
UCP Unity Bulletin No. 3

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UNITY BULLETIN NO. 3.

To the Membership,
Comrades:—

At the last joint meeting of the unity committees of the UCP and CP [Nov. 28, 1920], detailed figures of memberships claimed by each party were exchanged. Without hesitation, the committee of the CP conceded that the figures submitted by the UCP committee were substantially correct.† Our committee, on the other hand, could by no means make a similar concession in regard to the CP figures. The totals of membership figures given our unity committee by the CP unity committee seemed so highly improbable that we asked for a further report in greater detail, for the purpose of verification.

How well founded our fears of manipulation of membership figures by the CP were can be shown by an example or two. To understand fully a few remarks about the two party organizations are necessary.

At the unity convention, which resulted in the formation of the UCP [Bridgman, MI: May 26-31, 1920], the delegates present represented a total membership of about 11,000, both CLP and CP. This unity convention, in reality, formed a new party, the basis of which was the program and constitution adopted at the convention. It remained to be seen how many of these 11,000

members would conform to this program and the new organization form adopted at the convention. To weld the membership represented into a new party was a task, the accomplishment of which had to be undertaken after the convention. The membership figures as submitted by the UCP Unity Committee to that of the CP reflect the progressive success of this task. According to these figures, our party shows a membership during July [1920] of 2,906 — computed upon dues receipts; August [1920] 3,289; September [1920] 4,204; October [1920] 5,661.

These figures do not include unreported dues receipts from districts 11 [Portland/Seattle] and 12 [Minneapolis/Canada], nor dual members. Including these, our average membership for the months of July, August, September, and October [1920] is 4,350. This average is far below our active membership today.

The CP, on the other hand, retained its party machinery intact. It has maintained a continuous organization. According to the report of its Executive Secretary [Charles Dirba] made to the convention [2nd: New York: July 13-18, 1920], this party, after the split in its ranks, still had a membership of 8,350. Only dues receipts could form a sound basis for such a claim. How reasonable this claim was on a dues receipt basis may be seen by but a single instance. The Executive Secretary of the CP [Dirba] reported 2,000 members of the Russian Federation at the CP convention. Yet, this federa-

†- The CPA announced this determination in a letter to the UCP dated Nov. 30, 1920, signed by Executive Secretary Charles Dirba on behalf of the party.

tion only paid for 497 dues stamps during July [1920]. Only 10 Russian CP branches out of a total of 88 claimed by this federation show dues stamp purchases for July. It may be claimed that the July dues from these Russian branches were paid in later months. But then, it should also be understood, that in that event, these branches should also show dues payments for May or June, during July. This is not the case.

The statement of membership given the UCP by the CP makes the following claims: July [1920] membership 4,851; August [1920] 6,344; September [1920] 10,555; October [1920] 8,460; Average 7,552.

Upon this CP membership statement appears a total of \$2,646.80 in dues collected in November [1920] and placed to the credit of the four previous months as part of the dues receipts to be included and to make up the average CP membership.

Up to September 1 [1920], the CP federations paid to the CEC of the CP 20 cents per member for dues. And yet the CP membership report shows that in October [1920] several federations paid for 6,571 members at the 20 cent rate for the month of September. In November [1920] 2,564 CP federation members were paid for at the 20 cent rate, credited to the month of October. The CP membership claim is now in the hands of our auditor. Until further report is made, we ask that the UCP membership rest in confidence, understanding that the CEC of the party intends to do all in its power to force the CP to prove its membership. We shall not permit any tactic on the part of the CP to precipitate us into any agreement as to unity, unless such agreement rests upon acceptable membership figures and is certified by a spirit of unity.

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Where unity is sincerely desired, there the spirit of unity must first be engendered. The CP

leaders are doing everything but this. The Lithuanian Federation members of the CP openly publish in their paper that trusted and credentialed organizers of the UCP are spies and provocateurs. To them, no tactic is unclean. Ever since the convention at which the UCP was formed [May 1920], we have treated with silent contempt this unwarranted attack which the CP leaders made upon the UCP. The Communist International properly rebuked the CP leaders when it informed them months ago that no difference in principle existed between the CLP and the CP manifestos and programs. Yet, the CP leaders again [play] the same game, and right after the UCP convention began attacking the UCP program as centrist and UCP members as centrists. The CP leaders do not understand that there is such a thing as party honor. They know only how to malign, how to mislead their members, and in clover only then, when they are in the midst of an intensive party or inter-party controversy. The CP leaders forget that the mission of the party is to reach the masses with the communist message. They think their mission to be to narrow down the party to a few quarreling sectarians.

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The CEC of the CP, as well as its federation executives, have proclaimed and still proclaim that “unity with the United Communist Party does not mean peace nor even a truce with such centrists as Caxton [I.E. Ferguson] or Damon [C.E. Ruthenberg].” And while they made this admission and confession, namely, that they want unity only to carry on their disruptive campaign, and while they fulminate against Damon [Ruthenberg] and Caxton [Ferguson], two cablegrams are received from Moscow, which place the greatest confidence possible in these comrades. And this [when] the CP delegate, Andrew [Nicholas Hourwich], had appeared in Moscow to “expose” Damon [Ruthenberg] and Caxton [Ferguson] as centrists and to

“expose” the whole UCP as a centrist organization.

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The heresy hunting to be indulged in after unity, in accordance with a circular issued to the CP membership, will paralyze the united party and defeat the purpose of unity.

While firmly and faithfully supporting the program and revolutionary tactics of communism, a communist party must always be closely united with the most widely spread workers’ organizations, AND AVOID SECTARIANISM as much as lack of principle.” This is what the Communist International has said. In clear violation of this, the CP leaders propose to form a party which is an inquisitorial body, standing aloof from the actual labor movement and only excelling in dogmatism. The united party must be what the UCP is endeavoring to be: an organization conscientiously carrying out the mission of the Communist International. Only when in the course of communist work a member proves himself unworthy of the honor of being a member, should expulsion take place.

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The first leaflet issued by the CP giving news of the progress of unity negotiations also seems to show studied manipulation. Two of the letters in this leaflet were transposed, and in the last letter appearing in this leaflet, the one addressed to the CP by the UCP, the entire meaning of the last paragraph was changed by leaving out part of the last sentence. Compare the letter as printed in

the UCP unity bulletin and that which appears in the CP leaflet, and you will be able to comprehend what tricks the CP leaders attempt. No less unscrupulous are the leaders of the Russian Federation of the CP. In the Russian UP unity leaflet, supposed to be a translation of the English CP leaflet, phrases and sentences have been purposely changed and twisted to mislead the CP membership.

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The membership of the UCP must realize, with its CEC, what danger the communist movement would have to face if delivered into the hands of irresponsible comrades. The Communist International placed confidence in the UCP. It functions through the UCP in this country, publishes all its official documents through the UCP, pledges its material support to the UCP, and recognizes the UCP as the best expression of the communist movement in the United States. We must guard this trust by guarding the communist movement against the danger of being tied hand and foot to the stake of a communist inquisition.

We earnestly desire unity. Any form of unity that will safeguard the united party against these dangers will be accepted. Our stand is dictated by the desire for a permanent unity, while the leaders of the CP openly declare that unity for them means only new forms for their struggle for disunity. Further developments will be reported to you promptly.

Faternally,

Unity Committee, UCP.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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