
Letter to Ella Wolfe in Mexico from Jay Lovestone in Chicago, Jan. 8, 1923

Photocopy of typewritten document in Jay Loveston Papers,
Hoover Institution Archive, box 711, folder 26.

January 8, 1923.

Dear Ella:

Forgive me for not answering you sooner. Many times I wanted to write, but I figured that it would be best to wait until after the convention of the Party [WPA 2nd: New York, Dec. 24-26, 1922]. Besides I really hoped to hear that the fighting in Mexico might drive you out of the God-forsaken land below the line of civilization back to the greatest country on God's green earth — the USA.

A word or two about business before I let loose on this and that. I looked over the situation on the [Central Executive] Committee and decided that it would be foolhardy for me to propose giving you and Bert credentials. Some would have opposed it on the ground that it is against the Party's practice to give anybody credentials under conditions which give no guarantee as to his or her being in a position to represent the Party on the very latest phases of its work. Besides, one or two fellows on the committee would have raised objection to giving you credentials because you did not ask the Party permission to leave the country and went off on your own account. Rather than take a chance on mistake or misunderstand these facts to indicate the existence of any hostility to you or Bert on the CEC of the Party — the old or the new one.

The second and last business matter — this

appears only recently to have fallen in the category of business standards — why on earth doesn't Bert [Wolfe] ever write? I have gotten many promises from him. He has done nothing. If he has time to write for the Federated Press good dispatches, he can make time to send me a meagre few words at least once a year. Really, I am beginning to wonder whether Bert has some special personal reason for such a reaction to me. If he has I would like to know about it without delay, as there is no basis for any hostility to me on his part, and I am darned glad and ready to do all to clear it up.

That's all for business — rather old business.

Believe me I was glad to get your last long letter for more reasons than one. For one thing, by reading it several times I was enabled to check some of my lonesomeness and loneliness. Though I am in good shape spiritually and physically, yet I have the social blues most of the time. I get tired of looking at the same Communist faces all the time. I get tired of having no friends to whom I could talk and with whom I could agree and disagree over some matters than the darned Party routine and the periphery of the world revolution. Your letter served to bring me back to better days. You know of course that under certain circumstances fancy is more real than reality. Your letter made me feel momentarily at least that I was free from boring Party routine and tiresome Party company.

Of course I need not add that your story of

your travelling experiences aroused intense interest on my part. I wonder when I will be able to gather sufficient courage to get out of my grooves, break my chains, get out and see the world, say farewell to my present narrow confines, and above all stop taking myself even as seriously as I do today. I realize that though I violate rule number 7 very much less than anyone around me, yet I violate it too much to suit my best tastes.

The Convention is over. For the second time in 2 years I have finished a Convention in the minority though coming to it as a member of the majority ruling administration. This time as at Bridgman [CPA 2nd: Aug. 17-22, 1922] I was trimmed, I got trounced and trounced rather handily. I made a more vigorous [effort] than I did at Bridgman, but this was due only to the fact that the majority against my position here was much more decisive than in Michigan. By this time you must think that there is nothing I enjoy more than fighting losing battles or fighting for the sake of fighting. That is not so at all. In my opinion there was [a] very important point of view at stake.

Here is the gist of it. [John] Pepper and I were lined up on one side. We represented the dominant political point of view. William Z. [Foster] and James P. Cannon were on the other end of the rope in the tug of war. The organization of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party, our participation in it and our attitude towards it were at the bottom of the disagreement. On the surface they adopted our proposals and formally voted for it in the convention. But throughout the year and even in the debates in the convention it was definitely established that some comrades were afflicted with a narrow point of view towards the class conflict. The broad political point of view of communists was narrowed in their cases by a too strong emphasis on the importance of the Party being in the good graces of certain progressive labor leaders — particularly [John] Fitzpatrick and [Ed] Nockels of the Chicago Federation of Labor.

This is not a distinctly American problem. This conflict of point of view has appeared in the ranks of every Communist Party. You must remember that I have stated the situation in a most incomplete fashion and that it is only my way of putting it — and only one side of the controversy. There are two sides to the medal. As soon as the convention resolutions and proceedings are ready I will send a couple of copies to you.

Practically everything our side stood for was adopted. Yet we were voted down. There was considerable enmity to Pepper. Most of the opposition to him was petty, personal, and conceived in jealousy and reared in infamy. [Ludwig] Lore and his Finnish Hessians lined up with Bill Z. [Foster] in order to put Pepper in his place and give us a real American leadership.

Yet, there was no factionalism born at the convention. The Party is as united as ever before. We just agreed to disagree and all is going quite well. I was put back on the Central [Executive] Committee though I refused to get into an indecent bargain with the New Majority Caucus, as I dubbed them at the show. I copied Coolidge's motto and refused to make merchandise out of my principles. Today, though we are a minority on the new committee the initiative as to policies and Party tactics is still in our hands, though we have a great advantage of not wearing the thorns with the crown — we do not have the cabinet responsibility. Besides, politics make strange bed-fellows. The majorities of today become as they have become and are becoming already the minorities of tomorrow.

Because of the defeat I suffered at the show my European trip was sent to oblivion — at least for the present. This has broken up all my nicely laid plans to go to the 5th Congress [of the Comintern] and put over a couple of other little things in Soviet Russia. So you see that the fortunes of war and politics are etc. and the ways of gods and conventions are etc. I can't get hold of my proper typewriter keys at these points.

A word or two about Will [Weinstone]. He does not feel better at all. He is now in New York and planning to liquidate all official and paid Party work. This would be good for his physical and political health. Will did very well in the two times that he appeared on the convention floor. I might also add that our friendship is now stronger than it ever was. He has shaken Bittelman completely because this Jewish fellow played the role of a political Shylock and pawnbroker at the convention.

Julius [=???] was around during the conference. We talked about you quite a good deal. To say that he sends you the heartiest regards would be saying all too little.

Don't forget that we now have a daily paper [*The Daily Worker*]. You and Bert ought to write often and regularly. I am also expecting to hear from Bert myself.

Please don't delay answering my letter. Don't try to treat me as badly as I have treated you. You won't be able to match my delinquency and lack of consideration. I am rushing off to Washington again for a few days.

AS EVER*****

[Jay Lovestone.]

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