

21 January

Dear Fred,

Sending this book by a friend of mine as a belated Xmas card - it should amuse you. They are all best when sung - particularly the "Highland Divisions Farewell" and "We're all black bastards but..."

What are you doing now, you old crab? I had an amazing time in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and have returned with the old fires rekindled from the home fires of the revolution. What they are doing just can't be described and the spirit of the people was something I had imagined in day dreams, but which was better than imagination when seen in living fact. I worked for two months on the Yugoslav Youth Railway, and was for the last month elected Commandant of the British youth brigade working there. Time and again I wished you were there! It would have been your Compleat Element - whacking ~~and~~ great rocks with sledgehammers, washing at mountain streams at 5 a.m., holding mass friendship rallies and sing-songs with the eager young Slavs. Don't laugh but I'm now the proud holder of the Yugoslav Order of Labour (2nd Degree), as well as a Udarnik on the Railway. Dorothy, who came out as well, was also a Udarnik. They're wonderful people, Fred, and everything becomes clear as daylight over there - you should try and get over ~~next~~ this summer, when another voluntary scheme is being planned. No chance, I suppose?

How's Jezebel? Sold, I suppose, and no use with the petrol cuts. Do you ever get any time off? I'm living here on the west coast of the highlands until the summer, or until the Ministry of Labour settles me, trying out my long-cherished scheme of doing some writing. I've been here since October without many results, but now the old pen is at last getting under way. Dorothy is here with me, working on her book on the Chartist, Ernest Jones. If you do get the time and can spare the heavy train fare (about £7) come and stay with us. Any time will be fine, but in a couple of months the weather will be better and the trout fishing and salmon poaching season will be under way, and we could go places better. I wish you would come, tho I know it's probably a pipe dream, and you're chained to Philip's heels night and day. But if you get out of a job, stop worrying for a week or two, and come here to think the world out.

And write when you have time.

*Edward*