

ERICH FROMM
GONZALEZ COSIO NO. 15
MEXICO 12, D. F.
TELEPHONE 23-04-19

6th June, 1959.

Miss Dunayevskaya,
Bookman Associates,
Twayne Publishers,
31 Union Square West,
New York 3, N.Y.

Dear Miss Dunayevskaya,

I plan to publish a selection of Marx' writings, especially on the topics of philosophy and historical materialism, with an introduction by myself. The Ungar publishing company is going to publish the book.

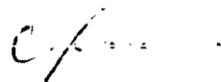
As one of the main pieces of this volume I want to include an English translation of Marx' "Philosophie und National-Oekonomie".

The reason for this letter is to ask you whether you might be willing to make this translation. Considering the importance of the piece, and the difficulty of finding a competent translator, I hardly need to stress how important your willingness to do it would be.

I would greatly appreciate if you would write me at your earliest convenience whether you would consider doing the translation, and in the affirmative case, about what time would be needed.

I want to take this occasion to tell you that I read your book on Marxism and Freedom some months ago, and consider it an exceedingly important and most needed contribution to the socialist literature.

Sincerely yours,



Erich Fromm

9976

(June 17, 1959

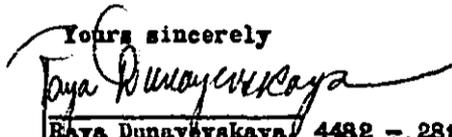
Dear Erich Fromm

Thank you for your letter of the 8th which Bookman's has just forwarded to me. I would be most happy to be associated with the translation of any of Marx's works, none of which (including CAPITAL) has had a seriously accurate rendering into English.

Unfortunately, I do not know enough German to be able to do so from the German. Only people as foolishly brave (or perhaps just foolish) as I translate Marx from the Russian. As I stated in the translator's note to the Appendices of my MARXISM AND FREEDOM, I believe that the knowledge of Marxian-Hegelian philosophy is greatly obstructed by available translations which are intended exclusively for philosophic circles. It is true the Russian language does not have as precise a philosophic idiom as the German. However, there is an overwhelming advantage to a language not rich in specialized expressions and compelled to operate through addition of prefixes and suffixes to its words of action and emotion. It is this: when the words of doing and feeling are made to say something philosophic, they say it so simply that the man on the street understands and the man in the ivory tower can no longer cover up his surface understanding of it by involved phraseology. Like a revolving light, the simplicity of expression illuminates thought both in its depth and breadth.

I'm sorry to burden you with my philosophy ^{the work of} ~~my~~ translation, but I could not see refusing a translation of Marx without a substantial why. To convince my German friends that I do not really know German seems to be the hardest thing in the world to do. To this day I do not believe that Herbert Marcuse believed it. No doubt he thought it would be adding insult to injury to have the American ignorance of languages grafted on the backward Russian suddenly in love with Hegel's Absolutes, so he kept a goodly distance away from the horrid truth that I am not German. Yet he was sufficiently free of the morcs of the academic world to be willing to associate his name with mine, despite our violent disagreements of interpretation of the modern era.

I am delighted to hear that you intend to publish Marx's writings on philosophy and historical materialism, which, in my view, is more accurately described as humanistic materialism. I hope you will not consider me presumptuous to ask to read your essay on it. Naturally I'm proud of the fact that I was the first to bring the Humanism of Marxism to the attention of the American public. Since the publication of my book the Communists have redoubled their attacks on Humanism because it is the form of the actual movement against their totalitarian rule in Russia itself and in the Soviet zone. This much I can do for your work -- keep you up to date on the latest in the Russian press on the philosophic writings of Marx.

Yours sincerely

Raya Dunayevskaya, 4482 - 28th Street,
Detroit 10, Mich.

P.S. Is your residence in Mexico a permanent one? That beautiful land holds some precious memories for me, although presently all it seems to do is to say "No" (very florid, very Latin "No's" that have a touch of "Yes" but not in matter of here and now, but only there and mañana) to bringing out a Spanish edition of MARXISM AND FREEDOM.

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Oct. 11, 1961

Dr. Erich Fromm
Gonzalez Cosio No.15
Mexico, D.F.

Dear Dr. Fromm:

In reading your "Marx's Concept of Man" I noted that you referred to the works of Herbert Marcuse as if there were no difference between the period when he wrote his wonderful "Reason and Revolution" and that in which he wrote his whitewash of Communist perversions in his "Marxist Marxism". I will not go into my views on the latter since I wrote about them extensively, and enclose herewith my review. The reason I mention it is that it illuminates the pitfalls awaiting one if the Humanism of Marxism is treated abstractly --and the dialectic of the present development is analyzed on a totally different basis.

If you'll permit me to say so, I would like to state that one aspect of this relates to your own work. Whereas in my MARXISM AND FREEDOM, in speaking of the three volumes of Capital (Chapters VII and VIII), I carry through the humanism of his early works (Chapter III) and finally, both in Chapter I and in the final chapter, show its urgency for our day in the concrete terms of Russia, on the one extreme, and independent Marxism, at the other end, you dealt with these magnificent essays in altogether too general terms. It appears to me that, for that reason the criticism of your work began to concentrate on the first published Marx's early essays. To me that matters very little. What matters is their present cogency and the need to discuss the Humanism of Marxism concretely. I do not mean to reduce philosophy to what Trotsky used to call "the small coin of concrete questions." I mean the discussion must be in terms of what Marx called the "abolition" of philosophy through its "realization", that is to say, by putting an end to the division between life and philosophy, work and life, and the different intellectual disciplines and work as the activity of man, the whole of man, the man with heart, brain and physical power, including the sensitivity and the genius of the arts. It is this which Marx literally pounds at in the essays both when he deals with the five senses and when he deals with the limits of psychology which excludes "industry", or the stark workshop where a worker wastes most of his life but also gains from it the spirit and cohesiveness of revolt.

The key turns out almost invariably to be the headlines of the day and since our state-capitalist age has the two nuclear giants fighting to the end, it compels those intellectuals who do not wish to base their theory on what the proletariat does, thinks, says, ^{to attack themselves} into one of the other pole. So Marcuse goes to Russia which he most certainly knows is not the Humanism of Marxism which he has proclaimed to be the true Marxism, and Daniel Bell goes to American capital, if even he must force "bourk and its discontents" into the head-shrinking agency called the plant psychoanalyst. I do hope you can exert your influence to begin these type of serious discussions into the open, and will invite me to participate in them. Let us not become part of the "bourgeois conspiracy of silence" against works like my MARXISM AND FREEDOM.

May I expect to hear from you? I have not heard from you ever since, in 1959, you first asked me to translate the Essays of ~~Marx~~

Yours sincerely,

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ERICH FROMM
GONZALEZ COSIO No. 15
MEXICO 12, D. F.
TELEPHONE 23-04-19

25th October, 1961

Miss Raya Dunayevskaya
4482 - 28th St.,
Detroit 10, Mich.

Dear Raya Dunayevskaya,

Thank you very much for your letter of October 11th, and for the enclosures.

As to your criticism of my essay that it is too abstract and does not discuss the humanism of Marxism concretely, I cannot offer any argument. All I can say is that this essay was meant as a first introduction into Marx's philosophical thought for American students, intellectuals, who know nothing about him, and that the essay was limited by this intention and also by the available space.

As to the substance of the points you make about the concrete nature of Marx's humanism, I naturally entirely agree with you. Also about what you write of the role of the ~~plant~~ psychoanalyst and Daniel Bell's position. As to Marcuse's work on Soviet Marxism, I do not have as much as you the impression that it was a whitewash of the Soviet system, since in many ways he expresses relevant criticism, but I shall have to go over it again having your comments in mind to test my impression. As to the reproach made in the review you sent me, and also in a book review in the New Leader that it was unfair of me to say that Bottomore's translation was the first English-language translation published in the United States, I want to say in the first place that I am glad you do not identify yourself with this reproach, and I want to explain something: the chapters of the philosophical manuscripts which you published are a little less than half of the ones which were published in Bottomore's translation, but I must admit that by the fact that they appear as an appendix, and that they are only 30 pages, I was not fully aware of the amount already published. I certainly had no intention of praising the new edition at the expense of what you had already done, but when I was writing I was thinking of a full translation, and for this reason I did not think of mentioning the translation of half the material which you published. I have just written the publisher to make a reference

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ERICH FROMM
GONZALEZ C6810 N^o. 15
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to your translation in a new printing he is going to begin. I certainly did not want to become part of the bourgeois conspiracy of silence against works like yours, Marxism and Freedom, which I liked very much.

I hope to hear from you, and am, with best regards

Sincerely yours,



Erich Fromm

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Dec. 8, 1961

9981

Dear Dr. Fromm:

Thank you for yours of Oct. 25th—I've just returned from a very exhaustive but exhilarating tour to find your letter waiting for me. It seems that the 50-megaton explosion has finally awakened even some of the bourgeoisie to recognize that, without Marxist-Humanism, the opposition to communism is rather empty. In any case I got invited even to the Iowa cornbelt—and the students burst into spontaneous applause when, in dealing with Khrushchev's actual explosions and Kennedy's threats to do same, I said, "If this isn't madness, it is only because madmen rule our world and they decree their irrational behavior as the rational and sane thing to do,"

Now then once again on those Early Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts, especially since I note that Harrington in NEW POLITICS compounds the mistakes (in part, again, I'm sorry to say, because he has deliberately and with malice aforethought in his case, decided not to mention my work). Of course, it is not a question of "first-ness", and I am confident you meant no effort to avoid my work as you mention it; I was compelled to be "first" to make that English translation (the 1st and more full one I made from those essays was a mimeographed version in 1947) because, for 15 long years, I tried in vain to get a publisher and couldn't, and only after that did I decide to include them as Appendix to my own book. When I first turned to them at the time I broke with Trotsky, I moved very cautiously since philosophy was not my field. I asked a friend then (1939) to intercede with Hook and see whether he wouldn't do it; his answer was: he was acquainted with those humanist essays and "there was nothing of value" in them for our era. But in 1961 I note that the New Leader announces he will have a special essay in the Christmas issue on them.

But why should Harrington speak of a "Russian delay"? There was no such delay for the good and sufficient reason that when they were 1st published in 1927 Ryazanov was at the head of the Marx-Engels Institute. It took a successful revolution plus money to pry them loose from the 2nd International. When they were published, the discussion on them was very short lived since it was the year of Stalin's victory over Trotsky. By the time they were published in German (1932) Hitler was on the way to power, and so once again those Essays remained "hidden"; the "delay" by the Russians to issue an English translation was due merely to the fact that all Europeans think the American movement to be rather "backward." In any case, the attack on them began before that publication in English, and when it began (in 1955) I wrote that it was not an academic debate; that it must mean that the East German Revolt had only been driven underground, and we better look at "the negation of the negation" to happen somewhere in East Europe as an actual revolution against Russia; in 1956 came the Hungarian Revolution.

What I am trying to say is that "first-ness" makes sense only when it is related to actual historic events. Right now I am more interested in a counterpart to MARXISM AND FREEDOM, this time tracing the dialectical relationships between ideologies, historical actualities and mass movement, not through Western civilization, but on the African scene. Did you see my first venture into that? Under separate cover I'm sending you my "Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions". I wondered whether you could help with that African trip I plan for spring at least in so far as accreditation is concerned with universities or publications.

Seasons's greetings! Yours,

*Not to mention that his attributing the "rediscovery" of Marx to the theologians in the post-war West European world only shows his own predilection, even as Tucker!