
Circular to All Units of the CPA on the “One Day’s Pay” Campaign from Louis Shapiro [“L. Bain”], Executive Secretary, August 8, 1920. †

Transcribed document in DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA collection M-1085, reel 938,
file 202600-1613, report of Agent W.L. Buchanan of Buffalo, NY, week ending Sept. 25, 1920, pg. 3.

August 8, 1920.

To All Units of the
Communist Party of America.

Dear Comrades:—

Our second convention [NYC: July 13-18, 1920] is over. If you were lax in your activities before the convention — there is no reason for it now. You must get to work, comrades.

The purpose of our Party, reads the first paragraph of our Constitution, “shall be the organization of the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat to educate and lead the working class of America for the conquest of political power; to destroy the bourgeois state machinery; to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat; to abolish the Capitalist system, and to introduce the Communist Society.”

To carry out our purpose of “organization

of the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat” — requires organizers. Organizes, in order to be able to devote their whole time for organizational purposes must have means. To obtain means NOW — our convention unanimously resolved to “issue a call for members to contribute One Day’s Pay for the Party organization.”

To work, then, comrades! Carry out in DEEDS the above resolution, which in turn will enable us to carry out in DEEDS our purpose — the purpose of organizing the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat.

A paragraph in the summary of our program states that “The Communist Party shall systematically and persistently propagate to the workers the idea of the inevitability of a violent revolution and the USE OF FORCE as the only means of overthrowing the capitalist state.”

Systematic and persistent propaganda to the workers must be done, to a large extent, by means of leaflets. But to issue leaflets means are needed.

†- There were approximately 10 Executive Secretaries of the American Communist movement through the death of C.E. Ruthenberg. Of these, one of the least well known was Louis Shapiro. Shapiro was a resident of New York City; whether he hailed from the Jewish (Yiddish language) or Russian Federation remains unclear. Shapiro had previously been arrested late in 1919 in conjunction with the Lusk Committee’s push to prosecute under the state “criminal anarchy” law. Nothing is known of the disposition of his case. Shapiro (pseudonym: “Lawrence Bain”) was held in high esteem by his comrades, it would seem, having been elected permanent chairman of the 2nd Convention of the CPA [NYC: July 13-18, 1920] by that conclave. At the July 20, 1920 reorganizational meeting of the Central Executive Committee, Shapiro was elected Executive Secretary, replacing Acting Executive Secretary Charles Dirba. Shapiro’s stint at the Executive Secretary post seems to have been brief, perhaps due to Dirba’s superior aptitude for office tasks — by the Jan. 11-16, 1921 plenum of the CEC, Shapiro had been replaced again by Dirba and sat once more as a regular member of the CEC. Shapiro was dispatched by the CPA to Soviet Russia in the summer of 1921 but died on board ship on July 5, 1921.

Hence, Comrades, get busy and to work!

To work, comrades! To work — in order that our Party is to be maintained as “the conscious expression of the class struggle of the workers against capitalism”; to work — in order that our Party is to be maintained fundamentally as a PARTY OF COMMUNIST ACTION.

In order that the Communist Party of America shall be in a position to “keep in the foreground its consistent appeal for proletarian dictatorship — the overthrow of the capitalist state and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat” — in order that it shall be in a position to do it, you comrades, must get to work NOW.

*L. Bain [Louis Shapiro],
Exec. Sec'y CP of A.*

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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