

2.) which is easily checkmated. Our work is the addition of an environmental ingredient. The only ingredient now lacking, which is to make sense of the ingredient of experience to the workers, is intelligent propaganda work. I have sought, and I've sought it vainly, after a real workers' press. Further, I have found no sensibly run fora. Which is why I address you at this present. I would know more of the Workers' Councils idea, with which I understand you are identified. Would you give me as much information

SECOND FOLD



VIA AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

P. C. Roberts,

15601 Morris Ave.,
Sherman Oaks, California,
CALIF., U.S.A.

AIR LETTER

Dr. A. Parnesbock,
Leist,
Regentesse laan 8,
Holland

IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED, THIS LETTER
WILL BE SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL

FIRST FOLD

3.) as you can and are willing to take the time for, our workers' Councils? Several of us here in the Los Angeles area are seriously considering a program which we think coincides with that of a workers' Council this Autumn, which may lend a feeling of urgency to your reply.

Fraternally,

Peter Roberts

15601 Morrison Street,
Sherman Oaks, Calif. 611,
August 23, 1949

Dear Sir:

Please permit me to introduce myself. I am a 26 year old Socialist - a Socialist of four years duration. Professional singing in motion pictures, radio and concert is my work. In the last named, I specialise in Lieder - Brahms, Schubert, Schumann, Loewe, Franz. It is in the cinematic and radio work that I consider myself a "worker", by Marxist definition. I have a lovely wife, who shares my philosophy, and we have two small children - a daughter 4 yrs., a son 4 mos..

I have been affiliated with the "world (earlier "workers") Socialist Party, as has my wife, almost since I accepted the materialist concept, aware of its faults and faulty methods since the start of the relationship. However, recent developments have indicated to me the inevitable failure of those who subscribe to the theory of inevitability. That theory, though sound in some respects, has, I sense, emasculated the Socialist movement - particularly in America. That Capitalism must inevitably collapse, and a revolution take place, seems incontrovertible, and I do not question that. However, the supposition that the revolution will, inevitably, be a Socialist revolution is fallacious, and works to deter Socialist endeavor. It excuses inertia on the part of individual workers. That is the case, I learn from experience, with World S. P., and is my reason for shrinking away from that group and its power philosophy. By preaching the inevitability of democratic Socialist revolution, they surrender tacitly their hope for capturing the ear of the world worker to the activist Stalinists and thus sow the seeds of their own destruction before they are borne into power. The Bolsheviks, through their artless use of the Hitlerian tactic of lie, lie, lie, have the world's ear - and leave in the world mind but one choice - Soviet domination (tyranny) or Capitalist fascist^m (tyranny). One other possible alternative is not generally felt aloud, but is felt, nonetheless - chaos. But never is Socialist, democratic revolt from below, given thought. Now, then, inevitability? Our job, then, as I conceive it, is not organizational effort,

15601 Morrison St.,
Sherman Oaks, California,
September 26, 1949,

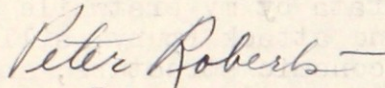
Dear Dr. Pannekoek,

Please forgive the delay in replying to your excellent letter of August 31. I have been extremely busy of late, not making much money, but just busy, mostly with the constant and continuing practicing which singers must attend to all their lives. As a sidelight, I must report that, at the moment the postman delivered your letter to me, I was at work polishing Schubert's beautiful and, I thought, apropos, "Frühlingsglaube". Perhaps you recall the strain, which was broken off by the poem's ring... "O frischer Duft, O neuer Klang. Nun, armes Herze, sei nicht bang! Nun muss sich alles, alles wenden. Man weiss nicht, was noch werden mag... vergiss der Qual! Nun muss sich alles wenden." A song which should be beloved by all marxists, for is not "nun muss sich alles wenden" a good summation of the philosophy? The refusal of most "socialists" to comprehend that essence is at once a bourgeois carry-over, a defense mechanism of the bourgeois subconscious and one of the greatest stumbling blocks to their total comprehension of what must be done. It is not only economic tradition that weighs like an Alp upon the minds of the workers of today. It is tradition as a generality which deters them (and ourselves); which makes them think unwittingly in the fashion of bourgeois mystics; which causes them to think of the 'revolution' in the same framework of reference with the Christian's "Millenium" when all sins shall be wiped away. Because of such views as I have just expressed, I am now considered persona non grata by my erstwhile comrades of the World Social Party. They attack and attack (puny, silly pin pricks unfelt by the Brobdignagians) the economic structure, and then have the temerity to laugh at economic determinists... standing in front of a mirror and laughing at their own reflexions, but they cannot see that. These, they are the Fundamentalist, Literalist Marxists... for which I develop an increasing contempt. They forget that Marx was but a road sign, pointing a direction, and was not an end in himself. As one friend of mine has put it, and I doubt that the thought originated with him, if Marx were alive today, he would undoubtedly endorse the Stalinists, whose minds fit more closely the ideal of the mid 19th Century "radical". Radical thought which is a century behind is not radical thought anymore, but reactionary and thoroughly negative. The radical who is not also a freethinker is no radical, but most alleged radicals of my acquaintance think that in reading hundred year old tomes they have found the Alpha and Omega... why go farther? Your attitude towards those Dumkopfen seems to pretty well coincide with my own... don't you find, too, that it sets you apart ~~xxx~~ ein Fremdling among the dogmatists? Aber, warte nur... are not so alone as it first appears. Perhaps, as you say, the old group have dwindled... I find that, here at least, there are many thoughtful workers who will not be satisfied with the old clichés. They are ready for development... it will take work and financial support. Unfortunately those of us who would work here, as elsewhere, suffer from lack of funds. Personally, I am living on the brink of bankruptcy... and I have a wife and two children to support. The American worker gets more pay than European cousin... and his support costs that much more... it really comes out. I can safely speak for my comrades here in the Southwestern U.S. when I say that we are most eager to get started, perhaps with open funds and an unaffiliated, free pamphlet press, free that is of partisan politics. Most of my comrades are out of the area at the moment, some in Detroit, some in San Diego, Calif., but they should be returning any day now... when all have returned, we hope to put a program into operation. Which is why I have contacted you for suggestions. I have read Mr J Dawson's paper occasionally in the past, and have several copies in my files... I shall contact him as soon as I get a few dollars aside and subscribe to his paper. I shall also contact Paul Mattick shortly.

The job is much more difficult in this country than in Europe... the American unionized worker, due to economic conditions here, is fatter and superficially better-off than the European worker. He is coddled and given more bones to keep him happy, or thinking he is happy... hence, most American workers are perfect foils for the bourgeoisie. For proof, just read the election returns of this country... the governments chosen are invariably either from the petty bourgeoisie, the shopkeepers (Democratic) or from the industrial-finance Capitalists (Republicans). You would be amazed, I'm sure, at the number of really underfed and illhoused workers who cast their votes for the Republicans. And nobody, but NOBODY, votes any shade of radical... except in time of "depression", admitted-by-the-Capitalists depression, that is, and then only a tiny few. It is most frustrating... or would be, if one permitted it to overshadow one's thoughts. We must simply concede that that is the condition, file the thought away, and continue to plug away... the collapse will come eventually... that is my only concession to the inevitability aspect.

I must close for this time. My good wife joins me in most cordial and comradely greetings.

Yours for revolt...



Peter Roberts