
Minutes of the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of America: New York City — Jan. 11-16, 1921.

A document in the Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 45, ll. 1-4.

First Day — [Tuesday] Jan. 11, 1921.

Present: All members of CEC, and “Kartash” (Russian Federation), “Kalnas” (Lithuanian Federation), “Brown” (Latvian Federation), “Moore” [John Balam, Editor], and “Dobin” [Charles Dirba, Executive Secretary].

Chairman: “Baldwin” [Oscar Tyverovsky].

Scott [Karlis Jansons] of the UCP, together with Comrade K. [Sen Katayama], present to make report from the Communist International, but withdrew while a privileged motion was considered, as follows:

Motion: That “Allen” [Maximilian Cohen] be suspended from the present meeting of the CEC. “Morris” [J. Wilenkin] has charges that “Allen” [Cohen] has gone against the decisions of the CEC and has made false statements against the CEC in a party propaganda meeting trying to create dissention in the party on the Unity question.

Motion: To postpone this matter until after report of Comrade “Scott” [Jansons].

Motion failed.

Point of Order (by Comrade “Allen” [Cohen]): That the CEC has no right to suspend until charges are preferred, investigated, and reported back to the CEC.

Chair [Tyverovsky] ruled to the contrary.

Allen appealed.

Chair sustained by a roll call vote: Yes — All except “Allen” [Cohen]; No — “Allen” [Cohen].

Amendment: Pending further investigation, “Allen” [Cohen] to be suspended for making false statements about the activities of the CEC.

Motion carried by roll call vote: Yes — “Bain”

[Shapiro], “Leon” [???], “Greenwald” [???], “Sullivan” [Edwards], “Morris” [Wilenkin], “Baldwin” [Tyverovsky], “Johnson” [???]; No — “Klints” [???], “Allen” [Cohen].

Allen made a statement, in which he said that if expelled he will appeal to the Communist International, handed in a letter to the CEC, and left the room.

“Scott” [Jansons] says instructions are to make report only to the CEC.

Motion: That representatives of the Federations may be present and the CEC considers itself responsible for all confidential information.

Motion carried.

Report of Comrade “Scott” [Jansons].

[Presented] credentials from Provisional Council of the Red Trade Union International. “K.F.&S.” [Katayama, Louis Fraina, Jansons] to constitute Pan-American Council to organize Bureaus in Mexico, the United States, and Canada and to campaign for delegations to the coming Congress [of RILU]. Credentials from EC of the CI [also presented] designating the same comrades as the American Agency of the CI to organize Communist Party in Canada, in Latin America, and to consolidate in Mexico; also to republish *The Communist International*, both the English copy and a Spanish translation; also to work on the Negro question and in the Trade Unions. The [Pan-American] Council has the right to organize the American Bureau for work in the trade unions, and “Allen” [Cohen] had been designated by them as the CP representative on it. Unity of CP and UCP must be achieved on the basis laid down by the Comintern. “Scott” [Jansons] has no right to change them, details

might be changed only by mutual agreement of the parties.

Extended questions and answers to various aspects of both the Trade Union and Unity questions followed, the more important of which are recorded in secretary's notes attached herewith.†

After "Scott" [Jansons] left, the question of "Allen" [Cohen] was again taken up.

Motion: To elect a committee of three to investigate the charges against Allen.

Motion carried.

"Sullivan" [Edwards], "Johnson" [???], and "Baldwin" [Tyverovsky] elected.

Motion: To instruct the Secretary [Dirba] to inform the Pan-American Council of the RILU that the CEC of the CP objects to the appointment of "Allen" [Cohen] as the CP representative on the American Bureau, and nominates in his place Comrade "Morris" [Wilenskin].

Motion carried.

Motion: To send Comrade "Leon" to the Conference.

Motion carried.

Motion: To nominate for technical work‡ "Benjamin" [???], "Johnson" [???], "Hoffman" [Morris Kushinsky], and "Klints" [???].

Motion carried.

Motion: To elect a committee of two to go and find out the stand of "K." [Katayama] in regard to the CP.

Motion carried.

"Dobin" [Dirba] and "Bain" [Shapiro] elected.

Motion: To adjourn until 5:00 pm next day.

Motion carried.

Second Day — [Wednesday] Jan. 12, 1921.

Present: "Morris" [Wilenskin], "Bain" [Shapiro], "Bald-

win" [Tyverovsky], "Sullivan" [Edwards], "Greenwald" [???], Jewish Federationist, "Klints" [???], Jewish Federationist]. Also "Brown" [???], Latvian Federation], "Moore" [Ballam, Editor], "Kalnas" [???], Lithuanian Federation], "Kartash" [???], Russian Federation], "Hoffman" [Kushinsky, Jewish Federation].

Chairman: "Baldwin" [Oscar Tyverovsky].

Letter to Pan-American Council drawn up by the Secretary [Dirba]. Long discussion. Several amendments made.

"Leon" [???] came.

Motion: To approve the letter as amended.

Motion carried.

Unity Question.

Extended discussion.

Motion: To elect a committee of 3 to draw up a communication to "Scott" [Jansons].

Motion carried.

"Baldwin" [Tyverovsky], "Moore" [Ballam], and "Morris" [Wilenskin] elected.

After a short intermission, the committee presented a draft.

Motion: To approve the letter proposed by the committee.

Motion carried.

Motion: To instruct the Unity Committee to draw up a letter to the CI sending full information about unity proceedings.

Motion carried.

Informational.

UCP circular addressed to the CP members; an article in the UCP official Jewish paper.

Motion: To adjourn until 1:00 pm next day.

Motion carried.

Third Day — [Thursday] Jan. 13, 1921.

Present: "Sullivan" [Edwards], "Greenwald" [???], Jew-

†- These notes are not attached to the copy of the minutes that was housed in the Comintern Archive.

‡- "Technical work" refers to the physical production of underground literature.

ish Federationist], “Leon” [???, Lithuanian Federationist], “Johnson” [???], “Bain” [Shapiro], “Baldwin” [Tyverovsky], “Klints” [???, Jewish Federationist] of the CEC; also “Moore” [Ballam, Editor], “Dobin” [Dirba, Executive Secretary], and “Hoffman” [Kushinsky, Jewish Federation].

Chairman: “Bain” [Shapiro].

Order of business proposed by the Secretary [Dirba].

Amendment: To take as the first question after the reading of minutes the question of the Finnish Federation splitting away from the SP.

Amendment carried.

Minutes of the previous meeting, 12/21/20 to 1/3/21 approved as amended.

“Morris” [Wilenskin] came, “Urlich” (Polish Federation) and “Kalnas” (Lithuanian Federation).

Finnish Federation Question.

Motion: To instruct District Organizers and Federation Organizers to get in touch with the seceding Finnish Federation of the SP and organize the revolutionary elements of them into CP underground groups.

Amendment: The CEC to make an appeal to the 12 Finnish delegates who voted for the acceptance of all the 21 points of the CI.

Amendment to Amendment: To instruct the Secretary [Dirba] to interview the Secretary of the Finnish Federation and the District Organizers to communicate with their branches on the question of their splitting away from the SP.

Substitute: To appoint a committee of 3 to get all information about the Finnish Federation splitting away from the SP.

“Johnson” [???] permitted to leave the meeting to attend to some defense matters. “Nicols” (Ukrainian Federation) came.

Voting resulted as follows:

Substitute *carried*.

Amendment to Amendment *lost*.

Amendment *carried*.

Motion *carried*.

“Hoffman” [Kushinsky], “Bain” [Shapiro], and “Klints” [???] elected to the committee.

Motion: This committee to come in contact also with the Scandinavian elements of the SLP.

Motion carried.

Report of the Secretary.

Sent out the resolution on Legal Workers Societies; Circular on Soviet Russia recognition and trade; Corrections to the UCP edition of the Theses; Fourth Statement on Unity.

Financial.

Cash statement for December [1920] shows received \$7,523.77 — paid \$10,214.99; Previous balance \$5,901.12 — present balance \$3,209.90.

Cash statement for the six months, July 1 to Dec. 31 [1920] shows received \$42,194.83 — paid \$38,239.78. Previous balance \$707.53 — present balance \$4,662.58 (including conting. [???] and district funds).

Filling a whole page of *The Communist* with figures must be avoided in the future. This can be done by publishing in *The Communist* only the general items, and sending out mimeographed copies, one for each branch, of the full statement showing items by Districts and Federations.

Membership.

8,460 dues were paid in October [1920], 5,119 in November, and 7,301 in December — the latter including 290 exemptions. This gives an average for the three months [1920-IV] of 6,960. The average for July, August, and September [1920-III] was 7,250, and the average for the six months just passed is 7,105.†

Motion: To accept the report and to approve the recommendation on cash statements.

Motion carried.

Motion: All convention assessments to be turned

†- To be precise, the math for average paid CPA membership in the second half of 1920 based upon the set of official figures (f. 515, op. 1, d. 43, l. 107) works out to 7,107.

in to the EC.

Motion lost.

Motion: To cut the salaries of party officials to \$35.00 per week.

Amendment: Single to \$30.00 and married to \$35.00 per week.

Both the amendment and the motion were voted down.

Reports of Districts.

District I [Boston]: Trying to organize Italians in Boston. Polish Federation should appoint a good District Organizer, the present is very inactive. General spirit good. Membership opposed to any concessions to the UCP. *Report accepted.*

District II [New York]: Financial statement for Dec. [1920] shows about \$1,200.00 received, about \$450.00 expenses. Circularized against taking bundles to meetings for apportionment among members. Expect to organize Russians in <deleted>. Removed a group organizer for coming out against the CEC on the unity question. *Report accepted.*

“Bain” [Shapiro] permitted to leave. “Morris” [Wilenskin] takes the chair.

District III [Philadelphia]: Philadelphia subdistrict passed resolution supporting the CEC. Present membership 763. Will try to organize union nuclei by calling a meeting of all members in a union. *Report accepted.*

District IV [Buffalo, district including OH]: District Committee was on the point of demanding the return of the District Organizer from the long session of the CEC. Work is going on OK. Want to organize a central propaganda group under the District Organizer. Membership 858, no losses, 168 in Canada, where Jewish and English groups were organized. Unemployed leaflet — printed 42,000. Defense Committee active, will turn in money to the Party. *Report accepted.*

District V [Detroit]: Minutes of District Committee meeting. Everything is all right. Organizing shop nuclei. Stand with the CEC on the unity question.

District VI [Chicago]: Minutes of District Com-

mittee meeting. Ukrainian comrades doing good legal work. Armenian comrades exposing their Social Patriots, now going back [to the CPA] as Communists; ask help for Armenian agitation.

“Johnson” [??] came back and “Kartash” [??, Russian Federation] came.

Motion: To instruct the Secretary [Dirba] to write to the CI [with a] copy of the report on the Armenian Social-Patriots, and to request samples of literature in the Armenian language.

Motion carried.

Motion: To designate Armenian Comrade “Z.” [??] to do organization work among Armenian workers, and to advance \$300 for the purposes, under the supervision of District I [Boston].

Motion carried.

Jewish Federation: Membership 325. Ten branches and all doing pretty good work. Unemployment has hit the membership very hard. Philadelphia District Organizer inefficient and was changed. Expelled “Sh.” [??] from their CEC and suspended for one month from the Party for disorganization work. Finances bad. Only one paid man now, but still will have to skip the current issue of the paper, the influence of which among the workers in unions is great. *Report accepted.*

Lettish [Latvian] Federation: Not present.

Lithuanian Federation: Organized branches in T— and L— and will try to organize in C[anada?]. Membership about 2,600. Finances all right. *Report accepted.*

Polish Federation: Membership about 400. Finances poor. Sent our organizer with help from CEC. Issue underground paper every month and some leaflets. *Report accepted.*

Russian Federation: Organized to new branches. Issued two pamphlets. Membership growing, even though many leave for Ukraine. Sent special organizer to Pennsylvania mining and steel district. Will hold an informal conference from branches in C. Finances OK. *Report accepted.*

Motion: To adjourn until 1:00 pm next day.

Motion carried.

Fourth Day — [Friday] Jan. 14, 1921.

Present: "Johnson" [???], "Morris" [Wilenskin], "Leon" [???], "Klints" [???], "Sullivan" [Edwards], "Greenwald" [???], "Baldwin" [Tyverovsky], "Bain" [Shapiro] of the CEC, and also "Moore" [Ballam, Editor], "Dobin" [Dirba, Executive Secretary], and "Hoffman" [Kushinsky, Jewish Federation].
Chairman: "Morris" [Wilenskin].

Letter from "Scott" [Jansons] asking for written report and documents.

Motion: That we send immediately a letter to "Scott" [Jansons] asking him whether the American Agency is properly accredited to act on the question of unity, and, if so, that the proper credentials be shown to the CEC.

Motion carried.

Motion: That we elect a committee of 3 to draw up the letter.

Motion carried.

"Leon" [???], "Morris" [Wilenskin], and "Dobin" [Dirba] elected.

"Kalnas" [???, Lithuanian Federation] came.

After a short intermission the committee reported.

Motion: To accept the letter drawn up by the committee.

Motion carried.

Mrs. "Allen" [Cohen] brought a letter from "Allen" [Cohen] asking for postponement, for minutes, and for a stenographer at the hearing.

"Kartash" [???, Russian Federation] came.

Motion: To refer "Allen's" [Cohen's] letter to the investigating committee.

Motion carried.

"Moore" [Ballam] and "Kalnas" [???, Lithuanian Federation] were permitted to leave the meeting.

Motion: The paper of the Jewish Federation to

be taken over by the Party.

Amendment: To assist the Jewish Federation with \$50.00 for each issue of their paper.

Amendment lost. Motion carried.

Motion: To elect a committee of 3 to take charge of the Jewish Paper.

Motion carried.

"Dobin" [Dirba], "Kartash" [???], and "O." [???] elected.

Report of "Benjamin" [???] on his work in the trade unions committee. *Report accepted.* Also financial statement attached.

Motion: To adjourn until Sunday [Jan. 16] at 2:00 pm.

Motion carried.

Fifth Day — [Sunday] Jan. 16, 1921.

Present: "Leon" [???, Lithuanian Federationist], "Sullivan" [Edwards], "Klints" [???, Jewish Federationist], "Greenwald" [???, Jewish Federationist], "Baldwin" [Tyverovsky], "Bain" [Shapiro], "Johnson" [???] of the CEC; also "Kartash" [???, Russian Federation], "Hoffman" [Kushinsky, Jewish Federation], "Moore" [Ballam, Editor], "Dobin" [Dirba, Executive Secretary].
Chairman: "Leon" [???].

Report of Investigating Committee on Charge Against "Allen" [Cohen].

Documents and testimony show that "Allen" [Cohen] has flagrantly broken party discipline and has intentionally misrepresented the activities of the CEC. Recommend expulsion from the CEC.

Motion: To accept the report of the investigating committee and to concur with its recommendation to expel "Allen" [Cohen] from the CEC.

Carried by a roll call vote of all seven members of the CEC present. "Morris" [Wilenskin] came a little later and recorded his vote also in favor of the motion.

Motion: To expel Allen from the Party.

Amendment: To suspend "Allen" [Cohen] from the Party for six months.

Amendment lost by tie vote of 4-4.

Motion carried by roll call vote of all eight CEC members present.

Report of Editorial Committee.

WC [*Workers' Challenge?*] #103 out. Preparing for *The Communist*. Leaflet on Soviet Russia is to be written, and Theses corrected. Too much work.

Report of Program Committee.

Went as far as Colonial Question. That and the Negro Question and the Agrarian Question left. All to be ready for the next meeting of the CEC. Manifesto will be written all anew.

Report of Technical Committee.

WC [*Workers' Challenge?*] #103 and C [*Communist*] #16 sent out. Pamphlets printed: 10,000 [Lenin's] *The Infantile Sickness of "Leftism" in Communism*; 10,000 Zinoviev's *Com.* [???]; 10,000 Lenin's on *Work in Reactionary Trade Unions*. Set up Kamenev's *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* and *The Manifesto of the Communist International*. Waiting for copy of Theses. Pamphlet from "B." [???] expected shortly.

New Business.

Question: How to organize the nuclei if information is not coming in? The consensus of opinion

was that District Organizers should take the matter into their own hands and do the pioneer work directly.

"Leon" [???] reported on the Conference. Eleven present. Majority wants to obtain as many delegates as possible, without strictness as to their stand. Even "Schl." [???] would be acceptable to them; seem to think that main work will be to industrialize AF of L; have tendency to the new policy of the Anglo-American delegations.

Motion: That "Leon" [???] and "Benjamin" [???] and "Abr." [???] give written reports to the CEC on the activities of the American Bureau.

Motion carried.

Motion: To reconsider the motion to take over the Jewish paper.

Motion carried.

Amendment: To assist the Jewish Federation with \$50.00 for each issue.

Amendment to the Amendment: \$60.00 for each issue.

Amendment to the amendment carried.

Motion: After two weeks we must call our convention.

Referred to the next meeting of the CEC.

Motion: To adjourn.

Motion carried.

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

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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