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# Statement of the CEC of the United Communist Party Regarding the Charges Against Louis C. Fraina

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At its first session [July 1-3, 1920] the CEC of the United Communist Party appointed a committee to investigate the charges that Louis C. Fraina, International Secretary of the Communist Party of America, was an agent of the Department of Justice. The Committee has reported the result of its investigation, as follows:

An agent of the Department of Justice named Peterson was assigned the job of spying on the Soviet Bureau. This man had been employed by a Finnish Socialist paper prior to the war and during the Left Wing struggle, prior to the split of SP, had read in a Finnish paper that all Left Wingers, and L.C. Fraina in particular, were agent provocateurs and spies. This man endeavored to ingratiate himself with Santeri Nuorteva, secretary to L.C.A.K. Martens, and in course of conversation with him made the statement that Louis C. Fraina was employed by the Department of Justice.

When, early in December [1919] Fraina was directed to leave for Europe by the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America to establish connections with the Communist International, he requested the Soviet Bureau to give him credentials which would enable him to enter Russia. These credentials were refused because of the insinuations against Fraina made by the man Peterson.

In order to clear up the matter, representatives of the Soviet Bureau and members of the

Central Executive Committee made an investigation. A meeting was held at which Fraina was confronted with the Department of Justice agent Peterson. At this hearing Peterson stated that he had seen Fraina in the New York offices of the Department of Justice on 3 occasions. Two of these dates he fixed definitely, the other he was unable to fix. The two dates so fixed and which he insisted upon as being the correct dates when Fraina was at the Department of Justice in New York, were September 7th and November 15th [1919].

Peterson also stated that he had seen in the files of Department of Justice reports supposedly made by Fraina and cancelled checks covering payments to him. These checks he stated were made payable to Fraina and were endorsed by him and the checks, after passing through the bank, were filed in the file containing Fraina's reports.

Peterson also gave a description of the man he thought was Fraina. When he was brought into the room in which the hearing was held he was asked whether he could identify any of the persons as Fraina, but was unable to do so. (It must be stated here that Fraina's appearance had changed somewhat.) During the progress of the investigation Fraina cross-examined Peterson, and after a question or two Peterson stated, "You are the man." It must be said, however, that the description given by Peterson of the man he saw in the Department of Justice was not a description by which those who have known Fraina during his work in the movement last fall would have

recognized him.

During the cross-examination of Peterson by those present many dubious points as to his motives and as to the reliability of his story were developed.

When the cross-examination was over, Fraina made a statement in reply in which he brought out that September 7th [1919] was the last day of the Communist Party Convention and that on that date, as could be verified by a score of people, he had been in the city of Chicago, attending the convention session in the morning and a meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the party in the afternoon. In the evening he was at a restaurant in the same city with a party of comrades. On November 15th [1919], another date definitely fixed, he attended a meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party in Chicago, as could be verified by 12 other members of the committee.

As to the checks which the informer claimed to have seen in the file supposed to contain Fraina's reports, anyone familiar with modern account-

ing methods would smile at the proposition that returned checks should be filed in the individual file of the person to whom they were issued.

When the investigation was completed those present were asked to state whether they were satisfied that Fraina had been exonerated, and all but two, members of the Bureau, agreed that such was the case. The other two persons still had some doubts although admitting that there was no clear case.

The stenographic report of the hearing was later submitted to the Executive Council of the Communist Party and the Translator-Secretaries representing the Language Federations in the National Office and it was [their] unanimous verdict that Fraina had been exonerated.

The committee, in view of the above facts, agrees with the previous verdict that Comrade Louis C. Fraina was exonerated by the investigation made at the time charges were first made.

The CEC of the United Communist Party concurs in the conclusion of its investigation committee that Comrade Louis Fraina is exonerated.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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