

February 20, 1981

Dear Friends:

Here, enclosed, are the xeroxed pages of Appendix I of the Dona Torr edition of Capital -- the changes Marx introduced into the French edition of his work, as that Dona Torr edition singled them out. Don't be confused by the statement that these are the "Changes and Additions made by Engels in the 4th German edition"; in the main, he followed Marx's French edition.

These changes are crucial, when singled out, to distinguish the 1872-75 edition from the 1867 edition -- not only in themselves, but because they made it possible to work out the new age of state-capitalism. That is to say, the two major changes -- the one in "Fetishism of Commodities" on form; and the other in "Accumulation of Capital" where Marx writes (p. 822 in Dona Torr): "In a given society the limit would not be reached until the moment when the entire social capital was united in the hands either of a single capitalist or of a single capitalist company" -- are the very ones that:

(1) allowed me to teach Capital as Marx wrote it (for which the Trotskyists began slandering me that I was not teaching Capital but the theory of state-capitalism);

(2) were the basis for Chapter 7 on "The Humanism and Dialectic of Vol. I of Capital" in Marxism and Freedom;

(3) will allow you -- if you compare this Chapter 7 with Part V of M&F -- to work out the dialectic methodology of relating what is "abstract" as you deal with a Marxian category and what is concrete as you begin to recreate it for its significance to your age.

Because I was so pleased that the new Pelican translation of Capital had restored Marx's philosophic language, I had limited my criticism of that edition to the absolutely terrible Preface by Ernest Mandel -- that is, to the total perversion of Marx that Mandel presented there.

I must now include almost as sharp a critique of the translator, Ben Fowkes, whose empiricism is so great that it almost amounts to a perversion. If you will read his translator's preface (pp. 87-88), you will find that he defends Engels for leaving out Marx's philosophic language, including even the omission of whole sentences on the supposed ground that Engels, "was following his friend's example" in making the ideas "more accessible to the reader" by using simpler language. This is utterly fantastic. When Marx was led to simplify some of his passages -- referring to the impatience of the French with theoretical discussions -- it was hardly a "popularization." And anyone who has in the least studied the French edition (and the translator must have, in order to be able to translate it) and places Engels' revisions on the level of Marx's changes in the French edition, should have his head examined. That examination of an empiricist's head would lead to the discovery of what is a great deal more serious than Fowkes' attempt to justify Engels' "omissions." For it turns out (p. 110, starred ftn.) that where Fowkes explains why he had not followed Marx, not only on the chapter numbers (see Dona Torr's explanation of the changes in the enumeration on the first page of the attached xeroxed Appendix I) but, worst of all, on the question of separate parts, here is what Fowkes writes:

"For reasons of convenience to English readers, we have held to Engels' arrangement. We have also followed Engels in presenting the chapters on 'So-called Primitive Accumulation' as a separate Part VIII, which is certainly justifiable in view of its special subject matter."

*You, of course, know by now that Engels still left out Marx's very important paragraph about the world market and the "new world" of Asia and Australia. (See ftn. on p. 786 Pelican edition.)

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Think of it. Here is Marx -- who has already shown that the three separate chapters in Part II, "The Transformation of Money into Capital" should actually be considered just one chapter with the title of the Part -- after which he decides on nothing short of subordinating the whole of Part VIII, "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation of Capital", as a mere chapter under Part VII, "The Process of Accumulation of Capital." (And here, Dona Torr likewise remains at merely citing the enumeration of chapters comprised into one, without citing that this means that an entire Part will no longer remain a separate part.)

Now reread that pragmatic explanation that Engels was absolutely right in letting that remain as a separate Part, since it "is certainly justifiable in view of its special subject matter." You couldn't count how many debates have been lost -- indeed, I could say how many heads of theoreticians have been chopped off -- over the question of what is genuine capitalistic accumulation of capital, and what is only backward, non-capitalistic, primitive, so-called accumulation. Poor Rosa Luxemburg had led herself completely astray by insisting that Marx had not really worked out imperialism, primitive accumulation of capital, since he had considered it something capitalist accumulation had long since outgrown. And here we see that Marx put it directly, integrally, as part of the process of capital accumulation.

Not only that. Let me tell you that Marx originally thought he would not include that Part VII in Vol. I, but that he would instead end simply with a summation "chapter six." (Each Part was called a Chapter then), which would be called "Reconversion of Surplus Value into Capital." Now look at the new name: "The Process of the Accumulation of Capital." Please also note Marx's expression, "So-Called." In a word, Marx certainly didn't mean that that's what it was, but that this is what would continue with capitalism evermore -- until, dear Rosa, it became imperialism carving up Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and, if we are to follow Marx, also Australia. And if Australia was still then considered a colony, think of what a man Marx was, when, in his Ethnological Notebooks, he refers to the British imperialists as "asses", whereas the Australian aborigine that the great scholar was interviewing and considering backward because he couldn't understand Christianity, was to Marx "the intelligent Black."

Have a great time studying this Appendix, and remember that "a great time" for Hegelian Marxists means an awful lot of labor, patience and suffering of the negative.

Yours,

Raya