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# First Convention of the Communist Party of America, Day 7 — Sept. 7, 1919.

by James O. Peyronnin

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*Report Made by:* James O. Peyronnin  
*Place Where Made:* Chicago, Ill.  
*Date When Made:* Sept. 13, 1919.  
*Period for Which Made:* Sept. 7, 1919.

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

**In Re: First Convention  
“Communist Party of America,”  
Chicago, Illinois.**

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

***At Chicago.***

Following is a detailed report of the 7th day session of the above mentioned convention:

Convention reconvened at 9 am. John J. Ballam elected as Chairman for the day.

In conversation with A. Renner of Detroit, Michigan, before the opening of the day's session, he stated that the Manifesto was gotten up by Fraina, Bittelman, and the other eastern delegates; was in his estimation the most ridiculous thing that could have been accepted by the Communist Party. Renner stated that he was a teacher in Economics in the Proletarian University of Michigan and that Dennis E. Batt (one of the leaders of the Communist Party movement), started a course in that University about 3 years ago. Renner further state that he and Batt had been spoken

to before the Convention to serve on the Central Executive Committee, but that on account of developments which took place at the Convention, and which they did not expect, declined all nominations for office. Renner also remarked that Louis C. Fraina was not qualified in his opinion for National Editor on account of his ridiculous attitude on the issue.

S.A. Kopnagel, Chairman of the Resolutions Committee, read the report of that committee, and was accepted by the body without discussions. (A copy of this report will be secured as soon as issued by the Communist Party and same will be submitted to the Bureau, Washington).

P. Sparer, Chairman of the Young Peoples Communist League, read the report of that Committee, and after many discussions it was moved and carried by the body that the report of this committee be referred to the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party for revision, etc.

Section 1, however, as read and voted by the body will remain as read: “That the Young Peoples Communist League be an auxiliary organization affiliated with the Communist Party.

Report of the FINANCE COMMITTEE: We have 137 delegates seated, 117 so far have paid their \$50.00 — \$5,850 collected, one delegate paid \$19.00, making a grand total received of \$5,869.00. Expenses on account of fares \$5,490.61, rent \$275.00, total expenses \$5,765.61. The Finance Committee could not give an accurate statement of the money received and expenses incurred. The committee requested time to make a further report.

G. Ashkenuzi of New York and [Bert] Wolfe re-

signed from Central Executive Committee. Charles Dirba of Minnesota and H.M. Wicks of Cook County, Ill., were elected for the vacancies.

By Ruthenberg: The Committee on Finance are not bookkeepers I am sorry to say and the records available do not show clearly what has taken place. I am submitting herewith a statement of that committee, after reading at length statement of figures, etc., he concluded that there was a balance of \$229.72 on hand, out of which will be paid the stenographer's fee.

It was further announced that \$155.80 was received through donations from various sources, and this amount would go to the funds of the organization.

By H.M. Wicks: made motion and supported, that the Minority [Michigan] manifesto be printed and placed before the membership along with the Majority report of the manifesto for their information.

By Ballam, Chairman: My understanding is that the Minority report is a part of the proceedings of this convention and will be published with all the rest of the proceedings.

By Ruthenberg: Motion that this Convention requests the federations, branches, etc. to turn over to the Communist Party the national and state dues which they retained less the extra expense incurred on account of handling the matter separately. *Carried.*

By J.V. Stilson: According to my close estimation the Communist Party will receive about \$10,000 from the various federations.

By Ruthenberg: We have the names and addresses of all delegates who are here for our records, but in addition those delegates can assist us very much in the work that will have to be done in the very near future by securing the names and addresses of all the English branches of their states and send them to the national organization. While we have the addresses of the locals in the United States of the former Socialist Party where there are City Central Committees, we have the addresses of the locals or branches of that organization, it will be very important that we reach these branches with our literature; also we can send them the Program and Constitution and get a decision as to where that will stand. The delegates here who have not turned in their addresses should do so before leaving.

We have been hearing a great deal about the con-

vention which met in the IWW Hall [the CLP], but I happened this morning to see a list of the delegates of that convention and just a brief examination of that list indicates the convention did not amount to a great deal; there were 90 delegates in that convention, but upon examination we find there were only 80 on their list, 7 were seated on the floor of this convention, therefore, in order to help raise the figures they included the delegates who were here and not there; then we can go further in the analysis and find that the 7 delegates did not represent anyone to speak of.

They have a list of 10 delegates from New York. I do not think that there are more than a couple of hundred at least behind those 10 delegates, possibly not even a hundred, so you can imagine what the New York delegation amounts to.

They have listed 11 delegates from Illinois at that convention. Not more than a few hundred at the very best represent them.

The only sound organizations they have behind the delegates who were in that convention were Washington, California, and Oregon. And we have delegates here on the floor representing those states.

Florida is one of their states. You could not find more than 25 Socialists in the whole state of Florida.

Virginia is similar to Florida.

West Virginia — a delegate happened to be there, and that was the reason he was seated. They let him help formulate the program of this soap bubble organization.

They have such states as Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, and Colorado, which we know have a very small membership indeed, and the large part of that membership is with this organization and not with their organization.

Indiana was represented there by 3 delegates, whereas Indiana, so far as being represented, was either with the Right Wing or was here.

There were possibly 10,000 members who might have been represented by those delegates, and even in that case there was not any clear mandate to organize a third organization. In the Right Wing [SPA] Convention there were a large number of delegates without any membership behind them. In the Communist Labor Party Convention there were 75 percent, possibly, at the outside, without more than 10,000 members behind them, whereas here our delegates who

stood on the floor in the convention represented a solid bloc of membership. That shows where we stand today and that shows the possibilities of the future.

“The Internationale” was sung by the Russians.  
Convention permanently adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Employee purchased a photograph of the Convention, which was taken on Sept. 5, 1919, for \$1.00, and same will be retained for the files at the Bureau office for that date.

In conclusion it will be stated that on account of the antagonism and friction existing between certain groups of the Convention, the ultra-radicals, who are the real “Bolshevists” in the United States, did not deviate to any extent from the actual business of the convention, but these radicals, with especial reference to the group representing the Russian Revolutionary Organization from New York, should be kept under surveillance in their activities in behalf of the Communist Party, and which organization with the other foreign element of the Convention practically controlled the Convention from its inception to end.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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