

3/14/50

Dear "Red":

Sorry that I had not gotten a chance to see more of you but of course when the class struggle is active nothing else has precedence. However, the magnificent job you did plus the nearness to the masses just when both a great strike and an independent action such as relief was being accomplished ought not to be allowed to pass without some very precise and elaborate notes of every detail of the action and the reaction for future use. Always, at the end of such an action one finds how much one has grown in stature and experience, and how much more he will know the next time. The point is now not to let it disappear as the past, but to write it down carefully and reexamine later.

No doubt Frank has told you that I am working on a big article on coal. Although I have read literally dozens of books and know the history of miners for a full century, nothing will be as valuable in that article as the actual talks with rank and filers on their specific attitudes. All theory, you know, is Marxist is but the conscious expression of the "instinctive strivings of the proletariat to reconstruct society on Communist beginnings", as Trotsky pointedly put it. Moreover, the workers themselves have been the ones to "invent" new forms of organization. Take the Soviets in the good days of Lenin and Trotsky. The workers spontaneously established them and when the great Marxist theoreticians saw them, they said, "That's it" and they made their theories more concrete.

All this is merely to lead up to the necessity to make of theory and practice one, not two separate departments. Hence, when I get a rough draft down in a month or so, I most definitely want you to read it and give me your comments. Also, at some later stage I will want to come down to Morgantown and I hope it will be possible for you to arrange for me to meet some of the miners and talk to them. Frank will tell you of a simple way we thought it could be done.

I was very glad to hear that your wife had been of great assistance in the distribution of relief. I feel sure that in the actual class struggle she would be a true rebel and of immense value to the labor movement. Perhaps you'll get a chance to show her the little piece I wrote on women and the strike (I believe it will be in this week's MILITANT) and get her reaction; I'd be interested in that.

Have you been able to get a job in the mines? With this recent activity of yours, you should at least have good "contacts".

Did Andy give you the notes he made of the plenum report; sorry you had to miss it, but both Andy and Frank made extensive notes so you'll have a good picture.

Do let me know what you think of the idea of the article (perhaps 9,000 words) on coal; what notes you have of the recent experience and in general what comments you have to make.

Comradely,

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