

January 13, 1931

Dear Ricky:

yesterday I sent you a letter, besides that a letter in the course of the 10th of January.

A few words on the general situation. As you know the entire press is suppressed. Only the government papers appear. Since we have no press we live only on rumors and guesses. No one knows what is happening. According to what we hear the negotiations ~~with~~ Menocal with M. have been discontinued. The government takes sharper and sharper measures. Preparations are being made to form a fascist guard which as they state, should make an end ~~of the~~ of the "leaders of the enemies of the fatherland", in two weeks. Lately they have invented an entirely new form of terror. They have appointed to the police department a large group of negro and malato women of the very lowest order who are well paid and whose task is to destroy the demonstrations in which women participate. They fall on the women who are taking part in a demonstration, tear their clothes to pieces and leave them naked on the streets. This happened the first time on the 10th. At that time they took a few girls who were taking part in a small demonstration tore their clothes to pieces and scratched and disfigured their faces. The fascist army of which I spoke previously is being formed in the particular sections of the city where they know their people better, so that they will become real butcher bands under the protection of the government. The Herm. Ferrov. naturally are taking an active part.

We cannot find out whether it is true that Menocal has discontinued his negotiations, whether the rumors are correct. It is however quite probable since very great dissatisfaction has been noticeable among "the masses" of the nationalists. We are told that many have said that the most correct position was taken by the Communists since they were against the Nationalist leaders from the very beginning. The situation becomes worse and worse, the crisis deeper and deeper. Unemployment is increasing. One must admit however, that the terror ~~in~~ of the government is having its effect. The population is terrorized and the working masses are also showing the effect. People are afraid to go out on the street. In this situation the demonstration of the 10th of January was despite all of its weaknesses a victory; because everyone was sure that the police would strictly carry out the instruction to ruthlessly liquidate any attempt at a demonstration by means of arms. Only through a combination did we succeed in getting around the watchfulness of the police and leaving them to expect the demonstration in another part of the city. Thus, the participation of 300 to 350 workers in a public demonstration under such circumstances of terror is really an achievement.

I want you to know also that the mood for strike is again rising. One cannot say that this mood has any connection with any activity of the Nationalists. One can hardly talk at present of any activity of the Nationalists. The most important leaders like Hevia and others are arrested. All their attempts at a coup-d'etat have been shattered; their political impetance has lost them the sympathy of the petty-bourgeoisie strata so that the mood for a general strike is ripening among the masses of the workers themselves. No one sees any way out. The economic situation becomes worse, the terror becomes wilder and wilder and it becomes clear that this situation of uncertainty, of undefiniteness demands some kind of a solution. Soon the 60 days of the extra-ordinary mandate of the government will be at an end. According to constitutional law the period cannot be extended. A military dictatorship can now be introduced. The broad strata of the workers have understood and