

Gardner Jackson Papers
Box 28
Felix Frankfurter 1935

Irke St.,
Onévy Chase, Md.
Oct. 29th, 1935

Dear Felix:-

As "the most influential single individual in the United States" I trust you will, nevertheless, find it in your heart to understand that I, as one of the radical birds for whom you are blamed, have been out of communication with you these many months through no lack of wanting to get your reaction and suggestions on many matters but rather through my own selfish preoccupation with family and other personal things.

The trip was a marvelous experience despite the difficulties I indicated in the letter to Marlon. It does little good to comment on it briefly in a letter. Suffice it to say that its effect upon me has been in two apparently opposing directions: first, it has greatly strengthened and confirmed me in my radicalism, not as a matter of moral right or wrong but as a question of sheer necessity (I can see no force other than communism capable of integrating Europe); second, it has made me far less emotionally involved in the squabbles which have heretofore engaged me in the New Deal. One cannot feel and see the evidences of the centuries of struggle that have gone on in Europe -- especially in England, with the inspiring tangible evidences such as the cathedrals, the Roman ruins (the lovely Maiden Castle hill in the Hardy country) -- without at last in one's life getting a bit of perspective and realizing what a small potato one is and what an exaggerated importance one has attached to fights which are, after all, very picayunish.

So, since we have been back I have deliberately not jumped into anything or with anybody yet. The only person I have sought out and spent many hours with is Lee Pressman who stands the test of all Podes and my standards better than any other individual with whom we have been thrown in the New Deal. His mind, his heart and his self-control make a combination to which we are devoted. The picture he gives me is, as you can imagine, one of appalling confusion and worse. It is too much to hope, I suppose, that some day Rex Tugwell will awake to the fact that he is probably the world's most incompetent administrator and that what he explains as getting the right sort of people into the organizations over which he presides or has influence is in reality a mere satisfying of his inordinate vanity -- a vanity born, I gather, from a deep unconscious sense of inferiority. The Resettlement Administration in its present state is a shrieking disgrace and the committee which we set up before we left -- The National Committee On Social Rural Planning which includes the enchanting Stella Landis as a native of the worst sharecropper region -- will inevitably have to make Rex and a number of his associates (all friends of mine) decidedly uncomfortable in our pursuit of facts as to the Administration's plans and activities. The committee includes various professors, southern as well as northern, and some of my radical agricultural friends. I am chairman of it through no qualifications of knowledge, as you would know offhand, but because they somehow thought I could bridge differences of opinion and get things moving. As soon as I get my tonsils out next Monday and get feeling fit again I expect to devote the major share of my afternoons to this undertaking. Mornings I am staying at home to

avoid telephone calls and people and to do some serious writing. Before the winter is over I hope to have a book banged out -- not exactly as we talked it after the AAA blowup but a bit more general. The title you suggested might fit still, however, to the ideas that are shaping in my mind.

Numerous reports of you and your activities have come to us since our return, some of them obviously untrue. Apparently, however, you did play extremely close to F.D. much of the summer. In all candor I was much surprised when I heard the first of them (the first came in Europe). My surprise was based on the conversations we had following the AAA fracas, especially your references to Don Richberg and the President and the Labor Relations Board. The essential for me in playing close to a person is complete trust. There is plenty of evidence, some of it, I thought, agreed to by you, that F.D. is not to be trusted in the way I mean. But, knowing you as I do, my ponderings have led you me to appreciate anew that you are eager to use whatever instrument you can to press forward in the direction of what you conceive to be the social good. And, I must confess, as I begin to grow up I am coming more and more to share that attitude. You would be surprised at ~~the~~ my growing capacity to keep my opinions and feelings concealed -- except to an extremely limited number of individuals such as Dode, you and Lee. Lee, who has always raised hell with me for injudicious spontaneity of outburst, is happily amazed, he says, at what three months in Europe have done for me. But in any event I hope an opportunity will arrive soon when we may discuss this and kindred matters.

Three immediate matters require your advice to me. 1. The Cutting family wants a book written about him. They will finance it. They have extended feelers to me for the job. I'm not at all convinced there's enough material. There's damn little documentary stuff, that I've already ascertained. Furthermore, his New Mexico political machine and activities in building it are none to palatable. I honestly believe Bronson was just about to emerge as a notable figure. I do not think he had done the stuff yet. What is your opinion?

2. Money for the Mooney case is urgently needed, for actual payment of stenographic transcripts of the record, payment of witness ~~at~~ expenses, etc., etc. John Finerty has shown me his financial condition as a result of the case and Frank Walsh is, of course, shelling out his own money all along on it. A couple of thousand dollars is required right away. You probably now all this. Have you any suggestions? There is no propaganda monkeybusiness about the situation. It's Mooney's biggest chance since you had your say in the case for Woodrow Wilson. It's a shame and disgrace to let it slide. We've formed a committee here and I am starting this week to canvass all my friends by mail. Please give me any leads you may have.

3. Sonja Branting, Georg's sister (we had long sessions with Georg in Stockholm), has been here in the interests of political prisoners under fascism. An interparliamentary group headed by Pierre Cot of France (Air Minister under Herriot) and including Georg, Lord Listowel of the British House of Lords, Senator Just of Spain, Fischer of the Belgian House of Deputies and others is holding a Congress in Brussels on Nov. 18th and 19th, I believe, to take action on the report of the committee

reporting on each individual case of the hundreds of members of the German Reichstag who have been assassinated, tortured, etc., or who are now in concentration camps, etc., as well as members of other provincial or district elected bodies before Hitler came in. The Interparliamentary Group, through Sonja Branting, wants to get expressions of sympathy for the purposes of the Congress to combat the rising tide of fascism from members of the United States Congress. The people who had Sonja in charge here -- Dora Haines, et al -- didn't help her in the least, practically all members of Congress being absent. So Sonja and her reception committee in New York have turned to me. I will go after the boys I know personally -- Bob LaFollette, Homer, Lew Schwollenbach, Ed Costigan, Maury Maverick, Vito Marcantonio, etc., etc. Have you any suggestions?

This has run altogether too long already. I can see you impatiently scanning it and seeing whether there's room enough on the margins to scribble replies. But before I shut up for the moment I want to report that Jim Landis, with whom I had lunch a couple of days ago, seems in a definitely level-headed condition with no illusions of grandeur or of the possibility of working wonders with the act; and that Jerome Frank, who is about to move over to the power commission, as you doubtless know, is still as fascinating and brilliant as ever but should never have remained in Washington. It has been bad for him psychologically, in my opinion, and his influence has been materially impaired. Also I might add that Dode and I ran into Henry Wallace and his wife at the Brandeis for tea last Sunday afternoon -- the first time I had seen H.A. since the blowup. He shook hands cordially with me and called me "Pat," but declined to raise his eyes from the floor while doing so. He did likewise with Dode who was even more reserved than I, feeling intensely regarding H.A. and his mysticism as she does. Justice Brandeis seems to me well but in the few words we had aside he expressed the profoundest kind of pessimism to me. I expect to have a session with him in a day or two.

Well, I haven't mentioned sessions in Geneva, London, Paris or your lovely Vienna which is one of the saddest places we hit. We spent most time in England and love the English countryside better than anything we've encountered anywhere (I so understand Conny Aiken's pull towards it now) but like Stockholm best for its people and way of life. The family is fine. The trip did all of them much good. Dode's got to have her tonsils out after I do but that's an old problem. Financially, after the great summer expenditures, (and the school, house painting, etc., expenditures since our return -- the Bolivian Minister and his family left the house in a hell of a mess) I may be in hot water before many moons but I'm fatalistic about such matters now. Please give our love to Marion and tell her that, except for some agric. labor inquiries and some Italo-Ethiopian digging and some probing in hideously insane Germany I did pick daisies all summer long. We much hope to see you and her soon.