
**Letter to Rachele Ragozin in Brooklyn
from C.E. Ruthenberg at Sing Sing
Penitentiary, Ossining, NY,
July 17, 1921 [excerpt]**

Typewritten document on prison letter paper in C.E. Ruthenberg Papers,
Ohio Historical Society, box 4, folder 1, microfilm reel 2.

Sunday, July 17, 1921.

Dear Rachele:—

In reading in the “nice” letter which I received yesterday about the qualities which you find in me and of your response to them, I am conscious of something in connection with some of these qualities of which I wish to tell you. You write of these qualities as if they belonged to me, as if in some manner they came out of me. The feeling I have is different. It is that in you I am in contact with another personality that has the power to unlock emotions and bring forth qualities that could not otherwise manifest themselves.

I am, I think, naturally rather rational and, possibly, cold, in my judgments and actions. I do not really give way to unreasoning anger and my enthusiasms are usually tempered with cool judgment. Because of these qualities I have rather felt myself alien among people who could let themselves go, who could be angry beyond control, who could manifest friendship beyond reserve, who seemed to be able to give themselves wholly in their emotions, without there being some sections of their mind that refused to be moved, that insisted upon reasoning, weighting, judging, and deciding without being influenced by either anger or good-will.

It comes with the quality of release to be touched by a personality that has the power of arousing in me an affection that contains so much of warmth, color, and enthusiasm that there are no reserves, that it absorbs me wholly. I think it is this that you meant in writing on the subject recently, and in quoting the lines from a poem which stated the matter negatively. It has made me more human, I think. It

has brought a change in my philosophical attitude toward life, made me feel the lure of happiness in aspects of life which I previously regarded rather disdainfully. If there is sometimes beauty in what I write, it is because I touch that person who is beauty for me. If there are other qualities which are pleasing, it is because that which I feel in you arouses in me the urgent need that every thought, word, and act shall be such as to bring you some of the joy which I receive. * * *

It is my happiness that you arouse in me shining thoughts of beauty, strength for achievement, and are the companion who shares the struggle upward to beauty, to creation, to achievement. Not only that, but also the companion who warms me to capability for the simpler human relations, to be social, to laugh a little in mere jolly friendship, to be, not only the cold and efficient human machine, but to be human. With you I am just myself, without guards, reflecting back to you the joy and happiness which you bring. You were right in the thought that there had been no one in my life who counted so much, who stirred in me the reactions which you do. If I were to summarize what I have written, I would say, when I am with you I am what I like myself to be.

* * *

C.E.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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