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# Report of “John Moore,” Delegate of the Minority Faction of the CP of A to the Comintern, to the CEC, June 27, 1922.

by John J. Ballam

A document from the Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 94, ll. 50-51.

To the Central Executive Committee of the CP of A  
Dear Comrades:—

I left Moscow under the specific instruction of the EC [Executive Committee] of the CI [Communist International] to do what I could to carry out the decisions of the Comintern relative to bringing back into the party the so-called Minority faction.†

I arrived here [from Moscow] May 7, 1922, and on Monday, May 8th I appeared before a conference called by the Minority and consisting of their Central Executive Committee of seven, the secretaries and editors of the Jewish, Ukrainian, Russian, Lettish, Polish, and Lithuanian Language Federations; their District Organizers from Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 12 (?), together with the editor of their English Official organs.

For weeks prior to my arrival in America the Secretary of their CEC had in his possession all the documents of the EC of the CI relative to the last decision on the CP of A and therefor had all

the necessary material upon which to base their decision and ample time for discussion and action.

Before the Conference of the Minority held May 8th to May 12th and which was composed of the entire active leadership of the Minority faction I presented a complete and detailed report of the decision of the EC of the CI, the manner in which it was reached, the attitude of the Comintern toward the questions raised in the minority appeal on the No. 2 organization [the Workers Party of America], liquidation, centrists, opportunism, expulsions, suspensions, disconnections (the “crushing policy”) etc. etc., together with the opinions expressed by Comrades Zinoviev, Kuu-sinen, Rakosi, Brandler, Valetski, Katayama, [Nicholas] Hourwich, Baldwin [Oscar Tyverovsky], Lenin, et. al. on the American question, none of which were favorable to the policy of the Minority faction.

I advised these “leaders” of the minority to loyally accept and to faithfully carry out the deci-

† The “Minority Faction” referred to here was the “Central Caucus” faction headed by Central Executive Committee members Charles Dirba, George Ashkenudzie, and John Ballam. These were former members of the old-CPA who departed at the end of November and the first part of December 1921 over the decision to launch a “Legal Political Party,” the Workers Party of America. It was clear that the WPA would operate without the cover of pseudonyms and clandestine meetings, thus exposing the entire movement to state repression, it was believed. This argument carried particular weight in many of the party’s language federations, particularly the Latvian, Ukrainian, Russian — significant numbers of which lent the Central Caucus group their support. It was further argued that the move to the LPP marked a victory of the vote-chasing “opportunism” and “centrism” feared and loathed by the old CPA ever since the September 1919 split with the Communist Labor Party. The Central Caucus group was acutely aware of the fact that the ex-CLP members of the CEC had gained a working majority through the “defection” of two ex-old-CPA members to the compact group of five hailing from the UCP, with a “crushing” of the old-CPA cadres seen to be in the offing. The departure of the Central Caucus group was thus seen by those leaving as a matter of both practical necessity and revolutionary principle.

sions of the Comintern and to so put themselves on record and that if they would so declare that I would stay with them and help to prepare their membership to understand and appreciate what the decision of the Comintern meant and thus help to liquidate the factional and suicidal struggle within the party within the time limit set by the EC of the CI, as well as to assist in protecting the membership rights of the minority (within the mandate of the Comintern) where these rights might be ignored or threatened.

After protracted discussion this conference decided that it was impossible for them to obey the decision of the Comintern. By their act they deliberately severed all relations with the Comintern, placing themselves outside its jurisdiction and flouting its authority. The rank and file membership of the minority had no part whatever in the making of this decision nor had they had an opportunity to understand it or its consequences. The membership of the minority could not have given the minority "leaders" a mandate to permanently put them out of the Comintern and in active and hostile opposition to its discipline and its policies.

Realizing the impossibility of reaching the minority membership through the channels controlled by these shortsighted sectarians and in pursuance of the instructions of the EC of the CI, I severed my connections with the minority [and] reported to the CEC of the party, who at once after hearing my report arranged meetings of the membership for the majority and minority in every important center, and issued a special bulletin for distribution to both factions. The results of this tour carried out under the order and instructions of the CEC of the party was as follows (covering the period from May 12 to June 25):

### **District 1 [Boston, MA].**

(Organizational work and meetings)

May 19, 20, 21, 22: Joint meeting in Bos-

ton — about 150 present. Report and analysis of Comintern decisions by Carr [Ludwig Katterfeld] and Moore [Ballam]. Resulted in demand on part of minority members to their DO [District Organizer] that meeting of minority be called to act upon Moore's report.

Minority meeting about 100 present, May 26th. Organized caucus of minority ready to obey mandate of Third [International]. Favorable sentiment among Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, and English branches.

June 23: Organized groups who were prepared for entering party. District 1 about 25% of minority membership will be in party before June 25th. Includes majority of English; all Lithuanians; influential Polish and Russian comrades. Minority membership sentiment for obeying Third almost unanimous in this district with exception of Lettish branches who are under influence of a few sectarian leaders.

### **District 2 [New York, NY].**

Minority Meeting held May 12 — about 200 present; 14 voting to obey decision, 90 opposed, 96 not voting. Caucus organized, under leadership of minority section organizer and placed in contact with the party. Meetings of minority and majority held May 24 and 25, addressed by Carr and Moore. Organization work with Lithuanians. Lithuanian Bureau voted 4 to 3 to obey decision and called national conference of Lith. Federation, which voted to return to party. Later Lith. Bureau voted 6 to 1 to return. Minority membership in this district under influence of sectarian "CEC" (minority) members and Federation Bureaus. About 20% of membership will return by expiration of time limit. Sub-District 2 (New Jersey) visited June 21st, 22nd, and 24th. Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian leadership in favor of returning and have joined party. About 50% of membership (of 250) will return to party as soon as they can be reached, in this Sub. Dist.

**District 3 [Philadelphia, PA].**

Four joint minority and majority meetings were held in Philadelphia addressed by Carr and Moore. Local Russian and Lithuanian minority leaders decided to obey decision. The main strength of the minority in this district is among the Lithuanians in Wilkes Barre [SD-2] and Minersville [SD-3]. This membership is very active in the miners' union in these sub-districts. Under the decision of the Lithuanian Federation to obey the decision and return to the party more than 75% of the minority membership will be in the party before June 25th in District 3.

**District 4 [Cleveland, OH].**

Cleveland was visited June 5, 6, 7, and 8. Meetings of minority and majority were held. Minority meeting of Russian branch of 50. Local Russian leader (Dutka) decided to return to party. Will bring in Russian branch. Largest Lithuanian branch also in favor of returning. Dutka being routed in district for work among Russian minority comrades. German branch under influence of local German leader who has strong sympathy for KAPD [the Communist Workers Party of Germany, a left opposition to the regular Communist Party of Germany] and Fourth International. Lettish minority groups unapproachable. About 20% of minority membership will return in this district before time limit.

**District 5 [Chicago, IL].**

Chicago visited June 13, 14, 15, and Milwaukee June 16. Strong sentiment for carrying out Comintern decision. Joint meeting of minority and majority addressed by Carr and Moore. Large solid minority meeting by Moore on 14th — nearly 200 present — only 57 voted to support minority CEC. Meeting with minority Letts resulted in a majority vote to return to party. About 40 percent

of minority membership in this district will be in party before expiration of time limit.

**District 6 [Detroit, MI].**

Visited June 9, 10, 11, and 12th. Three successful and large joint meetings held. Large minority meeting addressed by Moore but no vote taken. This is the strongest of the minority's districts, and after hearing the reports of Carr and Moore there is developing a strong sentiment for obeying the Comintern. Editor of Polish legal daily paper will return to party. Cannot estimate number who will return by June 25th but great majority will return to party as soon as they have an opportunity to realize the crime of their sectarian leaders in voting them out of CI. This membership in District 6 absolutely essential to successful party work here.

**General.**

The time limit (sixty days from the publication of the decision of the EC of the CI) has now expired. Not more than 30 percent of the minority membership (about 1250) will have reentered the party by this time. This leaves nearly 3000 communists outside the party organization, who, by terms of the decision of the Comintern, are now excluded and expelled from the CI and its American section, the CP of A. The great majority of these comrades are and have been organized in language groups affiliated to their respective Federations. They have as yet had no adequate opportunity to fully understand and act upon the decision of the Comintern due to the action taken by their leaders. The CEC of the party may invoke the letter of the decision to exclude these comrades from the party and expel them from the CI, or impose humiliating conditions upon them should they seek entrance to our party after June 25th. My experience has been that the sentiment among these comrades is overwhelmingly in favor

of accepting the discipline of the CI, but that this sentiment has not had time to crystallize. In view of the magnitude of the tasks which immediately face our party on both the political and industrial fields our forces are pitifully small, so that we cannot afford to alienate a single comrade who is ready to engage wholeheartedly in the party work. No better opportunity to unify the communist forces and to liquidate the long-standing factionalism within the party has ever presented itself and it is my conviction that this was the spirit and the essence of the Comintern's decision. I therefore recommend that the CEC continue to hold out the hand of comradeship to these members of the minority not yet in the party and that we continue to hold the doors of the party wide open for their entrance, and that instructions be sent to all lower party units to this effect. There is, and must be, room within the party for the widest possible divergence of opinion upon questions of tactics and policy, especially where these are yet in the formative and experimental stage. The tendency to exclude from the party and the party work all those who are in temporary disagreement with a

transient majority is in itself a form of sectarianism and leads to that kind of "heresy-hunting" which reduced the SLP to an impotent and sterile sect, and which has been the curse of the American communist parties since their formation. The sectarian of the "left" and the sectarian of the "right" have this in common — that both having diverged from a realistic and communist position are compelled to adopt extraordinary measures to maintain their equilibrium and to reach their ends.

In reporting to the membership I was governed at all times by the Theses of the Comintern where controversial questions were involved and interpreted the decision of the EC in the light of my experiences while in Moscow and according to the instructions given me as an International Delegate.

Fraternally Submitted,

John Moore [John J. Ballam]

June 27, 1922

*Edited with Footnotes by Tim Davenport.  
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