

October 20, 1980

Dear Raya,

I finally had a chance to go through the Sorge papers at the NYPL. While they are very interesting, in that one can see there original copies of letters in Marx's own hand, as well as letters from Engels and other socialists to Sorge, all of the letters from Marx appear to have been already ~~xxx~~ included in Marx's Collected Works in German. That I could tell by looking at the dates and the signatures on the letters; trying to read the actual handwriting was quite another matter, even in the one or two cases where Marx wrote in English. Then I compared that with a list I had made of the Marx-Sorge Correspondence from the Marx-Engels Werke. All of the letters in the Sorge papers appeared in the MEW.

The rest of the Sorge papers consist mainly of various leaflets from the socialist movement in the U.S. in the period after 1870, besides the letters from people such as Dietzgen, John Phillips, Weitling, and Becker. Since photostating was very expensive, I instead copied out a few of the more interesting leaflets, which I have typed up separately. ~~xxxx~~ Perhaps you might want to consider getting a photostat of ~~the~~ one of Marx's actual letters or ~~xxx~~ of one of these leaflets for use as an illustration in the new book. This costs \$3.00 per page.

I also got hold of Letters to Americans by Marx and Engels, put out by International. After comparing the texts there written to Sorge with the MEW, it appears that the overwhelming majority of those texts ~~do~~ appear in the International English translation. However, I am still going over all of that in more detail.

I have ~~xxxxxxx~~ enclosed a xerox copy of the table of contents of the 6 volumes of the MEW which deal with the period 1870-1883, so you can ~~x~~ see ~~xxxx~~ the whole of what they have ~~xxxx~~ there for yourself. I've put an ~~xxxxxxx~~ asterisk next to those of the ~~xxxxxxx~~ letters to Sorge which are already in the English ~~xxxx~~ language collection, and in a few places indicated where there were deletions. While many of the deletions appear to be on items like the ~~xxxx~~ health of Marx and his family, etc., there appears to have been some pruning also of Marx's remarks on some ~~xxxx~~ theoretical questions which they ~~xx~~ probably ~~xxx~~ thought were too academic. There is at most about 10 pages of material written to Sorge that is not ~~xxxx~~ already in English. ~~xxxx~~ And while many ~~x~~ critiques of Bakunin are left in the MEW MEW letters, ~~it~~ there is some material on different tendencies and critiques of them which is left out, but I cannot yet tell you what that is in detail. They seem also automatically to include anything on Russia, but not necessarily material on the European movement, at least in the English edition. (in case this has been muddled, let me make clear that the MEW does contain the full texts of the letters.)

I will keep working on this to see what exactly the Stalinists left out of their translation of the Marx-Sorge correspondence, but at this point it ~~xxxxxx~~ does not look like enough material to build an entire theoretical article around, and surely the Letters to Americans is no longer new to anyone, ~~xxxxxx~~ having been in print for many years.

When I spoke with Meintje I also discussed with her the idea of Teru and I going up there for a weekend sometime this fall. While I'm sure ~~xxxxxxx~~ Mike will have ~~xxxx~~ some things for me to do up there, let me know if there's anything I can do for you in libraries or archives in connection with the new book, which would of course take precedence.

As you can see from the above, my German is such that I do not feel very sure of what I am reading on theory, ~~xxxxxx~~ especially when it is Marx himself. But what better incentive to ~~xxxx~~ improve it ~~xxx~~ than ~~xxxxxx~~ to read Marx!

Best,

Kevin

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P.S. I could not find Rosa Luxemburg in Russian at the NYPL, but I'm sure Urseuba has written on what she did find on Marx in Polish & on Marx on Poland as well as some Polish books on R.L.

From the F.A. Sorge Papers at the New York Public Library:

(actual text in full
of report)

Resolutions of the political action of the International Workingmen's Association, adopted by the Congress held at Philadelphia, on the 11th, 12th, and 13th April, 1874

Considering: "That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the workingmen themselves."

The Congress of the North American Federation has resolved:

The North American Federation rejects all co-operation and connection with the political parties formed by the possessing classes, whether they call themselves Republicans or Democrats, or Independents, or Liberals, or Patrons of Industry, or Patrons of Husbandry (Grangers), or Reformers, or whatever name they may adopt. Consequently, no member of the Federation can belong any longer to such a party, and whosoever may accept a place or position of one of these parties, without being authorized by this Section and by the Federal Council, will be suspended during the time he keeps this place or position.

The political action of the Federation confines itself generally to the endeavor of obtaining legislative acts in the interest of the working class proper, and always in a manner to distinguish and separate the workingmen's party from all the political parties of the possessing classes.

As proper subjects of such legislative action may be considered: The normal working day, the responsibility of all employers in case of accidents, the securing of wages, the abolition of the working of children in manufactories, sanitary measures, the establishment of bureaus of statistics of labor, the abolition of all indirect taxes.

The Federation will not enter into a truly political campaign or election movement before being strong enough to exercise a perceptible influence, and then, in the first place, on the field of the municipality, town or city (commune), whence this political movement may be transferred to the larger communities (Counties, States, United States) according to circumstances, and always in conformity with the Congress Resolutions.

It is evident that during such a municipal or communal movement, demands of a purely local character may be put forth, but these demands must not be contrary in anything to the general demands, and they are to be approved by the Federal Council.

Considering: "That economical emancipation of the workingmen is the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinated as a means."

The Congress of the North American Federation reiterates its adhesion to an unqualified approval of the following resolutions of the Congress at the Hague:

"In its struggle against the collective power of the propertied classes,
"the working class cannot act as a class except by constituting itself
"into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to all old parties
"formed by the propertied classes. The constitution of the working
"class into a political party is indispensable in order to insure the
"triumph of the social revolution, and of its ultimate end, the
"abolition of classes."

"The combination of forces which the working class has already effected
"by its economical struggles ought at the same time to serve as a lever
"for its struggles against the political power of landlords and capitalists."
"The lords of land and the lords of capital will always use their political
"privileges for the defense and perpetuation of their economical
"monopolies, and for the enslavement of labor. The conquest of
"political power has therefore become the great duty of the working
"class."

and the Congress of Philadelphia adds here:

"(torn off poster)...the corruption of the present political parties!"

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Other excerpts from leaflets in the P.A.Sorge papers:

1. There's a Jan. 26, 1973 Open Letter from the General Council of the IWA to American workers. It is signed F.J. Bertrand, F..Bolte, C. Carl, S. Dereure, Fornaccieri, S. Kavanagh, C.F. Laurel, E. Leviele, F.A.Sorge, C. Speyer, E.P. St. Clair.

It gives some principles of the IWA, especially on the need for an international organization of labor, as the following from page 2:

"That there is an international understanding amongst the capitalists in exploitation and oppression of the working class and that for this reason the efforts of resistance made by the working people have mostly failed for want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labor in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of the different countries;...."

2. There's also a flier with no date but apparently 1870 on calling a meeting at Cooper Union where French and German workers are to speak out against war and especially Prussia. This was to have been held November 19, 1870. The flier reproduces some sentences from the manifesto of the IWA. Its first line in boldface is: "Workers of hand and brain unite."

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From F. A. Sorge Papers at New York Public Library:

M A S S M E E T I N G
of the
Working People of the 14th Ward, 1st District
Friday, Dec. 12, at 8 o'clock P.M.
AT THE
N.Y. Casino, 51-55 E. Houston St.

Fellow Workingmen. The Winter is only beginning, and from causes we could not avoid, nearly all employment has already been suspended. Cold and hunger are staring in our faces; and nobody can tell, how long the misery will last.

Nobody will attempt to help you, if you don't do something yourself. It is certainly now the time, that you meet to consider, how the dark prospects of the coming months are to be met.

Therefore do not fail to attend this massmeeting.

Come one, come all!

The greatest good for the greatest number,
Not of dollars, but of people!

A NUMBER OF WORKINGMEN

(This was issued in 1873, with a slightly different German text on the reverse side.)

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