

December 18, 1955

Dr. Russell Potter
Institute of Arts and Sciences
Columbia University
New York, 27, New York

Dear Dr. Potter:

It was a distinct pleasure to talk to you and find that, as wide apart as the fields of Shakespeare and Marx seem to be, your interest in germinal ideas was such that you offered to present my manuscript to a publisher. Please permit me to elaborate somewhat the ideas in the outline of my book which I here enclose and which I tentatively call Marxism and Freedom.

The book will center on the philosophical foundations of Marxism and the first systematic study of Russian state capitalism. Heretofore the philosophy has been handled as a 19th century humanitarian adjunct to Marxian political economy. Today, the search for freedom makes it clear that, far from being incidental, philosophy is pivotal.

At the beginning of World War II, working from Russian sources, I made the first Marxist analysis of Stalin's three Five Year Plans. With this as background, I was able to recognize the significance of the Communist revision in the theory of value in 1944. I wrote two articles for the American Economic Review at that time, in which I analyzed the revision not only as a break in Marxist theory, but as a break in theory which reflects the Russian reality of a state capitalist society fighting for world domination. The ruthlessness of the current Khrushchev-Bulganin tour of Asia have left gasping all those who thought they could counter each new Russian thrust as it comes. It should now be clear that only an all-embracing approach could combat Russian totalitarianism. My book projects a comprehensive theoretical approach.

The problem is to find a publisher who recognizes the possibilities of such a work and is willing to advance the necessary sum to enable me to spend three months to complete the book and prepare the manuscript for publication. I have already developed the ideas quite fully and have drafted the major chapters in preliminary form. These notes I have submitted to various people for their comment and criticism. You will recall the letter of Herbert Marcuse, the author of Reason and Revolution, and Eros and Civilization, who wrote me:

"I have read your notes and I should like to tell you that I must encourage you to go ahead with the elaboration. Your ideas are a real oasis in the desert of Marxist thought."

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As to the commercial possibilities of my book, here are a few indications worth considering:

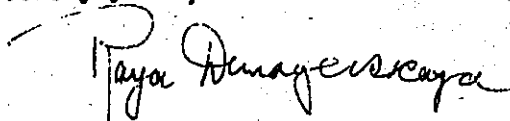
1) My articles in the American Economic Review (herewith enclosed) appeared at the height of American-Russian wartime collaboration when the official world refused to recognize the Russian reality. Nevertheless, my brief analysis was reported on the front page of The New York Times and became the center of a debate that lasted for an entire year.

2) Although more than ten years have elapsed, these articles are well known to the academic world and are referred to as a standard text on Russian economy and Marxism. As recently as two months ago, in October, I was invited as a guest lecturer to address the Economics, Sociology and Philosophy Departments in a number of California universities, including: the University of California at Los Angeles, University of Southern California, Occidental College, and the Berkeley University in Berkeley, California.

3) On the basis of my lectures and interest in my book I myself can guarantee the sale of 500 copies the first week of publication.

Thank you once again for your interest. Saul will write you separately about the lectures.

Sincerely yours,



Enclosed: 1) Outline of Book, Marxism and Freedom
2) Translation of Russian article which appeared in the American Economic Review
3) Commentary, and Rejoinder, September 1944 and September 1945, American Economic Review.

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