

ACLU Director admits one million dollar pay day from Stalin

Roger Nash Baldwin, long time Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, who worked for the ACLU for free his entire life, became rich off civil liberties work at a young age. In order to maintain his position of power at the ACLU, he never took a penny of salary, thus insuring no one would be applying for his job anytime soon. He failed to explain to the membership how he could afford to work for nothing.

In an interview with the Columbia University Oral History Project, Baldwin admitted receiving one million dollars from Stalin in the controversial Kuzbas Commune Case in 1923. One million dollars is not what it used to be. By today's standards it is worth \$8 million dollars. Baldwin had struck it rich at an early age representing foreign interests; foreign interests that would kill millions of people in the coming decades. Foreign interests that would have no regard for civil liberties at all.

The Kuzbas Commune would burst on the New York scene when American Communists would file suit, and Roger Nash Baldwin would be indicted for stealing the money from the commune. With the grand jury indictment, it proved to be a huge embarrassment for Baldwin. The only hope for Baldwin was that grand jury proceedings were private, and his hopes of keeping this news bottled up was to avoid a trial. Baldwin was unsuccessful, and the trial began in Brooklyn. American Communist Party members had paid \$600 to Baldwin, who was promoting this utopian paradise in Russia, that in reality, turned out to be a hellhole. A mining venture funded by Joseph Stalin, as well as the American Communist Party members own payments, the capitalistic real estate agent advertising in New York newspapers was Roger Nash Baldwin. When American Communist Party members returned from their utopia, they would head straight to the district attorney's office and demand justice.

Why was this real estate project being run by the American Civil Liberties Union at all? Why did Stalin shy away from having the American Communist Party run the Kuzbas Commune? When KGB files were opened in the 1990's, it was revealed Stalin did not trust the American Communist Party, and did not like their habit of drawing attention to themselves by having public rallies and political demonstrations. Stalin wanted issues handled through the back door, and he found a willing mate in Baldwin.

Baldwin set up secret bank accounts so ACLU members would not know what was going on, thus avoiding accountability. Now that he was scheduled to go to trial, the entire ACLU leadership would become aware of it. They would do nothing.

When the trial began, Baldwin was charged with larceny. With secret bank accounts, he needed a quick explanation for his actions. The money was gone, but Baldwin could not explain that it was never intended to go to the Kuzbas Commune. It was Baldwin's payoff from Stalin for running the propaganda campaign for Stalinism in America.

Baldwin's defense team was finally forced to play their ace or Baldwin would be convicted of larceny. His defense team presented a letter from Stalin that the money was intended for Baldwin. Baldwin would be found innocent. He would forever be in debt to Joseph Stalin in more ways than one. Stalin had made him a rich man for toiling in the vineyard. Baldwin would find that propaganda could be far more profitable than

civil liberties work. And Stalin would save his skin. Without Stalin's letter, Baldwin would have faced a long prison term.

Author Robert Cottrell, in *Roger Nash Baldwin and the American Civil Liberties Union*, published by Columbia University Press, provides this surprise, as well as numerous others. "In an oral history interview he later completed for Columbia University, Baldwin acknowledged he had handled various sums of money, so called Moscow gold, on behalf of the Kuzbas Colony and the Russian Reconstruction Farms. "In an oral history he later completed for Columbia University, Baldwin acknowledged he had handles various sums of money, so-called Moscow gold, on behalf of the Kuzbas colony and the Russian Reconstruction Farms. One check for one million, was drawn on a bank in Manhattan by the Soviet government, in consideration of the goodwill it engendered. It was passed on to Baldwin and two other trustees of a fund established to purchase equipment. Had word of such a transaction gotten out, Baldwin acknowledged, it might have come back to haunt him." For further information, please see *Roger Nash Baldwin and the American Civil Liberties Union*, Columbia University Press, 2000, p 175 or the Columbia University Oral History Project.

This remarkable confession is made more remarkable since it was made to one of the most liberal Ivy League schools, truly a bastion of liberal thinking. Did Baldwin assume he was amongst liberal friends and let his hair down? What he faced were accurate researchers who had done their homework. They simply wanted to get it right for posterity. The Columbia University researchers were able to coax out of Baldwin that the American Civil Liberties Union was able to keep it out of the New York City newspapers by getting friendly reporters to cover the trial. Again, the ACLU membership would never know the national office was up to. Baldwin does not seem to equate his work for Stalin as the equivalent of being a Soviet agent. His conversational tone seems to place his work in the lobbying category, just representing some old friends "back in the USSR". The ACLU is not a lobbying firm but a 501C(3) charitable organization whose mission is civil liberties. Author Robert Cottrell describes Stalin's payment as "goodwill." If Baldwin did not mind the membership knowing, he could have passed the money through the ACLU. His use of secret accounts indicates that Baldwin knew what the public reaction would be, and his admission that disclosure would have hurt the civil liberties movement reveals that years later, in his retirement years, he still understood what disclosure would do. Stalin had Baldwin on a string. He would never again criticize Stalin, not even when Stalin became Hitler's business partner with the signing of the non-aggression pact in 1939. Further, the ACLU WOULD WORK TIRELESSLY TO DESTROY POLITICAL CANDIDATES WHO OPPOSED LEND_LEASE AID FOR STALIN. THE UNITED STATES SENATE WOULD CHARGE THE ACLU WITH RUNNING THE SMEAR CAMPAIGN AGAINST MASSACHUSETTS SENATOR DAVID I. WALSH, THE AUTHOR OF THE FIRST MINIMUM WAGE ACT IN US HISTORY. HE WOULD BE SMEARED IN THE FICTIOUS 'NAZI SPY NEST' BY THE VERY PAPER THAT REFUSED TO COVER THE KUZBAS COMMUNE TRIAL. ROGER NASH BALDWIN'S CONFESSION THAT HE COULD CONTROL THE MEDIA EVEN WITH A SENSATIONAL TRIAL UNDERFOOT SHOWS HOW COMPLETE THE MEDIA CONTROL WAS. IF IT DID NOT GET PRINTED IN NEW YORK CITY, IT CERTAINLY WOULD NEVER PLAY IN PEORIA.