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example, the mass of documents relating to the sections in Lyons, published in 1961 by Jacques Rougerie. It is, furthermore, surprising to see cited in the bibliography the French translation of the incomplete Bernstein-Bebel edition of the Marx-Engels correspondence instead of the whole text of the *Gesamtausgabe*. But nothing is to be gained by dwelling longer on this poor sort of history.

Actually, the number of poor works on the International, which have come to our attention within recent years, is small. The mass, be they articles or volumes, has been of such high order that, in our opinion, they have set a landmark in the historiography of the one-time stigmatized organization. Certainly its future historians will have to consult the bibliographies mentioned in this survey, the articles we have singled out and the books we have assessed. No one with an eye to basic sources will pass by either *Der Vorbote*, or the assembled documents relating to Germany, or the original pieces in the volume on Switzerland. Yet, the publications here considered should be looked upon as reminders of the research that still needs doing, for they have plowed only a part of the field. Papers read at recent commemorative colloquia have evidenced an abiding interest in the many facets of the widespread Association. We may conclude from the number and representative character of the communications that it has for some time been the subject of concentrated effort on an international scale. Only when the investigations have been completed in the different countries where the ubiquitous organization penetrated will it be possible to write its full history.

SAMUEL BERNSTEIN

*New York City*

### ERICH FROMM IN THE CHAINS OF ILLUSION\*

*Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud* is the title of a new book by the well-known American Neo-Freudian Erich Fromm,† which is a kind of philosophical credo of the author. The work is of interest in that, in the first place, it attests the deepening crisis of Neo-Freudianism and secondly, it shows the growing interest in Marxism on the part of many contemporary bourgeois humanists who

† New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962. \$3.95. Pp. 182.

\* Translated from *Voprosy Filosofii*, No. 10 (1964).

are seeking a way out of the profound contradictions of capitalist actuality. As in his previous work, *Marx's Concept of Man* (New York, 1961), Fromm lays particular stress on the philosophical ideas of Marx, which he feels have been decisive for his *Weltanschauung*. "A renaissance of Western humanism will restore to Marx his outstanding place in the history of human thought" (p. 12). Fromm repeats several times that Marx was, as a thinker, "of much greater depth and scope than Freud" (p. 12). At the same time, in evaluating the philosophical heritage of Marx and Freud, he sees his task as theoretical—"to arrive at a synthesis which followed from the understanding and the criticism of both times" (p. 9). In his judgment, Freud dealt with the individual and Marx with the general, social pathology of man (cf., pp. 59, 61). Marx gives an historical explanation of the forces determining man's behavior, Freud a psychological or biological one (pp. 112-13). The conclusion drawn is that in various aspects of their doctrines Marx and Freud are not "mutually exclusive."

Fromm holds that although Freud discovered the "dynamic concept of character" (p. 71), his "conception of human nature" was extremely narrow, in that he regarded all of man's needs as the result of sexual desires. Fromm puts a much higher value on the idea of the "human essence" contained in Marx's early works. As has been pointed out, the American psychoanalyst sees the basic merit of Marx in the historical, social interpretation of the essence of man. It is just at this point that the first contradiction in Fromm's position emerges. On the one hand, he says that Marx did not accept any abstract, unhistorical human nature, dealing with the essence of man in each epoch in a concretely historical manner, as the "totality of all social relationships." On the other hand, he interprets a number of fundamental Marxist theses in such a way that as a result Marx appears not only to have accepted abstract human nature in general, but to have given it decisive importance. According to Fromm, Marx held that although man changes in the course of history, in the process he only manifests the invariable essence contained "potentially" in him (p. 30). The social-economic structure of society (and Fromm recognizes that the discovery of its influence on social psychology is entirely due to Marx) is only "one pole" in the process of the formation of the personality. The other pole is "human nature" itself. Man, says Fromm, "is not a blank sheet of paper on which the culture writes its text. Needs like the striving for happiness, belonging, love and freedom are inherent in his nature. They are also dynamic factors in the historical process" (p. 81).

Thus, Fromm tries to make an eclectic fusion of Marxism with an

abstract psychologism of Neo-Freudian hue. Not only that, but in his historical instances he frequently presents, as Marxism, typically Neo-Freudian notions. In one place he says: "The ideal of freedom . . . is deeply rooted in the nature of man, and it is precisely for this reason that it was an ideal for the Hebrews in Egypt, the slaves in Rome, the German peasants in the sixteenth century, the German workers . . ." (p. 86). Fromm attempts to support this idea by referring to the method of Marx. It is true, of course, that the idea of the love of freedom found its most solid theoretical basis in Marxism. But the reason for that is precisely that here the idea was presented historically. It was none other than Marx who showed that there are no abstract ideals eternally inherent in man. People's ideas of love, their ideals of happiness and freedom, shift from century to century, from generation to generation. These ideals have not existed eternally; in each case they have arisen out of definite concretely historical interests and have had a particular significance. The freedom that Roman slaves strove for was not the same ideal that was aimed at by the German peasants of the sixteenth century, which in turn differed essentially from the ideal of freedom represented by the workers of the nineteenth century, and so forth.

The historical continuity that in one degree or the other existed among these ideals has its basis in the continuity of social-economic development; it does not by any means attest the existence of eternal, independent and absolute needs of "man in general," such as "happiness," "ownership," "freedom," "love," etc. Moreover, over and above the various ideals of freedom, love and happiness, ideals of opposite trends have existed in history. In such cases, how are we to determine which ideals actually are primordially "inherent in man's nature" and which are not? At one time was not a portion of the peasantry marked by an idealization of feudal dependence, with the dream of the "good master"? Were not the petty burghers of Germany characterized by the ideals of the loyal subject, obsequiousness and unthinking respect for "order" and suppression of individuality? If we follow out the logical implications of Fromm's position, why should these ideals and tendencies not find a place in the "true nature" of man in general, and thereby be justified and preserved? The Neo-Freudian idea of the abstract psychological nature of the individual as a separate factor in the social evolution of man is only an historical illusion. It finds its explanation in the fact that the habits, customs, moral standards, psychology and ideals that the broad masses of people have inherited from the past have a relative independence, and slow down or accelerate change in the social-economic basis of society.

The founders of Marxism showed that the ideas and ideals that have today taken on the appearance of abstract needs of human nature are the products of a long social development. They kept pointing out that even such eternal and simple needs of man as, for example, the need for food, clothing and shelter, are determined in form and content by the concrete historical relationships, and above all by the conditions of production. "Hunger is hunger," Marx said, "but the hunger that is satisfied with cooked meat, eaten with fork and knife, is a different kind of hunger from the one that devours raw meat with the aid of hands, nails and teeth" (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, [Chicago, 1904], p. 279).

When Fromm wants to support the conception of "the nature of man" by references to Marx, he refers to the unfinished work, *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. In these manuscripts Marx did, in fact, lay much stress on the question of the "essence of man," the "species," the "alienation of the species," and so forth. Does this mean that he in fact based his explanation of history on a conception of the "nature" or "essence" of man in general independent of history, that he interpreted that essence in the Freudian manner, as the abstract-psychological complex of any individual?

A concrete historical analysis of the categories that Marx employed in his early works shows that in their form they were the still imperfect terminology inherited from Feuerbach, but that in content they were in contradiction not only to Feuerbach's, but to any other abstract-psychological conception of the "nature" of man in general.

As the history of all the sciences shows, knowledge that is in its initial stages is often still expressed in old terms that are inadequate to its new content. In the history of the formation of Marxism this is visible in the use of such categories as "species," "essence of the species," etc. In his *Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx inserted an entirely new meaning into the Feuerbachian conceptions of "species," "essence of the species." For him the "species" was not an abstract "community" of all people, realized only in history. In the *German Ideology* he criticizes Feuerbach sharply for his ideal "levelling out in the species," which leads inevitably to idealism and speculation. The real basis of the absolute "essence of man," of which German philosophers talked at such length, was, Marx said, the sum of forces of production and "social forms of intercourse," which every generation inherits as something given. In his later works, he showed that the ideal of the full-blooded, spiritually rich personality, well-developed in every direction, is not a dream or an abstraction but a real requirement of history and expression of the tendencies and possibilities within

the social character of production. What capitalism crushes is not various characteristics alleged to be eternally inherent in man, but those possibilities that man himself constantly formulates as demands and inquiries. In Marx the "essence of man" is not the "species" nor an independent eternal psychological factor of ancient and modern history (as Erich Fromm thinks) but a concrete historical result, differing from the limited products of past social-economic formations, and differing in that it bears unlimited possibilities within itself for the humanistic development of the personality. Only communist society gives the breadth of space needed for that process. In other words, both the early and the late works of Marx develop a conception of the "essence of man" that has nothing in common with the Neo-Freudian interpretation of this category.

Let us now examine how Erich Fromm evaluates the historical contribution of Sigmund Freud. Freud's thinking, Fromm says at one point, opened "a new era . . . in the natural sciences and art" (p. 136). It was critical in its basic direction. Attacking the "Victorian values," Freud made the forbidden fruit of sexuality the object of his analysis. In the last half-century psychoanalysis has gained enormous popularity in the Anglo-Saxon countries. But the growth of its reputation, Fromm admits ruefully, coincided with the process of its scientific deformation and disintegration. Psychoanalysis has lost the critical character that once characterized it as a doctrine attacking the hypostasis of hypocritical morality, and has become a frankly conservative theory. Psychoanalytical practitioners have turned away from social-political problems.

As we know, contemporary Neo-Freudians have "reformed" the conceptual heritage of Freud. They have freed it from the absurd exaggeration of the role of sexual motivation (the role of the "libido" and the "Oedipus" complex) but they failed to explain the causes of this exaggeration. They have abandoned a number of bits of obvious nonsense, such as the myth of the "racial unconscious," the "innate inferiority of women," etc., but they have not broken away from the surrogates for these categories. Moreover, in their corrections to Freud they have gone even further in the direction of emphasizing the primacy of the unconscious with respect to consciousness and the material relations that determine its structure. Such a "reform" clearly does not satisfy Erich Fromm. It displeases him that the practice of psychoanalysis is getting further and further away from the study of the social causes of neuroses, from explaining the complicated dynamics of psychic processes. Erich Fromm holds that it is not enough merely to reject the mistakes and exaggerations of traditional Freudianism. The problem has to be solved more

radically. In his words, the problem is to see the social content of the forces that act unconsciously in the individual psyche (cf., pp. 99–101). On this question the author comes back to Marxism once more, but it is just here that he again falls into confusion and distorts the Marxist point of view.

According to Fromm, Marx and Engels did not discover the mechanism by which the economic basis determines the ideological superstructure. "I believe," Fromm says, "that by using the tools of psychoanalysis, this gap in Marxian theory can be filled, and that it is possible to show the mechanisms through which the economic basic structure and the superstructure are connected. One of these connections lies in what I have called the *social character*, the other in the nature of the *social unconscious*" (p. 71). He puts forward the following formula: The economic basis determines the social character, the social character determines ideas and ideals (p. 87). The social character, according to Fromm, is an intermediate region between the basis and the superstructure. The types of social character in every given culture can not be brought out statistically; they must be sought by means of functional analysis. "The structure of society and the function of the individual in the social structure may be considered to determine the content of the social character" (pp. 82–83). "'Social character' is . . . the transmission belt between the economic structure of society and the prevailing ideas" (p. 78).

The introduction of the "social character" as an independent link between the basis and the superstructure is the key to the Neo-Freudian interpretation of Marxism. With the help of this category, Fromm tries to conserve, in social and historical investigations, the traditional Freudian thesis that the unconscious in the human psyche determines the entire system of consciously, rationally set purposes. In "Marxism," thus interpreted, the center of attention is occupied by the problem of bringing out and describing the various social characters pertaining to each specific culture. Fromm unquestionably psychologizes Marxist doctrine. This is particularly obvious in his conception of the "social unconscious." The enormous merit of Marx's theory, in Fromm's opinion is that it makes it possible to bring out "the passions and interests which direct us behind our backs" (p. 109). In saying this, the American psychoanalyst wipes out every boundary between objective social regularities and the system of motives they give rise to and that unconsciously govern individuals. The blind forces of imperialist economics are placed on the same level as the illusions and fictions, habits and customs that it gives rise to. What is not realized and what is independent of consciousness are lumped together as the "unconscious." Thereby, the differences

between subjective and objective social processes are wiped out. The conclusion of all of this is the statement that the "objective logic of the historical process" discovered by Marxism is nothing other than the "unconscious" (cf. p. 105).

The contradictory nature of the theoretical positions from which Fromm starts in his effort to combine historical materialism and the "methods of psychoanalysis" is further shown in the nature of the criticism of the present-day American scene that is undoubtedly one of the major merits of the book under review.

Fromm tries to apply a number of the principles formulated by Marx in the course of his analysis of alienation to an analysis of social psychology in the developed capitalist countries. Modern man "is neurotic because he is alienated," Fromm says (p. 52). The author sometimes gives deep psychological descriptions of the "dehumanization," the spiritual devastation, servility and standardization of the personality under capitalism. In America today, Fromm says, man has become completely "the object of blind economic forces which rule his life" (p. 59). The sharp contraction of the sphere of free competition, the unprecedented concentration of capital destroy the significance of individual initiative, boldness and intelligence. Man seeks ways of illusory compensation for these qualities; feelings of helplessness and hopelessness grow within him. The worker feels himself a little wheel in a large enterprise. He does not know who is exploiting him; he does not see those who determine the fate and character of his work. This feeling of covert violence follows man everywhere. When the drama of political conflict is played before him and he is called on for an "independent decision," he secretly feels that his decision can not change anything in the course of events, which are beyond his control. In addition the threats of war and unemployment are with him, like a nightmare. In Fromm's opinion, the process of "alienation" embraces all the classes in modern capitalist countries. It is a consequence of the fact that "Western society" has lost the genuinely human stimuli of social development, "has lost hope and belief" (p. 180). If the capitalist world does not stop and eliminate these processes, it must go down in the same way as many civilizations have gone under in the past.

The feelings of hopelessness, emptiness, fear and helplessness become intolerable. But instead of doing away with the causes of these attitudes, bourgeois society seeks artificial means of suppressing them. This takes place not so much on the level of rational thought and consciousness as on the level of the "social unconscious." The "social unconscious" is, as it were, an invisible censor in social psychology, carrying out a selec-

tion of "permitted" desires and enforcing "tabus" on all "dysfunctional impulses." Modern capitalist society does not allow the mass of its members to understand the contradictions that characterize it. If that should occur, the "normal functioning" of the society in question would itself be menaced (cf. pp. 88 f.).

In Fromm's words, modern man gets information as to the social milieu from a peculiar "socially conditioned filter" (p. 115). Certain ideas and facts not only pass through this "filter" but are imposed on the individual; others are held back by the filter and remain outside the purview of the mass of people, and if they do come through, they do so only after they are labeled as "shameful." The modern "standardized" man may, of course, begin to realize that his life is all but meaningless, that he has only the illusion of happiness, that he is unfree, etc. But if society is not always able to suppress such feelings, it is usually able to suppress awareness of them. A direct method of this suppression is the "brainwashing" that is conducted by means of the radio, films, television and other "mass communication media." Under this consciously or unconsciously conducted "filtration" people become, as it were, blind or squinting; they perceive certain facts and unconsciously ignore others. They do not ask questions that should naturally arise. Is it not idiotic to spend more than half of the budget on atomic weapons that, if they were used, would inevitably entail the annihilation of American civilization? Is it not hypocrisy to raise children in the Christian spirit of humility and altruism when it is known in advance that they are going to be faced by a harsh struggle for success? Nevertheless, the true significance of these simple, in part very obvious, facts is not yet realized by the majority of Americans. The "socially conditioned filter" is at work (cf. pp. 123 f.).

As an instance of the "paradoxes" of the unconscious suppression and concealment of the actual motives of human behavior, Fromm takes the relationship of American politicians to the socialist countries. American ideology labels the social structure of these governments as "anti-human," "totalitarian," "despotic," and so forth. They are spoken of and written about with open hatred. But why is it that this hatred vanishes when the inhuman dictatorial regimes of Latin America, Spain and Portugal are involved? All there is to it, says Fromm, is that the bitter hatred of communism is brought about by a deep unconscious fear of the possible elimination of private ownership. The theses of "antihumanism," "violence," etc., are set in motion in order to create hatred of communism even among those strata of the population who

are not in any way menaced by the elimination of private ownership, since they do not own anything.

Fromm accuses the capitalist system of inevitably giving rise to irrationalism. "The irrationalities of any given society result in the necessity to suppress the awareness of many of their own feelings and observations" (p. 123).

The illusions that are inculcated in the consciousness and behavior of the "standardized individuals" may be highly diverse, the author notes. They may be fictions that are proposed to Americans as slogans: "We are Christians," "Our leaders are wise," "The American way of life is the best," "Our system of marriage is a good one," and so forth (pp. 123 f.). In addition, there is a whole set of means for replacing the feelings of loneliness, fear and emptiness by fetishes, "compulsive structures." These are defensive psychological mechanisms of the modern "standardized man." In order to relieve the intolerable feeling of loneliness, the individual may turn to submission, to subjection to something outside himself—another man, social organization, God. But the most widespread form of escape from the unendurable reality that condemns man to fear and loneliness is, according to Fromm, "automatic conformity." What this consists in is that man abjures his individuality and even regards that abjuration as his highest vocation and satisfaction. The individual completely makes his own the form of action that society lays down for him, even though in and of itself that society is disagreeable to him. In the end, the new "ego," the "ego" of the automatic conformist, replaces the real nature of man, is taken by the individual as being his own essence.

Why do people stifle their own feelings and share illusions of this sort, Fromm asks? Because they are driven by "the fear of isolation and ostracism" (p. 126). Knowledge that could make a man a pariah in society is suppressed. Individuals force themselves to become blind.

How can the "fear of ostracism" be eliminated? Fromm feels that this can only be done in the event that the individual seeks solidarity with all humanity, and not with the specific culture of the given society (cf. p. 127). Fromm's book does not give a concrete elucidation of this vague formulation. The author does not see the possibility of overcoming "alienation" by means of class struggle, and inclines towards an abstract general "humanism."

Fromm's abstract humanism prevents him from giving a correct answer to the question: In whose interest are irrationalism and illusions implanted in modern capitalist society? Who profits by them? In his new book, as in his previous works, he does not get outside the frame



of analysis of the mechanisms of formation of a distorted social psychology; he can not uncover the objective basis of the feelings of brotherhood and solidarity, confidence and optimism, present in workers. Welcoming these attitudes, Fromm does not place any significant hope in them. Since he does not find any active social-political forces in the modern world that are capable of leading to the elimination of alienation and fetishism, he lapses into pessimism and despair whenever he is faced with the question of the future of humanity.

And yet, it must be said that the accusatory force of Fromm's new book is very great. The Marxian analysis of alienation, even in the abstract form it is given in Fromm, is a keen weapon of criticism of many of the social processes of modern imperialism.

It is highly indicative, though, that Fromm (perhaps unconsciously) distorts the really revolutionary-critical significance of Marx's conception of alienation. He does not deal with the problem of "communist action," communist revolution, that had one of the foremost places in the 1844 manuscripts. Marx regarded the alienation of labor as the material, social basis of all other forms of alienation, including religious, moral, legal, etc. As for Erich Fromm, he constantly confuses these forms. As a result, "psychological alienation" becomes for him the axis and content of all alienation.

His theoretical position is profoundly contradictory. His interest in Marxism is no accident, no passing fancy, but arises out of the internal requirements of the development of psychology as a science and is conditioned by the author's clear realization of the crisis of psychoanalysis. Fromm's awareness of this crisis was to a great extent furthered by his immediate participation in the fight for peace and his inevitable clashes with the anticommunism of the "wild men." And that is understandable: the experience of political struggle has always been the most active unmasker of social lies, and has suggested to thinkers the most adequate ways and means of analyzing society.

The social character of psychological motivation (including the domain of the unconscious), the causes and mechanisms of the formation of various psychological structures of the adaptation of the personality to the surrounding social environment, the differences of these structures in members of different classes and social groups, their general and particular characteristics: all these problems of modern psychology can not be solved without recourse to the Marxist methodology. But "having recourse" to Marxism does not by any means signify the same thing as understanding it. We have already seen the serious distortions of Marxist doctrine in Fromm's book. His works often contain

conclusions and interpretations that have much in common with the fabrications of modern anticommunism.

The development of Erich Fromm's ideas and theories can not be called a forward movement; it would rather be comparable to a curve whose complicated and unexpected turns are hard to predict.

"Freedom and independence can be achieved only when the chains of illusion are broken," Fromm says (p. 181). One would like to hope that in the future he will be able to cast off the invisible chains that bind his thinking. Neither the abstract "humanistic reason," to which he constantly appeals, nor the "penetration" of psychoanalysis will in and of themselves save him from going astray. The way to eliminate illusion is active participation in the fight for actual social and political liberation of the working people.

A. I. TITARENKO

*Moscow, U.S.S.R.*

