
Soviets Would Trade American War Prisoner for Convicted Communist: Would Swap Kirkpatrick for Either Larkin or Gitlow.

Unsigned article in *The Toiler* [Cleveland, OH], whole no. 167 (April 16, 1921), pg. 1.

Coming on the heels of the confirmation of the conviction of Benjamin Gitlow by the Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court of New York on April 1st [1921], is the information furnished by “Rosta”† of Vienna that the Soviet government is willing to trade Captain Kirkpatrick, an American military prisoner, for the pardon by the New York authorities of either James Larkin or Benjamin Gitlow.

Gitlow and Larkin were convicted some months ago on charges of violation of the state Criminal Anarchy law and were remanded to Dannemora Prison awaiting the appeal of their cases. Gitlow was recently transferred to Sing Sing.

The ruling in the case has been awaited with great interest for several weeks because of its bearing upon the cases of Larkin, Charles E. Ruthenberg, I.E. Ferguson, and Harry D. Winitsky, all convicted on the same charges.

Judge Read Between Lines.

Justice Frank C. Laughlin, in writing the decision of the Appellate Court declared that when people advocate such doctrines as the “Left Wing Manifesto,” there “must necessarily be great latitude for reading between the lines to determine what is implied in this doctrine, and they should be held responsible for advocating what they must know is involved in the doctrine and will be essential to the accomplishment of their purpose.”

The charges against Gitlow and Larkin are that on July 5, 1919, they “feloniously advocated, advised, and taught the duty, necessity, and propriety of overthrowing and overturning organized government,” in writing articles printed in *The Revolutionary Age*. Whether Gitlow’s case will be carried into higher courts is not yet determined by his attorneys. Bail in none of these cases is allowed by the court.

Louise Bryant Visits Kirkpatrick.

Writing in the *Russian Press Review*, published in English in Moscow, Louise Bryant, wife of the late John Reed, American Communist who died last November [*sic.*] in Russia, describes a visit to an internment camp where Captain Kirkpatrick is held a prisoner of war. Describing this visit and the conditions she met with there, she writes:

We spent about 6 hours in the Andronevsky Camp. We were allowed to walk about the camp and to speak to the prisoners quite freely, unaccompanied by the officers of the administration. We saw nowhere any gratings or bars on the doors of the cells. The prisoners pay visits to each other just as though they were in any small town. For instance, an American, Captain Kirkpatrick, invited us to drink coffee with his Hungarian friends. I got the impression that I was in a rest home and not in a prison at all. Nobody, of course, can ever feel happy in a prison, but the example of the Andronevsky Camp can be of much use to many of our prison reformers.

†- ROSTA was an acronym for “ROssiiskoe Telegrafnoe Agentstvo” — Russian Telegraph Agency, the state information service that was succeeded by TASS (“Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soiuza” — Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union).

Captain Kirkpatrick was captured during the Red drive against General Wrangel. Interned with him in the camp are a number of counterrevolutionists of note. Some members of the Hungarian nobility, such as Count Szechenyi, brother-in-law of Gladys Vanderbilt, have found lodging from their labors here.

According to the Rosta Agency, Captain Kirkpatrick feels very peeved because the United States government has not made decisive efforts to secure his release and has requested political friends here to intercede in his behalf.

Should such an exchange of prisoners take place as is intimated to be possible by the Soviet government, it would meet with great enthusiasm by thousands of radicals here who are friends of Gitlow and Larkin. And, now that the question of amnesty for all political prisoners is attaining such momentum, it is within the realm of possibilities.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2007. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.