
Letter to Emma Goldman at Ellis Island from Ludwig C.A.K. Martens in New York, December 15, 1919.

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December 15th, 1919.

Miss Emma Goldman
Ellis Island
New York.

Madam:

New York morning papers, Sunday, December 14th, published an alleged interview with me regarding your enforced departure to Russia. I was maliciously represented as having said that you and other refugees will not be welcome in Soviet Russian and that you may be punished by death if you “plot there as you plotted here.” While I have never had the pleasure of making your acquaintance, I feel confident that you understand that I have made no such statements, and I am writing this only to emphasize this fact.

Far from sharing in the malicious hysteria, a product of which are the stories which I now want to correct and many other insults to which you, your comrades in exile, and thousands of other men and women of Russian birth have been subjected in the United States, I wish on behalf of my country to state that the Workers’ Republic of Russia will be glad to offer an asylum to the first group of political refugees from the United States. Soviet Russia persecutes nobody for his beliefs or political or economic theories. Everybody, be he a bourgeois, an anarchist, a Socialist, or a Communist is in Free Russia at liberty to express his opinions and to advocate his beliefs as long as he does not engage himself in active cooperation with the enemies of the Russian workers — especially at this crucial time, when Soviet Russia is fighting for her existence against an avalanche of enmity and conspiracy. Whether he be a bourgeois, an anarchist, a Socialist, or an unfaith-

ful Communist, he meets severe punishment in Russia if he is found actively violating the interests of the Russian workers. I have no reason whatsoever to believe that you and your comrades in exile will not find yourselves in Russia wholeheartedly working for the strengthening of the ideals of the Russian Soviet Republic. I am confident that you therefore will be as welcome there as any other working man or working woman who is interested in the liberation of the working class.

I regret very much that the anomalies of the present situation prevent me from personally arranging for your security and comfort during your journey to Russia. You are perhaps aware of the fact that I, on behalf of my government, made an offer to the government of the United States to provide, at the cost of Soviet Russia, free transportation to my country of all Russians in America who want to return there, or whose presence in the United States is not desired by the authorities here. This proposition so far has led to no results. If realized, it would have saved you unnecessary humiliation and privation, and it would have saved the authorities here unnecessary excitement.

Please accept my best wishes and convey them to all the other refugees. Tell them that Russia, liberated from the oppression which drove them out of their native land, is welcoming them back, confident that they will find there an opportunity to work for the development of the Soviet Republic of Russia.

Sincerely yours,

L.A. Martens
Representative in the United States of
the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic

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