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153 W. 21 St.
New York 11, N.Y.
10/29/49

Dear Comrade Pannekoek,

thanks for your letter of October 22nd. And thanks also for your willingness to recommend me to the Guggenheim Fund. They will send you my work-project and will ask your opinion on my work and on myself. I do not know when that will occur, probably before the end of the year. I think my chances to get the fellowship are very slim, first because of the fact that I have no academic background, and second because of the character of my work. But as it is not absolutely excluded, I might as well try. I think, it would help to point out that I am particularly well suited to deal with the German question because of my acquaintance with the European labor movement. However, I do not really know what would help and what not, but please stress the need for an objective study of the German situation.

Thanks for your remarks regarding the article in "Left". The article seems a little dis-jointed and not well worked out. The reason is, that I had to cut it so severely to make it fit for magazine publication. Some aspects are not really worked out. Things that should be stressed are only indicated, etc. I will deal with the matter again at greater length, and will try to work out better what I think needs improvement. The element of spontaneity, which you stress, exists of course, or rather existed in the past, accompanying the relatively dis-organized laissez-faire period of capitalism. The organized capitalism tries first of all to escape spontaneous social actions by the control of organization and by the terroristic structure of modern capitalism (Russia-Germany). Situations like the one you mentioned in 1848, and even 1917 and 1918, can be prevented by an terroristic society which organizes its apparatus of suppression and control efficiently. However, I do point out, that the element of spontaneity will exist as long as there exists a class society and attempts to end it. The perfect terroristic society may be a probability, but it is not as yet a reality. There were no spontaneous occurrences in concentration camps. It is possible to organize the whole of society as a concentration camp. This is not the case as yet. But the trend is there and this trend indicates the decline of that type of spontaneity that has been discussed in the old labor movement. But again, the problem needs much more thinking and perhaps some new experiences.

Mr. Price of the Manchester Guardian exaggerates the share of the American working class on total production. What does his "working class" consist of? Maybe he includes in it all the high-paid jobs that represent a new bourgeoisie? The condition of the American working class in the last 20 years has not been improved, but it was then, and still is now, better than anywhere else. Just like the English working class was highly impressed by its "Empire", the wave of imperialistic expansion of American capitalism reflects in the minds of the workers. They are very nationalistic and really want to believe that their position is getting better and better. There is a deep split in the American working class; deeper than anywhere else in the world (with the possible exception of Russia) between the so-called "labor aristocracy" and the unskilled workers. There is not one working class in America, but definitely two, if one wants to use the class-term in breaking up the social layers. Of which working class did Mr. Price speak? He probably dealt with averages, which always hide some important facts. With the working class split, and the farmers relatively prosperous because of the decline in agricultural world production, the "reactionary" elements in America are in absolute control. No hope can spring from present-day America. No real labor movement can arise here as yet. This country is ready only for great imperialistic actions.

I share your remarks about the bad situation for Marxist theory to the full. Still, there is no choice but to keep on working with whatever is on hand. I will soon send you a longer study of Marx and Keynes, which will also show the deterioration of Marxist theory and of all social thinking.

I have sent you 10 copies of "Lenin as a Philosopher". If you need more, I will send gladly more. We have not fared too badly with this booklet as things are. We must have by now circulated about 1000 copies. But we still have just as many on hand. England was very disappointing; I think we got no more than 5 or 6 orders from England. It must certainly be possible to sell more than a half dozen copies in a country like England. Have you somebody there, who would be interested in handling the pamphlet in England? I am convinced, that if pushed, at least a few hundred copies could be sold there. What ever became of the Dawson and his printing of the "Workers Councils."?

We are sorry to hear that Dr. Brauns is not well. We hope that things will improve for him. Please give him our best regards. Our best wishes also to Mrs. Pannekoek.

As always yours,

Paul K. H. G.