

~~Handwritten scribbles and signatures~~

AYN RAND

10,000 TAMPA AVENUE  
CHATSWORTH, CALIFORNIA

August 1, 1946

Mr. Leonard E. Read  
The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc.  
Irvington-on-Hudson, New York

Dear Leonard:

Thank you for your letter of July 22nd. I see why I enjoy political discussions with you. I like your way of facing and answering criticism. You're always fair about it.

I shall discuss that further in a moment, but first I must tell you about a matter pertaining to ANTHEM. I sent a copy of ANTHEM to Mr. Burt MacBride of The Reader's Digest, and I enclose a copy of the letter I received from him. I have answered him, telling him that he must subscribe to The Freeman by all means, and that I would ask you to send him copies of your earlier issues.

It occurred to me that it might be worth your while to meet Mr. MacBride. I have never met him, but merely corresponded with him, when he wrote me sometime ago requesting an article. Here is an idea that his letter suggested to me: as he states, the Digest publishes only reprints; I have heard it said that when the Digest gets an original article which it wants to print, it first makes arrangements with some other publication to print it, then acquired the reprint rights. If this is their actual policy, I think The Freeman could be of great service to them by undertaking to print the more daring and outspoken kind of articles which others would be afraid to publish. This is just an idea of my own, and I would like you to consider whether such a possibility is worth investigating.

Incidentally, I wrote Mr. MacBride a five page letter, explaining how and why books like Kravchenko's make converts for Communism--and I have sent him copies of my TEXTBOOK OF AMERICANISM, which he is practically asking for.

I am enclosing the third issue of my TEXTBOOK for you. Are you, or are you not receiving it directly from The Vigil office?

I have not yet read Rose Wilder Lane's book review for August. I have subscribed to the review, and shall look forward to the August number with interest.

Now, to the political discussion of your letter. I fully sympathize with your anger at the conservatives who claim that they oppose compulsion except for their particular pet

cause. That is their usual attitude, and the one most damaging to our side. Nothing can be done about it, except by attacking it at the source. The source is the fact that people have lost all conception of principles. The cure has to begin by re-educating them to an understanding of the nature of principles and of their application. This is one instance that shows that our battle has to be fought on philosophical grounds.

As to your sentence: "He knows that coercion is destructive, except when it is used as police force to prevent interference with personal liberty"--the mistake here is in the implication, which places the state's police power in the same category as its power of economic coercion. You did not say this explicitly, but the sentence implies it.

I liked your saying, in your letter, that you do not know what an intellectual is. There certainly aren't many samples of that species around us nowadays. An intellectual is a man who thinks. That leaves out most of our contemporaries by definition. The awful objects who parade as professional intellectuals at present are a bunch of worthless phonies who are mostly pink and might as well remain so. They would do us no good on our side.

What we need are real intellectuals, that is, thinkers. But we cannot "convert" thinkers or "regain their devotion". We need them to convert us--that is, to teach businessmen and conservatives the proper kind of philosophy.

Such thinkers still exist somewhere and we need them desperately. No, they are not "faint hearts", as you say in your letter. And they have not given up. They have been choked off, stopped, prevented from functioning publicly through the fault of our businessmen. You know that for the last fifteen years every legitimate avenue of expression--newspapers, magazines, book publishing houses--has been closed to them. All these so-called respectable publications, owned by conservatives, have been staffed with pinks who maintain a blockade against all real advocates of our side. Only the Hayeks and such other compromisers are allowed to get through, the kind who do more good to the communist cause than to ours. Now the real thinkers whom we need will be hard to find, because they have not been allowed to make a name for themselves, to come out in the open and be discovered. So it's our job to find them. And, believe me, that should be the most important job of your organization.

It's not fair to call them "faint hearts", when they lead such a desperate, lonely struggle, against our own side, and have no avenue to get into print--just as I did not have for many years. I broke through on my own, and I don't want that struggle to be as hard for other writers of Individualism as it was for me. Let's clear the way for them.

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And whenever you have a chance to discuss the situation of intellectuals with any of your big business backers, you must drive relentlessly, at every opportunity, toward the goal of having them use their influence to clean up the Republican newspapers and magazines of their filthy load of pinks, and to hire the writers of our kind. That should be your purpose. That is the purpose for which I will fight by your side with everything I've got.

Your fighting "ghost",

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ayn Rand". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the typed name.

Ayn Rand