
Communist Party of America Convention

Day 3 — Sept. 3, 1919.

by Jacob Spolansky

Document in DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA M-1085, reel 931, file 313846.

Report Made by: J. Spolansky
Place Where Made: Chicago, Ill.
Date When Made: Sept. 3, 1919.
Period for Which Made: Sept. 4, 1919.

*Title of Case and Offense Charged
or Nature of Matter Under Investigation:*

**In re: Communist Party of America
Convention, Communist Matter.**

*Statement of Operations, Evidence Collected, Names and
Addresses of Persons Interviewed, Places Visited, Etc.:*

At Chicago.

Employee this date attended the 3rd session of the Communist Party of America convention, at 1219 Blue Island Ave.

C. RUTHENBERG of Cleveland reported recommendations of the Press and Propaganda Committee, which in substance are as follows:

1. That a daily newspaper is to be established, owned and controlled by the party and which shall be known as The Daily Communist.

2. That a monthly magazine should be published, the object of which is to discuss theoretically and philosophically the principles of Communism, and which shall be known as The Communist Review.

3. Books, pamphlets, and various literature touching on the Communist subject should be published in large quantities and distributed free.

4. That all local branches be urged to establish local weeklies, semi-monthlies, or monthlies, in which

general topics on Communism and Internationalism should be discussed.

5. That a fund of \$100,000 should be raised for the purpose of publishing leaflets and pamphlets to be distributed free of charge.

The convention accepted the recommendations of the Press and Propaganda Committee with the exception of the \$100,000 fund, which was changed by a motion submitted by NICHOLAS HOURWICH of New York to an unlimited amount, Hourwich stating that he is in a position to say that this unlimited amount will be easily available.

In reference to *The Communist Review*, the convention decided to change the name to *The Communist International*. Motion was made by Hourwich that no member of the Communist Party shall contribute any articles to any other periodicals, regardless of their political affiliations. The motion was accepted unanimously.

Next was the report of the Constitution and Organization Committee, which made the following recommendations:

[1.] That this organization shall be known as the Communist Party of America.

[2.] That its purpose is to overthrow the present capitalistic system.

[3.] That every conscientious worker who accepts these principles and submits to the party discipline is eligible for member.

A big discussion was raised as to the class who do not provide their living by working in the shop — millionaires such as William Bross Lloyd and Rose

Pastor Stokes. That such people had no place in the rank and file of the Communist Party. After a lengthy discussion which lasted for 2 hours, Nicholas Hourwich of New York made a motion that no man who earns a living through rent, interest, or exploiting his brother worker can be admitted into the ranks of the Communist Party. That no Federal, County, City, or Civil Service employee can be admitted into the ranks of the Communist Party.

In arguing this motion Hourwich stated that when the time will come and the workers will come out on the streets on the barricades, these various millionaires, preachers, and all the rest of the petty bourgeoisie will not come out with us and will betray the working class at the opportune moment.

DENNIS BATT in a speech was trying to convince the delegates that this particular motion should not be even mentioned in the Constitution, showing that such men as KARL MARX, ENGELS, and KARL LIEBKNECHT were making their living out of exploiting their brother workers and still they were theorists of this idea on which we are basing the present movement.

DR. [S.A.] KOPNAGEL defended the motion, showing that in Russia when the Bolsheviks made revolution the petty bourgeoisie who called themselves Socialists up to that time did not join their comrades when the revolution came. He further stated that the time of Karl Marx and Engels was way back. The people were trying to improve conditions at that time, supporting a bourgeois revolution against the feudalists; but now the time is different — revolution is sweeping Europe and the revolution here is about to come. “We must clear our ranks; we must make this Communist movement a purely proletarian movement and therefore I urge you delegates who are the real representatives of the rank and file of the American proletariat to keep our ranks clean.” This motion was unanimously adopted.

Delegate [MORRIS] ZUCKER of Kings County, NY announced that he received a telegram from his organization, in which he was instructed to leave this convention. He and another delegate from Kings Country, NY [Edward Lindgren] then left the

hall. On leaving he made the statement that the reason he was leaving the hall, or rather, the convention, was because the convention was controlled by Russian elements and that other representatives have no show whatever; that caucus is being held every half an hour and the Russians have a well organized machine which has full control of this convention and that he did not see any difference between this convention and the Emergency Socialist Convention and he was afraid that a few leaders were trying to dominate the Communist Party of America for their own selfish purposes. The convention was very silent when these two delegates left.

Report of the Committee of 5, which was instructed to negotiate with the Communist Labor Party, did not show any progress. They made a demand of the Committee representing the Communist Labor Party, in which they specifically stated that the delegates of the Communist Labor Party must go through the same test of a Credentials Committee of the Communist Labor Party as their own delegates.

They read a manifesto which they submitted to the Communist Party and which is of a general Communist phraseology. They call themselves the true bearers of MARXIAN COMMUNISM in America, the only body which carries the message of the Russian Bolsheviks into the rank and file of the American proletariat. Dictatorship of the proletariat is the only solution through which Communism can be established. The American Federation of Labor, Labor Party, and Socialist Party must be revolutionized and Communist ideas must be set there.

According to this manifesto the revolution is already in existence in the United States and the Communist Party is the only labor party which realizes this fact. This manifesto does not give any tangible facts as to the desired affiliation of the Communist Party with the Communist Labor Party.

Further, according to this manifesto the Committee is not very anxious to have these two bodies affiliated and does not show any definite progress.

The convention was closed at 11 o'clock to reconvene at 9 am the next day.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2007. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.