
Letter to Alfred Wagenknecht in Brooklyn from Max Bedacht in San Francisco, January 21, 1920.

Copy in DoJ/FBI Investigative Files, NARA M-1085, reel 940, doc. 840.

San Francisco, Calif.
January 21, 1920.

Mr. Al. Wagenknecht
c/o John W. Kellie
949 Willoughby Ave.
Brooklyn, NY

Dear Comrade:

Just now I received your letter of January 15 [1920], the first sign of life from you since some weeks. A few days ago I sent a letter to the old address which, according to your circular that I received yesterday, is no good any more.

I hope you will get that letter. I am really glad to hear that the unity question is taking real forms. I further hope that the members of the Unity conference from both sides are broad-minded and enough not to endanger Unity on account of some valueless formula. As far as I could see there was really only one bone of contention which seemed to stand in the way of unity. That was the form of organization, concerning the foreign language federations. I do not know what concessions the CP is ready to make in this respect, but I think that we could sail around the Cape of Good Hope by having the CP accept a clause according to which it would not be compulsory any more for the language Branches to be members of the Federations. I hope you will inform me in due time about all the moves of this important thing.

In my other letter I have notified you that I am now under a Grand Jury indictment, after some days in jail, now out on \$5,000 bail. San Francisco is an oasis in the desert of the United States. No arrests have been made here in the national raids with the exception of one German comrade, who was arrested on information from Portland, the city he only came from a few days before the raids. But what San Francisco lacks, Oakland, on the other side of the Bay, is making up for. There were wholesale arrests there. Local "authorities" there are completely under the control of the Chamber of Commerce, which in turn rules through the American Legion. We have all hands full here to help comrades from jail. A number of Socialists, that is, foreign speaking members of the Socialist Party, have been arrested also for deportation because their names have been found on the books of the Communist Labor Party, the books that the secretaries took over from the SP. The SP is doing absolutely nothing for them, so we will have to look out for them also. It is very hard to get bail. Ninety thousand dollars worth of property are tied up in our case alone for bail. We take the money where we can find it. So you will have to excuse us for using several hundred dollars belonging to the National Office for bail money. This is no loss to the National Office, it is only tied up for a while. The \$300 you sent me I gave to the Bail Fund, and \$100 Comrade Ragsdale had to send to you was also thrown in, all to get a comrade out that was in for three weeks.

Six hundred dollars of the \$1,000 required was raised by private loans.

Comrade Wagenknecht: Will you kindly give me as good an account as you can of the extent of the raids in New York and how far they affected our party or parties. Our organization here is completely outlawed. If our cases are settled by a conviction there will be nothing left for us but a secret organization in California. No meeting can be held because people are afraid to go anywhere near our headquarters. Authorities have threatened any visitor of our headquarters with arrest. But do not be afraid. We are still alive and very much so at that. If they think that the backbone of the revolutionary movement is broken, they will have to revise or amend their thoughts pretty soon.

Hoping to hear some good news about unity within a short time.

I remain

As ever yours for the cause,

Max Bedacht.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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