

Paris, January 26th, 1932.

Upton Sinclair, esq.,
Station A,
Pasadena, Calif.

Dear Upton Sinclair:-

Thank you for your letter of December 28th, Since I had not received your first letter, and your second letter contained nothing about Living my Life, except a few mis-spelled names, I was not so far out of the way in thinking you pedantic. Most assuredly I should not have thought you so had I known that you found something else that had impressed you in my book. On pain of having you repeat that it is I who belong to a "church", I must nevertheless insist that the Five Year Plan had no place in my book. Not because I refused to face facts, but for other reasons. I have, as a matter of fact, given these reasons in my last letter, but I will repeat them here.

First:- The part on Russia in Living my Life deals with my experience there during twenty-one months, and not with something that happened eight or nine years later.

Secondly:- I did not consider the Five Year Plan a fait accompli, not even remotely so. True, you say that having charged the Communists with being incompetent of running industry I ought now, in justice to them, to take the Five Year Plan for granted. Your reason for it is that a "German economic institute has reported that Soviet Russia has taken third place in general production, behind only the United States and Germany". And again, because "the Economic Review of Soviet Russia claims that, as a result of later events, this year Russia has passed Germany." Knowing, as I do, by what means visitors and investigators are hoodwinked in Russia, and knowing, as I also do, that there is no reliance whatever on anything the Soviet government claims, I could not possibly drag in the Five Year Plan. To do that I would have to be in Russia to see and hear things for myself. Not having been there I refuse to be hoodwinked, as you, and a great many others, have been by the glamour that emanates from Russia.

Granted, however, that the Communists are succeeding in industrializing Russia, I would still want to know at what expense. I see no reason to enthuse over the prospect of turning Russia into a madhouse of machines, of mechanizing the life and the spirit of youth, and indeed of the whole people. That was not the purpose and aim of the revolution. It was to set the people free to mold their own life, without a state machine, which is turning the vast bulk of Russian humanity into eggs, mere automata, without will or direction.

Besides, I happen to know that in Russia itself the ruling power is already admitting that, while vast factories and machines had been built, the most essential needs of the people had been overlooked. Instead of relieving the masses of the terrible want that has been their lot for so long, which relief, by the way, had been promised within two years, their condition remained unchanged. You will probably quote me Mr. Louis Fisher, as an authority, as you have the Soviet Economic Review, to prove that wages have increased in Russia. Even if I were willing to admit this as true there still remains the great disparity between the earnings of the people in Russia and the terrific high cost of living. With all the so-called special privileges the proletariat is supposed to be getting there is still no comparison between their earnings and their expenditure.

But why continue the argument, since we both approach Russian reality from different angles. Let us agree to disagree, until such time when even these blinded by the Bolshevik superstition will begin to see.

Sincerely,