

December 14, 1970

Dear Friends:

Now that you are being sent Part Two* of Philosophy and Revolution I can continue the discussion on methodology begun when Part One was sent out where I raised the question of the changing dialectics in presenting in book-form what had previously been presented in individual chapters and separated parts. This appears clearest, I believe, in the chapter on Mao. Though there is no difference in conclusions drawn, there is in the form of presentation.

This is no mere technicality. As you know, in Hegel, form may be mere show as contracted to content, but form is also, and above all, a concrete universal. To speak Marxistically, the Paris Commune form of the state is a non-state, a totally new set of human relations. So, though nowhere yet on that level, nevertheless the fact that, in the previous form, political conclusions dominated the philosophic reason for being of "Mao's Thought," whereas now the opposite is the dominant form of presentation, we can watch the self-development of ideas. Put in another way, we do not dismiss Mao's ideas because they deviate from Marx, but follow them, their transformation into opposite where, on the one hand, they compel Mao himself in a direction unanticipated by him, and, on the other hand, see opposition to him emerge in China itself. We must not forget that, where before the so-called Cultural Revolution, Mao had no New Left to bother him, he has one now.

One of the basic reasons why even the most objective and erudite of the analysts of Mao's China and opponents of Russia long before Mao did so for his own reasons, still could not see any serious elements of similarity between Stalin and Mao is due to the fact that Mao did differ from Stalin not only as one Big Power from another, but because of the philosophic approach to the "mass line." One of the best of these analysts, shocked at the "excesses" of the so-called Cultural Revolution, did think it "irrational" discontinuity from thought. When I said it appeared irrational only because he did not wish to acknowledge that Mao was accepting state-capitalism as the next stage of world development, putting socialism off to the Greek calendar, I appeared to him "subjectivist." The philosophic point at issue was that any one as "voluntarist" as Mao couldn't possibly also be a "fatalist." That voluntarism and fatalism are opposites is true, but, dialectically, they are united in Mao's Thought, that is to say, they are the intellectual reflection which express the antagonisms of the capitalist order and its inability to resolve its problems. How can it be otherwise when the only resolution to class contradictions is proletarian revolution?

Do study the changes introduced in the writing of the chapter on Mao, as compared to what I had written in the analysis of the Cultural Revolution "by itself." The dialectics that will now emerge should help you in trying your hand at analyzing current events. That is, after all, the purpose of the book, that "the labor, patience, seriousness and suffering of the negative" over the historic periods and dialectic philosophers, from

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the French Revolution and Hegel, through the 1848 and 1871 Revolutions and Marx to our day will make each one of us the type of revolutionary dialectic philosopher that philosophy and revolution will finally unite en masse. Mao who, as poet, though not as ruler, always has a word for it, declared at the start of the Cultural Revolution, "We are all critics and revolutionaries. China has 700 million critics and revolutionaries." All he failed to add was that it was in the very Humanist Essays that he was attacking that Marx first defined dialectics as "critical and revolutionary." But then Sheng-wu-lien acted those characteristics out in a manner history will never forget who talks blerney and who both talks and "makes" revolutions.

Yours,

Raya

* Actually, it is not complete since the last chapter of Part Two, which will need to be totally rewritten — Jean-Paul Sartre — I had to put away for the time being. The reason is that I felt strongly that Part Three, or rather the last chapter in it, "New Passions and New Forces," should have the collaboration of Allen. He accepted the challenge and is flying here New Year's weekend. Therefore I must skip to that chapter. We will also try to take advantage of Allen's being in Detroit to have a discussion with black revolutionaries interested in this work. It is not to be a Black/Red type of philosophic conference where we were interested in all voices. This time we must concentrate on those blacks who want to develop, not their own ideas, but those of Marxist-Humanism.

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