
In the Matter of Abraham Zanan, Under Telegraphic Warrant of Arrest: Philadelphia — Feb. 11, 1921.†

Present: A.G. Benkhart, Immigrant Inspector
A.F. Gould, Stenographer

Document in DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, NARA M-1085, reel935, file 202600-959-3.

February 11, 1921.

In the matter of Abraham Zanan, under telegraphic warrant of arrest, dated February 10, 1921.

Present: A.G. Benkhart, Immigrant Inspector
A.F. Gould, Stenographer.

Alien Sworn.

I have here a Telegraphic Warrant of Arrest, issued by the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Labor, under date of February 10th [1921], in which you are charged with being an Anarchist, and also that you believe in, advise, advocate, or teach the overthrow by force or violence of the government of the United States.

That you are a member or affiliated with an organization, association, society, or group that advises, advocates, or teaches opposition to all organized government.

That you are a member of, or affiliated with an organization, association, society, or group that believes in, advises, advocates, or teaches the overthrow by force and violence of the government of the United States, or all forms of law.

That you are a member of, or affiliated with an organization, association, society, or group that believes in and teaches sabotage.

That you are a member of, or affiliated with and organization, association, society, or group that reads, circulates, distributes, prints, publishes, displays, or causes to be written, circulated, distributed, printed, published, displayed, or that has in its possession for the purpose of circulation, distribution, or display, written or printed matter advising, teaching, advocating contrary to all organized government.

That you are a member of, or affiliated with and organization, association, society, or group that reads, circulates, distributes, prints, publishes, displays, or causes to be written, circulated, distributed, printed, published, displayed, or that has in its possession for the purpose of circulation, distribution, or display, written or printed matter advising, advocating, or teaching the overthrow by force or violence of the government of the United States, or all forms of law.

That you are a member of, or affiliated with and organization, association, society, or group that reads, circulates, distributes, prints, publishes, displays, or causes to be written, circulated, displayed, printed, published, or that has in its possession for the purpose of distribution, circulation, issue, or display, written or printed matter advising or teaching sabotage.

Q. What is your name?

A. Abraham Zanan.

Q. Is the name you have given your correct

†- According to adjacent documents on the same microfilm reel, Abraham Zanan turned himself in to the Philadelphia office of the Bureau of Investigation on Feb. 3, 1921. Philadelphia Immigration Inspector A.G. Benkhart was said to be recommending deportation on Feb. 12, 1921. The ultimate disposition of Zanan's case is unknown.

name?

A. It is. I also have a middle name.

Q. What is your full name?

A. Abraham Isaac Zanan.

Q. Now, at the outset of this hearing, I want to advise you that you are entitled to be represented by counsel. I am going to ask you if you wish to be so represented, or are you willing to proceed without an attorney?

A. I think I will proceed without counsel.

Q. Then you waive right to be represented?

A. Yes.

Q. How old are you, Mr. Zanan?

A. Just 20 years old.

Q. Where were you born?

A. In Zhitomir, Volin, Russia.

Q. Are you married?

A. No, sir.

Q. What is your occupation?

A. Shirt cutter.

Q. Where are you employed at present?

A. I am not employed. Since last March [1920] I have only worked about 6 weeks.

Q. Where do you live?

A. 627 Durfer Street, Philadelphia.

Q. When did you arrive in the United States?
What year?

A. In the year 1913.

Q. At what port did you arrive?

A. Baltimore.

Q. On what ship?

A. On the *Rhine*.

Q. How much schooling have you had?

A. I went to the 5th [grade], in grammar

Q. You were not graduated from grammar school?

A. No.

Q. To what societies or organizations do you belong?

A. The only organization I belong to at present is the United Communist Party of America.

Q. How long have you been a member of the United Communist Party of America?

A. Since its formation.

Q. Do you believe in the principles enunciated by that party?

A. I do.

Q. Do you fully subscribe to all its program, and its literature?

A. Yes, sir, as a member of the organization.

Q. Do you believe in the overthrow by force and violence of the government of the United States, or of all forms of law?

A. Not necessarily.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. Well, when there's no need of using force or other sort of violence, it will not be used.

Q. Well, let us presume that the aims of the United Communist Party of America could not be accomplished by peaceful measures?

A. In the time of the struggle for the conquest of power then, of course, the proletariat will have to use force because force will be used against them.

Q. Then, as a member of this organization, the United Communist Party, you are conscious and aware of all its aims and purposes, are you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You have read their program, and you have read all the literature so far produced?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, were you present at a convention held by that party when it was formed?

A. No, I was not.

Q. What is the indication of your membership? Is it in the form of a card?

A. No, it is not.

Q. How are you indicated as a member?

A. Through the Group Captains.

Q. You pay dues, don't you?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have you paid dues in this party since its organization?

A. Well, I paid up until the time I got out of work, 4 months ago.

Q. How are these dues paid?

A. Seventy-five cents a month.

Q. How are you credited with payment?

A. Well, the Group Captain, I don't know how he manages, but you just give him 75¢ each month.

Q. Do you get anything to show?

A. No.

Q. Is it not true that the Group Captain retains the dues card, which contains so many stamps, and when each payment of dues is made one of these stamps is removed from the membership book?

A. No, there are no membership books at all since the party went underground.

Q. Have you stamps that indicate the payment of dues?

A. I have never seen any.

Q. How many members comprise a Group?

A. Ten is supposed to compose a Group, but not all Groups have 10.

Q. Are there 10 in your Group?

A. No.

Q. Who is Captain of your Group?

A. Well, he is called Victor. I do not know whether that is his first name or second name.

Q. That is all the name you know him by?

A. Yes, Victor.

Q. Do the members know each other by their correct name?

A. Yes.

Q. Where is Victor now?

A. I haven't seen Victor for the last 2 or 3 weeks.

Q. Why haven't you seen him in that time?

A. Because we don't meet regularly.

Q. Where was your meeting place?

A. We have no regular meeting places, we go from house to house.

Q. How is it you haven't got to see Victor?

A. Because we haven't met for 2 or 3 weeks.

Q. Was he there at the last meeting you attended?

A. Yes.

Q. When was that held?

A. About 3 weeks ago.

Q. Is Victor among this group of pictures?

A. No, he is not.

Q. Is there anyone you recognize as a member of the Communist Party?

A. Yes, Mr. Harry Gerrish is a member of the United Communist Party. That is the only one that I know.

Q. Gerrish is not Victor, is he?

A. No, he is called Harry Gerrish.

Q. Is it not true that you voluntarily appeared in the office of the Department of Justice, and gave yourself up?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What was your reason for giving yourself up?

A. The main reason that I have surrendered to the Department of Justice, or rather to Mr. White, because Mr. White was the first one I met, was being out of work for the last 4 or 5 months, and being a burden on the shoulders of my people, as I could not find any work. You see, I made up my mind to surrender and be sent to Russia, where I could work. Another reason is because the Department of Justice in January 1920 raised my house, and could not locate me since, and I was under the impression that I was a fugitive from justice. That is the reason I gave myself up.

Q. Now, as to these charges I have read to you, do you admit they are true?

A. To the first charge, that I am an Anarchist, I say I am not an Anarchist.

Q. How about the second?

A. As to the second, I want to say, we don't go out and preach that we are going to use force now. We don't advocate force, but we say, [we will use it] if necessary.

Q. As to the third?

A. It means from the private ownership-means of production by the community, or those that protest, or by the proletariat. [*sic.*]

Q. Do you wish to convey the impression that the principles to which you have subscribed, and which you believe in, do not aim to destroy all organized government?

A. No, it does not aim to destroy all organized government. It aims for the workers to change the form of government.

Q. Well, in changing, you wipe out the form of government, don't you?

A. Yes, that's it.

Q. In what manner would you go about changing it?

A. In the manner the Manifesto of the United Communist Party declares.

Q. As to the 4th charge?

A. I think that was covered by a previous question.

Q. And the next charge?

A. I don't believe there is a clause or any written matter where the party has ever advocated sabotage. There is not a clause in the program of the United Communist Party or the Third International which advocates sabotage. That question was untouched.

Q. The next charge?

A. That is also answered in my answer to the second charge.

Q. The next?

A. That is also answered in a previous charge. I stated there isn't a clause in the program of the United Communist Party which advocates that.

Q. Do you read a publication called *The Communist*?

A. Well, that's the official party organ.

Q. Did you subscribe to it?

A. No, each member gets that free.

Q. Have you read Issue no. 1, Volume no. 1?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you subscribe in toto to all you have read in that publication?

A. Yes.

(I introduce a copy of The Communist, official organ of the United Communist Party of America, Vol. 1, No. 1, as evidence in this case and make same part of the record, marked Exhibit 1.)

Q. You have read the affidavits of Walter C. Foster, Hubert S. White, and Joseph F. McDevitt, Special Agents of the Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice. Are the statements made therein correct?

A. Yes.

(I introduce as testimony, and make same a part of the record in this case affidavits of Walter C. Foster, Hubert

S. White, and Joseph F. McDevitt, marked Exhibits 2-3-4.)

Q. Are your parents living?

A. Yes.

Q. Do your parents know of your membership and affiliation with the United Communist Party?

A. I don't now know whether they know I am a member. I do not know that.

Q. Do they know that you entertain communistic ideas?

A. I have never carried on any discussion in my house about that.

Q. To what organizations did you belong prior to joining the United Communist Party?

A. The first organization I joined in the year 1915 was the Young Peoples Socialist League, Jewish Branch, and in 1917 I joined the Socialist Party, Jewish section. When the Left Wing movement started within the Socialist Party [early 1919], and finally when they broke away and formed the Communist Party, I became a member of the Communist Party, and when there was another split within the Communist Party and the United Communist Party was formed by uniting with the Communist Labor Party, I became a member of the United Communist Party.

Q. Do I understand that only the more radical elements in the other parties joined this new party?

A. No, the element that is usually called the foreign element, composed of Russians, Lithuanian, and various nationalities, remained within the Communist Party. The more advanced or more Americanized wanted unity with the Communist Labor Party, and they formed the United Communist Party.

Q. What is your idea in wanting to go to Russia at this time? Is it your interest in the form of government that Russia has at the present time?

A. Well, of course, believing in the program of this party that advocates the same form of government as Russia, you see, I am, of course, glad to see that government of that kind exists in Russia, and if I should be deported I would not look for any political jobs or

anything of that sort, but will just work in the industrial field, for I believe they need to build up their industries.

Q. Is it your purpose to return to the United States at a future time?

A. Well, I suppose, the United States government would not allow a deportee to return.

Q. Have you personally distributed any of the printed matter issued by the United Communist Party of America?

A. Yes, I have distributed the answer from the Third International to the Socialist Party, entitled "Communist Answer to the American Socialist Party."

Q. Who gave you these circulars to distribute?

A. Mr. Victor, the Captain of the Group.

Q. Did you sign an application for membership in the Communist Party?

A. No, I did not, because the majority of the Local of the Socialist Party joined the Communist Party when that party was formed and, therefore, no application was necessary.

Q. Did you sign a ballot of your organization to join the Communist Party?

A. No, there was no ballot of that kind.

Q. In view of your admissions, what reason can you offer why you should not be deported in conformity with law?

A. Well, the only reason is, of course, my mother, who would not want me deported. If I could find employment here, I would prefer to remain in the United States.

Q. Do you wish to call any witnesses in your behalf?

A. Yes, you may examine my mother, who is here.

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[Testimony of Mrs. Zanan.]

Q. What is your name?

A. Mrs. Zanan.

Q. Where do you live?

A. 627 Durfer Street.

Q. Where is your husband?

A. He is working.

Q. How many children have you?

A. Six children.

Q. Is this your son? (Indicating Abraham.)

A. Yes.

Q. What can you say in the interest of your son?

That is, in regard to the matter before us?

A. I cannot say anything bad about my son, because I don't know such a thing.

Q. Do you know that your son is a member of an organization which teaches and advocates the overthrow by force or violence of the government of the United States, and that as such he is subject to deportation?

A. No, I never knew it.

Q. How old is your son Abraham?

A. About 19 or 20 years old. [19]

Q. When is his birthday?

A. In the month of August 1901.

Q. Has your son been on his own resources for a number of years?

A. He has been giving me his earnings.

Q. Is your husband living?

A. Yes.

Q. How much does your husband earn?

A. \$15.00 to \$20.00 a week.

Q. How old are your other children?

A. 14 to 22 years.

Q. Is your husband a citizen of the United States?

A. No.

Q. How long has he been here?

A. Ten years.

Q. Do you want your boy to be deported to Russia?

A. No, he is good, and the only one that can earn anything.

Q. But under the law he is subject to deportation—

A. I never saw anything that would show he belonged to the party.

Q. Do you own any real estate?

A. No.

Q. Then, you would not want your son deported to Russia?

A. No, if he goes back to Russia, I will die because I could not live without him. I could not say anything bad about him.

Q. Is there anything else you wish to say in behalf of your son?

A. I have nothing else to say, only that I don't want him sent back to Russia.

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To Alien:

Q. Are you able to furnish bond in the sum of \$1,000?

A. No.

• • • • •

To Witness (Mother):

Q. Are you, as mother of this boy, able to furnish \$1,000 bail conditioned on his being produced whenever wanted?

A. How can I furnish \$1,000 bail, the boy has not been working for 11 months and we have all we can do to take care of ourselves?

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To Alien:

Q. Are there any other witnesses you desire to call?

A. I have my brother-in-law here, who can testify.

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[Testimony of Soloman Weiss.]

Witness called and sworn.

Q. What is your name?

A. Solomon Weiss.

Q. How old are you?

A. 30 years.

Q. You are the brother-in-law of alien here?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you do to make a living?

A. I am a painter.

Q. How much do you earn a week?

A. Sometimes \$50.00 and sometimes nothing a week.

Q. Are you married?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. The alien here is your brother-in-law?

A. Yes.

Q. What can you say in his behalf?

A. I can only say since I know the people, my mother-in-law and brother-in-law, I never saw anything bad at that home. I know he is a good boy, and I wish you would let him out and he will be a good boy again. We will take care of him, and he will start and be a good boy again.

Q. Are you able to furnish bail in the sum of \$1,000 pending final disposition by the department?

A. Not now, I am out of work.

• • • • •

To Alien:

Q. Do you wish to call any other witnesses?

A. No.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct transcription of the testimony in this case.

A.F. Gould,
(Stenographer.)

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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