
Official Decision of the Third International in the Fraina Case. [Sept. 30, 1920]

Photostat in FBI Investigative Files, NARA M-1085, reel 939, no document number.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International, having investigated the charges made by Santeri Nuorteva, Secretary of the New York Soviet Bureau, that Louis C. Fraina was an agent of the Department of Justice, has unanimously decided that Fraina is innocent. Moreover, the Executive Committee brands Nuorteva's accusations as absolutely contrary to the attitude of a true Socialist.

An Investigating Committee of three was appointed by the Executive, consisting of A. Bilan (America), L. Rosmer (France), and A. Rudniansky (Hungary). This Committee had a full stenographic report of the story of the informer Petersen; it heard a number of American comrades and comrades from Holland, among them Comrade Wynkoop (in view of Fraina's attendance at the Amsterdam Conference, which was broken up by the police); and it also questioned Fraina himself, who arrived in Moscow soon after the Committee was appointed. The Committee drew up the following resolution for the Executive:

"The Investigating Committee of three, appointed by the Executive Committee, after reading the Stenographic Report of the Louis C. Fraina Case and investigating additional evidence, and also hearing witnesses, recommends the following statement for acceptance:

1) The star witness figuring in the Stenographic Report of the L.C. Fraina Case offers a very doubtful statement, which is not proven by the facts and based on a verbal story *only*.

2) We recognize that the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America, after investigating the charges, acquitted Fraina and granted him its full confidence as a true Party member. To accuse or suspect the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America as being an organization which protects suspicious persons — we have neither the proof nor the right. We have full

confidence in the Executive Committee of the Communist Party being a revolutionary body.

3) We consider as supporting the evidence that Fraina is not guilty the fact that the Communist Labor Party of America, through its Executive Committee, refused, after hearing the stenographic report of the Fraina case, to appoint an investigating committee, questioned Petersen's statement, and turned down the proposal of the 'Soviet Bureau' to take up the case.

4) The letter written by Comrade Rutgers from Amsterdam proves that Comrade Fraina has the full confidence of the Holland comrades.

Therefore, it is resolved that the Investigating Committee (Bilan, Communist Labor Party of America, Rudniansky, Communist Party of Hungary, Rosmer, Communist and Syndicalist Movement of France) find Comrade Louis C. Fraina *not guilty of the charges proffered against him* and recommend that he be given the necessary confidence as the accredited representative of the Communist Party of America."

In accordance with this decision, Fraina was admitted to the Executive Committee of the Communist International and to the Congress as the representative of his Party.

During the sessions of the Congress (August 1920), Santeri Nuorteva arrived in Moscow. Fraina thereupon requested the Executive Committee to reopen the whole case, in view of Nuorteva's presence. The Executive Committee, upon motion of Comrade Zinoviev, resolved to give Nuorteva 48 hours to present any new evidence; failing which the case would be closed and Nuorteva warned not to repeat the accusation on pain of severe measures being used against him.

Nuorteva appeared before the Investigating Committee, persisting in the accusation. The Investigating Committee after hearing him at length adopted the following resolution:

“The Committee on the Fraina Case, after hearing Santeri Nuorteva on August 20, 1920, has come to the following decision:

1) Neither the former nor the new accusations brought by Nuorteva against Fraina give cause for altering the previous decision of the committee. Nuorteva’s evidence consists of his personal opinion only. He offers no real arguments to prove any of his accusations.

2) On the basis of his personal opinion, Nuorteva openly spreads the story (even in the capitalist press) that Fraina is a police spy, that the program of the Communist Party of America was written by a police spy, etc. *Such proceedings are absolutely contrary to the attitude of a true socialist.*

If after this decision, Nuorteva does not cease making his accusations against Fraina, the Executive Committee will be compelled *to use the gravest measures to stop him.*”

At the session of August 26 of the Executive Committee of the International, this resolution was unanimously adopted among the members present, being Bukharin and Zinoviev, Russia; Meyer, Germany; Quelch, England; Reed, America).

One of the American delegates having suggested that in view of the charges against Fraina being public property, it might be advisable for Fraina not to occupy any executive position in the movement, the Executive Committee, upon motion of Zinoviev, decided that “the Executive Committee of the communist International sees no reason why Comrade Fraina should be deprived of the opportunity for responsible executive work in the American movement.”

Subsequently, upon the suggestion of Comrade Lenin, the following supplemental resolution was adopted, September 29 [1920]:

“The Executive Committee of the Communist International insists that Nuorteva must retract publicly, in the press, all the accusations made by him against Comrade Fraina.”

M. Kobetsky,
Secretary of Executive Committee.

Moscow, 30.9.1920.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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