
Letter to C.E. Ruthenberg in Cleveland from “J. Kasbeck” in New York, May 10, 1920.

A handwritten document in the Hoover Institution Archives, Jay Lovestone Papers, box 195, folder 11.

May 10, 1920

Dear Damon [Ruthenberg]:—

Just back from trip. Covered field thoroughly. Had meetings every night and find that in every city we have a majority with the exception of the Letts [Latvians]. Covered following cities: Boston (2 nights), [Salem?] (twice), Lawrence, Springfield, and Worcester. From Philadelphia a Jewish comrade reported officially that Philadelphia is solidly with us in spite of the efforts of the majority representative Raphael [Alex Bittelman], who tried his best without success. After a whole week of laborious labor he succeeded in winning over to his side only 4 members.

At first meeting in Boston my opponent Bunte [Charles Dirba] accused you of spending Party money and expressed himself that for so long as you have the finances of the party and all connections, you would try to use all that against the majority. I have proven that the minority had done its best to prevent a split and is still willing to do all possible to preserve unity if possible. The obtaining of money by Andrew [Hourwich] and Ries' [John Ballam] declaration of guilt in [criminality?] were good points.

At the second meeting of the Boston representatives a Lett [Latvian] resolution was passed that the Boston organization will maintain itself not taking sides until convention and that the minority join the CEC for the purpose of calling

a joint convention. I was assured by comrades that in case of break majority will go with us.

Amongst majority if not all of our supporters is widespread the demand that the calling of the convention is too early. They all are for the postponement of the convention! In New York I was quite surprised about the change of conditions upon arrival. Mike [??] is all up in the air. He does not know what to do. He claims it's impossible to elect anybody here upon such short notice. Obviously relates that the Federationists are making it their issue that the minority wants to rush them a quick conference, allegedly wants to escape discussions, and does not desire to have a joint convention. They here also attack you for keeping party funds and in all probability will press a fight on your declaration of mass action before various Federations. Today I succeeded to have a conference with Ukrainian representatives and argued mass action, which I consider to be my point of view. They agreed with me and advised me that we should by all means try to postpone our convention; they promised to use their influence on the majority for calling a joint convention. The Jewish Federation is also for a joint convention. Each group, according to them, is to elect its representatives. They want that 40% should be majority representatives and 60% from the minority. They promised to hand in to me their resolution tomorrow. It seems, however, that the CEC is using its propaganda in order to win time and undermine our strength by their organized front.

It is up to you to reckon with all factors.

There is a great demand for Russian literature here. Let the Chicago boys not be backward and send all they can.

Received letter from home. Sub-District is solidly with us. Taking into consideration the facts I gathered here, it seems to me that the best way out for the East is to postpone calling the convention (so that the rank and file gets a chance to discuss all matters and to intelligently decide for themselves with whom to side — as the majority in a new leaflet to come out very soon puts it). I think on account of the fact that the West is decidedly with us, we must concentrate all of our forces to the East. Your presence is, it seems to me, most needed in New York. We can do lots of work here and break opposition if we act as persistently as our opponents do. If we neglect New York and if we do not postpone the convention we will gather but a small representation from the East.

The Ukrainian Federation will use its influence to withdraw its Western delegates if a [rushed] convention is held. Others might follow.

I repeat that your presence is absolutely necessary here and that we can obtain a substantial support from lay membership, who are under the illusion that the majority fights for principle and tactic.

While I was away in a treacherous way a District Convention of Russian Federation repre-

sentatives of the New York district was hurriedly arranged and held on Sunday [May 2, 1920]. Discontent was reigning high. The report of the CEC of the Russian Federation was rejected. The report of the Press Committee of the Russian Federation was rejected. The Russian New York District has no trust in the deeds of the CEC members. The minority was not represented there. They passed a resolution that the minority join the majority and work for the common convention. The convention was called in an unusual and hurried manner, without care that all delegates elected should be present; some came to the city but could get not access, while on the other hand members not elected, I am told, were there with a right to vote. Obolonsky [??] is of the opinion that if I should have been there we could have won a majority. But I had no idea that they would in such a hurried way push through what they termed a representative convention.

I cannot just now give a financial report. Will prepare. Expected instructions from you through Mike [??]. My intention was to go to Detroit and Pittsburgh. Don't know what to do now. Lots of work in New York. Finances all gone. Need some. Write and if necessary wire what to do and what your intentions are through Recht's office.

Yours for Victory and Com.,

Kasbeck [=??].

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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