

June 6, 1957

Dear Friends;

Yesterday the book finally went off to the printer. It has grown to 400 pages of text plus 95 pages of appendices, including a 4 page Selected Bibliography which I hope we will be able to mimeograph for the friends if we get a free moment at the center. The footnotes too have grown so that they number over 250, although I tried hard to keep them at a minimum. I believe we now have a work that is ready to take all the blows the bourgeoisie, labor bureaucracy and old radicals are readying for it.

I would like to call attention to some unique contributions we are making with MARXISM AND FREEDOM ... From 1776 until Today:

The first and most important is of course the establishment of the American roots. I am referring not alone to history -- that of Abolitionism or Marxism -- but to the current scene and the new humanism which flows from the workers' attitude to automation.

Secondly--and this again is a first in books on Marxism-- is the depth of the philosophic roots. Never before have the thoughts the workers think been so tightly linked to philosophic thought of the greatest philosophers. By now it may appear to us a commonplace to say, as the book both says and proves--that there is nothing in thought, not even in that of a genius, that has not previous been in the common activity of common men. But I can assure you that when the world will read that, and will see that I mean it not only for a Marx but for a Hegel, they will have to re-examine every thought they had ever thought.

Thirdly--and here our contribution reawakens Marx to life-- the relationship of theory to history. To take up every one of Marx's major works and show that only when he broke from the intellectual conception of theory as argument with other theorists, and, instead, made the struggle for the shortening of the working day as the very and work of theory--that only then did he transcend all of previous theory and create a new dimension for intellectual as well as workers--that will shake up the whole intellectual world and show them they have a real and powerful contender in the working class even in the field they thought was exclusively theirs.

Finally they will all be forced to treat Marxism as the only serious theory of liberation, and Marx as that prophet of liberty who is more alive today than all living specimens of hollow words. To think that what Khrushchev says is not as a terror page of scientific fiction, but a truth of modern barbarism --that he has a bomb large enough so that if he dropped it on the polar ice caps it would flood the world -- and that all Eisenhower can say is that he will not answer him "personally" --that is the abdication of leadership on both sides of the Iron Curtain and an exposure of the end of any civilized thought. Only the working class can assume the leadership because that means that the working people will run their own lives and create a new basis for existence, which, as Angela Ferraro put it, will show that work ~~and~~ is not separate from life itself. In this will begin the true history of humanity.

With the book we have created a theoretical basis. Now we must go forth and enrich it with our own experiences and aspirations and see that we will be heard.

Rae

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