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# The United Communist Party in Pittsburgh

[April 25-27, 1921]

by H.J. Lenon and SDO "Ryan"

Unsigned report quoted in full in April 29, 1921 report of BoI Special Agent H.J. Lenon, DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA collection M-1085, reel 928, file 202600-391-196.

Monday, April 25, 1921.

The newly-elected Sub-District Organizer ["Ryan"] met Flynn [Edward Lindgren] of the Central Executive Committee of the United Communist Party, and Field Organizer Ray [=???], at the home of Frank Randa, of 702 East Street, Pittsburgh, at 7:00 tonight.<sup>1</sup>

After lengthy discussion on the method that the new Sub-District Organizer should use in making out financial reports and stating that only the Sub-District Organizer has the right to pay out money for the Party, other work was outlined by Flynn [Lindgren].

The Sub-District Organizer is expected to learn of all the meeting places in his sub-district, of the AF of L, Socialist Party, etc., and instruct the Section Organizers to see that the members of groups in the branches under them sell legal radical papers of the Party at these places during times of meetings, etc.

It is in his power to call special meetings when the occasion arises, attend the section meetings, and is in entire command of the sections and the Sub-Districts 10 and 11.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The UCP Field Organizer "Ray" is not to be confused with Joseph Stilson, who also used the pseudonym "Ray" but was a member of the rival Communist Party of America at this time.

<sup>2</sup> Pittsburgh was originally District 4 of the UCP but was merged into District 5 [Cleveland], apparently towards the end of 1920. The Pittsburgh SDO preceding BoI informer "Ryan," Joseph Martinovich, was arrested in February 1921.

Three addresses are to be secured for the Sub-District Organizer, one for telegrams from the Party, the other for the Field Organizer ["Ray"] to correspond with (in code), and the other form the Section Organizers of the district to reach him at.

An office is to be immediately secured, in which the Sub-District and Field Organizers, with the Assistant Sub-District [Organizer] will carry on the important Party work.

Literature will be wrapped in this office, and a storeroom separate from the office must be secured for the storing of the Party materials.

Flynn [Lindgren] of the CEC will remain in this city until the newly organized heads are familiar with their work, which will be about 2 weeks.

I learned today that the Sub-District Organizer ["Ryan"] with his machine [car] will meet Flynn [Lindgren] at Randa's home tomorrow evening, and they will then proceed to the PRR [Pennsylvania Railroad] station at Rankin, where they will pick up the Field Organizer ["Ray"]. The three will then proceed to East McKeesport, where they will get all the May Day leaflets and stickers, and put them in the machine [car].

They will then drive to Electric and Willow Aves., East Pittsburgh, and go to the first house in the rear (left-hand side, with back to Electric Ave.) of the South Slavic Hall. The Sub-District Committee will meet there from 7:00 to 9:00 pm and at this meeting the literature will be proportioned to the Section Organizers for their distribution to the Branch Organizers at the Branch Organizers' meeting Wednesday night [April 27, 1921], who in turn will give it to the Group Organizers, so that the literature will be in the hands of the members by Friday night [April 29, 1921] for distribution.

Among effects turned over to the Sub-District Organizer ["Ryan"] by the Field Organizer ["Ray"] are the names of S. Rundoek, 1420 E Ohio Street, and S.J. Wolf, 64 McClure St., both of the N.S. Pittsburgh. Also of the Butler St. Group is Louis Akma of 359 Main Street. From Rankin the Hungarian and South Slavic [Croatian] literature is sent to 333 Second St., Rankin, Pa. In McKeesport the literature for the group there is sent to Victor Favel, 213 Dorede Street, Portview, Pa.

During the rest of this week, and next week, Flynn [Lindgren] will take the Sub-District Organizer ["Ryan"] to all meetings possible and acquaint him with progress in the various localities.

All finances will be turned over to the Sub-District Organizer at the meeting tomorrow night [April 26, 1921].

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*NOTE [by Special Agent Lenon]: Tuesday [April 26, 1921] the meeting was held as scheduled except that instead of going to the house in East Pittsburgh mentioned above, they met at South Slavic Hall, where the literature was hurriedly parceled out to those present. All but 3 of those invited reported. Examination of at least 2 of the parcels show that one man had nothing but stickers, another had only dodgers. The men returned to their respective haunts riding from East Pittsburgh on street cars, all except Hill [=???] and Flynn [Lindgren] leaving this way. These two came to Pittsburgh about 11 pm, by previous arrangement, as to their probable route and stopping place. Agent in Charge C.D. McKean and Division Superintendent R.B. Spencer were able to get a spot on Flynn [Lindgren] and shadow him to his hotel. At this writing [April 29, 1921] there is still considerable literature stored in McKeesport as will be noted in the following report which has just come to hand:*

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[April 27, 1921.]

Frank Randa's house, 702 East Street, 3rd floor rear at 7:00 pm will meet X-21 [=???] and 3 other men there and go to the meeting tonight at which time Flynn [Lindgren] will give special instructions to the members recently elected to new positions. After meeting Flynn [Lindgren] will leave for New York City to attend a special meeting of the Central Executive Committee council of the United Communist Party.

S.M. Klukos, East McKeesport, Pa. This man is proprietor of the East McKeesport Baking Company, at which place at least 20,000 leaflets of the UCP were received. The meeting last night [April 26,

1921] was held in a dressing room on the top floor of the Slavic Hall on Small Street in the rear of Electric Ave., East Pittsburgh, Pa.

The District Organizer from Cleveland, Ohio ["Paul Stock-Schiller"] is due to arrive in Pittsburgh this evening. Will be met by Flynn [Lindgren] and the newly elected officers, and all codes and addresses now in possession of the District Organizer from Cleveland will be turned over to the newly elected Sub-District Organizer ["Ryan"] tonight at a special meeting, after leaving Randa's house at 7:00 pm.

Ray of Ambridge, a Section Organizer, will visit the East McKeesport Baking Company plant this pm for the purpose of making individual bundles of the literature stored there for distribution to the various groups that were not represented last night. This man will have a list of the various persons to whom the literature is to be given. He will leave above mentioned Baking Company plant after dark.

The literature last night was taken into 1451 Electric Ave., but was removed from there a short time later to South Slavic Hall.

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*[Note by Special Agent Lenon, April 27, 1921]:*

*FLYNN [Lindgren] leaves Pittsburgh tonight for New York City, where he is to attend a Special Council of the CEC, to be held on Thursday afternoon and evening [April 28, 1921].*

*A summary of this information has been sent to Washington in a letter written by Division Superintendent R.B. Spencer.*

*Copies of stickers and two of the dodgers are attached to this report.<sup>3</sup>*

*The following was received here by the organizer ["Ryan"] and was in my hand long enough to copy:—*

An Italian Organizer will be in District 4 [Cleveland, including Pittsburgh] for a month. He will solicit subscriptions for the Italian paper, collect funds for an Italian Defence Committee and organize for us. We have made an agreement with him, a sort of combination affair. To make his work count in District 4 he will have to know whom to connect with

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<sup>3</sup> The leaflets in question were "May Day of Revolution" and "May Day! Red Labor Day!"

there, so we ask that you go to District 4 at once and call at 3/3 — 2/8  
10/15 10/15 2/8 7/3 2/3 — 5/1 2/2 11/2 3/2 — 6/2 nd Ave-  
nue, Pittsburgh.<sup>4</sup>

The legal name of the Italian Organizer is the same as the above  
[Abbate] except that his first name is ERASMUS.<sup>5</sup> You must call for him  
at the above address between 17 and 20 of this month. You will realize  
the importance of this for if he is to spend a month or 4 and be of profit  
to us he will have to be directed and you will have to secure his coop-  
eration.

Fraternally,

***Paul Holt [Alfred Wagenknecht],***  
Ex. Sec.

*Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport*

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<sup>4</sup> This decodes as: "F. Abbate, 4918 — 2nd Avenue, Pittsburgh."

<sup>5</sup> Erasmo Abbate was the pseudonym of former Philadelphia anarchist Hugo Rolland. Abbate-Rolland left for Italy in 1922 to dodge a criminal syndicalism charge, returning to the United States only in 1925.