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# **Moscow Condemned:**

## **IWW Delegate in His Official Report Bitterly Attacks Meeting of Moscow Group: Williams Recommends that IWW Steer Clear of Moscow**

### **by George Williams**

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*This preliminary report of his impression of the Red Trade Union International was written by Fellow Worker George Williams at Berlin, and forwarded by mail and courier.*

*The report follows:*

I presume that headquarters has been rather anxious to get word from me and has also been expecting some. That I did not write sooner is explainable from many points. One is that I did not wish to trust anything to the mails from Moscow and also the situation in Russia was such that it was impossible to gather the necessary material for a clear report. It might seem strange to you to say this, but such was the manner of conducting the Congress [1st: July 3-19, 1921], together with the poor translations, that records of what was actually occurring were impossible to procure. Very little English was printed while the Congress was in session because of the total lack of equipment and labor necessary for that language. Even now, several months afterwards, only half of the proceedings are out and they are of such a miserable composition as to be utterly worthless. In view of this situation and other conditions no advisable to mention here, I decided to gather all I could in other languages that had not yet been printed in English and wait until I had reached America before preparing a report. At present I will only give a general outline of what took place at the Red Trade Union Congress in Moscow. When I arrive home and have access to more material I will make a more detailed report.

## In Moscow.

When I arrived in Moscow on July 1st [1921] I found that I had been preceded by three other fellow workers, acting as delegates from the Metal and Machinery Workers' Industrial Union. I am only acquainted with their surnames. They are Belinkis, Belotin, and Calvert. Belinkis and Belotin had credentials issued by the New York District Council of IWW Locals. Belinkis and Belotin told me that they, together with Calvert, had been elected by the convention of the Metal and Machinery Workers which was held in Detroit in February of 1921. (I have not sufficient notes with me to give their full explanation and must rely on memory.) However, even though elected as they say by the convention of M and MW, General Headquarters would not o.k. their credentials on the ground that the General Convention would send a delegate and also that Hardy was then in Russia and would represent the IWW. Calvert, whose credentials I did not see, was, when I arrived in Moscow, on an expedition of some kind about which I will explain when I get home. But I met him shortly before I left, and he tells me the same as the other delegates. He was recording secretary of the Metal and Machinery Convention. I mention the circumstances of these delegates so you will get a clearer Idea or understanding of what will be told later about the Congress of the Red Trade Union International.

In addition to the above mentioned parties, Fellow Worker Kraus was also present as a delegate with credentials signed by Roy Brown as Chairman of the GEB.<sup>1</sup> Kraus was empowered (according to the instructions) to act as an alternate to Hardy, who was in Russia at the time the credentials were issued and about whom it was not certain whether he could stay for the coming Congress because of delays and postponement. Kraus worked in the printing shop of the organization in Chicago on the Russian paper.

The above mentioned fellow workers had been in Moscow two months before I arrived and had already participated in several caucuses with other American delegates. They had been officially recognized at that time as delegates of the IWW by the officials of the provisional council of the RTUI [RILU] and were acting as best they could in lieu of the presence of an official delegate.

Upon arriving in Moscow and becoming acquainted with the situation, I informed these fellow workers that my credentials stated specifically that I was to be the only official delegate who was empowered by the General Convention and as it was so stated in writing on my credentials, they would have to fit in as best they could. They agreed to this and were subsequently admitted to the Congress as fraternal delegates. I saw no reason to object to their position, as neither they nor the officials in Moscow could know if

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<sup>1</sup> The General Executive Board — the governing executive body of the IWW, comparable to the Central Executive Committee of the CPA.

anyone was coming from the General Convention, and besides, a few more fraternal delegates in an already stuffed congress could make no difference. In addition to myself and the three fellow workers already mentioned, I found that the following were in Moscow as delegates from America:

### **The American Delegates.**

(1) Ella Reeve Bloor (under the name of Emmons), representing three locals of the International Association of Machinists; Local Union 337 of Chicago, Local Union 225 of Dayton, and Local Union 47 of Denver, Colorado, totaling about 18,000 members.

(2) Crosby [William Z. Foster], representing Amalgamated Metal Workers; Amalgamated Food Workers; Book and Shoe Workers; minority committee needle trades of Boston; Amalgamated Clothing Workers minority of Boston, totaling from 25,000 to 40,000 members.

(3) Hulet Wells, representing Seattle Central Labor Union, 50,000 members.

(4) Dennis Batt, representing the Detroit Federation of Labor, 60,000 members.

(5) Joseph Dixon [Earl Browder], representing the Kansas miners, the United Labor Council of New York City, and the Trade Union Educational League of Kansas City. Combined total of from 75,000 to 80,000 members.

In addition to the above, who were seated as delegates with decisive votes, there was a small army of fraternal delegates, who were credentialed by the New York City Red Labor Bureau, most of whom were also delegates to the Third Congress of the Communist International, which was then in session, and they served as convenient stuffing for the Red International Congress. They represented everything that is known and unknown in the American labor movement.

Having perceived the nature of the organizations which the delegates claimed to represent, I immediately entered a protest with the Credentials Committee and demanded that they (with the exception of Crosby [Foster]) be excluded as delegates "with a decisive vote." I also asked to see and examine the credentials of those delegates to whom I objected and learned that the credentials of Dixon [Browder] were an absolute fraud. He claimed to represent the United Labor Council of New York City, but no credentials could be procured from that organization. Dixon [Browder], moreover, did not even know where in New York this particular organization had its headquarters, nor did he know the names of any of its officials. His credentials from the Kansas miners were likewise absent, but a prepared mandate from the New York City Red Labor Bureau seemed to serve as bona fide credentials for the United Labor Council and Kansas miners. The United Labor Council of New York City, as near as I can understand, is an organization that serves the same function for radical independent unions of that

city as a a central labor body in the AF of L. It is a propoganda center and has no power to bind its constituents to an affiliation with the Red International. The Kansas miners, whom Dixon [Browder] claimed to represent, are supposed to be the several districts in that state that are part of the United Mine Workers of America, yet it is certain that they never sent Dixon [Browder] to represent them, but he appears in Moscow as their delegate. The Trade Union Educational League is a supposed organization in Kansas City which only exists on paper. Presumably it is a Communist organization for propoganda purposes. That Dixon's [Browder's] credentials from these organizations were issued by the Red Labor Bureau of New York City and not from the organizations themselves is proof positive that his presence in Moscow was specifically arranged for and that the Red Labor Bureau was the center through which the Communist Party of America worked to control the American delegation. The Red Labor Bureau is itself nothing more than a bureau of the Communist International and functions as such.

### **Unethical Practices.**

Dixon [Browder] was the American representative on the provisional council of the RTUI [RILU] before the last Congress selected another. Who he represented no one knows. That Dixon [Browder] is a Communist is sufficient to know and explains everything.

The credentials of Batt, representing the Detroit Federation of Labor, stated clearly and specifically that the bearer was being sent as a fraternal delegate.

The credentials of Bloor or Emmons are open to suspicion, and whoever they were made out for was only empowered to act in a fraternal capacity. Certain it is that these three locals, thousands of miles apart, did not elect the same person as their representative, each selecting a delegate about the same time. The case is simple from the standpoint that Emmons or Bloor is a Communist and all that was needed was a letterhead and a typewriter.

The credentials of Wells, representing the Seattle Central Labor Council, were also fraternal.

The credentials of Crosby [Foster], in so far as the Amalgamated Metal Workers were concerned, were good, although his representation of minorities in the needle trades of Boston and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of the same city are rather dubious and at the most are minorities manufactured by the Communist Party of America.

One of the most significant things about the credentials held by the Communist members of the American delegation was the fact that they represented organizations from different parts of the country. It is evident that distance counted but little in their calculations. And the fact that they

could not possibly be members of an organization in Kansas City and another in New York City and be elected at the same time did not seem to matter. An honest Credentials Committee would certainly question such mandates, but it seems that these delegates left America with all assurance that they would be accepted. And they were — with open arms.

But in spite of the obvious fraud being practiced by those mentioned, the Credentials Committee allowed them seats with decisive votes, as was to be expected.

The American delegates about whom I protested had been in Moscow one or two months before I arrived. Being recognized as delegates, they had organized themselves into an American delegation and proceeded to prepare for their participation in the Congress.

### **All Cut and Dried.**

According to the manner in which the Congress was to proceed, or, rather, the European way of arranging affairs, each delegation was grouped according to country. Thus, for instance, all American delegates were in the American delegation; all English delegates in the English delegation, and so on. These delegations, most of whom had arrived in May and the early part of June [1921], held meetings and each delegation elected members to act on the various committees, such as the Credentials Committee, Constitution Committee, and so forth. When I arrive everything had been prepared and the Congress was about to begin. The other delegates from the IWW whom I have mentioned before (with the exception of Calvert) had attended a few meetings of the American delegation and from their accounts they had been completely ignored and ceased to attend the meetings. I found that all but perhaps one of the other members of the American delegation were Communists and obviously intent on excluding the IWW as much as possible from any standing; in fact, they showed a decided hostility against both the delegates from the IWW and the organization itself.

### **Says Moscow Officials Dislike IWW.**

(One of the most noticeable things in the official circles in Moscow is the manifest animosity towards the IWW, especially in the RTUI [RILU].)

What I have explained about the character of the delegates was also the case in the delegations of all other countries. From the first it was apparent that each delegation was safely controlled by Communists and all working strictly on the policy laid down by the Communist International. Many of the delegates to the Red International from countries such as England, France, Germany, etc., were also delegates to the Third Congress of the Third International, and, being on the ground early, had prepared everything to suit themselves. The Credentials Committee (the most important

in view of the fact that they decided on the standing of all delegates) was composed mostly of Communists and they maintained a (poorly concealed) hostile attitude towards all Syndicalist and Industrial delegates. This Credentials Committee had one function only, and that was to see that each delegation was controlled by Communists. About the credentials of Syndicalists and Industrialists they were strangely rigid in their inspection, but about the credentials of those who were Communists anything was good enough.

The various countries were classified in four groups: England, America, Germany, France, Russia, Spain, etc., in the first group, and less important industrial countries in others. The first group had 16 votes regardless of the number of delegates, the second group 12, and so on to the last group. Each delegation was instructed to divide the number of votes allotted to it in their own meetings. The American delegation, being, as it was, mostly composed of Communists, divided the votes to suit itself in the following result: Emmons [Bloor] 1, Crosby [Foster] 3, Williams 3, Wells 3, Dixon [Browder] 3, Batt 3. Total 16.

### **A Sharp Division.**

From the first it was apparent that there was to be a sharp division in the Congress — on one side the Communists and on the other the Industrialists and the Syndicalists. The program that divided these two factions is too lengthy to go into here and unfortunately I have not the necessary material with me to give the subject its necessary clearness. But everywhere one looked, every action by the officials of the then provisional council and the general attitude of Moscow showed that the Congress of the Red International was to be nothing more than the tail of the Communist International kite. Indeed, a strange but decided hostility was displayed towards the Syndicalists and Industrialists generally. Strange to the workers in America, but it fits in with the policy of the Communist International.

To understand more the nature of the delegates present at the Congress of the Red International, I must briefly explain the manner in which many of them were sent.

From America six delegates were present with decisive votes, including myself. Of the six only Crosby [Foster] and myself were official representatives of radical labor bodies or of any other kind of organization. Emmons [Bloor] and Dixon [Browder] were Communists (so was Crosby [Foster]) sent over by the Communists of America. Wells and Batt were fraternal delegates from AF of L central bodies. None of these four delegates show that the organizations they represented or claimed to represent would ever become an integral part of the Red Trade Union International. It was admitted that the Trade Union Educational League represented by Dixon [Browder] was only a propaganda bureau set up in Kansas City to educate the

members of the AF of L to Communist principles. But it was argued that since there must be some radical members of the Kansas City trade unions, who as such had no organization, their logical representative was the Trade Union Educational League, or, in other words, the Communist Party as personified by Dixon [Browder]. The Communist viewpoint is that every trade union in the AF of L has what is called a radical minority which is striving to overthrow the present leaders in the AF of L. This radical minority has no organization through which it can express itself but it must be represented in Moscow. The Communist Party has an organization, therefore the Communist Party appoints a delegate to represent whatever minority appears on the labor horizon. Or, to put the case in another light, thus: There are many radicals in the AF of L, but they have no organization; the Communists of America have an organization but no members.

### **Made-to-Order Minorities.**

The manner of defining a radical minority in Communist circles is unique. For instance, the Seattle labor unions go on a general strike contrary to the wishes of the international officers of the various trade unions involved; or the Seattle Labor Council passes a resolution favoring the recognition of Soviet Russia. This is against the attitude of Gompers. There are 60,000 AF of L members in Seattle, therefore in the Communist conception of things the 60,000 members are a minority in the AF of L, and as such in the manner described are entitled to have a delegate in Moscow.

In Kansas among the coal miners a hostile attitude has been maintained against the leaders of the AF of L and the United Mine Workers. They have a so-called progressive leader [Alexander Howat] and go on unauthorized strikes; there are 70,000 coal miners in Kansas who, because of their general attitude, are styled a minority and as such they should have a delegate to Moscow. In fact, they must, and since they as a minority have no means of electing a delegate, the Communist Party, through the Red Labor Bureau of New York City, obligingly relieves them of this burden and a Communist who never saw a coal mine in his life is dispatched to Moscow.

But there are other ways of creating minorities by the Communists. Several Communists work, let us say, in the railroad shops somewhere. As members of the Communist Party they form what is called a cell movement and as such they are the official Communist representation of whatever minorities can be construed out of the situation. Whether any of the other workers in the shops who are perhaps radical in their views know of their presence and that they are represented makes no difference. Elections are not necessary in hypothetical cases. To the Communists every trade union is a potential minority and in more ways than one. The Kansas miners or the workers in Seattle are national minorities because of the presence of conservative officials. In fact, the Communists have created so many minorities

that one begins to wonder if there is any majority. The minorities are made to suit the occasion. Thus the Communists needed national minorities for the Red Trade Union Congress and they were readily furnished by the New York City Red Labor Bureau.

### **Mania for Control.**

What I have explained here I have found to be the case in every country represented. Germany, for instance, had over 70 delegates present; of this number perhaps 12 represented actual labor organizations. The rest were representing minorities in the German trade union movement. Moreover, nearly all of these minorities were also delegates to the Third Communist International Congress.

It might now be asked (in view of what I have said) why should there be such a manifest desire to stuff the Congress of the Red International with delegates who did not represent labor bodies when in the call issued by the provisional council of the RTUI [RILU] it was clearly stated that the Congress was to be composed of radical trade union delegates only and that a purely economic international separate from the political organization was to be formed. I think that every economic organization which answered the call believed that the RTUI [RILU] was to be free from any domination by a political faction. The answer to this is simple; having failed to bring the radical labor unions into the Communist International and knowing that there was a universal desire for an international composed only of radical labor organizations; realizing that sooner or later this International would be formed, the tacticians of the Communist International conceived the idea of forming the Red Trade Union International and dominating it by the mere fact that Moscow would be its headquarters. Thus the radical economic organizations in joining the Red Trade Union International would place themselves as completely under the domination of the Communist International as though they were units of the Third International itself. The plan as revealed by the deliberations is to place such national labor movements, radical and otherwise, under the domination of the political faction of each country, with the Executive Committee of the Communist International as supreme dictators of the world's proletariat.

### **Stuffing the Congress.**

In addition to the minority delegates I have referred to, there were delegates from countries in which no revolutionary labor organization exists. There were delegates from Palestine, Georgia (Asia), Azerbaijan, Korea, and several other places too numerous to mention and too hard to find on any map. The ridiculous assumption that revolutionary labor unions exist in Azerbaijan or Palestine and the audacity of seating delegates from these

countries in a Congress of revolutionary labor unions are but an indication of the steps taken to stuff the Congress with enough delegates of the desired caliber to put through any program desired. But whatever program was intended for the consideration of the Congress was lost sight of or cast aside for the purely obvious intention of placing the RTUI [RILU] under the control of the politicians. In fact, the most of the delegates from Korea and Azerbaijan were credentialed in Moscow and never saw those countries.

I cannot go into the actual proceedings of the Congress in this report because I have nothing to refer to here in Berlin that is printed in English. I can safely say, however, that nothing of a constructive nature was ever adopted or introduced. After everything is said and done about the First Congress of the RTUI [RILU], the tabulated results will be this:

### **Autocratic Methods.**

That an Executive Council was chosen (not elected) who are all Communists and that every bona fide revolutionary labor organization that joins the RTUI [RILU] will be subject to the mandate of this council. This council will in turn be merely a bureau of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist International.

One of the most glaring examples of fraud practiced upon the Red Congress by the political group in control was the selection of [George] Andreychine as a member of the Executive Council. Andreychine arrived in Moscow a few days before the Congress ended and, as is well known, was political refugee from America. He was not a delegate and bore no credentials from any organization. But he is a Communist and regarded (in Moscow) as being an influential member of the IWW. I am reliably informed that Andreychine was selected as the representative of American on the Executive Council by a secret caucus of American Communists in Moscow. And the majority of those who participated in the caucus were not even delegates to the RTUI [RILU], but were delegates to the Congress of the Third International.

Shortly after arriving in Moscow and appraising the situation as I have briefly described, I abandoned the meetings of the American delegation and refused to attend their deliberations. I could not bring myself to participate in such ludicrous proceedings. I was a minority of 3 votes against 13 against me. Moreover, there was a decided hostility against the IWW. I saw that the Congress was to be dominated by Communists and nothing could be done. The Credentials Committee decided the course of the whole Congress. Everything was cut and dried. As for the delegates from the revolutionary labor bodies who attended, they might better have stayed home.

Somehow I was selected to serve on two committees (not elected, but just informed "they" wanted me to act). Both of the committees met at the same time and therefore it was impossible to act on both. These committees

were of course dominated by the politicians and the proceedings were a farce.

I expect criticism from the Communists in America when my report is made public. My refusal to attend the meetings of the American delegation and the committees will be used as a basis of attack. But I feel justified in the course taken by me in Moscow. I could not and would not work in harmony with the political machine. To me, and I am sure to every true IWW, the first Congress of the Revolutionary Trade and Industrial Unions meant the building of an economic international free from the domination of any political group. But I found that the Congress was dominated by the Communist Party and with a program that placed every industrial organization in the world under its domination.

The sessions of the Congress are also an indication of political domination. A particular feature of the congress was the shortness of its duration. One would think that a Congress called to form a worldwide organization of revolutionary labor unions would have much to deliberate about. The actual length of the Congress was 12 days. Considering that translations were necessary for every speech, motion, and resolution, which took up at least two-fifths of the time, and the fact that many speeches were made on purely irrelevant questions, the actual constructive work of the Congress was confined to 5 days' time. But the constructive work (so called) is in itself a separate story and I cannot deal with it here. However, what has been done towards construction can easily be measured from the printed proceedings, which are or should be in America by this time. It is certain that no program was adopted that bears any resemblance to a feasible plan of organization. In this the hand of the political faction is seen. The whole truth of the matter in a few words is that the political faction did not want an economic international in fact, but in name only. It is quite evident that a real international of revolutionary industrial unions would become such a powerful organization and of such worldwide influence in the revolutionary field that the political organizations would have to surrender their present dominating position. The tacticians in the Communist International know this, therefore they are making every effort to control such an organization and keep it in the embryo stage.

### **Syndicalists and IWW Oppose Communists.**

The results of the Congress were a great disappointment to me, and a great lesson. From my observations in Russian and a knowledge of the steps taken to control the RTUI [RILU], I am convinced that a truly economic international of revolutionary industrial unions cannot exist with headquarters in Moscow without being dominated by the Communist International. It is a physical impossibility. As an explanation of the above point would

require a discussion on conditions in Russia, I will have to reserve this matter for the General Executive Board.

Practically all of the delegates from the Syndicalist organizations and many of the organizations themselves were opposed to the entire procedure of the Congress. They have all recognized the political domination. I am well aware of the general attitude of these delegates as practically all of them participated in minority conferences during the Congress and immediately following. Practically all hold the same views as I.

Perhaps many in America will be surprised at my attitude and I can easily understand (in view of the Communist propaganda which is so vigorously applied in America) that many will not believe my report is based on facts; but the outcome of the Congress is as deep a disappointment to me as anyone. I can gain no advantage of any kind by taking a contrary attitude to the Communist Party. But, as for me, I am opposed to any political party — revolutionary or otherwise; and what I have said here and will add when I return to America will be borne out later.

Yours for Industrial Freedom,

*George Williams.*

*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport*

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