

Amsterdam Feb 13<sup>th</sup> 1938

Dear Comrade Mattick

Thank you for your letter of December. As to my article in "Science and Society" the matter is this. When I learnt that this review, "A Marxian quarterly" would appear and I saw a number of university people among the contributors - whereas just the difficulty for Marxian ideas to ~~propagate~~ <sup>express themselves freely</sup> at American universities had been a point of discourse when I was at Harvard a short time before - I offered at once my assistance and sent an article as a contribution. When then I received the first numbers I was disappointed to perceive that it was entirely dominated by C.P. spirit, and indeed was really a publication of C.P. people - which I found confirmed by correspondence with an old acquaintance who belonged to the C.P. I did not feel justified to withdraw my article, but I informed them that I would not contribute any more to their review, because my ideas stood in opposition to those of the C.P. So this short episode is finished. I see in this review an attempt of the C.P. to organize and extend their adherence in the intellectual circles of America, using the name Marxism as a sign-board, to catch all the growing opposition against capitalism in these circles and lead them <sup>in</sup> the direction of their party aims.

I was much surprised to hear that your Council Correspondence would be changed into an ordinary printed review. I suppose that your number of subscribers has increased so strongly that it pays to have the review printed. That would be a very gratifying success; but if we consider the large field which you are covering (besides America still other English speaking countries) and at the same time the crisis and the new political phenomena, we cannot wonder at this development. Perhaps it means also, that the emphasis of the propaganda is turned somewhat more towards intellectual

circles. Here in Holland such a change would meet <sup>with</sup> considerable opposition among the workers; now ~~they~~ the cyclostyled periodicals mean to them that they do it themselves and have it entirely in their hands; as soon as it would be replaced by a printed review they feel that it comes from intellectuals who try to dominate them mentally. We have to consider that a socialist party with large political representation is <sup>working here</sup> already 50 years, and indeed dominates large popular circles by its leading apparatus, a bureaucracy of intellectuals and leaders. So the small groups of independent workers have a healthy distrust against anything that scents intellectual domination. Of course there is also the small country that does not allow of a big propaganda. In America everything is different; the man of the workers is simply middle-class-minded, foreign to socialist ideas, not disappointed by ~~the~~ an old big socialist movement, with fresh minds exposed to the new critical situations of capitalism; a large class of intellectuals has to begin to orientate themselves in social conditions and ideas. So there seems a good possibility for success. On the other hand, when the field is fertile, there must be sufficient sowers. Do you have a sufficient number of collaborators? I understand that for yourself this will be a good opportunity to publish your studies on unemployment and crisis. But a review wants more, especially many different kinds of articles, which cannot be written by one or only a few persons. Of course I will try to collaborate also, by sending articles now and then; but the main part must come from American authors. The leisure hours I had in the last years I used for a study of the philosophy of Leninism, with which I am now ready. I hope we will find a means of multiplying the ms; I think the results may be of interest for a good judgment of the character of the Russian revolution and of the C.P.

Yours very truly

Ad. Sauer

By pressure of other work I could finish this letter only a fortnight after date.

We distinguish very strictly between party and class. In former times, as e.g. in the old SD and de Russian CP the party had to lead and to represent the class, direct for the class, command the class and call upon it for its actions. We consider a party only as a group of persons of the same opinions, trying to bring their insight, their point of view, their knowledge into the class. But the workers themselves, the class has to decide on all the actions; its apparatus are the councils, by which they express their will. Such a party is our group. Hence there is no trace of trying to win power, to find a big body of adherents; what we want is only so many adherents as is necessary for propaganda, for the selling of papers and speaking in assemblies. So we had newly the curious experience, that a minority of Spartacists separated after a struggle in a group conference — they said the Amsterdam majority had given up the old principles of Spartacus by the influence of the G.P. T. C.; the majority said the Rotterdam group with their old ideas of *salvo part* in parliam. elections and trying to found special shop-unions would certainly fail — In such a case of splitting up of a party there was always furious ~~words~~ <sup>mutual</sup> hostility, reproaches, accusations, and bitterness. But here, in this Spartacus case, the two groups separated in friendship, each saying we will see which of us shall be right, but we cannot do otherwise than each going its way. This could happen, because none of them tried to win party-power. Each thinks only how the class-power can be increased.

So you see we are looking full of hope into the future; we expect the cap. world going the way into camouflaged or open dictatorships, the working class now going into its real ~~power~~ struggle for class-power, by means of mastery over the shops.

I am wondering that Lenin Philosopher will appear in Spanish earlier than in English. It shows how everywhere the need is felt to oppose the C.P. influence upon the workers. Now that German has ceased to be the foremost language of socialist thought, it will be desirable to have it published in English; but in such a case I insist on reading the translation myself first.

If you have some one <sup>among</sup> your acquaintance who can read Dutch, we could send him some of our literature. I hope to hear another time more on yourself and your work.

Yours very truly,  
Anton Pannekoek

My brother-in-law will have informed you about my work under the war time, chiefly a ~~study~~ study on the workers councils, which ~~stands~~ stands in its development most sides of the past history of the movement. It ~~will~~ is now to be published by the same publishing firm as the weekly, and I hope it will soon appear; it is under pseudonym, because I wish that the ideas therein shall be weighed and considered by their own merit, without any connection or influence of the author's name and history. There exists already an English translation, or better an English version, because some special parts on Dutch or German conditions are left out and replaced by English lines of thought. We intend to establish connections with the English workers movement, as soon as intercourse will be possible and secure — do you know addresses in England of persons or publications working in this line of thought? — and to try to find a publisher of books on working class movement, who could be willing to publish it, or some group. Then you would receive it in America also. If there existed a good publishing house in the USA, such as 40 years ago Charles Kerr for the movement at that time, it could be published there. But I think there is not such a one. Still I think that in Am. the movement will come up again pretty soon, and then spontaneously the workers will take up this new tactics of direct action. And then it would be of great importance if they had a periodical or weekly to give true information, to defend their cause and to show them their true task, viz. to ~~be~~ lead their actions themselves, without leaders; to develop their councils, not unions; to fight for a future where they are themselves master of production without government to dominate them. I think that, after the war prosperity, unemployment crises will break out and rouse the workers into a first beginning of real class and mass fight. I do not ~~sup~~ suppose, of course, that a revolution is in sight; a development of some <sup>of industrial property</sup> dozens years, perhaps a 3<sup>d</sup> world war America contra China-Russia will be unavoidable first; but now the foundations for a future mass movement can be laid. We have to consider that everywhere the real class fight for liberation has still to start.

will be the response of the workers to this development. Here their organisation must be shop-organisation; the shop-personnels active as one body, abolish and disregard the old differences of unions. Shop organisation is not a new form of union, a new membership, but the natural aggregation and unity, given by being parts of the same production-unit. The aim of the fight must be the workers master of the shop, producing as shop-organisation for the community of all the workers, as part of the total social organisation. They take their decisions and regulate and direct now their fight and afterwards their production by means of workers' councils. The growth and organisation of these councils will be the chief contents of the process of revolution that is the process of liberation and conquest of power.

It was only a small group, but with many able persons. There was another group, originated from a syndicalist movement in former days, then taking part in the polls because its leader wished to have a seat in Parliament, temporarily affiliated to the Moscow International, but then hostile against the Stalin as well as to the Trotskyist tendency, only ~~the~~ faithful to the Lenin-tradition and considering Russia as the workers' fatherland that only temporarily <sup>was</sup> fallen into bad hands. This group called itself with the name Spartacus, it had adherents in many parts of the country, mostly communist-by-sentiment. During the war it gave out illegal leaflets among the workers, also called Spartacus. According to the decrees of the Dutch government all ~~the~~ illegal papers fighting the Germans were allowed to appear as legal press after the liberation; so the weekly Spartacus went on to appear. ~~The~~ The group of J.C. Brad during the war time came in touch with the Spartacists, as the group that stood nearest to herself, and had inculcated them ~~with~~ with her ideas, and <sup>had</sup> associated itself with them. So now Spartacus is a weekly paper, with an increasing number of readers, always standing for the working class and its fight, explaining the new tactics and principles of council organisation, and in every spontaneous fight of the workers (such as lately of the doctors in Rotterdam) defending their cause and propagating the true tactics of class fight. Campbell, with some other friends are now among the best <sup>of the editorial staff</sup> of ~~the~~ this weekly paper, and they are doing a lot of fruitful work.

We distinguish very strictly between party and class. In former times, as e.g. in the old SD and the Russian CP the party had to lead and to represent the class, act for the class, command the class and call upon it for its actions. We consider a party only as a group of persons of the same opinions, trying to bring their insight, their point of view, their knowledge into the class. But the workers themselves, the class has to decide on all the actions; its apparatus are the councils, by which they express their will. Such a party is our group. Hence there is no trace of trying to win power, to find a big body of adherents; what we want is only so many adherents as is necessary for propaganda, for the selling of papers and speaking in assemblies. So we had newly the curious experience, that a minority of Spartacists separated after a struggle in a group conference — they said the Amsterdam majority had given up the old principles of Spartacus by the influence of the G.P.C.; the majority said the Rotterdam group with their old ideas of taking part in parliam. elections and trying to found special shop-unions would certainly fail — In such a case of splitting up of a party there was always furious ~~mutual~~ hostility, reproaches, accusations; and bitterness. But here, in this Spartacus case, the two groups separated in friendship, each saying we will see which of us shall be right, but we cannot do otherwise than each going its way. This could happen, because none of them tried to win party-power. Each thinks only how the class-power can be increased.

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Yours very truly,  
Grunwald

smashed and his skull also damaged. It happened in the last of September, and he is still in the Emergency Hospital at New York street in Washington; ~~alive~~, but, so far as I understand from the informations, not quite out of danger. He was just preparing to go to Holland to his family and see his little grandson, and perhaps to stay there the ~~coming~~ <sup>coming</sup> years; now this all has to be postponed. We are extremely sorry that this accident has befallen him; we looked with expectation upon his coming and staying here; and we hope that all may turn into the right way.

I hope it will be possible for you, with a group of friends having the same ideas, to start some paper for propazanda. It seems to me that stress must be laid more upon the practical side than on the theoretical argument. The present and new generations do not care whether your teachings are Marxism or based on Marx; now that the CP has discredited Marx and all appeal to great names we have to ~~begin~~ <sup>base</sup> ~~with~~ upon the simple slogan: the workers themselves master of the shops, leading their fight themselves in direct actions, securing their unity by council-organisation of their strike-committees, organising production by their workers' councils. We have to teach marxism by not naming it as authority but by applying it at every social phenomenon, <sup>words</sup> at politics and class fight. Just because we are sure we have in all our ideas the spirit of Marxism, we do not want any appeal <sup>to it</sup> to defend our position against old socialism; <sup>(and C.P.)</sup> we simply fight it because it is obsolete now, an aid to dictatorial <sup>and CP because it is itself state capitalism.</sup> Capitalism. I think that on this basis, applying it at every class movement, every great strike, every important political happening, we can find so much support that the propazanda gets a firm lasting basis.

It will interest us here very much to hear of you and of American affairs. My friend H. Canneboeyer sends his best greetings; he is very much occupied by writing and speaking for the cause.

Yours very truly

Ant. Canneboeyer

that the <sup>old methods</sup> (should) bring victory and freedom; the depression of res. movement in which we are living is the natural outcome of a necessity and difficulty of ~~find~~ finding new ways in stead of the old. The old ways all had as their goal: planned economy directed by the leaders, either political leaders, i.e. state socialism, or trade union leaders, after syndicalist ideas, tried at Barcelona in the Spanish uprising. This goal implies that the working class remains exploited and subjected, is not itself master of the means of production; it establishes state capitalism or helps to subdue the workers under the dictatorship of monopolist capital. When we see all these consequences and implications we cannot be disappointed that all the workers movement till now did not "succeed". The real fight for self-determination, self-rule has still to begin, as soon as conditions are ripe. In Europe with its damaged economy and heavy crisis it is not impossible that within some years the beginnings of such fights will spring up. But theory has to be advanced to this height; it is backward now against the <sup>practice of</sup> great strike movements, for nobody, nor the strikers themselves, understand their meaning and future. In the book on Workers' Councils an attempt is made to clarify these points and direct the attention to these new trends. I am sure there are many young people, workers and intellectuals, eagerly searching for better insight into the world's development, and many adults still at a loss and disappointed, why these old hopeful socialist and other movements have totally disappeared. To give them a guide in understanding, so that then further they use their brains themselves, is the chief aim of the book. Once the meaning and character of workers' councils is understood, they will apply it to the special circumstances of practical struggles, and a basis is won for discussion of all the problems connected with the movement.

You have obliged me very much by giving the English addresses; with Reichenbach I am already in correspondence, and he sent me some papers - though not yet any among them corresponds ~~somehow~~ <sup>anyhow</sup> to our



own ideas. But I hope to find them in investigatory further on. After what was published in England after the 1<sup>st</sup> world war, in new ideas, and after what you say about the situation in the U.S.A., it seems to me that England would be a better ~~publishing~~ country for publishing. It is important, however, that there is a group of people interesting themselves in the distribution of the new ideas. Perhaps your suggestion for having it published by the Australian group of comrades may show a way out; though I feel the importance to have it brought to the front in the midst of great proletarian masses, the centres of capitalism. The lack of a clear outstanding goal, now that the old goals have collapsed or <sup>have</sup> been discredited, seems to me a major reason, why among the critical minds and discontent workers there does not appear a new rising of class-struggle-movement. Here we have the impression that the idea of workers' councils, worked out and applied upon a broader basis, will afford this goal - seeing the successes this propaganda had here among the workers. It was because among <sup>our</sup> groups of friends (Group of Intern. Comm. it was called before the war) ms. copies of that book had already circulated during the war, that after the war they could with so great force and <sup>with</sup> clearness exhibit the new ideas in the Spartacus-papers.

I heard with great interest that you tried to make an English version of Lenin's *Philosopher*, and even published a part of it. I have not seen it and ~~am~~ <sup>am</sup> very much interested to see it; it was my intention to ~~make~~ make an English translation myself as soon as I could get good aid for it. The "New Essays" about which you write, I do not know and I have not seen them. It is a very difficult thing to express these philosophical matters from German into English; I must procure first the English edition of Lenin's work on *Empirio-criticism*, before I can do that. It interested me to hear that my brother-in-law, Dr. Brauns, had cooperated with you in that work.

Probably you do not know that Dr. Brauns has been struck by a serious accident. While crossing the street on a rainy evening he was hit by a car, his lame leg