
Statement on the Unity Proceedings Between the Communist Party and the UCP of A.

[November 15, 1920]

by Charles Dirba

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Statement of the CEC of the Communist Party on Unity and International Relations.

To the Membership of the Communist Party,
Dear Comrades:—

The following documents, presented in their chronological order, will give you a general and precise idea of the status of the unity negotiations between the CP and the UCP, as well as the relationship of both Communist Parties from the Communist International.

From the report of our international delegates [Alexander Stoklitsky and Nicholas Hourwich] you will see that the Communist Party of America is completely vindicated in its struggle with the Centrist leaders of the former CLP and the present UCP. Despite the lies, the misrepresentations and underhand intrigues of the UCP to smash the Communist Party and have it expelled from the Communist International — **the Communist Party of America is recognized as an integral part of the Communist International. Its delegate, Comrade Andrew [Hourwich], has been placed on the Executive Committee of the Communist International and the mandate for unity between both parties has been extended to January 1st [1921] and the method of unity is to be by joint convention based upon dues actually paid for the months of July, August, September, and October [1920].**

The UCP lies and misrepresentations about the CP have been completely exposed. Their stupid and

arrogant pose that they are the “majority” is now revealed in its true light. Their ridiculous attempt to dictate the basis of delegates at the unity convention (6 to 4 to correspond to the representation given them at the Second World Congress of the Communist International) has been properly rebuked by the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

All the documents herein speak for themselves. It is only necessary to explain the dates and the matter which called them forth.

As soon as the CEC of the CP accidentally came across the mandate for unity by October 10th [1920], the Secretary [Charles Dirba] called for a special meeting of the CEC on October 19th. At this meeting a resolution was adopted complying unreservedly with the mandate. A Unity Committee was elected to prepare for a joint convention with a similar committee from the UCP. On the following day we received information that Comrade Andrew [Hourwich] had arrived in Moscow and had come before the Executive Committee of the Communist International on September 22nd [1920]. The information given to us was that Comrade Andrew [Hourwich] had succeeded only in postponing the date from October 10th [1920] to January 1st [1921].

In the meantime our unity committee arranged a meeting with the unity committee of the UCP. A few days later the two committees met. The UCP committee notified our committee that they were acting without instructions from their CEC, but they requested a discussion on the general points of unity involved, as set forth in our official letter to the CEC

of the UCP dated October 20th [1920]. The four points in our proposal were gone over and a deadlock was reached on the question of the basis of representation at the unity convention. The UCP unity committee made it clear that they were speaking unofficially, but that they represented the majority opinion of their CEC in demanding the ratio of 6 to 4. Our committee told them that we considered this meeting unofficial and were prepared to arrange for another meeting at which the UCP committee would come instructed from their CEC.

On November 2nd [1920] our CEC met again and our unity committee made its report. The report was accepted and the committee was instructed to continue the negotiations on the basis of representation at the unity convention to be on dues-paying membership. Our Secretary [Dirba] thereupon went forth to notify the UCP to elect and empower a committee to meet ours. He was told that 2 delegates recently arrived from Moscow wished to come before our CEC as they had some message for us from the Communist International. Our Secretary [Dirba] then asked whether they had credentials from the Communist International. They answered that one had and the other had not. He came and reported this to our CEC and that body immediately decided to hear the delegate with credentials.

Comrade Flynn [Edward Lindgren], delegate of the UCP arrived and presented a statement signed by Comrade Zinoviev and addressed to both parties as follows:

Dear Comrades:—

You will receive all material from the Second Congress [of the CI]. We demand now, ultimately from you all, that an immediate full unity should be accomplished on the basis of the decisions adopted by the Congress. Further split cannot be tolerated and cannot be justified by anything. We await from both sides an immediate formal reply. Fraternal greetings,

With Communist greetings,

(signed) G. Zinoviev,
Chairman, Executive Committee
of the Communist International.
August 20th [1920].

Comrade Flynn [Lindgren] further reported on the Congress which confirmed information already received. He had no specific instructions on the Fed-

eration question — details he said were left to the membership in this country. He said he arrived towards the close of the Congress [July 19-Aug. 7, 1920]. At the beginning the CP and the CLP had been given equal representation (5 [votes] to 5), but he had reported that a majority of the CP had united with the CLP, forming the UCP, with a membership of 10 to 12,000 — leaving the CP with 3 or 4,000, and demanded that the CP delegates be unseated. The Congress decided against the UCP and the CP delegates were given representation of 4 votes and the UCP 6 votes on the basis of his report that the UCP represented the larger party. He also reported that [Louis] Fraina's case had been investigated and that he had been completely exonerated and [Santeri] Nuorteva ordered to cease all attacks under pain of severe measures being meted out to him. Flynn [Lindgren] then reported that the other delegate, without credentials, had a message for us and requested a hearing for him. This was granted and later the other delegate, Comrade Morgan [Alexander Bilan], appeared.

Morgan [Bilan] reported same as Flynn [Lindgren]. Also agreed to make an appointment with the unity committees.

The unity committees met on November 3rd [1920] and the UCP committee then read the following communication from their CEC, dated November 3rd and published below. This statement insisted upon the 6 to 4 representation and was written in a very arrogant tone. Our committee informed them that the CP would not recede from the basis of proportional representation based upon dues-paying membership and in case they refused would appeal our case to the Communist International.

The UCP committee then promised to have an answer to this resolution by noon (Nov. 4th [1920]).

The CEC of the CP then reconvened the following morning to take up the report of the unity committee. In the meantime one of the CEC members had received and brought with him to this meeting the letter and resolutions of the Communist International from our delegates Andrew [Hourwich] and Fraina.

One contained an exoneration of Fraina on the charge of being a "police agent" made by Nuorteva. The other contained the later decisions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International rela-

tive to unity and international matters and was dated September 30th [1920]. The latter is printed in this statement. The Fraina resolution is printed in a separate leaflet.

Our CEC after hearing the contents of these communications immediately voted to adjourn to give the Unity Committee an opportunity to arrange a meeting with the UCP and acquaint them with the important information.

The following day [Nov. 5, 1920] our committee met and we were handed their written answer to our last resolution. This answer is dated November 5th and speaks for itself. Two points, however, are especially worthy of answer: (1) They still claim to have twice as many members as the CP. This claim is refuted by their own demand for arbitrary representation of 6 to 4 at the joint convention as well as by their refusal to accept proportional representation based upon membership figures. (2) Their claim that the Communist Party delegates at a convention are subject to ratification by the language federations is a deliberate lie intended to obscure the whole issue. Everybody knows that our electors and delegates to conventions are elected through the party organization as a whole and that the language federations have nothing whatsoever to do with the action of party delegates. The party delegates are responsible to the party as a whole and to no one else. This lie is intentionally made to lend color to the charge that the Communist Party is not a party but a loosely formed federation of federations. The decisions of the convention and the party constitution are ample refutation of this charge.

As a whole this last answer of the UCP is sufficient proof in itself that the UCP does not really desire unity but wants to “smash the Communist Party.”

Our committee then submitted a signed statement containing the 6 points adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International relative to its mandatory decision for unity. Upon their request they were shown the original statement signed by our delegates.

They received the information in silence and the meeting was concluded. Upon the request of our committee for another meeting they told our committee that they could not make arrangements at present but would notify us whenever they considered a meeting

necessary. We have not heard from them as yet. The unity negotiations therefore rest at this point.

In the meantime, the CEC has issued the call for a special convention in accordance with the decisions of the Second Congress of the Communist International and contained in the “Conditions for Affiliation.” Should final agreement with the UCP be reached this convention will become a joint convention.

Below, in the order of their receipt follow the documents relating to the unity negotiations with the UCP and the report of our international delegates.

[1]

Reports from Our Delegates
[Louis C. Fraina and Nicholas I. Hourwich]
to the Communist Party of America.
[Sept. 30, 1920]

Dear Comrades:—

The report of Comrade Fraina, previously sent you, pictured developments here concerning our Party, unity, etc., up to August 25 [1920]. In this report we shall picture the new developments while making a complete summary of the whole situation.

In accord with the decision of the Executive Committee of the Communist International for unity, the delegates of the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party agreed to work as one delegation in the Congress, etc. But while the Congress was still in session, Flynn [Lindgren] arrived as the delegate of the UCP and broke the agreement. Upon the instructions from the Central Executive Committee of his party, Flynn [Lindgren] contested the recognition of the Communist Party delegates on the ground that recognition would interfere with unity. The Credential Committee rejected the proposal, although it gave the UCP 6 votes and the CP 4 votes (Flynn [Lindgren] having declared that the UCP had from 10,000 to 12,000 members, while the CP had not more than 1500. Fraina, being without information, had no means of contradicting this.)

Flynn [Lindgren] thereupon brought the contest before the Congress. Fraina, in answer, emphasized that Flynn [Lindgren] was acting in the worst factional spirit; to reject the Communist Party was to reject the most consistent American expression of Communism; that Flynn's [Lindgren's] proposal was not to promote unity but to break the CP. Flynn [Lindgren], moreover, argued that the Communist Party had repudiated the Communist International, since a representative of the International [Samuel Agursky] had assisted in the unification; in answer, Fraina declared that this representative not only had no mandate to achieve unity, but had no political mandate whatever (this was subsequently confirmed by Bukharin). The Congress decided against Flynn [Lindgren], only Flynn

[Lindgren], [John] Reed, and [Alexander] Bilan voting in favor.

After the Congress, the Executive Committee adopted a resolution ordering the two American Communist parties to unite by October 10 [1920], under threat of expulsion from the International.

The UCP delegates, having 6 votes out of the 10 given to America, elected Reed as the American representative on the Executive Committee (one representative only being permitted).

The UCP delegates, particularly Flynn [Lindgren] and Reed, acted throughout in the worst factional spirit; Reed declared to Fraina that he did not want unity of party and party, but unity by means of smashing the Communist Party; and he used fully his official position to that end.

Upon the arrival of Comrade Andrew [Hourwich: Sept. 22, 1920], with information concerning the actual state of affairs in the United States, the situation changed.

We brought, by means of Andrew's [Hourwich's] report, the whole question of the American movement again before the Executive Committee. The Executive reaffirmed the mandatory decision for unity, but its actions rebuked the maneuvers of the UCP politicians here to make a factional issue of unity.

Among other things, the Executive Committee decided:

1) To extend the date by which complete unity is to be achieved from October 10 [1920] to January 1, 1921.

2) That pending this complete unity of our movement and the election by the party of an American representative on the Executive Committee, each party shall have a representative on the Executive with the same vote.

3) That unity must (and this is mandatory) be achieved on the basis of all the decisions of the Second Congress of the International.

4) The representatives of both parties must give a pledge to abide by the decision for unity.

5) The two parties have equal rights, the unification to be by means of a Congress and party for party.

6) Representation in the Unity Congress is to be decided upon the basis of dues actually paid for during the months July, August, September, and October [1920].

Reed objected to having a representative of the Communist Party on the Executive Committee, maintaining that the United Party was entitled to the representative alone, since it had already accepted the decision for unity. This was again a factional attempt to make capital out of unity; but the attempt was rebuked by Zinoviev, who inserted in the resolution the clause that the representatives of both parties have equal rights (which was not in originally).

Comrades! The decisions of the Executive Committee of the Communist International are final, and binding upon the affiliated organizations. Whatever may be one's opinion, the Communist Party must loyally accept it, while maintaining its consistent expression of Communism.

Close up the ranks and prepare for the coming unity congress.

This is not a perfunctory matter, it affects the whole future of our movement. The Party must prepare theses, proposals, etc. Since all decisions and programs of parties affiliated to the Communist International must be approved by the Executive Committee, we have the right to appeal to the Executive in the event the Unity Congress adopts any

decision or takes any steps contrary to our principles.

The authority of the International and the revolutionary requirements of the movement itself, if nothing else, will impose a consistent program upon the united party.

Moscow, September 31, 1920.

Signed: Louis C. Fraina,
Andrew [Nicholas Hourwich].

P.S. According to a supplementary decision of the Executive Committee, the name of the completely unified party is to be the Communist Party of America.

P.S. Representatives of the Communist movement on the Executive Committee of the Communist International at present are: Andrew [Hourwich] — CP of A; and Reed — UCP of A.

P.S. Third paragraph in this statement refers to the Com. Ag. [Comrade Agursky]. It was stated at the Executive Committee of the Communist International and confirmed by Bukharin, that his mandate was limited only to assistance in formation of the CP in America, no such Party being in existence at the time when he left Russia.

[2]

***Letter of the CEC of the Communist Party
to the CEC of the UCP.***

[Oct. 20, 1920]

To the CEC of the UCP,
Dear Comrades:—

Having on Oct. 14th [1920] accidentally come across a decision in the Sept. 14th *Izvestiia*, official organ of the Soviet Republic, relative to the unity of the Communist Party and the United Communist Party as follows:

“Both Communist parties — the UCP and the CP — are obliged to unite into one party on the basis of the decisions of the Second World Congress of the Communist International. This unity must be finally accomplished not later than in two months; that is, by the 10th of October, 1920. Those who do not subject themselves to this decision shall be expelled from the Third, Communist International.”

In accordance with this decision of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, the CEC of the CP has passed the following decision:

“Since the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Comintern demanding the immediate unity between the CP and the UCP was received after the date set in the resolution for the final completion of unity; and

“Recognizing that the idea and the intent of the resolution must be carried out to the best of our ability and circumstances without further delay;

“We decided to take immediate steps for calling a joint convention with the UCP within two months, the representation to be in proportion to membership deter-

*mined upon a just and equal basis for both parties; and
"To notify the Executive Committee of the Communist
International of our acknowledgment of their authority in the
question, and of the steps we have taken to comply with
their decision as soon as it reached us."*

On the basis of this resolution the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party has passed the following motions in order to facilitate the process of uniting both parties at a joint convention:

1) A committee of 3 (Allen [Max Cohen], Dobin [Charles Dirba], Leon [Lithuanian = ???]) has been elected with power to make arrangements with a like committee representing your CEC.

2) That in the event of agreement a call for a joint convention shall be issued by the respective CECs of both parties.

3) The basis for the joint call shall be as follows: (a) The decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern. (b) The conditions for Affiliation to the Comintern. (c) Any decisions of the Executive Committee of the Comintern pertaining to the Communist movement in this country.

4) The joint convention shall be called within two months.

5) The basis of elections to joint convention shall be as follows:

Representation is to be in proportion to membership determined upon a just and equal basis for both parties.

In view of the very limited time for the calling of the joint convention, we expect a speedy reply.

Fraternally yours,

[Charles Dirba] — Exec. Sec.,
Communist Party of America.

[3]

Answer of the United Communist Party.

[Nov. 3, 1920]

Nov. 3., 1920.

To the CEC of the CP,
Dear Comrades:—

The following resolution on the subject of Communist Unity in the United States was adopted by the CEC of the UCP:

Communist Unity is essential for the communist victory. The UCP has always recognized this, and expressed this recognition in the following words in a unity resolution adopted at its convention:

"American capitalism is mobilizing all its forces to control the rising tide of working class revolt, and has particularly directed its power of suppression against the communist movement.

"Under these circumstances, and in view of the fundamental unity of principles, all the communist elements should

be united in ONE party, and the UCP therefore calls upon the group still outside the united party to join it."

We, the Central Executive Committee of the United Communist Party, mindful of our duty to unite the battle front of the revolutionary workers in the United States, welcomed the endeavors of Comrade Linde [Samuel Agursky], who in the name of the Executive Committee of the Third International offered his services to bring about complete unity of communist forces. We helped him in every way possible. We deeply regretted that the hostility of the CEC of the CPA to the achievement of unity caused Comrade Linde's [Agursky's] labors to fail of success. When this became apparent, we again reported to the Third International the situation relative to unity of the communist elements in the United States.

Meanwhile the Second Congress of the Third International [July 19-Aug.7, 1920] had taken place, and the newly elected Executive Committee of that body, in compliance with the instructions of the Congress, issued an imperative mandate for communist unity in the United States.

Since the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party has now indicated a willingness to reverse its previous position and to comply with the mandate of the Executive Committee of the Third International, we agree to hold a joint convention and appoint Comrades Holt [Alfred Wagenknecht], Alden [???], and McGee [???] as our committee to act with a like committee of the Communist Party.

We empower them to make arrangements for a joint convention on the following conditions:

1) In conformity with the decisions of the Second Congress regarding centralized party organization, no autonomous groups or federations shall be allowed in the united party.

2) Only those members organized in the underground group form of organization shall be permitted to participate in the election of delegates to the joint convention.

3) The basis of representation at the joint convention shall be the same as the voting ratio established for the American delegates by the Second Congress of the Comintern; namely, the ratio of 6 delegates for the UCP to 4 for the CP.

4) All the theses adopted by the Second Congress, and the decisions of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, shall constitute the basis of the deliberations at the joint convention.

5) In order to bring about unity by January 1st [1921], the time limit finally set by the Executive Committee of the Comintern, the convention must be held before that date.

With Communist Greetings,

Central Executive Committee,
United Communist Party.

[Alfred Wagenknecht] — Executive Secretary.

[4]
To the CEC of the UCP of A.
[Nov. 3, 1920]

Nov. 3, 1920.

Comrades:—

The Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America will not accept any other basis of representation at the Joint Convention than the number of dues paying members, and will appeal to the Executive Committee of the Communist International in case the United Communist Party does not agree to this at once.

Fraternally,

[Charles Dirba] — Exec. Sec.

[5]
Letter of United Communist Party.
[Nov. 5, 1920]

Nov. 5, 1920.

To the CEC, CP.
 Comrades:—

The CEC of the UCP, after careful consideration of the proposal of the CEC of the CP relative to the execution of the unity mandate of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, comes to the following conclusions:

1) Unity of the federation group of the old CP still outside of the UCP with the UCP is not the subject for negotiations or agreements with this group, but simply a question of the execution of the imperative mandate imposed upon this group by the authority of the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

To the UCP as the body through which the Comintern functions in the United States falls the task of executing this mandate.

In view of this fact, the CEC of the UCP considered the plan of an immediate merger without convention as the only proper form for carrying out the spirit and letter of the order of the Comintern. Only the inequities which might attend a merger without convention, because it would result in arbitrary forcing the liquidation of the CP and its federations, makes a convention advisable. But even adopting the convention plan as necessary, the CEC of the UCP insists upon carrying through the principle of no negotiations or agreements as a prerequisite to unity.

The function of the convention in all matters relative to unity is merely to make the technical arrangements for unity and to facilitate the liquidation of the federated Communist Party.

2) After agreeing upon a convention, the CEC of the UCP considered the basis for representation for this convention. Two methods were possible. Proportional representation based upon dues paying membership or a fixed representation for each party.

The election of delegates by proportional representation would make a majority of CP delegates possible only through manipulation. We understand perfectly that such manipulations are not entirely foreign to the practices of the leadership of the federations.

Such manipulations would readily be facilitated by the form of organization of the CP federations. These federations count as members many elements that conform only nominally to the underground form of organization. Many of their members hold membership chiefly for social and nationalistic reasons. Such legal social membership cares more for the federations as social and nationalistic expressions than for the building of a centralized communist organization. Over such legal federation membership the CEC of the CP has no control, and yet the CP wishes to count them as bona fide communist members and base representation upon them.

The interests of the communist movement in America imperatively demand of the UCP to guard even against the possibility of a manipulated convention majority — because: (a) To permit the sectarian and dogmatic spirit of the leadership of the present federation group, known as the Communist Party, to predominate in the communist movement in the United States would mean to condemn that movement to sterility; (b) The very form of the organization of the CP takes the real power out of the hands of the CEC of this party, and any convention delegates the CP membership might elect, and places this power in the hands of the various federations. The acts of such CP delegates would be subject to ratification or rejection by each federation separately. In view of this, an apparent majority of CP delegates in any convention would, after the convention was over, simply resolve itself into an insignificant minority. Those whom these delegates nominally represented would not be bound in any way to carry out the convention decisions.

3) The membership figures published by both parties for the months of July, August, and September [1920] show that the UCP has twice as many members as the CP. The UCP, therefore, has no reason whatever to dread a convention on that basis for electing the delegates. The UCP refuses proportional representation on the ground of principle. The question is not whether the CP is numerically stronger or weaker than the UCP. The fact is that the CP does not represent a centralized party, but only federated factions, which must submit themselves to the UCP, since it is the only centralized expression in the United States of the Comintern.

Even though the ratio of 6 to 4 offered to the CP by the UCP as the convention representation basis gives the CP larger representation than its actual membership would entitle it to, we stand on that basis; in demanding it we do not consider the numerical strength or weakness of the CP federation organization, but only its relation to the communist movement.

Because of the foregoing reasons, we must insist upon all the conditions as laid down in the resolution communicated to you by us. We are ready to unite at any time upon the basis we presented.

The welfare of the communist movement in the united States requires that unity be consummated without further delay. The UCP has already built a strong, centralized, and well disciplined party. Its propaganda, agitation, and

educational work is being carried forward upon a scale never approximated in the history of the American communist movement. We can not be diverted from this constructive work in order to engage in useless negotiations with a faction whose sectarian leaders have talent only for mudslinging and controversy. Therefore, unless these terms are complied with, we will call upon the Communist International to take decisive steps to compel obedience to its mandate for unity and will demand the liquidation of their groups with United Communist Party.

Fraternally,

Central Executive Committee,
United Communist Party of America.

Paul Holt [Alfred Wagenknecht],
Executive Secretary.

[6]

*From the Communist Party of America
to the CEC of the United Communist
Party of America.
[Nov. 4, 1920]*

Nov. 4, 1920.

To the CEC
of the United Communist Party of America.
Comrades:—

In case you have not already been fully informed through your own representatives, we hasten to transmit to you the following decisions of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, as reported to us by our representatives (F. [Louis Fraina] and A. [Nicholas Hourwich]) in a letter signed by them, which reached us this morning.

(Then comes quotations of the 6 clauses from our delegates' report [above].)

Since the last clause specifically disposes of the point on which there was a deadlock between your sub-committee and ours, we confidently expect that you will accept the decision of the Executive Committee of the Comintern and that our committee will have another meeting immediately to make all the necessary arrangements for the Joint Convention.

[Charles Dirba] — Exec. Sec.,
Communist Party of America.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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