
Ludwig C.A.K. Martens.

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Farewell, First Ambassador of the People!
We have waited for you one hundred and forty-five years.
And now you have come there is no one to honor you.
For Death has disbanded our original reception committee.
The men who burned the trails of civilization through the jungle;
The fellers of trees, the yokers of oxen, the hunters of beasts and lords;
The merry masqueraders who dumped tea and coronets into the ocean;
Who watched bonfires and lanterns on the hills, who lay awake listening to
the galloping of horses at night;
The men who wedded the flint stocks to the hoes, and the cannon to the
plows in the name of God and liberty;
They are all dead now, First Ambassador of the People.
Since then we have fought nearly a score of wars (only a few in our defense);
And we have placed a first mortgage upon the earth;
Since then our minutemen have become the sheriffs, the tax collectors and
the gendarmes of three continents;
Since then we have entertained grand dukes and princes and mandarins,
The descendant of George III, and the brother of an emperor;
Since then a king has been allowed to lay a wreath on the tomb of
Washington;
And a lady in the White House has curtsied three times to him;
And we heard him addressed as Your Majesty by the bareheaded
grandchildren of William Penn.
Hadn't your heard of all these things in your land, First Ambassador of the
People?
Bon voyage. Do not come again.
Why did you come, anyway?

Didn't your know that a bunch of our farmer boys had been shooting old moujiks in Archangel to add a few gray scalps to the private collection of our big chief?

Were you never informed of the privy purse that kept in Washington an absconding sneakthief in the palace you now claim as your own?

Of the ships laden with stolen goods from our people sent out in the dead of night to Denikin and Kolchak?

Of the dimes and quarters embezzled from the sweated slaves of the East Side by the Red Cross to buy whiskey for the bandits of Pilsudski that were ravaging your fields?

Have you never heard of the blockade, of the Soviet Ark?

Of our law-watching bulldog who barks against every sunrise;

Of our Civic Federation that waylays every ideal, of our Chambers of Commerce which hold up and hamstring every wayfaring dream of justice;

Of the brothels of Park Row and Times Square, where thought is sold out cheaper than flesh for every lewdness and every pollution?

Have you never heard of Trinity Church and Wall Street, where God is again remade of silver and gold?

Why did you come, then?

The people must be very dull and stupid indeed to send their ambassador here!

And yet we, the silent millions, we, the stillborn who toil all the sunny hours of our days,

For bread and the grace of God and a few hours of sleep;

We have no grudge against you, First Ambassador of the People.

We do not know why you should be sent back, who came here smiling and trusting and debonair;

Leading your little daughter by the hand.

We do not know why you cannot remain here,

You, who came bearing letters of marque from embattled farmers and credentials from generals in overalls;

Who expected no lifting of silk hats, who did not drive in a seven horse carriage

Through the cowpaths and the milk routes that led once to the Soviet houses of our farmers and artisans.

We see no reason why you should go.

You who came here with a hempen sack full of the life saving of one hundred
and twenty million peasants, tied up with the gold chain that once
hung Christ and half a hemisphere from the neck of a crowned moron;
You who brought the promise of rich-smelling argosies full of ores and flax
and sables for the bare shoulders of our queens
To barter for shoes for the bare, frozen feet of sowers and harvesters,
And rubber nipples and bottles for the crusted mouths of their babies,
And plows and locomotives
To shorten the roads of bread and peace between your people and our people.
There is no reason, indeed, save destiny that set your land in the East;
And our so far away beyond your noon.
Go, then. God speed you, Last Ambassador of the People.
But you shall not go empty handed, even if you go without cheers and
without tears;
For nobody leaves our door without gifts.
Some take with them a few hundred square blocks of our city and become
English lords;
Some carry in their handbag our Constitution and a loan and become
presidents and premiers and hangmen;
Others a finely-caparisoned girl and a fur coat stuffed with gilt-edged
securities;
And the most nothing at all save their wounds and, at last, the promise of
true life.
To you, Last Ambassador of the People, we give much more, we give all we
can afford, we who work only for bread and sleep;
We give you a new silver dollar to tip the law that escorts you to the gate, and
a worn-out quarter for Organized Labor that assists you to leave;
We give you a feather from our last eagle, which is dying of loneliness in
Bronx Park, to sign safe-conducts to whatever American spies may be
still devouring extra rations of Russia's mud bred;
And a clod from the grave of John Brown to spread over the grave of John
Reed.

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