

September 11th, 1936

Dear Rae,

I received your letter with a delay of almost a day. Hope this will reach you before Monday as I want to give you some of our ideas on the "trial".

But first as to the money. You are swell, and I shall acknowledge the receipts separately to the contributors a day or two later. Becker pledged two dollars monthly and has given me the first two already (at the beginning of September) but I would very much like to apply that to August and, if at all possible, inveigle him somehow to contribute again for September. Do you think we might succeed in view of the "emergency" now existing? And as a matter of fact, Rae dear, the situation was never so black as now. I will give you a few extracts from a letter by com. Held (of course, very confidential). EIGHT police are guarding LD day and night. All mail is censored, no phone calls, or cables. Incoming mail is censored as well. He lives under the conditions of a "glorified" concentration camp; Money is needed, loads of it to institute suit/against the Norwegian government, this will be the only opportunity of L.D. to appear in court and air the whole bloody business. This will also put the treacherous Norwegian Labor Party "on the spot". These people have the cheek to say that L.D. broke "the pledge" and that they intend to interfere into the internal affairs of Norway. They cite his writings in the international press and visitors. They knew about his writings all along and never breathed a word in protest (as a matter of fact they reprinted many of them), they knew about the visitors - why L.D. gave Isaacs, for instance, a bitter introduction to several editors ~~with whom~~ whom Isaacs gave an interview on China. They knew about it (the interview appeared also in the labor press) and never breathed a word against it. Now, that they are giving in to the demand of the Norwegian fascists (and Stalinist bonapartists) for muzzling the "old man" they drag in the accusation of a "broken pledge". All this must be exposed. An effective guard has to be built up around L.D. - his life was never so immediately in danger as now - as you probably understand. An effort must be made to get larger donations. Here in New York so far a couple of comrades gave very heavy contributions but no campaign has been developed whatsoever, it is true that no public ~~target~~ campaign could be made but still.... Isaacs gave more than five hundred dollars, the Konnikows, including Wright about four hundred.. (Not a word from Glantz - I expect to pay him a special visit, no matter how unpleasant it may be).

Now to the trial itself. Possibly what I will state here, you will have thought about yourself and it will be a mere repetition. But I believe it is worth it. Light on it can be shed from various angles. First, that the whole frame-up was planned as far back as the Kiroff assassination, this is borne out by the fact that Litvinoff signed a pact with capitalist governments against terrorists (in connection with the assassination of Alexander and Barthou), by so doing he laid a base for asking for the extradition of political opponents (now under guise of "terrorists"). No evidence of a plot to kill could be foisted upon Zinoviev and Kameneff who were merely kept in jail as "corrupters of youth", and at the time of the Kiroff business, how then did it happen that people who sat in jail could have plotted all that ~~that~~ they later "confessed" they did? No doubt, that members of the GPU, Olberg, David and Lurie, were planted among them, it is more than likely that they too have been killed (although that cannot be proven with certainty) to do away with those who knew too much how the whole affair was being prepared (just as in the Reichstag fire ~~that~~ it on the side of the government, were done away with so as to close their mouths forever.

~~But~~ Why this haste in executions? Why no representative of the Second International was allowed to sit in?

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But what is the POLITICAL meaning of the trial? The obvious answer is, to cover up the betrayal in Spain and France. Yes, partly it is so. As a matter of fact, the tremendous demonstration in Moscow on behalf of Spain frightened the bureaucrats sick. The masses for the first time in many, many years went out into the streets with a genuine enthusiasm and among the many banners carried, to be sure, there were some who demanded help to Spain, etc.

But even more important than this is the new turn of Moscow as reflected now in France. And that is the call for a FRENCH FRONT (no longer Popular Front). You see the Popular Front is not all-inclusive enough. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ The French CP through the mouths of Thorez and Duclos advocates "unity of all Frenchmen" ~~for~~ "for the defense of the laws, for national economy, for the liberty and independence of France" (quoted verbatim from Thorez report on August 7th) As a matter of fact ~~there is no~~ we have good reason to believe that negotiations with French generals, like Petain, are going on for the "French Front". The CP of France feels that it cannot rely on a weak-kneed support of a popular front Government with Blum. It needs the big bourgeoisie, with its generals. For what? For a war with Germany. They will make agreement with anybody, as long as they will be on the side of the USSR as against Germany. This is the stage the Franco-Russian alliance reached now. What is the price the generals demand? We can only surmise. May be it was already paid ..... by the execution of the leading figures who at one time or another were close to Lenin. This is the final guarantee Russia is giving that it has nothing to do with old Bolshevism.

As a matter of fact, the CP of France is quietly proceeding to blow up the whole Popular Front. "Quietly", I say, because it is afraid of its own followers. The refusal of allowing the representative of the Second International to be present at the trial is an indication of the break with the Popular Front forces, the request for help to Spain which brings pressure on Blum and jeopardizes the Popular Front is an indication of that. Although, of course, it has even more significance. And this is that the Soviet bureaucrats became convinced that they cannot escape war in the near future, and if so, they will better choose the moment. And they choose it now. But they prefer to see France involved first, that is the real meaning of the agitation for help to Spain. They ask for help to Spain not to push Spain on the road of proletarian revolution, and certainly not to help French workers take that road, but simply and purely to involve France in an imperialist war against Germany with Russia on the side of France. As a matter of fact, Russia hopes by this means to tie the French workers hand and foot and also muzzle its own stirring masses more effectively.

That is enough on my part. L.D.'s article did not arrive, we have ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ reason to believe that it was confiscated. You saw his little note on Olberg and how this GPU spy ~~XXXXX~~ tried to penetrate the LD household in the guise of secretary to LD. - thank the stars this did not work. LD's article on Spain has been printed in the Socialist Appeal, have you got it? The gist of it is that the whole army has to be rebuilt from top to bottom, the officers corps destroyed, only then can the army be purged of fascists and carry on an effective fight against the fascists. Also, that to win the war political means are even more important than military. Giving the land to the peasants, nationalization of the factories are the political means by which the workers ~~XXXXX~~ and peasants would rally to the side of the "loyalists" and the armies of the fascists would be deserted.

Best regards to you and let me hear from you

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