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# “Not Goodbye, Just Change,” Says Georgian

[event of Sept. 21, 1919]

Unsigned report in the *New York Call*, v. 12, no. 275 (Oct. 2, 1919), pg. 7.

Commonwealth Hall was crowded Sunday night [Sept. 21, 1919] with those who came to say farewell to Alexis Georgian, who is being deported because of his work in behalf of the working class.†

Gertrude Hunter presided at the meeting.

Georgian was called upon to say good-bye, and was greeted with an ovation. He said: “Deportation is not a new thing. It has existed since the exploitation of man was introduced into society. It was so in Russia, and it is so in England, France, and all over. Deportation is a social crime by the master class to subjugate workers. I am not the first, and I will not be the last. Deportation will exist as long as the capitalist class.

“‘Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains.’ When I heard that first in the wilderness of Caucasia, it became my belief, and it is still my belief.

“Since that time my bit has been contributed to that slogan. The salvation of the workers can come only by their acting for themselves.

“Because of the prosecution and oppression visited upon the workers of Russia, Russia is in the vanguard of progress. The same thing is coming here, and they can’t crush it.

“This is not a farewell, just a changing of place. I have always been in the struggle, and am going to talk whether they send me to China, Germany, or Hell.”

In an interview Georgian said: “The Department of Immigration set themselves up as prosecutors in secret session and convicted me of advocating things which I’ve been fighting all my life. I am against anarchy not because it is too radical, but too reactionary, and anarchist tactics are undermining and injuring the working class more than any other enemy, as is demonstrated in Russia, where the Bolsheviki are forced to fight harder against anarchists than any other reactionary elements.

“I didn’t have justice from the government, but I couldn’t expect it from a capitalistic government.

†- **Alexei “Alex” Georgian** was a delegate of the Russian Educational Association of Minneapolis to the “2nd All-Colonial Congress” of Russians in America and Canada in January. He was also a delegate to the 5th Convention of the Russian Federation of the Socialist Party of America in August 1919 and to the founding convention of the Communist Party of America in September. He was elected an alternate member of CPA’s Executive Council. Georgian was sent to Ellis Island for deportation on Sept. 25, 1919, but was released on a writ of habeas corpus. The US District Court upheld the deportation order, but at the end of 1920, Georgian was still free on bond pending appeal. In a letter to the Chief of the Bureau of Investigation dated Dec. 31, 1920, St. Paul, Minnesota Special Agent in Charge Roger Skelly called Georgian “perhaps the most dangerous radical in this section of the country” and noted that “his deportation is bound to have a good effect in this district.” [NARA M-1085, reel 943]. While the precise outcome of the deportation case is unknown, it seems that Georgian remained a fixture in the Minneapolis political scene throughout the early 1920s as proprietor of the “Modern Bookstore” in Minneapolis. Georgian was probably the key Russian Federation leader pseudonymed “Kasbeck” that left the CPA with C.E. Ruthenberg, Isaac Ferguson, Jay Lovestone, and Leonid Belsky in 1920, and who was a delegate to the ill-fated 1922 Bridgman Convention from Minneapolis.

"I want to thank the public, the highest court, the radical element, and others generally for standing by me because they saw I was prosecuted on one charge and punished for another.

"I am perfectly satisfied. I hope to hear soon, when in Russia, that the state of Minnesota and the United States have changed to the Soviet form of government.

"I have never belonged to any organization or fraternity in my life except the Socialist Party."

It was originally intended to send Georgian to New York alone, but the Department of Immigration received word from Washington that he should be accompanied by an officer, and so this extra expense is saddled on the people in addition to that already incurred to carry out the schemes of the lumber interests and other exploiters in Minnesota.

*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.*

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