
Challenge of the Mandates of the CPA Delegation to the 2nd Congress of the Communist International, August 5, 1920.

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Eleventh Session August 5, 1920

Giacinto Serrati [Italy]: The session is open. Comrade Radek has the floor on behalf of the Credentials Commission.

Karl Radek [Russia]: The Credentials Commission had to decide the question of the credentials of the American delegations. Both American parties, the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party, are represented here. Meanwhile, a delegate from America, Comrade Flynn [Edward Lindgren], arrived with the news that both parties had united into one party. But in the course of this unification, part of the communists declared they would not accept it and have placed themselves outside of the United Communist Party. The representatives of the Communist Party wanted therefore to retain their old credentials. Comrade Flynn moved the annulment of two credentials, that is to say those of Comrades Fraina and Stoklitsky.

We decided to continue to recognize these comrades as delegates for the following reasons: The situation with which we have to deal in America at the moment is rapidly changing. In the concrete case we only have in front of us the reports of the now United Communist Party. We are not in a position to judge here how far there were compelling reasons which forced the minority of the Communist Party to remain outside the unified party. To refuse to recognize their credentials would mean declaring ourselves in solidarity

in advance with the United Communist Party as the only Communist party. Perhaps that will be necessary when we have received more detailed reports. But we cannot disqualify a communist organization on the basis of insufficient information.

We have therefore decided to recognize the credentials of both parties and since Comrade Fraina by no means denies that, according to his knowledge of the situation, the majority of the organized communists are to be found in the ranks of the United Communist Party, we have divided the credentials in such a way that the representatives of the United Communist Party received six and the representatives of the Communist Party received four votes. Comrade Fraina attempted, moreover, to prove that he and Comrade Stoklitsky by no means supported the position of the split but that they could not simply join the United Communist Party without any further ado. On behalf of the Credentials Commission I ask the Congress to agree to this decision.

I have to make a further report on which the Ukrainian comrades insist. That is to say that the Credentials Commission has not recognized the credentials of the Ukrainian Communist Party. As comrades may know, a small group has formed which numbers between 100 and 500 members. It is clear that this is a very small group which has nothing to do with concrete communist work.

Edward Lindgren [UCP of America]: I protest against the acceptance of the recognition of the credentials of the Communist Party of America and against the adoption of Comrade Radek's pro-

posol. As a result of various efforts a United Communist Party was finally formed in America of 30,000 members of the Communist Party and 20,000 members of the Communist Labor Party. This Party went over to illegal work and a kind of separation arose in the Party itself because only one part wanted illegal work. For this reason a part of the Communist Party has split from the United Party. Now, one could understand the credentials of the Communist Party being recognized here if the unification of the Party had taken place on the initiative of the American comrades. But this was not the case. A delegate from the Communist International was sent to America to bring about this fusion. Since this fusion has already taken place we cannot understand that the Communist International sanctions splitting by the recognition of the part that has split.

Louis Fraina [CP of America]: I greatly regret that this point at issue between the two factions in the American communist movement has come before the full session here. Besides, the Credentials Commission has already settled this question. I came to Russia about a month ago on behalf of my party and have had, together with Comrade Stoklitsky, the other delegate, two discussions with the delegates of the Communist Labor Party. Even before Comrade Flynn [Lindgren] arrived here in Moscow as the delegate of the United Communist Party, I myself proposed that the representatives of both parties of the American movement should reach an agreement here, first of all to recognize that a united party of communists is absolutely necessary, secondly to appear here at this Congress as a united group, thirdly to call on the Executive Committee to carry on working to complete the unification of the communists in America, fourthly to take on the obligation to submit to the decisions of the Executive. Things are

not as Flynn [Lindgren] has tried to picture them here, that is to say that if the Congress continued to recognize the two comrades from the Communist Party it would be sanctioning the split.

On the contrary, if these two comrades are expelled from the Congress, this will serve to sharpen the bitterness. I think that I have the right to take part in the Congress as a delegate because my party can, and must, and will, contribute a great deal for the common cause of the communist revolution. If Comrade Flynn's [Lindgren's] point of view is adopted that will only be damaging. But if Stoklitsky and myself remain as delegates that will have a calming effect on the dispute in America.

The question of how small or how large the portion of the former Communist Party is which refuses to join the United Communist Party is immaterial. It may be that the larger part has united with the Communist Labor Party but up to now, until official reports are available, I must insist that Stoklitsky and I remain here.

The question of removing us could only arise either if the Communist Party itself decides to withdraw its representatives or if the Executive, having investigated the matter thoroughly, decides that the Communist Party must be removed from the International. But otherwise the representatives have the right to demand that they should remain here as delegates.

A proposal is made to take a vote on closing the discussion.

John Reed [UCP of America]: I am against closing the discussion because I should like to give a few reasons why Comrade Radek's proposal should not be accepted.

The motion to close the discussion is accepted. The proposal of the Credentials Commission is then accepted by 19 votes to 9.

***Transcription by Andy Blunden. Additional minor editing by Tim Davenport.
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