

12/2/80

Dear Kevin:

You have such a great new discovery in store for you-- a paragraph by Marx I never knew of before which speaks of the "world market had successively annexed extensive areas of the New World, Asia, Australia"--that I shouldn't begin with my usual disgust of academics, followed by a request that you translate from the French some 5 pages anew for me, but then how would you know both the process of my discovery and the request to you, so here:

Because I have gotten to the point where I trust no one of the specialists I decided that the Pelican edition of CAPITAL which remains best of the translations hasn't revealed "all", especially since the translator's (Ben Fowkes) brief preface (p.87) still defends Engels's edition though he has had to change language back to Marx's philosophic language as well as "whole sentences omitted by Engels", without specifying them, I went thru, page by page the whole of the Pelican edition. And sure enough, on p.786, I find that magnificent magnificent paragraph I refer to above and I'll give you the opportunity to read for yourself both in English and in French.

The French comes in because by then I didn't trust this translation either, couldn't understand how no one all these years since the French edition never called attention to it--I have followed carefully all the page listings both Magtelists in general in the French edition, but he stresses only the extensive changes in Fetishism and the still more extensive ones in General Law of Capitalist Accumulation, and those by Engels for 4th German edition which was to have included all those plus some extra ones Marx added very much on his death bed. (The Dona Torr had them all listed in the 1939 edition on which I have lived ever since that year and through my 1941 study of Rus. eco.) But still no mention of the par. in Pelican edition, p.786. And where to get a French 1875 ed.? (Incidentally it is always just referred to as "French edition" without even mentioning Le Capital.)

Then I remembered I have the 1963 Gallimard, Rubel edition and they do Le Capital although they list it as 1867, I believe it is reference to Ger.ed. (You might glance pp.537-541 introductory remarks, I suppose Rubel's, if you can find that ed.) But what I am interested in and don't want to take chances about which edition is available in NY, I xeroxed for you and want you to translate, Sec.3, Production Croissante d'une Surpopulation Relative ou d'une armee industrielle de reserve, or at least pages 1141-1150, especially top page 1150 which is the par. missing in all editions except Pelican. It begins there "Mais c'est seulement de l'epoque ou l'industrie mecanique...ending with "Au contraire...des cycles se raccourcissent graduellement."

Here is why I want more than that one paragraph. There seems to be differences between English and French texts. Thus if you turn back to beginning of Sec.3 of 25th Ch. ~~xxxxxx~~ which in Pelican ed. begins on p.781 (Fr.ed p.1141) you will note that the 2nd par. speaks of organic composition of capital changing from 1:1, 2:1...7:1. But that par. in French doesn't appear till 2 pages later (p.1143) Moreover, it is preceded, on p.1142, with pars. 1st, 2nd, 3rd which I see nowhere in English. So it is important to check MOST SCRUPULOUSLY the pages preceding the "new" par. O.k.? Have a grand time. Yours, hurriedly,

15250

December 12, 1980

Dear Raya:

As you will see as you begin reading the enclosed translation from the French Le Capital edited by Maximilien Rubel, the French text is quite different and includes at a minimum several pages of material (not in any English edition). All English translations seem to follow Engels' "official" Fourth German edition which probably went through the Second International and is now published in the Marx-Engels Werke out of East Germany. Although Fowkes does not specify which edition he is using and appears to claim in his preface to have consulted all of them, I am not sure he has really studied the French edition. For example the paragraph which caught your attention on the extension of capitalism outside Europe does not appear to have been found by Fowkes by studying the French Le Capital, since this paragraph appears exactly the same way, in a footnote, at exactly the same point in the text in the East German Werke, on page 662. I have enclosed the same passage you wanted translated in German, and if you even scan it, you will I'm sure see that it is almost exactly the English translation, down to the footnotes. Fowkes does cover himself by saying he took footnotes from this, but surely a passage from Marx should not be treated as a mere additional footnote. The East Germans do not indicate when this footnote on the world market was added, but I suppose we could try to check that. Is it in the Russian edition? My hunch was that it was not included until fairly recently.

The Rubel French edition does claim to be "giving Capital, Vol. I, in the version of Joseph Roy" because "we have taken into account a wish expressed by Marx in his 'To the Reader', when he was revising the last installment of the French translation" (Rubel, "Notice", p. 539). However, Rubel claims to have corrected "quite numerous errors" by utilizing the German edition. The first re-edition of Roy's Le Capital was in 1938 (Paris, Bureau d'Editions) and later (1949-50) by Editions Sociales, both CP houses. He also reverses the order of the last two chapters, claiming that Marx really wanted to end with "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" rather than the chapter on colonization, but did it that way to get through the German and French censors.

As to the history of the French edition, Rubel claims to have consulted in Russian (A.V. Ourioieva) The Story of the First French Edition of the First Volume of Capital by Karl Marx in On the History of the Formation and Development of Marxism (Moscow, 1959). Rubel quotes a letter from Marx to Danielson (May 28, 1872): "Even though the French edition... may be the work of someone quite knowledgeable in the two languages, he often translated too literally. I was therefore compelled to edit anew, in French, whole passages which I wanted to make readable... Later it will be all the easier to translate the whole from French into English and the romance languages." Despite this, Engels dismissed the French edition (Rubel does not say if he was aware of the above letter to Danielson, and as you know he hates Engels)... Rubel quotes a letter from Engels to Marx? he does not say) (on November 29, 1873) where he states: "Despite all my respect for the artistry with which it has been turned into elegant French, I'm fed up with (or bored with) this pretty chapter... It would be in my eyes a big mistake to take as the basis of the English translation the French clothing (obviously an idiom I don't catch)". Thus Rubel has it appear that Engels went against Marx's wishes in this matter.

I also looked at the 1938 and 1950 Stalinist editions in French and they are pretty much exactly the same as Rubel's version, at least in the section you wanted me to look at. They claim in their preface (1950) to have conserved Roy's text but to have changed the footnotes based on later corrections by Eleanor and Engels, and by Moscow. They call attention only to the fact

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that Marx apparently deleted a couple of mentions of Proudhon from the French text, and substituted the same critique without explicitly naming him. They have shown this alternate wording in their footnotes, but I see no mention of any differences between texts in the passages you are having me translate, either by Rubel or the Stalinists. I do believe that both of these translations did leave the text of Le Capital fairly close to what Marx had authorized as Roy's translation.

However, I have not had a chance yet to look at any other parts of the Le Capital as against the English text, but I am confident that there are many alternate wordings and paragraphs. Nor can I easily obtain the Dona Torr edition- ---it may even be missing from the NYPL Research Library on 42 St., or at least it wasn't on the shelf when I tried to get it. Isn't it outrageous that no one after all these years has written an article or furnished appendices to Capital which in any one language sum up the different versions between the French and the German edition? It almost sounds like French chauvinism on Rubel's part and German chauvinism on Engels' part. Not even the East German Marx-Engels Werke appears to show these changes, except in the small passage which is in the Pelican edition.

In my translation, done with much important help from Dennis, I have indicated in the margins correspondences with the Pelican English edition, and I'm sure I have not noticed all of them. However, I am equally certain that there are whole paragraphs which occur nowhere in this section of the English text, as can easily be seen by the varying lengths of the two texts. When in doubt I have translated very literally, which may make for stilted language at times, and in doubt I have indicated in parenthesis possible alternate wordings when a word has several possible translations. In a few cases I have also inserted between parentheses extra words implied but not stated in the French version (their pronouns are more specific than ours). Dennis went over with me both the paragraph you especially wanted and most of the rest with me sentence by sentence, except for pages 8 to 11, which I did on my own, and thus may have more errors. Since we ran out of time, it seemed more important to send it off at once and polish it later. He will in the next few days look over the whole thing that I have done, and I may send you a few corrections then.

Best,

*Kevin*