

Leist (Holland) Febr. 27 1947
Regentesselaan 8

108/30

Dear Comrade Ridley

I thank you very much for your kind letter of Febr. 18th. I was extremely pleased to read there that you agree with us that bringing stuff for increasing knowledge and insight ^{to the workers, so that they go to} ~~and for~~ ~~thinking~~ over the conditions of their fight, is now the thing most needed; and that the ideas put forth in my ~~extract~~ ^{summary} of the book find a sympathetic understanding. I heard in the meantime, that many conservative elements left the I.L.P. so that you are free or than before to make it a valuable revolutionary factor. In the name I.L.P. is indicated that not any socialist doctrine but the class, the working class is the dominating conception; in the present times, now that we see in nearly all countries socialist parties assisting or leading in establishing stronger dictatorial power of the state over production and working class, the name "socialist" begins to assume an ominous sound; ^{on the other hand} ~~and~~ ^(cherished for so many good traditions) ~~this name and doctrine~~ ^{(may withhold many} ~~of the workers)~~ ^{militants from approaching with open mind the new wild and "official" actions} ~~and the ideas emerging from them.~~ If the class is put into the forefront it means that we stand open-minded before the new conditions and new phenomena of class-fight, and build our theoretical insight upon them. Thus it may appear that your party is just the most appropriate to take care of the book and to promote its being published as much as possible. We have to see the matter in this way, that it ~~has~~ tries to bring new ideas to the workers (taken from their own practice) that will strengthen them for future fights, give them self-confidence, and make them immune against the spiritually suppressing influences of the modern ruling powers. ^{that takes its basis entirely in the working class, and its mastery over society} Such a book ~~cannot find sympathy or furthering from a middle-class publisher;~~ that a progressive ethical liberal ~~as~~ ^{with} ~~be its~~ ^{publisher} I ascribe to an intuitive class-feeling. But in that case it must be a cause for the workers themselves, ^{for} or groups standing at their side, to see to that ~~that~~ such a book is not silenced, or hampered (perhaps for petty reasons) to appear. From my correspondence with

comrades in America and Australia (Paul Heath at New York, Jim Dawson at Melbourne) I learnt that printing in America is exceedingly expensive, whilst they are only ~~very~~ poor people, and books from Australia cannot be imported into England save in single specimens; ~~and~~ they all advise to have it published, if possible, in England, and they are expecting and welcoming it with great desire. Now that England just was the scene of wild strikes with a splendid spirit of solidarity, it is here that a clear understanding of the meaning of such outbursts and of their significance for the future is most needed, and may be expected at the same time.

So it would be a heavy disappointment and a pity if such a mere technical haphazard as shortness of paper should prevent the publishing. Try to arrange it in any way and do the utmost to make it possible. If there are other obstacles please inform me that I can see what perhaps can be done, or how the matter stand. Financial aid I cannot afford; even if we could find means here, every sending of money to other countries is forbidden here.

I was much interested by what you wrote on my little work on Darwinism and Socialism. Is it the English translation published by Charles Kerr in Chicago, (long ago, when it was a broad-minded successful publishing firm)? I remember I have seen this translation and found some sentences not sufficiently exactly rendered; this may be of importance if you think of making at some time a new edition; in that case I will look for my old notices, to provide you with a good translation. Still more I am interested in what you write that you are publishing a book on English revolutionary tradition; I am desirous to see it.

I include on a separate sheet the opinion expressed in a press-notice ^{of a} ^{mild} reformistic-ethical ^{socialist} weekly; thus rendering the impression made by the ^{in its Dutch edition} book upon people living in a quite different line of thought.

Hoping that you may succeed, I remain fraternally yours

Ant. Pannekoek

Leist (Holland) April 7th 1947.
Regentesselaan 8

108/31

Dear Comrade Rudley.

I thank you very much for your extensive letter of March 9, where in I saw your interest in "The Workers' Councils" and that you will keep it in mind continually and do your utmost to find publishing a way for. You refer only to lack of paper; but you add that you feel to be the culprit by having underway two greater books of 160 000 and 200 000 words, on revolutionary history. Could it not be possible - since the tasks and needs of the present situation are more pressing - to make an interchange and destine a part of it to this smaller book of only 95 000 words, to bring this out first, and then the historical studies a little bit later? Or is perhaps this idea based on a wrong judgment of the paper situation? There are reasons not to postpone the publishing; the development of the world goes on rapidly; so we have to drive forward the spiritual movement. The situation is worsening, in England too, and may come to a crisis; it is important that to the workers new vistas are opened. In England an able reviewer here in Holland (moderate socialist) concludes his sketch ^(viz. West European alliances) in this vision: when that does not succeed, England slowly goes down in impoverishment, not without resistance, with heavy internal disturbances and pains, with Labour Govt. compromised, the working class demoralized, the Tories in power only to aggravate the conditions, the result will be general despondency and embitterment; the only way out is help from America; something analogous ^{is then expected} for our country. From the March Guard Weekly I get also the impression of danger, though here a greater capitalist strength appears. It is all seen from the middle class point of view. We, looking from the workers' viewpoint, see matters different, because we know of, and rely upon, the forces lying hidden in the working class. But these must be awakened and brought to consciousness; they remain inactive if it stays staring at Parliament and Trade Unionism. They ^(workers) must know how to build up and organize production themselves, by constructive work from below, by strenuous exertion of themselves and their organs. This holds for all Western Europe ^{even the members,} (in a wider sense for all the world). Everywhere the workers have their misgivings

about socialist and communist party politics, they have lost confidence and enthusiasm, but do not know their ^{own} forces and what ^{other} (ways are open. They fight, ^{spontaneous} in strikes, against capitalist oppression, with endurance, courage, and a fine spirit of solidarity, but they do not know how this fight and this spirit will open the way to self-won freedom. They fight, so to say, with closed eyes. Thus it is a matter of first necessity that new views are presented to them, that they see the significance of what by intuition and necessity they are doing already (to take away the doubts when for their strikes they are attacked from all sides), and see that they can build up the new order saving society. In the 3^d part of "The Workers' Councils" it is said that, if anywhere, then in England a conquest of power might be possible by a succession of partial steps; because of the character of the English ruling class to seek for practical solutions in every emergency and to yield before the breaking point is reached. But this will depend on the working class, whether it will be equal to its task. Since all propaganda needs time to spread and have effect in new convictions, it is necessary not to lose time, and to make haste. We cannot expect that the working class, in its present weakness, will be able to prevent a third world war by ~~the~~ thwarting it by revolutionary counteractions; but after ^{the} devastation it will stand before the choice of building up their free world, or ^{fall into} a deep slavery under a united world capitalism.

You speak of libertarian socialism as the brand of the I L P in the next time. What was called by that name till now mostly was a sentiment rather than clear knowledge, ^{sentimental} a ~~sentiment~~ of distrust against party-rule and State-socialism. These ^{goals} belong to the time of ascendancy of capitalism, ^(say, till 1910) when the workers had to fight for their place within this system. Now the time seems ripe for a new phase with new goals, self-rule and mastery of the workers over production (you speak of cross-roads ~~to~~). But theory is still entirely dominated by the old doctrine; nearly all socialists and communists believe that State-socialism and Parliamentarism and Trade-unionism are prescribed by Marxism, by the science of Marx and Engels. This belief we have to refute. Now that the working class has to solve

the problem how to combine freedom with ^{social} (organisation), the libertarian ideas have to develop from sentiment into clear knowledge, based on substantial economic theory. So we want books, materials for study, wherein it is laid down. The G. I. C., leaning upon theoretical work in Holland and German experience, has done much to provide a solid economic and social basis, and it is of great importance that the English speaking world of labour should get access to such international literature. The books should serve not so much to convert or convince present leading spokesmen, who are mostly ~~still~~ clinging to traditional ideas, but chiefly to instruct the upgrowing next generation that has to do the practical work and fight. ~~What~~ We want books to be published, to be widely circulated, in order that the young workers can read and find out truth after their own judgment; must we suffer that by lack of means, against the ruling doctrine ^{that} by their power and money ^{are able to} ^{make} (broad) propaganda, the voice of revolutionary fight for free society cannot be heard? After and besides the "Workers' Councils" we know of more books and pamphlets that should be translated and published in English, now the chief world-language. Could not you bring together a kind of Combined Socialist Publishing House, by appealing ^{groups and} to persons of different ^{groups} ^{and} ^{trends} ~~views~~, but all interested in spreading wider knowledge on workers' ~~the~~ problems, socialism, liberty, social development; something as Charles H. Kerr ^{was} ~~was~~ in Chicago?

I understand that your "Engels society" is a group devoted to the study of Marxian and other theoretical subjects, and, I suppose, limited in ~~extent~~ size and in means for publishing writings. When I will be able to make a revision of "Marxism and Darwinism" I will be happy to send it to you in order that you, if you wish, may publish it (A conflict with Kerr will not arise out of it, I suppose). I will be greatly interested to read your pamphlet on Socialism and Religion, when it appears; because in 1905 I made a lecture on the same topic at Bremen (my first contact with the German S.P.) which was printed as a pamphlet; I am not sure to have still a specimen of it. I suppose that we will have approached the subject from different sides (it has so many sides!); my

that religion is based on the contradictions of social economy and
point was that not atheist propaganda but revolutionary fight of the workers and clear
Marxian insight makes religion sicker away in them and disappear gradually.

You mention Gorter's "World-revolution", that expressed the high hopes and the best thoughts
of the time; we then could not ~~think~~ ^{imagine} what ~~would~~ ^{later on} happen with the Russian revolution and the
workers fight. It was dedicated to Lenin; I suppose you know his later "Open Letter to Lenin"?
He died 1927; he was my best friend, we made most of our socialist fights in common. He was the
foremost poet of Holland, ~~for~~ ^{for} his pre-socialist poetry beloved and venerated all over the country.
Besides his poetry (all in Dutch of course) he made a study on the World's Great Poets, which
we hope to be able to publish ^{in English version} within some years.

Here also I read of the Paris conference of socialist groups. If it must serve to
exchange ideas it will have its utility. I do not go; I am no conference-man; I can
better express my ideas by writing. I fear that ~~the present~~ ^{at present} socialist powers are too weak
to influence really European politics. When the workers in every shop, every enterprise,
every country ^{will} have established their class-unity ^{the} in fight against capitalist power,
then their international unity will establish itself without any difficulty. So
I see for myself the chief task ⁱⁿ helping them - through theoretical explication and
understanding - to find ~~ing~~ their way of unity and class-fight.

With fraternal greetings

Yours very sincerely

Ant. Pannekoek