
Administrative Council Outlines Negotiations with Jewish Bureau, States Present Position.

Letter of C.E. Ruthenberg to Louis F. Wolf, Dec. 1, 1922.

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In response to a resolution of the German Bureau of the Workers Party asking that the Party Central Executive Committee makes further efforts to settle the controversy in the Jewish Federation, the Administrative Council has sent the following letter to the German Bureau, outlining the negotiations which took place and the present attitude of the Administrative Council as follows:

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New York City, NY, Dec. 1, 1922.

Louis F. Wolf,
Executive Secretary, German Federation
15 Spruce St.,
New York City.

Dear Comrade Wolf:—

The Administrative Council of the Party directs me to make the following reply to your letter of November 27th in which you express your regret at the threatened split in the Jewish Federation and recommend the reopening of negotiations between the CEC and the Bureau of the Jewish Federation, offering your good offices in achieving this end.

After the publication of the manifesto of the Bureau of the Jewish Federation attacking the CEC of the Party and refusing to submit to the discipline of the CEC, the Administrative Council

of the Party immediately drafted a reply which was adopted by the Administrative Council on November 16th. After the adoption of this manifesto, through the good offices of Comrade Lore, a meeting was arranged between the Executive Secretary of the Party [C.E. Ruthenberg] and Comrades Olgin, Wishnak, and London representing the Jewish Federation Bureau in an effort to arrange a settlement of the controversy.

At the opening of this meeting at which Comrade Lore was present, Comrade Lore stated to the representatives of the Jewish Bureau that the fundamental condition to any settlement of the controversy was the acceptance of the decision of the CEC that the even division of representation in the Jewish Bureau be restored, that is, that the Jewish Bureau submit to the discipline of the CEC.

It was with the understanding that the representatives of the Jewish Bureau accepted this fundamental condition that the negotiations continued.

During the discussion at the meeting in question, which was held on Friday, Nov. 17th [1922], the Executive Secretary of the Party outlined the conditions which he believed could be agreed upon as a basis of settlement of the controversy. After considerable discussion it was agreed that these conditions would be put into definite form and submitted to the representatives of the Jewish Bureau at another meeting on November 18th. Comrades Wishnak and London appeared as the

representatives of the Jewish Bureau. The Executive Secretary of the Party submitted to the representatives of the Bureau the following proposals for settlement of the controversy:

1. That the Administrative Council would endorse the convention called for December 16th, thus making it the regular convention of the Jewish Section of the Party.

2. That elections of delegates to this [convention] would be through district conventions, as provided by the Party constitution, or, if the Jewish Bureau preferred, through branches with the understanding that branches having less than an average of 10 members as shown by dues payments for the months of July, August, September, and October would not be entitled to voting delegates but to fraternal delegates. Branches having from 10 to 25 members would be entitled to one delegate and an additional delegate for each additional 25 members or major fraction thereof.

3. That the discussion of the question of an open Communist Party be continued in order to insure equal opportunity of both sides to present its views. A committee consisting of Olgin, Bitelman, and Ruthenberg [would] be created which would have control of the discussion so far as the amount of space allowed and the order of appearance of articles...but not as to the contents of the articles.

4. That the 50-50 division of representation of the Bureau of the Federation be restored at once.

5. That there be transferred to the Party a 50 percent ownership of the *Freiheit*.

6. That in case either side desired to send speakers to appear before the branches to present its viewpoints that this should be granted by the other side with the understanding that the opposite side also have the same privilege.

In view of the fact that the manifesto of the Administrative Council was being withheld from publication while these negotiations were pending it had been made a condition of the continuance of the negotiations that the representatives

of the Bureau must accept or reject the terms proposed at the meeting on Saturday, November 18th. These terms were presented to Comrades Wishnak and London at this meeting and were accepted by them subject to the ratification of the Jewish Bureau. It was the understanding that the Bureau would meet on Monday, November 20th, and act upon these terms.

On Tuesday, Nov. 21st, Comrades Wishnak and London called at the office of the Party and informed the National Secretary that the Bureau had accepted the terms above outlined with the exception of the provision as to the 50 percent division of the strength of the Bureau. From the statement made to the Executive Secretary it appeared that there was no question as to the other points proposed in the agreement but only as to the restoration of the 50 percent division of representation on the Bureau.

The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that this point could not be conceded. Comrade London thereupon appealed to the Executive Secretary to make further efforts to have a concession made on this point. The conference was dissolved without any definite decision.

On Wednesday, Nov. 22, the Executive Secretary called Comrades Olgin, Wishnak, London, and Salzman to his office and informed them that upon further consideration and in order to avoid any further controversy, the condition as to the 50-50 representation on the Bureau had been withdrawn and that in its place a Convention Committee of five from each group was to be created (this being the alternative proposed of the Jewish Bureau) and the Bureau to continue to function. This concession on the part of the Executive Secretary removed the only point still subject to controversy as stated by the representatives of the Bureau at the previous conference, but immediately upon this point being conceded to the four representatives of the [Jewish] Bureau present, they began to create new conditions. They raised the question as to the transfer of the 50 percent

ownership of the *Freiheit* to the Party and also some question as to the method of election. The conference dissolved with the understanding that the Bureau of the Federation would meet that evening and give its answer the next day, the four representatives to meet the Executive Secretary at his office on the next day.

On Thursday, the day following [Nov. 23], the Executive Secretary received a letter signed by Olgin, Wishnak, and London stating that the Bureau of the Federation rejected the proposed method of election of delegates and rejected the condition that the 50 percent ownership of the *Freiheit* be transferred to the Party.

It was only after these extended negotiations with the representatives of the Jewish Bureau in which the representatives of the CEC of the Party made every possible concession in order to avoid a conflict that the decision of the Administrative Council made a week before it was carried into effect through the publication of the manifesto which had been adopted on November 18th. We feel certain that the comrades of the German Bureau will see from the above statement that the Administrative Council and its representatives in negotiations did not wish to precipitate the present controversy but made every possible concession, even concessions which involved acceptance of violation of Party discipline before taking final

action to enforce its decision.

In spite of the fact that the history of the previous negotiations with the Bureau of the Jewish Federation is outlined above show even bad faith on the part of the representatives of the Bureau, the Administrative Council stands ready at the present time to entertain any definite proposals for the settlement of the controversy, and if the German Bureau can obtain such proposals they will receive earnest consideration from the Administrative Council.

The Administrative Council agrees with the Executive Committee of the German Bureau that any action within the party at this time threatening the unity of the Party is a crime against the revolutionary movement in the country. It is quite certain that the history of the negotiations as outlined above prove that the Administrative Council of the Party has not been guilty of such action and that if there is a controversy which may bring about a split in the Jewish Federation, the Bureau of that Federation must thereupon shoulder the responsibility for this condition.

With fraternal greetings,

C.E. Ruthenberg,
Executive Secretary.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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