
Letter to C.E. Ruthenberg in New York from Marion E. Sproule in Boston, Feb. 4, 1920

Handwritten note in Jay Lovestone Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Box 194, folder 8.

Boston, Mass.
Feb. 4, 1920.

C.E. Ruthenberg,
New York City.

Dear Comrade—

Your letter received regarding the organization work and I will continue as I have been doing. Is it still your idea to have the sections of 10 as I was at first informed? This is necessary for me to know at once. I have worked out a plan along these lines that is very successful so far.

Also let me know if you sent me a message by B. [Ballam] about an assessment of \$100. = for H. [Hourwich]. It was very vague and unsatisfactory but if it is all right will send at once.†

Fraternally,

Marion E. Sproule.

†- A \$100 “assessment” was levied of the Massachusetts state organization of the CPA by CEC member John Ballam (“Ries”); the funds garnered were to be used to immediately dispatch International Delegate Nicholas Hourwich to Moscow, where he was to serve as a delegate at the 2nd Congress of the Comintern. Unfortunately, this effort to shake down State Secretary Sproule for funds directly contradicted a decision of the CEC, that Hourwich should not proceed immediately to Soviet Russia. A bitter fight over the secret financial machinations of Ballam and Hourwich erupted, ultimately resulting in the resignation of I.E. Ferguson from the CEC and the position of editor on March 9, 1920, over the refusal of the CEC majority to discipline Ballam and Hourwich for their violation of party discipline. The incident was one of several contributing factors to the split of the Ruthenberg group in April 1920.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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