Party. The Party is no relief organization. It is the duty of every comrade to perform his comradely duty toward the Party.

Fraternally,

[A. Jakira.]

†- Probably a reference to Henryk Walecki (Genryk Valetskii), who brokered unity at the 1922 Bridgman Convention.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport.
Second Edition, March 2007 — identifies “Arkadieff” as Epstein, rewrites footnotes.
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