

Letter to Emile Armand

“I have lost the sectarian intransigence of the past.”

Victor Serge

19 March 1917

My Dear Armand:

I ask that you publish these lines, which are addressed both to you and the comrades who remembered me and assisted me in the present circumstances. I am infinitely touched by their gesture. I thank them.

You prefer not to publish the letter from Toulouse, where I explained the reasons that prevent me, though fully one of you, to collaborate in your work. As you wish. In any case, I don't want to cause a polemic on this troublesome theme. I prefer to completely abstain. Before certain moral situations there is only one thing to do: leave. I'm leaving.

But I want to say to our comrades that it's neither due to discouragement or following a divergence in ideas. In this time of contrary winds that confuse weathervanes, it's not without use to specify things in this way. I have lost the sectarian intransigence of the past. I now attribute less importance to words than to ideas, to ideas than sentiments – and much less importance to casuistry than to good will. I feel myself capable of working with all those who, animated by the same desire for a better life, clearer and more intelligent, advance towards their future, even by different roads than mine and even if they give our common goal in reality different names that I don't know.

And so I am still one of you, confirmed by harsh personal experience, by my desire for combat and the opinion that our effort, however feeble it might be, is necessary. If I currently abstain from your work it's only for the reasons I already laid out and that I ask you to make known to the friends of “*Au-dela la melée*.”

Yours, V. S. le Retif

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