
Letter to Ludwig Katterfeld in Moscow (Probably Received by Otto Huiswood) from Abram Jakira in New York, Dec. 2, 1922.

Document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 100, l. 103.

Dec. 2, 1922.

Dear Comrade Carr [Katterfeld]:

Enclosed you will find a clipping of the *New York World* dealing with the Chicago cases.[†] It speaks for itself. It is essential that if Elk [Katterfeld] has not yet returned, he should do so at once.[‡]

I have written you some time ago that the centrist [Workers Council-Olgin] group of the JF [Jewish Federation] have accepted the terms of the Exec. Com. of the WP [Workers Party]. However, after I sent you that letter, a change took place. The centrist group backed out at the last moment and rejected the terms of the Exec. Com. The statement to the membership, a copy of which I mailed you some time ago, was sent out. At present the centrists have control over

the Daily [*Freiheit*] and are defying the Exec. Com. of the WP. With the centrists have joined hands — well known to you — [Noah] London, [Louis] Hendin, and [Joseph] Raskin. The centrists expect to “capture” the convention of the JF [Jewish Federation] called by them [Dec. 16-17, 1922] through a number of delegates coming from small towns, who are mainly petty businessmen. The Party has the backing of all Jewish branches in the industrial centers, that is, of those branches consisting of workers and not of petty businessmen. The centrists [Olgin group] have cabled to M [Moscow] asking the CI to interfere, repeating the same old arguments. The CEC of the WP also cabled to the CI, stating the case. I hope that the CI will uphold the Exec. Com. of the WP. I am preparing a complete set of documents dealing with this matter and will forward it to you shortly. The German Fed-

[†]- Ludwig Katterfeld was a defendant in the July 1920 mass trial of the leadership of the Communist Labor Party, held in Chicago. He was found guilty of having violated the Illinois Criminal Syndicalism Law and on Aug. 2, 1920 was sentenced to 1-5 years in the state penitentiary and given a \$2,000 fine. Katterfeld remained out on bail pending appeal, which allowed him to participate as a delegate to the May 1921 Communist Unity Convention, to serve as Executive Secretary of the unified CPA from July 27 to Oct. 15, 1921, and as the American party's representative to ECCI in Moscow from November 1921 through March 1922. After returning to America, Katterfeld was active in the turbulent factional politics of the CPA. In July and August 1922 he was a member of the 8 man “Disarmament Commission” which negotiated an end to the bitter split of the CPA between “Geese” and “Independents.” Katterfeld was elected to the CEC of the CPA by the August 1922 Bridgman Convention, served a 2 week stint as “Provisional Executive Secretary” immediately thereafter, and was returned to Moscow as the CPA's representative to ECCI by decision of Sept. 5, 1922. However in the Fall of 1922 his court case began to heat up and Katterfeld was instructed by the CEC to return to post new bail in the case, as ordered by the court. He seems to have stayed as long as he could so that he could attend the 4th World Congress of the Communist International as a delegate, leaving Moscow not later than Dec. 5, 1922. His position as the CPA's representative to ECCI was turned over provisionally to factional ally Otto Huiswood at the time of his departure. Katterfeld was imprisoned at the Joliet State Penitentiary in 1923 and was not released until 1924.

[‡]- The security-conscious Jakira uses a second pseudonym for Katterfeld in this sentence rather than risk making known to intercepting authorities through use of an ill-placed personal pronoun that pseudonym “Carr” was actually Katterfeld, which they might easily deduce from context. Jakira was willing to risk exposure of the less-important alternate pseudonym, which would have been known to authorities in any event as a result of their successful raid of the 1922 Bridgman Convention. The phrasing of this passage indicates that Jakira did not fully expect Katterfeld to be in Moscow to receive this message, which would have been and doubtlessly was delivered to Katterfeld's successor, Huiswood.

eration has adopted a resolution expressing disapproval of the action taken by the centrists [Olgin group] of the JF, and as you know, the German Federation of the WP is for an open CP.

Under separate cover, you will find a pamphlet issued by the WP on the matter of the formation of a Labor Party. The pamphlet speaks for itself.†

Some time ago, Comrade Paul [J. Wilenkin] left for Russia with his family. He received the permission of the CEC, as we realized that it was impossible for him to remain in the states.

Enclosed you will find a copy of a letter written by a group of Russian workers to the Profintern, asking the Executive Committee of the Profintern to impress upon their delegate to the Profintern with the necessity of joining the Party. The letter may reach you too late. However, I am sending it over.

Fraternally yours,

J. Miller [Abram Jakira],
Exec-sec'y.

†- Workers Party of America. *For a Labor Party: Recent Revolutionary Changes in American Politics: A Statement by the Workers Party*. First Edition. (New York: Workers Party of America, 1922). Written by John Pepper, whose by-line appeared on the revised 2nd and 3rd editions of the pamphlet, published in 1923.

Edited with footnotes by Tim Davenport.

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