

June 1, 1954

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My dear Sirs:

I can now give you a decision regarding our publication of Buchner's Endosymbiosis. You may each be interested in the background thinking. Hence this letter to you both.

I have done three things: First, I wrote a handful of carefully selected biologists, each of whom I thought--and believe you two would think--would be discriminating and most apt to favor this sort of publication. Next, I figured the investment that would be involved and the potential sale. Third, I considered the problem of a translator and his recompense.

I have decided that we cannot, at this moment, undertake to publish a translation, though we may very well at some time in the future and under the proper circumstances--of which more below.

First, the biologists I chose all seemed to agree that it would be a nice thing to have the book available in English--for others, but not for themselves since they have read the German edition; and each of them seemed to feel that investing our time and money in other projects would be more valuable to biology as a whole. This reaction that says, "Others might buy it, but I wouldn't," is a most discouraging one, as you can imagine. Therefore, I concluded that Dr. Goldschmidt's estimate of the sale as 2000 to 3000 copies, as reported by you, Dr. Steinhaus, was, if anything, optimistic for a \$16.00 book.

Second, because of the general recognition of this book as a classic, I was willing to estimate the financial gamble involved on the basis of a 2000-copy sale over three or four years. I found that we would have a loss, but a small one, so that I would be willing to approve it were enthusiasm for the book greater and were the third problem (see below)

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solved. Of course, I would not approve it unless satisfactory answers to the other two questions were found.

Third, there is the matter of a translator. If our investment in this book would, as I estimate it, be purely a labor of love, the work of the translator would be even more so. I would not ask anyone to undertake this task for the sum of money that a 2000-copy--or even a 3000-copy--sale would mean could be paid to the translator. One would be working for less than a clerk's wages.

Therefore, I feel the idea of this translation should be dropped for the present. However, I ask each of you to file in the back of your mind two items of information. First, we want to publish significant monographs whenever we can. Second, we want to do so when some individual--graduate student, scholar, or the like--knowing he cannot be repaid any more than we can, undertakes, of his own volition and for his own fun, to do the translation of such a work. So, should either of you ever come upon such an individual with such an intention, in the case of the Buchner book or any other of similar value, do not hesitate again to raise this or a similar suggestion with us.

Sincerely yours,



W. H. Freeman

WHF:mc