

Dear mother:

I have been meaning to write you ever since my latest burst in the headlines, but I have been desperately busy with an assignment, and am preparing to leave for a two week lecture tour, and have put it off from day to day. Ted, however, wrote me a very amusing letter, and I replied to him in kind with a full report on my misadventures. It occurred to me that the simplest way of telling what happened would be to send you a copy of my letter to Ted, and then Catherine, if she wishes, can strike off copies and mail to whatever relatives she thinks might be interested. The important thing of course is that my record is clear, as the letter will show you, and that the newspapers played it up simply because I am me.

I enclose also a pamphlet entitled "Time of the Toad" which was published about a week before the incident. Upon reading it, you will see there is nothing in it which would endear me to the press or the police. Originally scheduled for publication in 10,000 copies, the ~~map~~ pamphlet has caused a sensation, is now coming out in a second edition of 15,000, and a third edition of 25,000 is on the way. It is aimed mainly at intellectuals, the universities, the churches, the professions, and has already achieved nation-wide circulation. A physicist at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies send in money for thirty, with addresses of thirty professors to whom it should be sent. A minister from the mid-west has ordered a hundred copies, and wrote the Ten, "God bless Dalton Trumbo." One man writes me: "In my opinion, which is at least that of a fellow writer, the Time of the Toad is the finest American political pamphlet since Tom Paine. It is very likely that your pen has struck the mightiest blow yet against democracy's besworded enemies." Another says: "I have just finished reading The Time of the Toad. God what a magnificent job! Certainly one of the best pamphlets I've ever read. An awful lot of words are being turned out in this town but I doubt very much that any of them will be as long remembered as yours. Dorothy Parker gave me her copy, and in case you don't hear from her personally, I think you should know she shares my enthusiasm. So does everyone I've talked to who's had a chance to read it. A fine, fine piece of work." A woman writes: "I have just finished reading the Time of the Toad, and feel that I must write you and tell you how truly excellent it is. In your hand the pen becomes a sword, or should I say the typewriter becomes a machine gun? Too often pamphlets are written with fervor, from facts, but without skill. To say that your writing is skillful would be presumptuous, but may I praise the passion, the irony, and above all, the scope of your pamphlet? The only other document I have read which has had a similar impact for me, and which I urge you to read if you have not already done so, is a communication to the American Historical Association from Henry Adams, dated Dec. 12th, 1894, which you can find on page 125 of 'The

Degradation of the Democratic Dogma.' I am purchasing a large quantity of your pamphlet, and will distribute them to close friends, casual acquaintances and business contacts. Thank you again, Dalton Trumbo." Rev. Stephen H. Fritchman of the First Unitarian Church in Los Angeles, in writing me to address his congregation---which I can't do because I shall be east---says: "I would like you and Mrs. Trumbo to have a buffet supper with us before we go to the church. I will then tell you personally my great delight in reading The Time of the Toad. I shall be using it in a hundred ways the next few months, I hope with due credits."

I quote so extensively only to show you that there are persons who do not make the calumnies of the newspapers the basis of their judgment. I am leaving about the tenth of November for a speaking tour, which interests me because it covers a part of the country I don't know very well. St. Louis, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Madison, mainly university and professional groups. Then to Chicago for a big Progressive Party rally, where I speak with Wallace, Robeson and Marcantonio. Then home.

The status of our case is this: we are waiting for the Supreme Court to decide whether or not they will accept the case for review. We shall hear November 14th. If they refuse to take it, there is a certain amount of legal stalling permissible before we actually go to jail. If they do take it, the issue will be postponed for months. More briefs have been filed on our behalf with the court, urging it to take the case, than for any case in the history of the country. Groups like the Methodists, Episcopalians, Unitarians, Civil Liberties Union, Congress of Civil Rights, Authors League of America, several Jewish groups, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People---altogether an astonishing outpouring of support, which we hope will have some influence upon the Court.

I enclose also a copy of the published playing edition of "The Biggest Thief in Town". I don't know whether I mentioned to you that Theatre Arts Magazine, the leading magazine of the theatre, has purchased the play for publication in its January issue. In addition they asked me for a preface which I wrote, and for which they not only paid me---something they don't do---but as a result of which they have asked me to contribute whenever I have anything to say about the theatre, which is breaking down the magazine barrier in terms of the black list.

I also, about a week ago, wrote my first short story in 12 years. I enclose a copy, which I shall need returned. Elsie likes it very much, and is now trying to peddle it. We shall see how much resistance there is to my name in fiction. I send it because I think it is a story you will probably like. Additionally, in the last three months I have earned \$50,000, finished a diet and taken off ten pounds, and bought a Jeep

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to shoot the kids to school in this winter---a station wagon with heater. The record, I think, will not bear out the contention that so much work can have been done in so short a time by a chronic alcoholic.

Cleo and the kids are fine. I invented a Halowe'en costume for Nikola and rehearsed her in her portrayal of character, and she walked off with the prize at school, which delighted her and distressed Chris. Ethel and Frank Butler visited here today, and Ethel tells me that Mrs. Smailes, the principal, says Christ is the brightest child in school---which would comfort him for the loss of the prize, although we shan't tell him.

I am now working to finish an assignment, for which I shall be paid next year. Then I have another to do before Christmas, which will also be paid for next year. Thus I shall have enough funds, in the event of disaster, to take care of every responsibility for a full year, and have a little left over. Debts are non-existent, and if the good luck of a reversal should occur---which I don't plan on---I shall be in a position to do whatever I wish for a year or two and live comfortably at the same time.

All in all, things are not so bad. They are, in fact, very good. When something nasty happens, I always think of you and suffer for you, as I am sure someday I shall feel pain at Chris or Nikola or Mitzi. But I reassure myself with this thought: your friends admire you, not for me, but for yourself. And then I know you will ride through.

When I look back on my own convictions and rebellion, I find nothing remarkable in it. For I am reminded that at a younger age than I my mother, too, rebelled, left her church, joined an unpopular and ridiculed faith, insisted upon the immunity of her children from supervision of medical authorities; and that the church she joined was fighting for its life before various legislatures, and that its founder was in the newspapers, falsely and outrageously, and fought them off to the end. Now, then, could a rebellious mother produce anything but a rebellious son?

Disagreeing as we do and have, we have finally struck a relationship which I am sure pleases us both---one of mutual respect. I love you very much, but I respect you even more, and that is what I hope to earn ~~xxx~~ from my own children, after suitable conflicts and disagreements. Instead of regrets for my present plight, I have only renewed confidence, and a joy in writing that five years ago I thought would never come to me.

My God, I've given you enough reading material for a month. Enough, then! One would think I was trying to sell it to you.