
Letter to Max Bedacht in San Francisco from Alfred Wagenknecht in Brooklyn, January 30, 1920.

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January 30, 1920.

Max Bedacht
309 Bennington St.
San Francisco, Cal.

Dear Comrade:

You ask, in your letter of 1/21/20, for an account of the raids. Shall do you this favor, for I know you are anxious to hear just what happened in other parts of the country. Yet it seems to me that I have written you about this before.

In Portland, Ore. You probably know that several of our members are held for deportation. Have heard of no raids in Washington. In Missouri, Charles Baker and J.P. Cannon, State Secretary, are under federal charges for having violated the Lever Act — interfered with coal production by agitating among the miners during the strike. Cannon is still in jail, going on four weeks now, I think, whereas Baker, who was arrested in Ohio, is out on bail, but can not leave the Northern Ohio federal district.

In Chicago all local officials, state officials, and national officials of the party have been indicted. We are supposed to have violated the state sedition law by holding our convention there and passing certain declarations. Most of those indicted are out on bail, excepting probably [L.K.] England and [Charles] Shipman, who from last accounts are still in. The situation in Chicago as far as bail is concerned seems very favorable for our party. Whereas the CP members who are in prison complain because no one is looking out for

them. The CP National Office in Chicago is occupied by police. No party work has been conducted from there for several weeks. The CP has decided to move its NO [National Office] to New York City, if I am correctly informed.

The raids hit the coast cities most severely. Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts — each furnished a big quota of comrades, some being sent to Ellis Island, New York, others to Deer Island, near Boston, while some are kept in city jails. Understand from a Massachusetts comrade that releases by bail are being had from Deer Island, and we have all comrades out on bail from Ellis Island except 8. The other comrades over there belong to the CP and the Union of Russian Workers.

The Gitlow trial is on. All jurors have been selected by now, I think. The papers are concerned mainly with the expulsion of the 5 Socialist assemblymen and are not giving the Gitlow trial much space. The SP fight to reseal their assemblymen is dirty. Hillquit accepts, publicly, money from the New York World, which is fighting to “retain representative government” and one of the contributors to the NY World fund is Barney Baruch of war profiteering fame. At Albany [Seymour] Stedman is leading the defense and claims that the SP “is for the law” and that it furnished its quota of heroes in the war. A meeting for Madison Square Garden was arranged at which old party representatives spoke. Garden about half full. More later.

[Alfred Wagenknecht.]

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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