

November 30, 1978

Dear Lawrence Krader:

Your Introduction to, and editing of, The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx, I consider to be an original contribution where "Marxism" as against Karl Marx himself, has done very little. I never considered Engels' The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State to be Marx's work, although I had not previously openly called it into question. In part this was due to the fact that I am not an anthropologist; in part because, until fairly recently, I had not known about Marx's Notebooks; and in part, except for the 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts (which I happen to have been the first to translate into English), I wasn't very interested in anthropology, so that my analysis of those manuscripts showed, instead, my preoccupation with dialectical philosophy.

In my new work-in-progress -- Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation Movement and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution -- I found I could no longer afford the luxury of keeping silent on the question of "matriarchy". Your introduction to Marx's Notebooks encouraged me, finally, to make the plunge. I acknowledge my indebtedness in two footnotes -- fn.1 which stresses the painstaking work in your transcription and analysis; fn.2) which shows that "I am greatly indebted to the seminal Introduction he wrote for it." (Herewith enclosed are the galley proofs of one chapter of my work-in-progress.)

Under separate cover, I previously sent you my Philosophy and Revolution. Naturally, I would like to hear your critique, either of that or the chapter presently enclosed, or anything else on which you would care to open a dialogue with me on the relationship of Marx's philosophy of revolution to his studies of anthropology and the manner in which I'm relating it to today's problematic on the Man/Woman relationship.

I thought your book would have caused more of a stir than it has. Whereas I am used to being an "unperson" to established Communism, I cannot see how they pay no serious attention to Marx's own Notebooks. Isn't there any "intercommunication" between anthropologists of the West and the East except for outright attacks?

Yours sincerely,

15112

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Dear Raya Dunayevskaya,

Just back
Thank you for your letter and for the proofs of your book. The thought that you have taken the steps to criticizing Engels within the framework of Marxism is to be positively estimated, for Engels made many contributions, but at the same time science has gone beyond his work. You should continue fearlessly in the same direction you have set out on. Of course, if I can help in any way you may and can count on me.

As to the silence about your work, you should consider the following. Marxism is and long has been a matter of parties in the political world. It is a fighting doctrine, and the independent has a minor role to play, if indeed any at all. Perhaps as a gadfly. If you do not have the support of partisans then you have nowhere to turn, and no one will turn to you. There is no such thing as "pure" Marxism. That is merely a bourgeois falsification of Marxism, making it into an academic creed, which is not interesting in any way. Who wants to form one more academic discipline? That is the height of hypocrisy for a Marxist, who then becomes a "so-called" Marxist.

Secondly, for a fighting creed of Marxism, you are in the wrong country. The class struggle in America is nowhere. It is misled, sold out, falsified. All the hopes of Marx's cohorts, Weydemeyer, Sorge, et al, were in vain. There is nothing there in the immediate

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15113

future. Only a complete change will bring about a change in America with it.

You misestimate the form of the struggle because you see it from within. (Excuse my harsh language, but I regard you in a comradely way, and between Kampfgenossen there can only be frankness.) As to my own works, the situation is not the way you think, save in America. They are translated into German, Russian, Japanese, Spanish, Italian, Jugoslavian, and at least six other languages of the eastern and western worlds, and the colonial-recolonial world, where they are well if critically received. Recently I got a ③ page critical review from Dresden in the DDR. Before that a ② page close-packed review from Moscow, a long review from England, an even longer one in West Berlin, and so forth. It enters into party politics, with internal struggles. But not, of course in the United States. People know of it, and they write me from there friendly notes. But such are meaningless. Yours is the first meaningful mention of the work of Marx from the U.S. in the spirit of a comradely fellow fighter. Another, also from a woman, by the way, is soon to appear. I don't attach importance to the feminist doctrine, which is a distortion of the class struggle, and just another means to split the com on front of the working class. There is enough of this being done by the agents of the reaction. Our own people must not do this. The approach to the women's question should be opposed to feminism.

15114

The more acceptable approach to the woman's question is to be made by specialists in that question, such as yourself, within the common front of revolutionary Marxism. The past leaders, among them Luxemburg, were Marxists first and specialists in this or that aspect of the general question second.

The low level and distorted form of the class struggle in the U.S. is no grounds for discouragement. The main impetus for the future struggle will not come from the rich countries where the proletariat is bought out with oil, linens, and TV any way. My speaking audiences are rather in such countries as Mexico, Spain, Nigeria, Italy and the like. I have been disappointed by the development in Northern Europe (Germany, Sweden, Holland) where I have been invited to speak. The Mediterranean is full of promises, particularly Torino, Barcelona and Milano, the industry centers. Tomorrow I am off to India where I will speak on the peasant question and the Asiatic Mode of Production. I have a deep love for the Mexicans, and the struggle there is very deep. I know it well, having been there with a long and continuing connection. I was in Iran 20 years ago, and some Iranian students have come to me here in Berlin. Also from Egypt: the chief among the latter have been two who were imprisoned by Nasser.

Just keep on fighting. You will get no thanks, for no one asked you to sacrifice your life, also you won't get a statue or a Matzovitch, such as

is erected in Russia. You are just doing what has to be done in isolated if materially splendid conditions, in contrast to others who have to work also in isolators, but in conditions that are not so materially luxurious. I suppose you know what узора́т is.

I am speaking here in a purely theoretical and impersonal way. For the practical side we will take those up in connection with concrete issues. I am now undet taking the critique of Marx, after a century, from within, and pay no attention to what the momentary partisans may say. These come and go. I count on your support. You may count on mine.

Yours,
Lawrence Kramer