
A Visit to Communist Party Headquarters, Chicago — Oct. 14, 1919

by A.H. Loula

Excerpt from Loula's report for the week ending Oct. 18, 1919.
Copy in DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA M-1085, reel 922, file 202600-14.

AT CHICAGO:

The Communist Party of America is very actively engaged in spreading its anarchist propaganda throughout the country and its leaders, *Fraina, Stoklitsky, Hourwich, Ferguson, Stilson, Ruthenberg, Kowalski, and Friedman*, are working tirelessly to increase its membership and finance. All Agents of the Radical Department of this Bureau Office have been instructed by Division Superintendent Edward J. Brennan to keep in constant touch with the activities of the above-named renegades, and their activities are carefully being watched.

I consider the above-named men as the leaders and brains of the Russian anarchists in the United States at the present time.

On October 14th [1919], at about 6:30 pm, I visited the *Smolny Institute*, at 1221 Blue Island Avenue, Chicago, which is the headquarters of the Communist Party of America, and upon entering the office found Isaac Ferguson, Alex Stoklitsky, Frank [Joseph] Kowalski, Karl [C.E.] Ruthenberg, and J. Stilson seated about Stoklitsky's desk in a whispering conference. The purpose of my visit was to ascertain the contents of a pamphlet entitled, *The Capitalists Challenge You, Working Man*.

Capt. Campbell of the Central Division Military Intelligence had notified this office by telephone that the pamphlet reeks with sedition and anarchy, and that it was distributed among

the strikers of the Steel Corporations, and that his department was anxious to know who was responsible for the "outrage."

Upon entering the room I saw several hundred of the pamphlets in question on the table and confiscated a bunch of them without letting the "comrades" know the purpose of my visit.

Ferguson demanded to know how they came to be honored by a visit from the Agent of the Department of Justice, to which I replied that I was hoping that when I visited them again, it would be in company with a United States Deputy Marshal who, I hoped, would have an invitation for them to select rooms in the County Jail. *Stoklitsky* remarked that his deportation case was now pending in Washington and he said, "If you are a good sport I'll bet you any money you want that I never will be deported." I asked him why he was so sure of this, to which he replied, "I am too big of a man for the United States to handle. The Police Department tried to put Dennis Batt in jail on a frame-up, and you know in your heart that they won't succeed. Ruthenberg and Stilson are also under indictment, as is our comrade [Harry] Wicks, but neither of them will ever go to jail. We have ample funds to give them the proper defense."

I then picked up one of the pamphlets above referred to and asked if they were responsible for the printing of the same, to which Karl [C.E.] Ruthenberg replied, "Yes, the Communist Party

of America is responsible for this pamphlet and every other pamphlet or piece of literature that has been or will be issued under its name. If at any time you think we are overstepping the powers granted us by the United States Constitution, you are welcome to go ahead.”

I later read the pamphlet and have come to the conclusion that it does not contain matter upon which prosecution could be based by this Department.

The Communist Party, according to its leaders, state that since Sept. 1, 1919, when the party was organized, it has a membership of 55,000 members.

The Communist, official organ, in its issue for Oct. 18, 1919, contains a report written by Louis C. Fraina, Executive Secretary [*sic.*], furnishing the history of the birth of the organization and elucidating the split in the Socialist and Left Wing Parties. A marked copy is being sent to the Department at Washington under separate cover.

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Edited by Tim Davenport.

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