

February 9, 1962

Dear Jonathan:

The characteristic element of your critique of the supplement on Mao brings us all over again to what is "subjective" and what is "objective?" Bourgeois academicians think that by relying only on the objective, the Marxist is blind to the question of will, personality, the accidental, the "human" and therefore never really tells the whole story. Hegel, who was no Marxist not only because he lived before Marx but because he was a "happy" bourgeois who lived in his philosophic tower of ideas, saw through any such superficial analysis. Without having any recourse to "the underlying economics", and truly believing in the ideal in its purest thought sense, he nevertheless saw through it all even as he saw through his own individual happiness to the negativity and imperfections and even horrors of the actual because the Whole was so pervading a concept in both history, actuality and thought that he abolished division between objective and subjective not by "erasing" it as if it were some chalk on a blackboard but by "absorbing" both into an Absolute where the unifying element predominated over the dissident one.

Take, for example, the question of will. Nothing appears to be more subjective than a man's will. It is, philosophically, what divided Kant from Hegel and the latter ~~never~~ never had more fun than when he hammered away against Kant's "oughts" —if only were as it "ought" to be, we not only would be erasing centuries of history of what is, but could substitute the moral of men of good will changing it all, bending it to "the general will" and we'd be living happily ever after — except that there would be no movement, no forward movement of humanity.

This, however, didn't mean that Hegel thereby threw "will" overboard. Quite the contrary! He showed the contradiction within it, which didn't come from the moral "ought", but from self-development, development through contradiction, etc. The two most important historic leaps in this, said Hegel, is when will recognizes necessity and doesn't allow himself to be capricious: "the want of freedom springs from clinging tenaciously to an antithesis, and from looking at what is, and what happens, as contradictory to what ought to be and to happen.... man is the architect of his own fortune... If men remembered, on the contrary, that what happened to them was an evolution of themselves.... So long as a man is otherwise conscious that ~~what~~ he is free, his harmony of soul, and peace of mind will not be disturbed by disagreeable events. It is their view of necessity, therefore, which is at the root of the content and discontent of men, and which in that way determined their destiny itself." (Encyclopedia, par. 148)

If that were so —and it isn't with Mao —then the will "purified of all that interferes with its universalism" (Philosophy of Mind, par.) would find no contradiction between itself and freedom for all. But when discussion is "exoteric" and hence "the only method available in dealing with the external apprehension of notions as mere facts, by which notions are perverted into their opposite." (par. 573)

Dear Jonathan, you seem to think that this contradiction between freedom for all and freedom only for Mao and tyranny for all must be modified according to whether Mao did something really out of "volition" or there was "inexorable compulsion" as if the "inexorable compulsion" wasn't the very one that produced the will such as it was in life with its inevitable results—Maoism.

If I may, I'd like to say that you are too subjective also in your concept of Stalinism just because the debates in the academic world have in front of them Mao or Stalin or whatever the personality and being or not being a "Stalinist" then depends on whether one follow that person called Stalin. But Stalin was a name, only a name, for an objective world phenomenon, that of state-capitalism. That, and that alone explains, how Mao could disregard every rule in the book of Stalin as the Russian phenomenon, and still be a "Stalinist"—but I never call him that because he then is a Maoist and yet that full state-capitalist phenomenon. Please reread the section on the "Defeat of

12018

Revolution" where I speak of the fact that guerrilla war, not peasant revolution, was the element made into a new theory, and later where I speak of the reasons why ~~the~~ Mao's only original and "feeling" piece of writing--the Hunan Report--it was that

did not become the great divide between Maoism and Stalinism as, in World War I, self-development did become the divide between established Marxism, and Leninism.

There is no reason to be so self-conscious either on the question of whether what you call "monolithic interpretation" begins to sound as if it were Wittfogel. Only when one disregards the truths--and millions in forced labor is dismissed because it is supposed to be "order" as against the anarchy before and therefore somehow "deserving" of ~~xxx~~ a whitewash of Maoism as against State Department persecution and misinterpretation--the whole truth, that one has any need for shoddy self-defence. No one on earth, from Wittfogel to the Schwatz wing of the controversy--both fully State Department-- nor from a Mrs. Wright to an outright Communist (whether Stalinist, Maoist, Khrushchavite, or Titoist) would possibly wish to associate with my integral interpretation. And, while I wouldn't land an academic or a State Department or Stalinist chair, I would, I hope, make the young humanist student wish to start on new, totally new foundations. And that was my only disappointment* in your critique, that it ~~was~~ did not take its point of departure from the analysis in the supplement, but on the basis of what your points of departure had been previously.

Now as to the concrete, factual points: (a) I know Li Li-sar was not physically destroyed, and returned to the fold later; I thought that my quotation from Snow which referred to "rebels" and not to individuals made that clear. But obviously it didn't and I'll make sure to expand that point so it is clear when next I expand it for book. (b) At that point the physical divorce from the city is dealt with not as if it could have been avoided in face of Chiang Kai-shek's triumphant counter-revolution, but only as a matter of fact. The sharp division between a genuine Marxist and a Maoist there is that a Marxist would have told the truth, as Lenin said it when he had to retreat to the NEP, instead of making the defeat into the basis of theory, as both Stalin did with "socialism in one country" and Mao with "the peasant Army." (c) Because of the above the present cities and workers are what you say exactly "to be used", not to become the basis of full freedom. (d) Sorry about the wrong spelling on Ch'en Tu-hsiu. There is quite a difference in English translation in the 1920's (where I took it, I believe) and the more knowledgeable present. (e) I cannot see how that could have been misunderstood as meaning anything but what I quote Confucianism to mean in Mao "complementary in place of "contradictory" in the view of opposites. (f) and (g) Sorry to see that you were more anxious to defend the liberal writers and their genuine enthusiasm during Yanan than the new that I am stressing over and over again in dealing with the economic compulsions of state-capitalism, the typically Maoist "thought reform", the famine and tyranny that now exist. Of course, there is the opposite --and not only in ~~that~~ the 100 flowers campaigns revealed (the real revolution of 1925-27 forms no part of this particle since I begin with Mao and Mao begins with the end, the defeat of 1925-7, up through the present "communes") but what is sure to come in the future. That is why I'm showing the indications for the future, not merely the future of my book as I say in article, but future of actual developments in China and the world. Therefore what I really would greatly appreciate from you is comment on that very last section, "Subjectivity", and tell me, above all, how it is, would, or may affect your own study of China.

Yours,

Raja

*except that I was shocked beyond belief by your flippant "smacks of HUAC". Dear, dear Jonathan, don't fall into the "popular frontist" attitude of so worrying about a criticism of what is, though that be the opposite (but truly the same as GPU is of HUA) of what academicians, bourgeois or otherwise, say that you do not carry a thought out to its logical conclusion. That is the essence of *the dialectic*.

12819