

Freedom in the individual and freedom in society, however, are not the same. The former is based upon unity, the latter upon diversity. The attempt to perform such a transition as Marx had designated by "revolutionizing practice" leads not only to destruction of any society but also to the dissolution of the individual.

Marx's final and most devastating contradiction lies in his attempt to establish a humanism incorporating the concept of class warfare. Thus on the one hand, if alienation is a psychological concept, then it should apply to the capitalist as well as to the proletarian; the very basis of humanism is universality. If alienation is universal, however, then there can be no class warfare, for all men have been reduced to the same state of life. On the other hand, if alienation is an economic concept, as in the alienation of the worker from his product, then class warfare follows as a logical development. However, in this case there is no universal humanism, for the capitalist is not alienated from the product of labor. Class warfare and a genuine humanism are mutually exclusive.

Our final point of criticism deals with the very foundation of Marxian humanism, the concept of labor. Marx distinguished man from the animals by "uncoerced" labor while disregarding the traditional basis for such a distinction, namely self-consciousness, or more precisely, rationality. Yet in the very notion of "uncoerced" labor lies the only real ground for a qualitative difference between men and animals: the *rational* use of labor. Consequently, even from an analysis of labor, rationality appears as the distinguishing characteristic of man.

Marx's concern with human alienation and its conquest by creative fulfillment through uncoerced work was a legitimate concern. Yet, I believe it is true that if Marx had analyzed the alienation of the individual *from society* rather than the self-alienation of the individual and the consequent self-alienation *of society*, he might have made a positive contribution to the future development of society. For, today it is Marx's "spectre" and not labor which has caused the self-alienation of world society into two opposite camps.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

FROMM, MARX AND THE CONCEPT OF ALIENATION

While the controversy around Marx's early manuscripts has been going on for fifteen years in intellectual circles of European capitalist countries as well as some socialist countries, Erich Fromm's sponsorship of a new (although less complete) English translation* has come as an invigorating novelty in this country. Whatever disagreement we have with his interpretation of Marx's work which occupies about half of the volume, we applaud his courageous presentation of Marxism.

It is an agreeable rarity to hear that Marx was "a man with an uncompromising sense of truth, penetrating to the very essence of reality, and never taken in by the deceptive surface; that he was of an unquestionable courage and integrity; of a deep concern for man and his future; unselfish and with little vanity or lust for power; always alive, always stimulating, and bringing to life whatever he touched. He represented the Western tradition in its best features: its faith in reason and in the progress of man" (p. 83). The impact of this book is to awaken or reawaken a realization of Marx's tremendous genius and show us a record of this extraordinary young man, equipped with the most advanced intellectual positions arrived at by Western thought, struggling to work through in his own mind a solution for the problems that beset mankind.

Yet in his endeavor to present a more palatable and less controversial Marx to new audiences, Fromm omits what was central to Marx, namely class struggle. Fromm attributes Marx's "unpopularity" to the fact that Marxism has been identified with "Russian Communists," the Soviet Union and Stalinist malpractices. To his credit he also hints that animosity to the Soviet Union is partly irrational, due to the fact that "a system which has no private property is considered inhuman and threatening" (p. 7). But one can hardly ignore the historical fact that

* *Marx's Concept of Man* by Erich Fromm, with a translation from Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* by T. B. Bottomore. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1961. \$4.75. Pp. 260.



Marx was anathema to existing governments from his earliest utterances. The reason for the ignorance, distortion and unpopularity of Marx's ideas finds its main explanation in a circumstance lightly brushed over by Fromm, namely that Marx advocated proletarian revolution. It is Marx's preoccupation with the practical requirements and agencies of revolutionary change which gained him the hostility of the ruling classes and it is this Marx who is missing from Fromm's thoughtful and loving portrait. And this is the consistent distortion which runs through all the different sections in which Fromm proceeds to dispose of some of the most common misunderstandings and falsifications.

One of the main things Fromm attempts is to clarify Marx's concept of social development. He undertakes the perennial task of demonstrating that materialism in the social sciences does not refer to supposed motivations of individuals for gain, nor disregard of high ideals nor denial of the power of ideas. He also refutes the charge once again that Marxism is an advocate of force and violence as a mode of life. He shows Marx's concept of society as an objective, cohesive material process with its own laws of development in which the future productive forces and relations have to mature within the framework of the old and that the role of force cannot be anything more than "midwife" to historical change.

But Fromm's tendentiousness leads him to minimize Marx's emphasis on revolutionary class struggle which was beginning to appear even in these early manuscripts, though not so clearly as it was later. Fromm says: "When a mode of productive or social organization hampers rather than furthers the given productive forces, a society, if it is not to collapse, will choose such forms of production as suit the new set of productive forces and develop them" (p. 19). This is most certainly an over-orderly transcription of Marx's conception which appears in a quotation a page earlier: "At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production. . . . Then begins an epoch of social revolution" (p. 17).

We see the same tendency in Fromm's emphasis upon Marx's concept of "alienation." He demonstrates from the early manuscripts and from Marx's later writings that the idea of an impairment in the human potentialities of an individual was never lost and that Marx had an inspiring vision of the possibilities of individual development under the proper social conditions. A careful reader will certainly find in Marx's notes a constant struggle to understand and express the connection between spiritual alienation and the material processes of actual life. Marx

keeps struggling to understand and express how existing production relationships give rise to the paradox that what should be a gratifying and liberating human activity turns against the producer himself, robs him of his freedom, his development as a person and distorts his whole experience and conception of his actual relations to the world and other people. He is particularly concerned with the effects upon members of the working class whose work results in their being deprived of their most elementary biological necessities.

While it is certainly true that there is a consistency between the young Marx and the mature one in a concern for the spiritual crippling of humanity and a vision of a "truly human" society in which all individuals will more nearly realize their potentials, there is also an essential difference. In these notes Marx still regarded private property as the result of alienated labor rather than the reverse. Within four years the concept of alienation was displaced and what became central in the mature Marx was the exploitation of the working class, the concept of surplus value and the necessity of a social revolution led by the working class. Marx's central criticism of capitalism was not that it destroys individual personality but that it is incapable of solving the problems presented by the tremendous growth of the socialized productive forces. Even in these early notes he was deeply moved by the condition of the working class and looked to it as the agency for bringing about the necessary changes. "From the relations of alienated labor to private property it also follows that the emancipation of society from private property, from servitude, takes the political form of the emancipation of the workers" (p. 107).

Fromm explains Marx's preoccupation with the working class as due to Marx's false belief that the working class was the most alienated of all classes and therefore had the most to gain from socialism. But as he points out, the white-collar classes, the petty-bourgeoisie is even more alienated than the working class. His conclusion therefore tends to be that socialism is not a matter of class struggle but a matter in which all-worker and capitalist alike—are or should be equally concerned. Hence also his tendency to take the emphasis away from practical struggles to solve the problems of production and to place it on ethical and spiritual changes. One can appreciate Fromm's reminder that Marx's concept of socialism was not merely that of a surfeit of commodities for all. But Fromm's disparagement of the possession of things is not only part of his castigation of the Soviet Union for its emphasis on increasing production; it is directly connected with his identification of Marxism with various religious philosophies which are equally concerned

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with "the salvation of the individual." Thus he says: "Socialism for Marx was, as Paul Tillich put it, 'a resistance movement against the destruction of love in social reality'" (p. 59). Or again, "Marx's concept of socialism is a protest, as is all existentialist philosophy, against the alienation of man" (p. 63).

This ascetic leaning leads Fromm to some almost unbelievable distortions of Marx's statements. For example, Marx, after a blistering and sarcastic attack on economists who glorify the poverty of the working class, concludes: "This science of a marvellous industry is at the same time the science of asceticism. Its true ideal is the ascetic but usurious miser and the ascetic but productive slave. Its moral ideal is the worker who takes part of his wages to the savings bank. It has even found a servile art to embody this favorite idea which has been produced in a sentimental manner on the stage. Thus, despite its worldly pleasure-seeking appearance, it is a truly moral science, the most moral of all sciences" (p. 144).

It is hard to believe but nonetheless true that, quoting the remainder of this passage, Fromm quite seriously prefaces it with the remark: "Marx recognized that the science of capitalist economy is a truly moral science . . ." (p. 36).

The same tendentiousness is noticeable in Fromm's treatment of Marx's concept of "man." While Marx was very clear even in this early period that people are different in different societies, that "human nature" changes with historical transformations, he did not, as Fromm stresses, fall into a kind of cultural relativism which makes it impossible to evaluate any particular epoch or to find a desirable direction for the future. He had a concept of human nature in general. But it seems to us that Marx made it very plain that this human nature in general was not given in the biological raw material but rather had been brought into existence by associated mankind itself. Marx wrote: "Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin [to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin] to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization" (p. 15).

It is undoubtedly a mistake of the printer that the words we have indicated by brackets are dropped from the above passage which makes it unintelligible. But the printer cannot be blamed for every instance of this. Fromm turns the fact that Marx did believe in human nature in general into the mystical conception that this implies an inherent "essence" which unfolds and is "realized" in the course of history. He

manages this partly by the simple expedient of omitting certain phrases. When he first quotes the aphorism from the "Theses on Feuerbach" which crystallizes Marx's position: "The essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each separate individual. In its reality it is the ensemble (aggregate) of the social relations," he takes the liberty of omitting the second sentence (p. 25). He does this to support his thesis that while the essence of man is no abstraction, it is inherent in each separate individual.

Fromm states that for Marx certain constant or fixed drives, hunger and sex, "are an integral part of human nature," while other types of drives are derived from life in society. But Marx's concept of the relation between the biological and the human was much more complex than this. It is indeed extremely interesting to see how, in these early manuscripts, Marx was struggling to grasp the process by which the biological in a social context becomes the human and how the human values and other forms of consciousness and the social practices of different periods of history enter into the very organic functioning of the human being so that he becomes different even on the level of sensory perception. Just to mention briefly the example in which Marx discusses sexual relations: "The relation of man to woman is the *most natural* relation of human being to human being. It indicates therefore how far man's *natural* behavior has become human, and how far his human essence has become a natural essence for him, how far his human nature has become *nature* for him" (p. 126).

Fromm frequently acknowledges that mankind has created its own human potentials; yet he simultaneously seeks to retain the idea that this "human essence" is inherent. In this way also, he tends to tip the balance away from social struggles, from having to come to grips with the practical necessities involved in transforming capitalism into socialism. It is one thing to remind us that this struggle must never be separated from the ethical struggle to create better human relations, but it is quite another to identify Marx's thought in this respect with various mystical and religious figures of the past from Buddha to Kierkegaard.

In our present period the early notes of Karl Marx are receiving greater attention than his mature definitive studies. The notes of the young man are written in the often obscure Hegelian "prescientific" terminology. This lends them to interpretations of such great disparity that one might even, as Hodges does in a recent issue of *Science & Society*, question them as a "muchly overestimated work."

Fromm's comparison of this work with Zen Buddhism grows less

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FROMM ONLINE

startling when we find Prof. Feuer's comparison with Freud and Prof. Saville's with Rousseau. Helmut Fleisher finds in the young Marx an excellent defense of the Western position in the cold war. Similarly, Wolfgang Leonard of *Die Zeit* in Hamburg composes an imaginary conversation between Marx and Ulbricht quoting copiously from the young Marx to refute and embarrass Ulbricht. (Incidentally, this was translated and published in the *National Observer*, a publication owned by the *Wall Street Journal*, as well as in the social-democratic *New Politics*.) Prof. Bell finds in the early Marx early confirmation of Marx's bankruptcy. In the Socialist world, Prof. Schaff explains how the Polish youth are fascinated with existentialism as a result of the gap left by Marx after his early manuscripts.

This diversity of opinion is all the more compelling reason for serious Marxist students to avail themselves of the manuscripts for more intensive study.

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COMMUNICATIONS

THE EVIDENTIAL AND CORRESPONDENCE THEORIES OF TRUTH: A CONTROVERSY

I

If "Truth in Science and Labor," by Edward R. J. Primbs (*Science & Society*, Summer, 1962), is intended to present "evidence" to support the author's "evidential theory" of truth, I believe that in Primbs' own terms his theory is not "true." However, as a stubborn believer in the correspondence theory, and as, therefore, one who admits that a statement can be meaningful or even true even if the evidence is insufficient, I shall not call Primbs' theory false, but simply unproven.

I should like to comment on a few passages in the article and then to make some general observations.

On page 281, Primbs writes that all the objections to the correspondence theory "are given good ground by just inquiring into what is being asserted: in what possible sense could it be said that a true proposition, an expression of thought, corresponds, mirrors, agrees, or conforms to a fact? And if truth does consist in correspondence, how is this to be determined? Are all the properties of the fact also properties of the proposition?" These are not objections to the correspondence theory; they are questions it must answer. Asking the questions is not the same as showing that they cannot be answered satisfactorily.

On page 282, Primbs writes that if a proposition "is an expression of a material process, it will be distinguished from the material process by a qualitative break, and hence to speak of this expression when true as being in correspondence, conformity, or in a mirroring relation with the material process is absurd." On the contrary, it merely asks for a definition of "correspondence." If Primbs chooses to *define* "correspondence" as self-contradictory, he has demolished a straw man of his own design, not the correspondence theory.

On page 283, Primbs triumphantly concludes that "the question to be resolved [is] not whether our concepts correspond, whatever that means and however that is proved, but whether there is evidence for the