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# Letter to James P. Cannon in New York from Ludwig Katterfeld in Moscow, Dec. 10, 1921. †

A document in the Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 39, l. 180.

Dec. 10, 1921

Dear Friend:—

It is now exactly five weeks that I've been in this burg [Moscow] and to date not a line from you or any of the others aside from three little cables. What the what's the trouble? Please condescend to waste five minutes of your extremely valuable time and write me at once regarding the whyness of the wherefore. You know from experience, or at least you ought to, the emotions that at this moment struggle within my manly bosom for expression. So PLEASE come across with a letter and tell me all about the latest.

Here everything is all hunky dory, as far as our business [the CPA "majority"] is concerned. Have landed every order that I went after [able to win support of all key figures in the Comintern]. Business is rushing, in fact, and it will keep our factories running night and day to supply the goods that I have orders for right now. The total orders [budgeted funding] are even larger than those that we planned to get last summer, and which the old salesman at that time [Robert Minor] failed to land. The people here are very pleased with our new goods [the turn to a "legal" orientation], and want us to push them, but they also insist on our continuing the old lines ["illegal," underground structure and explicitly revolutionary publications]. A letter was received here from some of our Finnish cus-

tomers [members of the Finnish Federation, which joined *en bloc* the American Labor Alliance, institutional forerunner of the Workers Party of America] proposing that the old lines [underground organization] be dropped entirely. This would not do at all. It would kill all our chances for the larger new business [the Legal Political Party]. Those that propose to drop the old must be stricken off our lists [expelled], as their judgment is rotten.

The old salesman [Robert Minor] is on the way. Should drop in on you most any day now. Be ready to give him a good welcome. He has the specifications for some very popular new articles with him [details on the WPA]. Be sure to wait to see him before you start the manufacture [hold the convention] of the newly contemplated line [the WPA]. It would be very costly if you make a mistake in this regard. That is why you were sent a cable to postpone the matter [founding convention] until February [1922].

Also you MUST heed the advice to hold a private conference of your own sales force [convention of the underground CPA] before entering into the public competition with others [the WPA]. There'll be some heads chopped off if you don't.

I am making regular weekly reports to the Branch office [the CEC in New York]. Are they being received? I shall continue to do this, even though the Branch manager [Executive Secretary Will Weinstone] seems to be asleep at the switch there. Please feed him a little

†- The 31-year old Jim Cannon is assumed to be the recipient based on content indicating that the letter was addressed to a member of the Central Executive Committee who was not the current Executive Secretary (Will Weinstone) nor the former "Branch Manager" (Robert Minor). Other theoretically possible (but less likely) recipients for this letter from the 40-year old Katterfeld would include Jay Lovestone (age 23) and Joseph Zack Kornfeder (age 24). It is unlikely that Katterfeld would have addressed himself so familiarly with a former member of the old CPA or with Alexander Bittelman. This message is phrased in Aesopian "biz-speak," alluding to confidential party affairs in a semi-opaque way to hinder the prying eyes of agents of the Department of Justice's Bureau of Investigation or the Military Intelligence Department.

cayenne pepper to wake him up.

Please also make sure that the wages are sent to my wife regularly. You know how it is to worry about that matter yourself. If she was alone it would not matter so much, she could manage. But with such a flock of young ones it is necessary that she get that regularly, even if the Branch office [National Office] is short. The American Continent will be a very unsafe place to live in for some of my more or less good friends, if when I get back I find out that this is not attended to.

I wonder often how you get along on the Board [CEC], and just what your present duties are. Please write me on this, and keep me posted if there are any special developments. The address that our minority stockholders [Central Caucus/"Minority"] use, and that the Manager [Weinstone] also used for cables seems to be a good one.

Have oodles of news for you, but can not write. The old salesman [Minor] will tell you personally. It is mostly GOOD news. The old geyser that used to befoul the landscape here has stopped spouting, or rather has been stopped [apparently a reference to Nicholas Hourwich]. So this is a very pleasant place to be. There is of course much work to do, and I hope to be left on the job to attend to it until the next big salesmen's convention [Congress of the Comintern]. Of course I'll hope to meet you there.

Regards to your Frau and the little shavers,

J. Carr [Ludwig Katterfeld].

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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