

October 18, 1955

Hello,

As you know, I am going to include the Early Economic-Philosophic Essays of Marx as an appendix to the book. I thought I could use the original translations of these by Stone, the Johannite philosopher-designate. But, upon rereading these, and comparing them with Marx, I found Stone's translation of no earthly good and I must retranslate them anew.

Once again we see that there is no such thing as a purely technical question. Just as types in a paper reveal the political state of the organization, so slipshod work in a translation reveals the translator's contempt for the proletarian reader.

In typical intellectual fashion Stone has used the more abstruse phrase wherever she could with the result that it not only is impossible to get the full meaning of Marx; it is meaningless altogether. For example, where Marx says simply "labor as the lot of each member of the community," Stone has translated this as "labor as the category in which everything is posited."

There are enough strictly philosophical phrases which Marx had to use, and which we cannot avoid using, without cluttering up the passages that are simply phrased. As Marx himself says, after he has used some philosophical phrases, in criticizing Hegel's abstractions, "To use human language, this means, " etc.

Stone did not know how to use human language because she was preoccupied with herself to such an extent that she left out whole sentences and phrases so that you do not have the full text of Marx, and very often have the wrong meaning. For example, having left out a sentence on Feuerbach, Marx's criticism of him appears instead as a criticism of Hegel, and vice versa. At the same time one of the attacks on capitalism appears as an attack only of communism. That is to say, Marx, in criticizing vulgar communism for wishing to exchange "the relation of exclusive marriage with the private property owner for the relation of universal prostitution with the community," continues: Marx "Since prostitution takes in not only the prostituted but the prostitute (the lowest of all), so the capitalist falls into this category." This is entirely left out by Stone.

This is by no means the most glaring example of all she left out. The point is that even where she translates correctly, the impact is not that of the original because she has transformed something into a subordinate clause what should be a climactic sentence. For example, the last sentence in the essay, Private Property and Communism should not be a subordinate clause, and should read thus: "But communism, as such, is not the goal of human development, the form of human society."

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As for the Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic, that whole essay is nearly totally unintelligible in the form in which Stoue translated it. Difficult as the essay is, I believe that it can be made intelligible for workers. It will need careful work and concentration on the speaker's one addresser, but there are whole passages which will be so clear and relevant to a need felt by everyone that it will be a welcome discussion to the workers, who are the only true inheritors of all the achievements of civilization for they are the only ones who treat it not as mere accidents, but as the regeneration of all that is human in a new truly human form.

It means a great deal of extra work for me, but that is not the reason I am writing this note. Outside of the purpose of information, the reason is to stress how the abnormal separation between mental and manual work has deprived the intellectual of the energizing force of the intellect. It is not alone that the Jansenite eye has the same destructive drive that the automation machine has. It is that any intellectual cannot be a whole person without making the worker the center of all his thinking and thus giving his own intellect a new dimension.

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