
Communist Party Convention: Day 1 — Sept. 1, 1919.

by August H. Loula

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*Title of Case and Offense Charged
or Nature of Matter Under Investigation:*

**In re: Convention of the Communist Party of
America, held at Smolny Institute, Chicago.
Communist Matter.**

*Statement of Operations, Evidence Collected, Names and
Addresses of Persons Interviewed, Places Visited, Etc.:*

At Chicago.

Subject convention was called to order this morning by LOUIS C. FRAINA, of Boston, editor of the **REVOLUTIONARY AGE**. The convention is being held in the Smolny Institute, 1217-21 Blue Island Ave. 130 delegates were present when the convention was called to order. MAX COHEN was selected as Secretary for the day.

The hall was beautifully decorated with red ribbons, red streamers, and red flags, but no American flag or bunting of any kind was in evidence. These decorations were ordered torn down by officers of the Police Department before the delegates were called to order. A 75 ft. sign, printed in white on flaming red muslin, read, "Long Live the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." Framed pictures of MAXIM GORKY and other revolutionary writers adorned the walls. These were not molested by the police.

Very prominent among the Communists were

the following ultra-radicals:

DR. KOPNAGEL, of Chicago.
ALEXANDER STOKLITSKY, of Chicago.
DENNIS BATT, formerly of Detroit, now of Chicago.
NICHOLAS HOURWICH, of New York.
JOSEPH B. STILSON, of Pennsylvania.
LOUIS C. FRAINA, of Boston.
J. BALTRUSAITIS, of Pennsylvania.
ATTORNEY ISAAC FERGUSON, of Chicago.
PETER OMELIANOVICH, of Chicago.
MORRIS BACKALL, of Chicago.

and many lesser lights.

Our Confidential Informant No. 121 [N. Nagorowe], who has been directed by Division Superintendent Edward J. Brennan to attend this convention, has been elected as a delegate and is taking an active part in the proceedings, and any secret sessions of the heads of the Communist movement or any other secret procedure that may be contemplated by the radicals outside of the convention hall are concerned, will be taken care of by him. Confidential Informant No. 121 [Nagorowe] will submit written reports to this Bureau office, and upon instructions of Division Superintendent Edward J. Brennan, I will submit the same in my reports which will follow this convention.

Nothing of importance occurred on this date, further than the selection of several committees. A Committee on Credentials, consisting of 7 members, was elected, the following delegates comprising the same:

Delegate ELBAUM — 89 votes.
Delegate STILSON — 87 votes.
Delegate KOPNAGEL — 83 votes.
Delegate BALTRUSAITIS — 72 votes.

Delegate OLKIN — 65 votes.
 Delegate FORSINGER — 60 votes.
 Delegate LUNIN — 59 votes.

Among the spectators at this convention are a great many of our leading ultra-radical Bolshevik propagandists, who are being watched by agents of this department and undercover men in compliance with Superintendent Brennan's instructions; and a report on them will follow.

DENNIS E. BATT, who acted as Chairman Pro Tem in opening the convention, before turning the convention over to LOUIS FRAINA, who had been selected to act for the day, made the opening address, as follows:

Friends and Comrades:

In the name of the National Organization Committee of the Communist Party and the National Left Wing Council of the National Left Wing Section of the Socialist Party, I greet you.

The calling of this convention to order imposes upon me a responsibility of which I am deeply sensible. I trust, in fact I am sure, that each and every one of you are likewise deeply sensible of the responsibility that you assumed in taking part of this convention as delegate. The eyes of the class-conscious American Proletariat are upon this convention, watching with anxiety the outcome of this historic gathering. To them you owe a duty that must not be shirked or treated lightly. They are looking to you to formulate the plans that will guide them most quickly and safely out of this dark night of capitalism into the dawn of a new day.

The convention itself is not the beginning nor the ending of the Communist movement in America. It is but a climax which marks the beginning of a new era in the development of the Communist movement in this country.

The beginning of this movement has its roots many years back and has but now reached the stage where it can proceed as the dominant one. Our work here is to formulate the position and structure of an organization that will be the weapon by which the working class will train and organize itself for a conquest of political power. The party is here. The movement is here. It is for you to shape its structure. The Communist Party of America is a fact.

The American Proletariat has manifested a tendency to, and in many cases actually has, severed its connections with its reactionary leaders. The world war brought graphically to the minds of the proletarians that a reorganization of the socialist movement was necessary, and from this the great revolutionary movement of America has received a great stimulus. The question of complete separation from all Centrist and reactionary elements is no longer debatable. It is absolutely necessary and an

accomplished fact.

In the past there have been many movements toward the organization of a real revolutionary movement in America that have not been a success. Whether this convention is successful in organizing a real movement rests on you. We have one advantage over previous movements of this character. They have usually relied for a great part of their strength upon mere anti-administration sentiment, while we have been drawn together, not only by a realization of the fact that the existing socialist movement was unscientific and unprincipled, but we have also been drawn together by some measure of understanding as to what was required in the way of an organization to replace the old machinery.

It is true, of course, that there are differences of opinion as to what should actually be the tactics and structure of this organization. These problems are to be solved at this convention, and they will be solved with the greatest benefit to the Communist movement if we exercise forbearance in our deliberations and conduct ourselves as becomes men and women who have the interests of the working class in mind and are conscious of the responsibility resting upon them.

The National Organization Committee of the Communist Party of America and the National Left Wing Council of the National Left Wing Section of the Socialist Party look with pleasure upon this convention; conscious of the fact that they have been particularly fortunate in playing a part in this movement. The propaganda that has been consistently carried on by these committees for this convention has borne fruit. The response has been excellent. And the result you see about you.

Events of the last few days in this city have amply established the truth of our contention that it was futile to participate in the Socialist Party Convention. The Communists who are still of the opinion that they should participate have since been forced by the contemptible acts of the rules of the Socialist Party to leave that convention.

There is no question but what these Communistic elements will eventually be lined up with us. There is also the possibility that a third movement will be organized. There are many elements that will not leave the old barge of the Socialist Party until it sinks beneath the waves with its reactionary leaders.

These events cannot in any way swerve us from our path. We should keep steadfastly on in the course that we have chosen, confident of the fact that the revolutionary workers of America are with us and that soon the proletariat of this country will rally to the standard of the Communist Party of America. (Applause.) We have but to acquaint them with the program. The American proletariat, I am confident, does not lack the intelligence and courage to follow the path lighted by the Moscow International to a conquest of political power.

With these few preliminary remarks, by the authority vested in me by the National Organization Committee of the Communist Party and the National Left Wing Council of the Socialist Party, I declare this convention formally opened to consider such business as may properly come before it.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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