
Letter to Rachele Ragozin in Brooklyn from C.E. Ruthenberg in St. Joseph, MI, Sept. 15-16, 1922

Typewritten document with handwritten postscript in C.E. Ruthenberg Papers, Ohio
Historical Society, box 5, folder 3, microfilm reel 3.

St. Joseph, Mich.
September 15th, 1922.

Dear Rachele:—

The hearing in our case was postponed until Sept. 26th [1922]. We succeeded today in securing the release of [William Z.] Foster and Max Lerner.¹ This leaves 12 still in jail — 10 of the original 17 and [Earl] Browder and [Phil] Aronberg, who were brought here from Chicago with Foster.²

One bail bond has been signed in blank and the justice is investigating the property in Detroit. This will be used to release T.S. Sullivan, who is next on the list. The Detroit prospect who was to furnish a hundred thousand bail is still good and [Cyril] Lambkin felt that the arrangements could be completed by Tuesday [Sept. 19, 1922]. If so we will have bail for all but one.

Efforts should not be relaxing, however, to secure the bail from other sources. I am enclosing National Bail Fund applications for [T.J.] O'Flaherty and [Charles] Krumbein. Please get the endorsement signed — [Alexander] Trachtenberg and [Joseph] Brodsky signed that for Caleb Harrison and will no doubt also sign these. When the signatures are secured send them to Albert DeSilver, 68

¹ CPA member Max Lerner (1897-1988) is not to be confused with the liberal *New York Post* columnist Max Lerner (1902-1992).

² Foster, Browder, and Aronberg, who attended the ill-fated August 1922 Bridgman convention of the Communist Party raided by local and federal officials, escaped the original dragnet, only to be arrested in Chicago shortly thereafter.

Williams St. You can give these instructions to Nerma Berman and have her attend to the details.

The Labor Defense Council has been organized in Chicago with the SP [Socialist Party], F-LP [Farmer-Labor Party], Proletarian Party, WP [Workers Party], TUEL [Trade Union Educational League], and quite a number of unions represented. I will have the National Office established by Monday [Sept. 18]. I think it will be a big thing. We have made tentative moves toward establishing a branch of the Labor Defense Council here in St. Joe. One of the local preachers delivered a sermon in which he denounced the arrests and there is the beginning of a popular resentment against the whole things, which we will foster.

My plans are still to reach New York on Wednesday [Sept. 20] although I will have to be back here a week from Tuesday [Sept. 26]. I might stay in Chicago and devote my time to the Labor Defense Council, but in view of the meetings arranged for Philadelphia and Boston, and I understand in New York, I will have to travel back and forth — and, there is the happiness of a few days with you.....

C.E.

Saturday [Sept. 16, 1922] 11 am:— I am in a garden at Niles, Mich. My train to Detroit is due in a half hour and I have strolled out here to enjoy the autumn morning. It is a beautiful garden where I am waiting. A clump of splendid elm trees at one end with flowers in an open space at the other. From where I sit I have a glimpse of a beautiful be of scarlet sage, some great yellow autumn flowers, and nearby is a pond in which a school of goldfish swim. I have been standing before a white flower growing in this pond. It is a large, tall flower with red petals and a yellow heart. It brought to my memory the flowers I tried to describe in many letters last year.³ Life is pleasant here — the crisp autumn air, the stately trees, the splashes of brilliant color — one could sit and dream and be happy. I would like to show you the garden and sit here and talk with you. —C.E.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport

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³ C.E. Ruthenberg and Rachele Ragozin conducted a voluminous correspondence during his imprisonment at Sing Sing and Dannemora State Penitentiaries in New York from November 1920 to April 1922.