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The reception of Erich Fromm's ideas in Bulgaria – part 1[1]

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Abstract: *This article presents a research on the reception of Erich Fromm's ideas in Bulgaria. The criticism of Fromm's ideas is presented and an attempt is made to evaluate it according to its context – ideological, psychological and philosophical. The author aims at explaining the theoretical and substantive side of the criticism.*

Keywords: Erich Fromm; Marxism-Leninism; criticism; psychoanalysis.

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[1] The article is dedicated to the 120th anniversary of Erich Fromm's birth and to the 40th anniversary of his death.

During the 1960s Erich Fromm was intensively politically active and attempted at finding supporters in the socialist camp and in the Western world for what he calls communitarian (humanistic) socialism. Fromm tried to rehabilitate Marxism in the West by showing that what Marxists in the Soviet Union wrote that Marx thinks and claims is a perverted version of his ideas. In his book *May Man Prevail* (1961a) Fromm criticized the Soviet system and the claims of the Soviet communists that they practice Marx's ideas. In this regard, he asked Tom Bottomore, a teacher in London School of Economics, to translate in English Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. The translation was published in 1961 with a long study by Fromm, entitled *Marx's Concept of Man* (Fromm, 1961b/2004). In it Fromm tried to draw a parallel between the ideas of, as is known in Western philosophy, the young Marx and the old Marx, and to show that Marx was misunderstood both in the West and in the East (The Soviet Union). Fromm was also the editor of the collection of essays called *Socialist Humanism* (Fromm, 1965), in which there were contributions by quite a few Marxist philosophers from Eastern Europe. The fact that he tried to revise psychoanalysis and to spread Marx's ideas into the so-called Western world, as well as his cooperation with the Yugoslav Praxis group, attracted the attention of Bulgarian psychoanalysis researchers and Bulgarian Marxist philosophers. They analyzed his ideas through the prism of the then prevailing Marxist orientation of the Bulgarian science and of the humanities, based on the principles laid down by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Lenin, the so-called teaching of Marxism-Leninism. From a psychological point of view, Fromm's ideas were viewed from the standpoint of Pavlov's dialectical materialism and nervism. The criticism of Fromm's ideas from this point of view was in line with the more general criticism of psychoanalysis (often termed Freudianism by those researchers) which was mainly addressed by Kiril Cholakov (Cholakov 1947), Hristo Dimitrov (Dimitrov 1965; Dimitrov 1968; Dimitrov 1969a; Dimitrov 1969b; Dimitrov 1973; Dimitrov 1975a; Dimitrov 1975b; Dimitrov 1976; Dimitrov 1983), Hristo Hristozov (Hristiziv 1983) and Stoyu Stoev (Stoev 1966; Stoev 1969; Stoev 1972; Stoev 1973; Stoev 1975).

The criticism of Erich Fromm's works mainly comes from two fields. The first one was criticism from psychiatrists like Hristo Dimitrov and Hristo Hristozov and the second one was criticism from researchers from the Institute for New Social Theories in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The second group of researhers includes only Marxist philosophers such as Stoyu Stoev, Stefan Angelov (Angelov 1973), Girgin Girginov, Atanas Natev, Vladimir Nestorov, Ognyan Saparev, Ivaylo Znepolski (Znepolski, 1973), Sava Ganovski (Ganovski, 1973), Deyan Pavlov, Nikolai Bozhkov, etc. What all of them have in common, though coming from different schools of philosophy at that time, is the general tendency to analyze Fromm's ideas through the prism of Marxism-Leninism. For example, Stoyu Stoev was a classical Marxist philosopher, Stefan Angelov worked in the field of ethics, Girgin Girginov worked in the field of epistemology, Atanas Natev was a literary and art critic.

The 1960s

One of the first mentions of Erich Fromm was in 1965 in Hristo Dimitrov's book *Psychoanalysis and its Variations*. Dimitrov mentioned that Fromm, Horney and Sullivan are representatives of 'cultural psychoanalysis'. According to him, they make an 'attempt to "enrich" and "complement" psychoanalysis through social concepts and studies, limited mainly to observations of family relations and the cultural influences in certain social groups' (Dimitrov 1965: 33). Dimitrov's criticism is that in their theories 'there is striving to study family, everyday, cultural, and interpersonal relationships and influences in isolation from the particular socio-economic structure' (Dimitrov, 1965, p. 87). As early as 1937, in his article *Man's Impulse Structure and Its Relation to Culture* (Fromm 1937/2010), Fromm analyzed the middle-class family and how

its psychic dynamics is related to the socio-economic structure in which it lives (Fromm, 1937/2010)[2].

In his later work *Psychoanalysis and Philosophy* (1973), for the first time Dimitrov criticized cultural psychoanalysis, as he calls it, more extensively. This is also the first criticism made by a specialist in the field of mental health in Bulgaria. He described Fromm's view that in American society, the business owner, the managers and the workers are not related to their work in a productive way. He also described 'the idea of alienation' (Dimitrov 1973: 127) and the structure of the personality. In my opinion, in *Psychoanalysis and Philosophy* Fromm's character orientations were described for the first time in Bulgarian – the receptive type (characteristic of the slave-owning system), the predatory type ('shaped through feudalism and further developed ... during the initial stage of capitalism', Dimitrov 1973: 129), the hamster (hoarding) oriented type, the market oriented type ('the product of capitalist society during the first half of our century', (Dimitrov 1973: 129), and the productively oriented type.

It is noteworthy to mention how Dimitrov related the character types to certain periods. For example, the hamster oriented type[3] (collector-oriented character orientation according to the translation of *Man for himself* in Bulgarian (Fromm, 1947a/1995) and stingy character according to the translation of *Man for himself* in Bulgarian (Fromm 1947a/2005) refers to 'the period of the stabilized capitalist society seeking to preserve the created relations' (Dimitrov 1973, p. 129). Dimitrov's conclusion that it refers to the period of stabilization is incorrect because it actually refers to the period of the initial accumulation of capital and for this reason, according to Fromm, the society had to create in every individual a desire to save which became part of his/her character, and this is what he says in *The Sane Society*: 'Like all other character orientations, the hoarding one has positive and negative aspects… … It can be easily seen that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the hoarding orientation was geared to the necessities of economic progress, the positive characteristics were predominant, while in the twentieth century when these traits are the obsolete feature of an obsolete class, the negative aspects are almost exclusively present.' (Fromm 1955a/2008: 89). And furthermore, 'While in the nineteenth century the general tendency was to save, and not to indulge in expenses which could not be paid for immediately, the contemporary system is exactly the opposite.' (Fromm 1955a/2008: 105).

A major mistakes of Dimitrov's thesis is that he defines Fromm's view of alienation as 'a kind of continuation of the psycho-energetic view affirmed by Freud and Jung, and in particular the entropic principle of the possible "wasting" of drive-psychic energy.' (Dimitrov 1973: 133).). Insofar as it is true that Freud assumes that one must be careful where they invest the libido, because it may end, that is, it is finite in quantity, then Fromm has a different opinion. Contrary to this idea, Fromm claims that the more you give, the richer you become (Fromm 1956a: 21-22). The following statement of Dimitrov's should also be noted: 'Because of this existential-mystical basis from which Fromm derives the idea of alienation, he neglects its specific socio-historical and class nature – alienation becomes a universal necessity to which modern people must submit both in the capitalist countries and in the socialist countries.' (Dimitrov 1973: 133). What Dimitrov misses, however, is that alienation is a natural state of man, who due to the presence of self-consciousness is not one with himself, with his essence. Therefore, he must find a solution to the problem, the problem of how to live life, because he cannot simply repeat his parents' lives or his compatriots' lives. Fromm's ap-

[2] I examined this article in my dissertation *The idea of social character in intercultural context* (Minchev 2018).

[3] Fromm uses the term "hoarding orientation".

proach is essentially sociobiological, because alienation from nature and the other people is due to the increased cerebral cortex, which allows man, in contrast to the animals, to have imagination, self-awareness, to have meta-emotions and metathoughts. In other words, Fromm's idea is based on the interpretation of biological data and not on existential-mystical insights.

Another inaccurate conclusion of Dimitrov's is that Fromm 'replaces the old psychoanalytic dogma of the Oedipus complex as the key to understanding all pathological deviations with the principle of alienation as an explanation of all disease deviations in the behavior of modern man.' (Dimitrov 1973: 136). In fact, Fromm, when denying the universality of the Oedipus complex, does not replace it with alienation, but simply shows that alienation is characteristic of the people from Western Europe and the United States, as well as the USSR, and although it is different in form, it is similar in its essence. Fromm does not always make a clear distinction between the historical alienation and the "universal" alienation common to all people which makes the understanding of the distinction problematical (Funk 1982b: 79). The first one is an alienated reaction[4] to the "universal" alienation and the second one is a common feature of all human beings since they have lost their instinctive apparatus to a large degree. Eventually, Dimitrov argued that 'Fromm's teaching is one of the most serious attempts to adapt the "classical" psychoanalysis to the modern conditions and to reflect the most essential features of the human personality in today's Western society' (Dimitrov 1973: 131).

Erich Fromm's ideas about the alienation of the worker from their labor under capitalism were mentioned by the Marxist philosopher Girgin Girginov in his article *Science, Technology, Dehumanization* (Girginov 1973: 95). Girginov believes that Fromm (quoting his article *Freedom in the Workplace* (Fromm 1959f)) and other, as he calls them, 'bourgeois and revisionist authors' tried to deideologize society, however not of bourgeois ideology, but of the 'Marxist-Leninist science' (Girginov 1973: 118). According to Girginov, 'E. Fromm is forced to admit that the American guildsman, the industrialist, is the most convincing argument in favor of the process of deideologisation'. Erich Fromm does not use the words guildsman and industrialist anywhere (Fromm 1959f: 4). The use of the word "forced" leads to the idea that Erich Fromm does not want to make this acknowledgement, but he does. Girginov seems to want to attribute to Fromm some supposed internal or perhaps external pressure, which suggests that although Fromm does not want to, he must admit how bad the American citizen is. The use of the word also means that Fromm knows the truth, but he does not want to admit it; eventually, however, he is forced to. This interpretation, however, is based on Girginov's own feeling that if one has to say something that is not very pleasant for someone (in Bulgaria at the time of the writing of the article), it must be said because one is forced by the inconvenience that otherwise he/she will save some of the facts, and not because that would be an expression of honesty and objectivity.

In Bulgaria the word "guildsman" is used for a specific stratum which relies on its mastery to produce household items. It existed before and after the Liberation of Bulgaria and was completely destroyed during communism. But the Bulgarian word is used to mean "philistine" too and thus, the following may be translated using the word "philistine" instead of "guildsman": 'A guildsman in this sense is a person who has the moral and qualities of a small owner, rather of a small existence. In this sense, when someone is referred to as a guildsman, it means that he thinks, feels and acts as a small owner. Guildsman may be used in reference to the bourgeois, the peasant or the intellectual.' (Genchev 2011: 104). Thus, when Girginov used the word that we translated with guildsman, he actually meant

[4] According to Fromm, one can react in a productive way and develop their reason and capacity to love.

"philistine". Girginov calls the people from the American middle class guildsmen because of their concern for themselves, for their families and for money, but the application of this socio-psychological category which existed in Bulgaria to a class that has nothing to do with craftsmanship or has little in common, is inappropriate. The highly developed individualism of the American middle class, reaching selfishness, is rooted in the capitalist development of the country and not like in Bulgaria in the attachment to small property and the inability of the guildsmen to take advantage of the new opportunities which arose in liberated Bulgaria.

The first article in which Fromm's ideas are the central object of description was written by Deyan Pavlov and is entitled *Erich Fromm and Marxist Humanism* (Pavlov 1968). He was one of Fromms's earliest critics and he also wrote several articles in German criticizing his work (Pawlow 1968, Pawlow 1971). Although he mentioned it in an implicit way, Pavlov was the first Bulgarian Marxist philosopher to mention the idea of social character. He wrote that 'with the help of psychoanalysis E. Fromm seeks to reveal the mechanisms via which "the structure of the economic base is connected to the superstructure" (Pavlov 1968: 72-73), quoting *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, a book in which Fromm wrote that the social character is an intermediary between the economic base and the superstructure.

Pavlov assumes that Fromm is 'part of the liberal intellectuals in the capitalist world' and considers that he is a representative of the culturalist neo-Freudianism" (Pavlov 1968: 71). Explaining Fromm's position, he wrote that Fromm disagrees with the Marxist-Leninist theory and is 'its petty-bourgeois, "liberal" critic' (Pavlov 1968: 71) and that Fromm is involved in the struggle against the Marxist-Leninist theory through 'his traditional abstract humanistic concepts.' (Pavlov 1970: 109). The problem with all these labels that Bulgarian Marxists use is that for them, as well as for the Soviet Marxists, anyone who owns any kind of business is a capitalist or, if they are part of the middle class, they are a bourgeois – there is no attempt to make a real distinction.

Deyan Pavlov wrote that 'Fromm applies elements of the historical-materialist method in the explanation of the human situation under capitalism' (Pavlov 1968: 71), which includes alienation. Although he accepted Fromm's criticism of the American society, especially the part on alienation, Pavlov remained at odds with Fromm giving more power to the psychological states. He believes that Fromm absolutizes alienation and that he does not sufficiently grasp the depth of the 'historical-materialist explanation of alienation' because of his petty-bourgeois outlook. He further added that 'If the alienation under capitalism were absolute, as E. Fromm thinks, there would be no prospect of freeing humanity from the yoke of exploitation and slavery' (Pavlov 1968: 74). This criticism is not entirely accurate because Fromm would not bother to write on this topic if he did not believe that people could realize the path they were on and change their direction. In fact, that is the purpose of his books: 'The position taken in this book[5] is in principle that of Mumford and Ellul. It is perhaps different in the sense that I see somewhat greater possibility of restoring the social system to man's control.' (Fromm 1968a/2005:14). Another mistake Deyan Pavlov makes is that he believes that Fromm thinks that 'the prospects of socialism and capitalism' are the same, but what Fromm only really claims is that Soviet communism leads to alienation just like American capitalism does.

One of Pavlov's main points is that Fromm attributed to Marx erroneous ideas about human nature, with Pavlov saying that Marx had broken 'decisively with the abstract, metaphysical conceptions of "man in general", of man as purely anthropological, biological, irrational, mystical, etc., being. Therefore, E. Fromm's statement that

[5] As in *Escape from Freedom* and *The Sane Society* (Fromm's remark).

K. Marx put on the same level the way of production of material goods and the so-called human nature is not true' (Pavlov 1968: 73). How the Bulgarian Marxist philosophers understand the human essence, however, is expressed very clearly by Pancho Rusev: "There is no human essence in general. As Marx says, it is not an abstraction, but a set of social relations. Although it is not completely reduced to one or another social system, there is no human essence that stands outside one or another system. Man exists in bourgeois society as alienated from his essence, which is not a solitary isolated reality but a socially determined reality, existing in a real particular society, respectively the capitalist' (Rusev 1972: 189). Although he mentioned Marx's words that human nature is not an abstraction, the conclusions drawn by Rusev and other Marxists are wrong because they suggest that man is a tabula rasa (blank slate)[6]. In fact, Fromm used the distinction that Marx made in a note in the first volume of *Capital*, where Marx ridiculed Jeremy Bentham's ideas related to utility (utilitarianism) and wrote that if we want to know what is useful to man we 'must first deal with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch.' (Маркс 1948: 497). In this sense, the claim that Marx breaks with the idea of "man in general" is wrong[7].

The 1970s

The 1970s were the culmination of articles and books devoted in whole or in part to Erich Fromm and his ideas. The first comprehensive criticism of Erich Fromm was made by the Marxist philosopher Stoyu Stoev (Stoev 1972, Stoev 1973)[8]. In *Man, Neo-Freudianism, Marxism* the purpose of the analysis is "the philosophical and methodological foundations of their "theories" and their concepts of man and society. " (Stoev 1972: 6). The use of the word "theories" in quotation marks suggests that the author does not consider the ideas of the people he analyzed as theories or, in other words, he does not consider they are scientifically valid. Stoev was a Marxist philosopher, not a psychologist, nor was he a psychoanalyst in particular, which means that he lacked the clinical experience to evaluate some of Fromm's views on man and society, because, in the case of Fromm, they are connected with his clinical experience as well. In Bulgaria, the authors on the problems of life and social development were usually the Marxist philosophers. At that time, psychology in Bulgaria was just being established as a subject at university, and a section in social psychology was just established in the Institute of Sociology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences with was Mincho Draganov as head. Even before commencing the analysis of Fromm's ideas, Stoev made some mistakes about which scientific current the psychologists and philosophers he mentioned belonged to. For example, he wrote that Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Alexander Mitcherlich and Jürgen Habermas were neo-Freudians (Stoev 1972: 21). However, that is not true. Of all those listed, only Fromm was a neo-Freudian. Marcuse was a Marxist, a philosopher and Alexander Mitscherlich was a German psychoanalyst, but he never belonged to the neo-Freudians. Habermas is a German philosopher, the most famous living representative of the Frankfurt School today, but he has nothing to do with psychoanalysis.

Among the other authors who mentioned Fromm in one way or another are Nikolay

[6] The idea of the blank slate or the blank sheet of paper can be traced back to Aristotle and is not a new idea in the field of philosophy. A similar debate is still going on in the field of psychology and neurosciences called Nature vs Nurture, and some research, especially on twins, shows that the brain has certain innate modes of action.

[7] It should be noted that *Capital* is part of the works written by the Old Marx, not the Young Marx, which is often used as an argument by Soviet Marxists to prove to its Western interpreters that certain ideas (e.g. human nature) that Marx wrote about earlier were subsequently abandoned by him.

[8] In the second part of the article, Stoyu Stoev's criticism will be presented in more details.

Bozhkov, Atanas Natev, Ivaylo Znepolski, Vladimir Nestorov and Ognyan Saparev. Atanas Natev mentioned an idea of Fromm's, saying that 'Erich Fromm rightly puts on the same line the "solely" receptive attitude to cultural products and the "market orientation".' (Natev 1974: 23). According to him, Fromm, Adorno and Marcuse have the same opinion about 'the favorable *conditions*[9] that modern commodity market relations create for the degeneration of art and the spread of false cultural substitutes to such unimaginable proportions. However, these authors change their point of view when it comes to *the cause*.' (Natev 1974: 24). It is not clear what Natev thinks about Fromm's position because in the following lines he wrote only about Marcuse and Adorno. However, the following general statement possibly concerns all three authors again: 'That is why the dispute is transferred to another level. If commodity market relations are considered a condition that aggravates the defensive of art, then the reason is sought in the so-called "industrial society" - in the "means" it offers, and in the "technical rationality" that accompanies it. Thus, "mass culture" is presented not as an ideological battlefield, but as an inevitable disaster in the "technical age".' (Natev 1974: 24). With this criticism Natev wants to show that in fact all three are not critical enough and do not see that commodity-money relations are the problem and not the industrial society.

In his article *The Nylon Wrapper* Vladimir Nestorov commented on the views of various Western and Eastern (Marxist) scholars on culture, including Erich Fromm. He defines Fromm's ideas about culture as 'E. Fromm's social utopianism and moralism' (Nestorov 1974: 103). 'No matter how hard neo-psychoanalysts try to emphasize their difference from Freud's creative legacy, they ultimately pay tribute to the weakest points of the Viennese psychiatrist's doctrine. They still consider the main conflicts to focus around the "irrational" beginning of human nature, as well as on the idea that the subconscious passions and nocturnal secrets have a determinant influence on the overall activity of the individual. In essence, man remains "naturally inert", completely dependent on the vagaries of his emotional and social environment, as well as to hereditary predispositions' (Nestorov 1974: 104). How false this position is can be seen when we consider the idea of the need for efficiency mentioned by Erich Fromm in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*: 'Man's awareness of himself as being in a strange and overpowering world, and his consequent sense of impotence could easily overwhelm him. If he experienced himself as entirely passive, a mere object, he would lack a sense of his own will, of his identity. To compensate for this he must acquire a sense of being able to do something, to move somebody, to "make a dent," or, to use the most adequate English word, to be "effective".' (Fromm 2003: 260).

Nestorov goes on to say that 'Freudianism presented the individual with an alternative: to either adapt to culture, or to experience the sad consequences of permanent psychological deformations. Some researchers in this field looked for ways to "save" humanity, and for one of them they led directly to religion or to the varieties of a religious ethic capable of softening the adaptive conflicts.' (Nestorov 1974: 104). The last statement refers to Erich Fromm, as Nestorov further clarified in a footnote "Perhaps the most complete manifestation of this trend is found in the book by Erich Fromm. The Art of Loving, world perspectives, 1956, where science completely gives way to the strange conglomeration of Christian ethics and Hindu mysticism." (Nestorov 1974: 127).

Boredom as the disease of our century is mentioned in Ognyan Saparev's article *Mass culture as means of entertainment and adaptation* (Saparev 1974). In this regard he mentions Erich Fromm: 'The entertainment of "mass culture" is above all a cure for BOREDOM – the "disease of our century", accord-

[9] Natev's italics here and below.

ing to Erich Fromm' (Saparev 1974: 186). He also emphasizes the relevance of Fromm's theory of aggression (Saparev 1974: 188).

Ivaylo Znepolski mentions in passing Fromm in relation to free time serving as compensation and serving to 'quench some inevitable shortcomings of the system, it is present in the arguments of almost all bourgeois researchers of the phenomenon, belonging to different schools and currents: … the neo-Freudians (Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse)' (Znepolski, 1974, p. 277). Actually, Fromm's idea of what people do in their free time in the Western world is slightly different. According to him, the effect of the automatization of work is that the Western people are idle after work and innerly passive instead of using their free time productively.

Another researcher who dedicated an entire article to Fromm is Nikolay Bozhkov with his article *Erich Fromm's "Humanized Society"* (Bozhkov 1976). Like Deyan Pavlov, he claims that Fromm is part of the liberal bourgeois intellectuals (this is not a coincidence, given that the first reference in the article is to Deyan Pavlov's article about Fromm), who sometimes take up progressive positions. In a sense, Bozhkov is a forerunner of the Bulgarian researchers who in the 1980s paid great attention to the fact that Western researchers wrote about the problems between man and technology in Western society. Bozhkov correctly evaluates the fact that Fromm puts man at the center of his system. It should be emphasized that Bulgarian researchers often use the label "capitalist society" (Bozhkov 1976: 88), while Fromm always speaks of capitalist system. According to the Marxism-Leninism ideology, in the United States and elsewhere, where there is an economic system called capitalism, society itself is defined as capitalist, which places it within certain limits. It is no longer man who is at the center of concern, but the system. For them the problem is not in the capitalist system, which makes man alienate from himself, it is in some kind of a personified capitalism, that is, human, and therefore the problem is not only in the economic system called capitalism, but also in the people who live under that system. They were perceived as part of it and therefore seen as enemies. Because of that, many Bulgarian researchers did not understand that Fromm can take a critical position against both the Soviet Marxists and the Western researchers, because they thought in terms of the friend/foe opposition. If you are a friend, then you have the same opinion as us, if you are an enemy, then you have a different opinion.

Similarly to Stoyu Stoev, Bozhkov thinks that 'Fromm's evaluation of capitalism is entirely negative' (Bozhkov 1976: 89) and also 'Fromm completely ignores the objective laws governing the development of society. He only sees the negative side in the development of capitalism. For him, the development of the productive forces, science and technology under capitalism are a curse for humanity and bring only its depersonalization and universal alienation. Fromm argues that capitalism has not contributed with anything progressive to humanity and must therefore be overcome.' (Bozhkov 1976: 91). Bozhkov's criticism essentially refers to the fact that he assumes that Fromm thinks that technology is man's problem, when in fact everything that Fromm says is in the context of how modern development during capitalism leads to further alienation of man. Bozhkov repeats verbatim what was perceived as the final truth in Marxism – private ownership of the means of production is the scourge of capitalism, without having in mind that Marx wrote that in the context of alienation and its elimination. Fromm is briefly mentioned in the book *Philosophy of Destruction* by Pancho Rusev (Rusev 1972). There Rusev commented on Fromm's idea that in capitalist society each individual feels the other as a competitor and it makes him/her cold and hostile, isolated and alone.

The 1980s

In the 1980s, a number of Bulgarian authors continued to cite some of Fromm's conclusions and summaries in their books on bourgeois ethics, social change and the quality of life, mainly concerning technology and its impact on human life. Among them were Maksim

Lazarov, Vessela Tabakova, Vera Dimitrova, Tanya Marincheshka, Angel Todorov and Bonka Stoyanova-Boneva (Stoyanova-Boneva 1988). Tabakova and Marincheshka quote Fromm in various publications in relation to the ideas presented in *The Revolution of Hope* (Tabakova in Dobriyanov 1981: 241; Marincheshka in Dobriyanov 1981: 296). Fromm is mentioned briefly in relation to his ideas about how a harmonious society could be built and that television is a mass source of violence (Lazarov 1980: 237, 239).

Vera Dimitrova wrote that Fromm is part of the "pessimistic technological current", which also includes Lewis Mumford, Victor Ferkis, Herbert Marcuse, etc. (Dimitrova 1981: 270). In contrast to that, Nikolai Bozhkov argued that Fromm is one of the optimistic scientists who write about the humanization of technology, while Mumford is pessimistic (Bozhkov 1976: 87). Further in her text, when discussing concepts about the use of technology Dimitrova pays special attention to Fromm's book *The Revolution of Hope*. Like a number of other authors, whose criticism of Fromm has already been considered, Dimitrova assumes that Fromm's analysis of the individual is "abstract-humanistic." His ideas for dealing with the crisis proposed in the *The Revolution of Hope* are perceived as moralizing instructions 'for the self-realization of the true spiritual needs of man' (Dimitrova 1981: 282).

She sees the possible change in the United States not in becoming aware of the path that American society has takien, as Fromm advises, but 'in the need for decisive revolutionary actions, in the need for a radical change in the nature of capitalist social relations, in the need for a qualitative transformation of the overall structure of the social life under capitalism' (Dimitrova 1981: 283). The second and the third point were considered in detail by Fromm as early as 1955 in *The Sane Society*. There he discussed the idea of changing the social relations by the establishment of small groups in which people could get to know each other well in order to overcome the growing alienation and abstractness in thinking. What is striking in Dimitrova's article, however, is the use of 19th-century phraseology in the 20th century, namely 'decisive revolutionary actions.' The use of outdated concepts is often due to the dogmatization of the theory and its transformation into a dead, abstract theory, taken out of the context of the time of its creation.

Angel Todorov also commented on the ways in which Fromm sees an opportunity to humanize technology and supported his view that man should be at the center of technology and that he should define the values and not that the values should be imposed by technology. However, he also believes that Fromm's idea, although humane, is 'filled with utopian content' (Todorov 1977: 153). His main criticism is similar to that of the philosophers Deyan Pavlov and Stoyu Stoev and the scientist Vera Dimitrova: 'In its most concentrated form, E. Fromm's utopianism on the question of quality of life consists in his categorical rejection of the social revolution as a way to the destruction of the capitalist socio-economic and political conditions and as the necessary condition for the formation of a truly new quality of life (Todorov 1977: 154). Here again we come across the idea of a revolution coming to the fore – a basic postulate in the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. It is Todorov who pointed out that Fromm speaks more of the 'humanization of planning, consumption and management' (Todorov 1977: 154) than of changing the political, legal and ideological superstructure of society. According to him, Fromm did not discuss change in the social and production relations, which is not quite true.

Fromm speaks exactly of change in the production relations when he says that we should begin to plan, that man should stand at the center of technology and that he should determine the values according to which we produce, and not that the values should be imposed by the economic system and its requirements. Moreover, as we can see from today's perspective, the change in the economic base both in the USSR and Bulgaria did not lead to a radical change in the whole superstructure, as Marx and the theorists of Marxism suggested because of the existence of what

Fromm called social character which serves as a mediator between the base and the superstructure. The social character always lags behind the economic and social changes and, to put it more precisely, the people's social character does not change quickly and they stick to their previous believes, cultural practices and so on. This shows that the change of the economic base does not necessarily lead to a change of one's social character. For a more detailed analysis, see Fromm's books *Beyond the Chains of Ilussion* and *The Sane Society.* In this regard, a great analysis was made by the historian Nikolai Genchev, who shows in his book on socio-psychological types, written in the 1970s, that the change of the economic relations does not mean a complete change of the social relations.

In one of his studies Angel Todorov wrote that Fromm's position is that communism and capitalism have lost their meaning, mistakenly assuming that Fromm tries to reject the category of socialism. (Todorov in Mitev 1973: 44). Commenting on the various functions of ideology, Diana Danova mentioned Fromm's idea that ideology has a hallucinatory function, which is to create 'illusion of spiritual closeness between individuals' when they are actually alienated (Danova 1990: 82)

Conclusion

The Bulgarian researchers on Fromm's ideas appreciate his theory of aggression and his views on the alienation of the American society. However, the latter are evaluated through the prism of communist ideology, and not in an attempt to objectively evaluate the situation in the United States. They consider Fromm to be part of the bourgeois intellectuals in the United States, albeit having an antifascist position. Certain views of his are often underestimated due to misunderstanding their source or because of the researchers' distorting evaluation. That is due to Fromm's anti-Soviet position and his critical evaluation of Karl Marx's and Vladimir Lenin's ideas who were the two main pillars of the leading ideology in Bulgaria and the USSR, Marxism-Leninism. I have tried to show what this ideology consists of, what its basic postulates are, and how they were inadequately used to evaluate Fromm's ideas, as well as in terms of understanding Marx's ideas themselves.

Very often, the Bulgarian researchers who wrote before 1989, labeled Fromm and placed him in a certain school of though, often wrongly, and they did not always adequately evaluate his ideas. That is quite normal, given that they looked at them from an outside perspective and evaluated them through the prism of the opposition of the two systems – capitalism and socialism, and the desire to prove that socialism is the better system. At the same time, many Western researchers did not adequately evaluate the situation in the socialist countries, because they too were misled by what is seen from the outside which does not always mean what it looks like on the surface. It is no coincidence that Fromm wrote numerous articles and a book to show the American misconceptions about Marx's ideas and the Soviet policy. Another point characteristic of the Bulgarian researchers is the use of 19th century phraseology in the 20th century, for example, "class struggle", "revolutionary situation", "the revolutionary role of the working class", etc., which is not useful for the objective analysis and furthermore leads to the distortion in the interpretation of Fromm's ideas – because they do not correspond to Marxism-Leninism and they are very often critical of Marxism-Leninism and of the idea of the forcible overthrow of the rulers.

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