

12/24/58

Dear Alexander Erlich:

Thank you for your meticulous letter of criticisms of the section on the Russian economy. You can be sure that it will receive my most careful attention, not alone in the factual corrections, but even where I disagree fundamentally as a Marxist. As I told Professor Carr when I asked him to read the whole manuscript, I am one person who lives by Lenin's dictum that "the party work must be checked by the non-party masses" and while you two are not the masses, neither am I "the party". The principle however is the same: that if you are serious in any field, your opponents' views are of the highest value and you must meet them. As you know, even the one whom I have asked to introduce my work--Herbert Marcuse--does not agree in many essential respects. The fact that nevertheless he and others have read and given me the benefit of their criticisms makes me think that they have appreciated my powers to listen to opponents.

Now then for my basic views not alone of Russia but the law of motion of this crisis-ridden world--it is that nothing less than a philosophy, that is to say, a total approach can give the slightest inkling, and the most essential part of that total approach is the workingclass itself--its thought not just its labor power. It is the attempt to find a new unity of theory and practice to end the division between mental and manual labor which is the cause of all the crises that is the raison d'etre of MARXISM AND FREEDOM. I enclose some of the working drafts of some of the chapters for you to read--while I hold my breath for the publisher to give his final answer.

McMurry

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