
Fourth Statement on Unity Proceedings.

[January 5, 1921]

by Charles Dirba

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To the Membership of the CP of A.

January 5, 1921.

Dear Comrades:—

The time limit set by the Comintern for the final accomplishment of unity is passed, but unity is not accomplished.

The responsibility for this lies entirely upon the UCP.

They have refused and they still refuse to abide by the decisions of the Comintern providing for a joint unity convention on the basis of proportional representation.

They have insisted and they still falsely insist that our statement of dues paying membership for July, Aug., Sept., and Oct. [1920], showing an average of 7,552, is fraudulent, and that their membership, shown on their statement as 4,611, is greater than ours.

They have proposed a joint unity convention on the basis of equal representation, saying that for unity's sake they were willing to make the "concession"; and they have tried to disregard the CEC of the Communist Party — to have us call our convention together separately too, so the two conventions could "negotiate," and to have us send out to our delegates individually a false and insolent statement of theirs.

Our answer to all these maneuvers and stratagems was always the same: "We insist upon compliance with the mandates of the Communist International providing for unity through a joint unity convention on the basis of proportional representation, determined by the dues paying membership for July, August, September, and October [1920], according to

the official books of both parties. We demand that the UCP comply with these mandates."

We submitted to the UCP for examination all our books and statements; we wrote long letters and verbally proved to their Unity Committee in detail that our figures were correct, that their "analysis" of them was absurd, and that their "investigation on the ground" was a sham and a fraud. Still, in the face of all this, as a last resort, as the only excuse for evading compliance with the decisions of the Comintern, for refusing to let the rightful majority of the Communist movement in America fully to determine and control the future of the united party, the UCP repeat again and again the lie that the CP statement is fraudulent.

In their letter of the 18th of December [1920], they pretend to list proofs of their assertions.

Since it was very apparent that the figures and alleged proofs of discrepancies in our membership statement were presented merely as a formality and an excuse, our CEC did not deem it necessary to take them up in the answer to the UCP.

To our comrades, however, we want to tell very briefly that the figures in the UCP letter are juggled again, miscalculated and misused, and that their "proofs" are either false or beside the point.

That our statement "purports to show that only 3,048 paid dues in July" is not true; our statement plainly shows that in fact this figure represents the number of dues *received* by our *National Office* in July. 4,835 dues reached the NO in August, and not 3,867, as stated by the UCP. 8,240 old rate dues reached the NO in October, not 9,373. The total number of dues reaching the NO in October is 9,659, and 90 percent of them were paid by the branches in September, that

is *before* the decision of the Comintern on unity was received in this country.

The July, Aug., Sept., and Oct. [1920] average for the whole Lithuanian *subdistrict* "C" [Chicago?] (not only one branch) is 314 and not 358 as stated by the UCP; and for the subdistrict "P" [Philadelphia] it is 306, not 390. This shows how much credence should be given to the UCP statement, which they consider "proof" without any further evidence.

UCP "gossip mongers" have been going around in B. [Boston] saying that our statement is claiming there 250 Russian members, while our average is only 75. The UCP letter says that we are claiming 496 Ukrainian members in D. [Detroit], while our average is only 337 for the *whole district*; the 128 Russians in M. [??] shows on our statement as only 105; the 140 Lithuanians in M. [??] as only 75 for the *whole subdistrict*, etc.

If the UCP committee does not stop short of falsifying the figures taken from our statements, which we can check up plainly and indisputably, you can imagine how truthful their statements of our "actual membership" must be.

Further proof, conclusive and indisputable, that our statement was correct is now furnished by the actual present membership figures represented in the recent district conventions of our Party. Taking into consideration that within the last two months or so a number of our comrades have left for Russia, these figures absolutely substantiate the figures of our statement for July, August, September, and October [1920].

With this fact firmly established, the communications that passed between the two parties forth and back since our last statement of December 16 [1920], will plainly show that the UCP was under a false pretext defying the decisions of the Comintern and that the CP was insisting upon compliance with them, not merely on formal grounds, but because they were of the utmost importance for the future interests of the Communist movement in America.

For the present the UCP has frustrated all steps to unity; but they will not be able to defy the Comintern indefinitely. We have definite information that further instructions from the Comintern will be received in the near future, and we are sure that the UCP will have to change its false position, and will have to agree to a joint unity convention on the basis of pro-

portional representation.

[1]

**Letter of the CEC of the United Communist Party
to the CEC of the Communist Party.
[Dec. 18, 1920]**

December 18, 1920.

Comrades:—

Your letter of the 16th [of Dec. 1920], which your unity committee gave to ours at the joint meeting tonight, has just been considered by us. Nothing in your communication explains away the fact that the membership statement that you furnished us is manipulated and unworthy of acceptance.

You may say that you had more reasons to doubt the UCP figures than we have to doubt yours. If you doubted our membership statement then it was your business to investigate it. The fact is that you know it to be correct, and that is why you accepted it. The UCP membership has grown from month to month, and it is much larger today than the average for which you have given us credit, and you KNOW it.

You attempt to befuddle the issue with a dissertation upon the "indispensable laws of arithmetic" and "the law of averages." The fact is that it is this very law of averages that indicts your figures.

Out of an alleged membership of 7,553, your statement purports to show that only 3,048 paid dues in July. And this 3,048 covers not only July dues, but a portion of dues for an unknown number of months before. It shows that 3,867 paid dues in August, and again this 3,867 covers not only August, but an unknown number of months previously. Then you allege that in October 9,373 members, many more than in July and August combined, paid their dues at the old 20 cent rate, not for October, not even for September, but for some months BEFORE September. This would surely mean a violent rape of the "law of averages" that you quote.

We accept your challenge to "cite one single instance" of legal membership in your party which does NOT function underground. One example is your Lithuanian organization in C. [Chicago?] (the UCP letter gives the full name), where you claim to have 358 members. Your Lithuanian organizer for that subdistrict stated before your subdistrict committee "We have in the Lithuanian branch (known as Singing Society) about 350 members working legally — staging dramas, organizing dances, etc., who belong to the federation and enjoy full membership rights. We have subdivided 18 groups with about 150 members, but only 9 groups are active."

Another flagrant case of legal membership being sufficient for membership in the Lithuanian Federation is in P. [Philadelphia], where there are not more than 150 Lithuanian members in underground organization. Your statement claims credit for the whole 390 members of the legal organization simply because a portion of their treasury is turned over regularly to the federation for dues.

Your CEC may not be responsible for these facts, but the membership of the UCP would certainly hold our CEC

responsible if we dared to accept such membership figures as a basis for proportional representation in a unity convention.

If the UCP was willing to accept and count such legal and social members, we could claim at least 5,000 additional members in several federations, which have not been permitted to claim membership in our Party since the unity convention because of the strictness of the governing rules that we have adopted then for the UCP.

You have not answered our charge that representatives of your federations peddled dues stamps wholesale to federation branches for the purpose of "making a showing" as a basis for the coming convention. As an instance, we cite your Lithuanian organizer who visited B. [Boston]. Shamelessly he admitted this much. (*This is the first time such charges are mentioned. —CP*)

We have heard from a number of places, for instance C. [Cleveland?], B. [Boston], etc., where you claim to have Russian groups, but where you have no Russian membership whatever. (*Our statement shows 14 in C. [Cleveland?] and 7 in B. [Boston]. —CP*)

In other places your own CP members have informed us that you have less than half the membership that your official statement claims. For instance in D. [Detroit] you claim to have 367 Russian members, but from your own members we have learned that you have only 178. You claim to have 496 Ukrainians there, while they testify that you have only 210. You assert that you have 304 Lithuanians in that city, while they tell us that you only have 108.

In K. [???] you claim to have 75 Russian members, whereas your own Russian organizer in that city, whereas your own Russian organizer in that city says that you have only 33. In your M. [???] subdistrict your statement shows 128 Russian members while your local Russians claim only 90. In the same subdistrict you allege that you have 149 Lithuanians. Our local organizer certifies but 48. In M. [???] you claim 21 Russian members, whereas you have only 8 in good standing. In S. [???] your report shows 346 dues stamps for October, while you have but 11 Lithuanian members in that city and some scattering ones in surrounding towns. We are informed that when your Lithuanian organizer reorganized those 11 members he secured the old branch treasury. Is it possible that he sent it to the federation for "back dues?"

We have scores of other instances where indisputable evidence proves either total absence of CP membership, or only a fraction of the number of members alleged by the CP by your official document.

The total membership claimed by your official statement in all those branches of the CP on which we have received reports through out investigation is 4,326. Our information gives you but 1,973 members in these branches, or less than half of what you claim.

In the light of this information, how can you ask us seriously to accept your membership statement as a basis for representation in unity convention? If we accepted it, how could we ever explain or excuse our action to our own membership, who from their own personal experience know the truth about these membership claims of the CP?

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Our rejection of your membership statement must not be twisted to mean that we are opposed to unity, or that we

refuse the mandate of the Communist International to achieve unity by means of a convention. It means merely that we reject the specific statement that you handed to us as a basis for arranging this convention. WE WANT Communist unity, and we are ready to obey the mandate of the Communist International regarding proportional representation in unity convention.

But we are sure that when the Executive Committee of the Communist International decided upon unity by convention through proportional representation it did not intend that either side should submit to membership statements that they KNOW to be false. Had the Executive of the International been familiar with the "historic" malpractice of the federations with figures, it would probably have made provisions against this. As it is, we must safeguard the integrity of the Communist movement ourselves.

We repeat, the fact that we do this must not be perverted into meaning opposition to unity and the International's mandate. We of the UCP have stood for Communist unity from the very beginning. That is why we of the CP and the CLP united in the UCP last spring. The federation factionists on the other hand have until very recently been outspoken in their opposition to unity. That is why you held aloof from the unity convention last spring. (*The CLP refused to continue unity negotiations with the CEC of the CP after the split. —CP*)

You persistently ignored the decision of the Communist International regarding unity between the CP and the CLP. Last summer you ignored the decision of a representative of the International regarding unity between the CP and the UCP, when you refused his request to elect a unity committee to meet with ours. (*No such request was made to us. —CP*) Your anti-unity resolution to the effect that "unity with the UCP, a Party of Centrists, is impossible," was published in your official record and is a matter of record. Your slanderous and unscrupulous attack upon the UCP, which you have made through your official papers and through your paid organizers trying to poison the minds of the membership by shouting "centrists" and "provocateurs," belie your present protestations of the unity spirit.

The UCP, on the other hand, has obeyed all suggestions from the International. From the very start we have held out the hand of Communist comradeship to you as a Party. With us "unity" is not merely a 12th hour slogan, as it is with you, to be shouted from the housetops because the Executive of the Communist International orders it. We are for unity not merely because the CI orders it, but because we have always realized that Communist unity is essential to Communist success.

And we want the only kind of unity that is worth having, a unity only of those elements that accept without any reservations whatever the Program and Theses of the Third International and the strongly centralized form of organization that is instructed by the Third International. It is our duty to guard against the loosely jointed form of organization of your federation factions, with its divided responsibility and consequent bickering and wire-pulling of petty politicians for personal place and power, which in its very nature is the fertile breeder of further splits. We want unity on a basis that guarantees some permanency, and we still hope to achieve it.

• • • • •

The Communist International has called for unity by convention. Your failure to furnish a true statement of membership and your refusal to discuss in the unity committee the points at issue between the two parties makes it impossible for the two CECs to unite in a joint call for a unity convention. The two Executive Committees are now at a deadlock so far as convention arrangements are concerned.

But this deadlock must not stand in the way of unity. The failure of the officials of the two parties to agree upon a joint convention call must not be allowed to prevent a joint convention. The deadlock must be broken.

To end this deadlock and fulfill the mandate of the Communist International, the CEC of the UCP unanimously decides to place the decision of the question upon which the two CECs can not agree into the hands of its party convention, and calls upon the CEC of the CP to do the same.

With this end in view we have called the UCP convention to meet at an early date. We know that your call for a CP convention went out to your membership long before ours. The CEC of the UCP now calls upon the CEC of the CP to convene the CP convention about the same time as that of the UCP, so that the delegations that have just been elected by the membership of the two parties may simultaneously consider the problems at issue, with an opportunity to communicate direct with each other. We are confident that if they are given this opportunity they will come to an agreement regarding proportion of representation in a joint convention and all the other questions involved in the present deadlock, and that unity of Communist forces will become a fact.

If you deny to your membership, through the convention delegates that the CP has already elected, this opportunity to obey the mandate of the Communist International, and to come to an agreement with the delegates of the United Communist Party direct, then the full responsibility for the failure to achieve unity of Communist forces rests on YOU.

Since neither CEC seems able, under the circumstances, to yield to the other, we earnestly beseech you now to lay aside past prejudices and recriminations, and to adopt our proposal and join us in this final effort to achieve Communist unity before January 1st [1921], the date set for its consummation by the Communist International.

We request an answer to this proposal within 24 hours.

Central Executive Committee,
United Communist Party.

Paul Holt [Alfred Wagenknecht],
Executive Secretary.

[2]
***Declaration of the CEC of the CP
to the CEC of the UCP.
[Dec. 22, 1920]***

December 22, 1920.

The EC of the EC having ordered both Communist

Parties of America to unite at a joint convention to be held on the basis of proportional representation according to membership, as appearing upon the official books of both parties, and since the mandate of the EC of the CI nowhere provides for unity by means of negotiations through the medium of two separate conventions, as the CEC of the UCP now proposes for the settling of existing differences preliminary to a joint convention:

Therefore, the CEC of the CP of A declares that the refusal of the CEC of the UCP to participate directly in a joint convention is a breach of discipline and a flagrant violation of the mandate of the CI, which provides only for a joint unity convention, and calls upon the UCP to do likewise.

And if the Central Executive Committee of the UCP, as stated in its reply, cannot take upon itself the responsibility to fulfill the mandate of the Third International, we request that a committee of our CEC be admitted to your convention to present the CP position on unity.

[3]
***UCP Convention [2nd: Kingston, NY]
to the CEC of the CP.
[c. Dec. 24, 1920]***

The United Communist Party in convention assembled has elected a committee consisting of McGee [???], Henry [???], and Alden [???] to present the following motion to the Convention of the Communist Party. The motion was adopted by the convention of the United Communist Party by a roll call vote, unanimously, every delegate voting:

"That we send a committee to the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party with the demand that if the Communist Party convention is not now in session, they call the Communist Party convention delegation together at once, and

"That we invite the Communist Party convention delegation to meet with us in joint unity convention on a basis of equal representation, with not more than 25 delegates from either side."

The United Communist Party requests the CEC of the CP to permit this committee to bring this message personally before the Communist Party convention.

The committee bearing this communication is authorized to make the necessary arrangements for unity convention on the above basis.

Yours for Communism,

United Communist Party Convention.

Joe Milner [???], Chairman.
H.D. Wendell [???], Secretary.

[4]

***Statement of the CEC of the CP to the
Delegates of the UCP in Convention Assembled.
[c. Dec. 25, 1920]***

Comrades:—

The CEC of the Communist Party, after having heard your committee, and after careful deliberation, declares:

1) That the United Communist Party's Unity Committee, acting in the name of, and for, the CEC of the UCP, upon receiving, through their own channels, the 6 conditions for unity adopted by the EC of the CI, accepted them without reservations in a signed communication received by our CEC.

2) The Communist Party delegates were elected to represent the CP of A in a joint unity convention together with the delegates of the UCP, there to achieve the organic unity of both parties in accordance with the spirit and letter of the mandate of the Communist International.

3) The CEC of the CP of A therefore can call these only to such a joint convention.

4) The Convention of the UCP in demanding that the CEC of the CP immediately call its convention delegates together, also includes a proposal to that convention for a joint unity convention upon the basis of equal representation, with not more than 25 delegates from either side, thus rejecting in advance one of the conditions of the Communist International on unity.

5) We reaffirm our position that organic and permanent unity of the two American Communist Parties can only be successfully achieved at a joint convention of the two parties upon the basis of proportional representation as provided for in the mandate of the EC of the CI.

The Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America is fully competent to make all the necessary arrangements with the representatives of the UCP to hold such joint unity convention.

We urge your convention to consider the question of a joint convention of both parties, and to take formal action as to whether or not your accept the decisions of the Communist International that the joint convention shall be held on the basis of proportional representation determined by the July, August, September, and October [1920] average dues paying membership, according to the official books of both parties, statements of which have been officially exchanged by both unity committees.

6) The delegates of the Communist Party of America are ready to come to the joint convention immediately upon notification.

It is imperative that we receive a reply to this communication within 48 hours.

With Communist Greetings,

Central Executive Committee, CP of A.

By C. Dobin [Charles Dirba].
Executive Secretary, CP of A.

[5]

***UCP Convention [2nd: Kingston, NY]
to the CEC of the CP.
[c. Dec. 26, 1920]***

The United Communist Party invites the Communist Party to meet in joint convention of the two parties on the basis of equal number of delegates from each party, the total number of delegates in the joint convention not to exceed 50, for reasons of safety. The United Communist Party convention considers a mere delegation from the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party as utterly inadequate. Such Central Executive Committee delegation would not have authority to make conclusive agreement. Furthermore, it would consist of a subdivision of a body that has already rejected all reasonable overtures and is now standing between the rank and file of the two parties and preventing a fusion. In offering to send a sub-committee representing only your Central Executive Committee, instead of making a joint convention as invited, your CEC is merely by subterfuge refusing our invitation, and therefore such small delegation is not invited.

By rejecting our invitation to bring the rank and file together in equal proportion (which invitation we extended despite the fact that our party has by far the greater membership), the Central Executive Committee of your party has merely further proven the need of such getting together of the rank and file over the heads of any officials that may stand in the way.

We attempted to put into effect the condition of the Communist International in regard to proportional representation. The failure of your Central Executive Committee to submit a correct or credible statement of membership constitutes its refusal of the Communist International's condition. Recognizing the imperative necessity of a unity of Communist forces in view of the industrial crisis that is developing, and in order to bring such unity about without permitting further quibbling over figures, our convention unanimously decided to concede to you equal representation in a joint convention.

Assuming the possibility that your Central Executive Committee may reconsider its refusal of our invitation, and as the delegates for a forthcoming convention of your party are already elected, we, the delegates of the United Communist Party convention shall remain together awaiting the arrival of your delegates. If your Central Executive Committee should notify us that it will require more than a few days to get your delegates together, we will temporarily adjourn to reconvene in the immediate future for a joint convention.

Yours for Communism,

United Communist Party Convention.

Robert Real [???], Chairman,
H.D. Wendell [???], Secretary.

[6]
**Statement of the CEC of the CP
 to the UCP.**
[c. Dec. 27, 1920]

Comrades:—

The Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America will call the CP delegates to a joint unity convention with the UCP as soon as you agree to the unity conditions laid down by the Communist International, including these — that unity must be achieved through a joint unity convention, and that the representation at the joint convention shall be proportional on the basis of the number of dues paying members for July, August, September, and October [1920], according to the official books of both parties.

Fraternally,

Central Executive Committee,
 Communist Party of America.

by C. Dobin [Charles Dirba],
 Executive Secretary.

[7]
**UCP Convention [2nd: Kingston]
 to the CEC of the CP.**
[c. Dec. 28, 1920]

Comrades:—

Since you have refused to call your convention delegation together to consider our invitation to meet on a basis of equality, in Unity Convention, we now request that you transmit the following communication, which was adopted by unanimous vote of the United Communist Party convention, to each one of your elected convention delegates.

Fraternally yours,

United Communist Party Convention.

U.P. Duffy [Alfred Wagenknecht], Chairman,
 H.D. Wendell [???], Secretary.

To the Convention Delegates of the Communist Party.

Comrades:—

After remaining in convention session for three days awaiting an answer of the Communist Party to our invitation to join us in Unity Convention, we receive with regret a reply of your Central Executive Committee. Your Central Executive

Committee has failed to call you together to receive and consider our invitation to meet with us in Unity Convention on a basis of equal representation. Your Central Executive Committee itself assumes to refuse our invitation.

*The answer of your Central Executive Committee is nothing more than evasion by insistence upon obviously fraudulent membership figures. Thus your executives purposely continued the deadlock that **our** convention attempted to liquidate by the concession of equal representation to your numerically smaller party.*

We regret that your Central Executive Committee did not place or consent to place our invitation before your convention delegates, who were already elected and awaiting call. Inasmuch as you have had no opportunity to pass upon our invitation, we cannot accept the refusal of your Central Executive Committee as final.

Before adjourning our present convention we shall elect twenty-five (25) of our delegates to join with an equal number of yours in a Unity Convention. Our delegates shall hold themselves ready for an instant response to your call.

We repeat that our desire is to comply fully with the Communist International's condition for unity; however, we cannot join your Central Executive Committee in the child's game of juggling with fictitious figures.

Again reminding you that the pending industrial crisis demands Communist Unity, we remain,

Yours for Communism,

United Communist Party Convention.

U.P. Duffy [Alfred Wagenknecht], Chairman.
 H.D. Wendell [???], Secretary.

[8]
**CEC of the CP
 to the UCP Convention [2nd: Kingston].**
[Dec. 31, 1920]

Comrades:—

Your request that we send to our delegates your insolent and mendacious statement contained in your last letter to us is tantamount to a demand that the supreme body of the Communist Party of America should abdicate, and is on the face of it preposterous. The fact that the CEC of the United Communist Party deliberately flouted the conditions imposed upon both parties by the Communist International, and has practically resigned after having created an impasse, is no reason why the CEC of the Communist Party, which has at all times been ready to carry out all the provisions for unity and has the complete confidence of the CP membership, should do likewise.

Our last communication to your convention contained the request that a committee of our party be permitted to appear before your delegates on the question of unity, to refute the malicious and false claims of your CEC that our membership figures were fraudulent. This request you first ignored and then refused. Yet, you continue to repeat these

false accusations, and then have the effrontery to ask us to submit your outrageous statement to our delegates individually.

Your communication coming at the 11th hour before the time limit set for the completion of unity (Jan. 1, 1921) and being in fact an outright rejection of the provision of the Communist International relative to the holding of a *joint* unity convention upon the basis of proportional representation according to dues paid as appearing upon the official books, places the blame for the failure to achieve unity within the time limit entirely upon the United Communist Party.

Unity must be and it will be accomplished. The United Communist Party must obey the mandate of the Communist International. The CEC of the Communist Party reiterates its readiness to call the delegates of the Communist Party to the joint convention as soon as the United Communist Party agrees to the basis of proportional representation according to dues paid.

Fraternally,

Central Executive Committee,
Communist Party of America.

by C. Dobin [Charles Dirba],
Executive Secretary.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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