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Julius Lester

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**Repression and Academic Radicalism**

J. David Colfox

**Israel 1973: Reform  
or Rebellion?**

Don Peretz

**Perspectives for  
The Israeli Left**

Jonathan Brandow

**The Re-Stalinization of the Ukraine** Roman Kupchinsky

**Dr. Han Suyin's View of Mao Tse-tung**

Raya Dunayevskaya

**A Letter from Prague**

Book Reviews: Phyllis Jacobson / James Petras / Richard Boyden  
Abraham Friend

**Exchange on the Painters Union**

Herman Benson • Frank Schonfeld • Burton Hall

ing elite is determined to save the structure and itself by constantly changing the Republics' leadership and re-Stalinizing at lower levels. The task of re-Stalinization of the Ukraine has now fallen to V. V. Shcherbytsky, formerly a chemical engineer and a member of the CPSU for 32 years. Failure will mean Shcherbytsky will find himself in the position of his former friend and comrade, Shelest. Shcherbytsky will have two options at his disposal in "normalizing" the Ukraine. He will either have to take draconian measures against all manifestations of Ukrainian national consciousness, arrest more cultural activists and former Shelest appointees or call for a discussion of the nationalities question and implement the results of this discussion.

The second course, the only possible resolution is ruled out for the time being, not because Shcherbytsky would be opposed in principle (principles do not exist for a man like Shcherbytsky who at the drop of a hat is willing to smear his former comrade Shelest) but because he does not have support for it within the Politburo.

All indications are that the first course of action has been selected by the Kremlin. The forecast is for a long, bitter struggle resulting in a further polarization of the population and possible radicalization of dissident forces. In May 1972, at the time of Shelest's removal, an unsigned letter appeared in Ukrainian samizdat which gave the following characterization of the coming situation:

The change in climate in public life in the USSR in this direction is an extremely dangerous symptom. A number of events—the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet armies, a secret veto of the exposure of Stalinist arbitrary rule and even of compiling the materials of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, the hounding of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, endless reminders to intensify the ideological struggle—all these evoke prolonged anxiety, for they indicate a tendency which is capable of leading to a new 1937. . . . The suppression of national consciousness, multiple arrests of leading representatives of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, threats, blackmail, persecution, and countless mass searches serve as a dangerous reminder of the fact that the year 1937 began in 1935; it began with repression against national cultural activists. Herein the reason for our warning . . .

ROMAN KUPCHINSKY works as a researcher on Soviet nationalities problems and is a contributor to the Ukrainian language monthly, *Sučasnist*.

### Heaven and Earth Change Places:

## Dr. Han Suyin's View of Mao Tse-tung

Raya Dunayevskaya

Mao made it possible, by employing the sentence "One divides into two," to have this concept assimilated, both intellectually and emotionally, by millions of people who would have been unable to conceptualize "the unity of opposites." The phrase has now become so familiar that it is heard every day, even from children.

THE VERY TITLE OF DR. HAN SUYIN'S BIOGRAPHY of Mao Tse-tung—*The Morning Deluge: Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Revolution 1893-1954*\*—suggests that the reader will be confronting a phenomenon of vast proportions. So vast that the author has coined a new religious vocabulary—"nation-man," "man-ocean": "Unrelenting as flood, as water, the Revolution is Mao's whole being, thought and action. He merges with the moving tide within the ocean body of the Chinese Revolution. It is impossible to separate them. The one is the other." Not only are they inseparable but: ". . . the revolution made Mao Tsetung as much as Mao Tsetung made the revolution. But the choice was his." As for the 1893 in her title, its only relevance to the Chinese Revolution is that it was the year of Mao's birth.

A description of Mao at age six swimming in the lotus pond becomes the occasion for leaping ahead to the "Cultural Revolution," although this volume ends with 1954: "There is a connection in Mao between this addition to swimming and the decisive movements of his mind. Sixty years later, on July 16, 1966, Mao Tsetung would swim the Yangtze river at Wuhan the day before returning to Peking to lead the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The act was symbolic; for the Cultural Revolution would be a flood, sweeping away many accepted symbols, renewing the freshness of revolution, renewing his own youthful exploits through yet another generation of rebels."

Should such panegyrics turn readers from the book, they would be missing a phenomenon by no means restricted to an author addicted to hyperbole, whose imagination, like love, is "a many splendored thing." The truth is that there is a veritable flood of articles, pamphlets, books, films, television specials and discussions (including fulsome praise of Dr. Suyin's work by the dean of scholarly Chinese experts, Professor John K. Fairbank, who surely knows better), all of which testify to a new "culture." Bourgeois writers close their eyes to the Chinese reality because it is imperative that our state-capitalist age learn if Mao can achieve primitive accumulation of capital through the many unpaid hours of labor "willingly" given by workers to the state, if Mao can simultaneously keep the nation unified at a high level of dedication and pack a nuclear punch sufficient to impress the superpowers and especially, if Mao's China can become a counterweight to Russia's global ambitions.

\* Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1972. \$12.95.

DR. SUYIN'S PANEGYRIC MERITS CONSIDERATION, not because of the uncritical raves it got, but because her work is not governed by these bourgeois motives. For her, no "ifs" exist; all are achievements, products of the invincible Thought of Mao Tse-tung. It all began, if not actually at birth, surely at the age of six. And when her vivid imagination and talent for fiction do not suffice to prove a point, events become symbols of "facts" a decade or a full half-century later. Nothing hangs suspended, nothing is accidental, everything is continuous and "dialectical." The chapters are titled in such a way that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is foreshadowed by the revolt of May 4, 1919, called the "First Cultural Revolution"; the "Second United Front" with Chiang Kai-shek following Mao's rescue of Chiang from arrest by his own troops is preceded by the "First United Front," stretched to cover not only the alliance with the Kuomintang proposed by Lenin but its continuation by Mao, who remained in it long beyond any other leading Communist. Indeed, the chapter, "The Ways Divide," is concerned far more with Mao's factional battles than with the counterrevolution. The 1925-27 Revolution and Chiang's counterrevolution merit no chapter headings of their own, and when "The Ways Divide" is followed by a chapter entitled "The Betrayal," the suggestion is that the betrayal in question occurred "from within."

This book is the first volume of a two volume biography and is itself divided into two parts. Part I takes us from Mao's birth through the Long March and Part II from Yanan to the Korean War. One always divides into two whether it is the unity of opposites or the division of opposites. The discovery of the Cultural Revolution so governs Dr. Suyin's thinking that she reads it back into Mao's genius in 1937, when he wrote *On Contradiction*. She forgets that prior to the Sino-Soviet conflict the line was "two unite into one," that Russo-Chinese friendship was "eternal" and "unbreakable."

Since this volume covers the period of the Korean War, Dr. Suyin is faced with the dilemma of treating this touchy topic. She can hardly avoid calling the war imperialistic or speaking harshly about the United States. Her solution is another leap ahead, this time to October 26, 1971, "twenty-one years almost to the day when Chinese volunteers came to North Korea," the day that China gained admission to the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. This leap frees her to conclude: "That this 'conversion of contradiction' could occur *without a war* was due to Mao Tsetung, to his consummate patience, vision, and effort." In other words, speak softly to the U.S.

NOW LET US TURN TO DR. SUYIN'S one truly original piece of analysis, her treatment of the Hunan Report of 1927, history rewritten as fiction. Curiously, Han Suyin gives Mao's famous Hunan Report relatively little space. There is, of course, routine praise: "In its passionate yet profoundly logical sweep . . . the report will remain one of the world's great literary documents as well as a political manifesto . . . There is not only analysis, but also a plan, detailed and minute, for organization and leadership . . ." However, by squeezing the report into the chapter "The Ways Divide," she focuses on "the appalling muddle," the "backdrop of confusion, intrigue, betrayal" against which Mao produced

the masterpiece. The "intrigue and betrayal" refers, not to Chiang and the Kuomintang, but to the leadership of the Communist Party, especially its chairman, Ch'en Tu-hsiu,<sup>1</sup> from whom Mao had learned all he knew of Marxism, but whom Dr. Suyin describes as providing "ineffectual, flabby non-leadership," and carrying out a "policy of capitulation, practically handing the leadership of the revolutionary movement to the counterrevolutionary leaders of the Kuomintang." Slanders and the rewriting of history<sup>2</sup> are not unusual among Mao's followers; the curious feature here is the methodology, the manner in which they are introduced at precisely the place in the biography where they divert attention from Mao's *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*.<sup>3</sup> Why?

In the first place, the Report did not contain a "plan." Its eloquence flows, not from any "plan, detailed and minute, for organization and leadership," but from a description of the spontaneous revolutionary activity of the Hunanese peasantry. The vision is spelled out: "In a very short time, several hundred million peasants in China's central, southern and northern provinces will rise like a tornado or tempest—a force so extraordinarily swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to suppress it. They will break through all the trammels that now bind them and push forward along the road to liberation." The Report is full of revolutionary fervor suggesting a perspective that was quite new for Mao, one he did not entertain before the

1. The only reason Li Ta-chao who, along with Ch'en Tu-hsiu, founded the Communist Party in China, escapes slander is that he was gruesomely murdered by Chiang Kai-shek on April 6, 1927, before Mao even dreamed of state power. For a serious objective study of the origins of Communism in China which tells a story quite different from the one that passes for history in China and from fellow-travellers like Dr. Han Suyin, see Maurice Meisner, *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

2. The deluge of books on China is so endless, the rewriting of history by state powers so much easier to obtain that it is almost impossible to get to the source material. Here are a few of the indispensable books on the 1925-27 Revolution and the Yanan period: Leon Trousky, *The Problems of the Chinese Revolution* (contains Appendices by Zinoviev, Vuyovitch and Nassunov); Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (the original 1958 edition is now unobtainable and Professor Isaacs has taken liberties with the revised edition; nevertheless, especially since the Isaacs collection contains original documentation, is at the Hoover Institute, it is an invaluable source); Brandt, Schwartz and Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*; C. Martin Wilbur and Julie Ho, *Documents on Communism, Nationalism and Soviet Advisers*; M. N. Roy, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*; North and Eudin, *M. N. Roy's Mission to China*; Benjamin Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*; Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*; Jerome Chen, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*.

3. Dr. Suyin spends a lot of time criticizing the early Chinese Communist leadership for its neglect of Mao's Report on Hunan, 1927, without once mentioning that it was translated into Russian and published by Bukharin. The further irony in this episode arises in belated controversies in the West. Thus, Professor Wittfogel tried to support his thesis that Mao was merely Stalin's echo with the fact that Bukharin had published the Hunan Report, as though the pivotal controversy between Trotsky and Stalin on the Chinese Revolution and the fact that Bukharin "needed" the Hunan Report to "prove" that the revolution was continuing in China were inconsequential. Professor Schwartz does a finer job on the period. See the debate between them in the *China Quarterly* (Numbers 1 and 2, 1960).

1925-27 Revolution. But, as we shall see, there is a reason for Dr. Suyin's fictional account.

Han Suyin wants both to predate Mao's view of the peasantry as an unconquerable revolutionary force and, at the same time, to suggest a theory that is simply not to be found in the Report: the outflanking of the cities by a peasant army operating from a set base. Now that actually happened two decades later, at which point Mao succeeded in converting his practical experience into a "new Universal." So far as Dr. Suyin is concerned, the Revolution of 1925-27 had begun in 1924, at the time of the "First United Front" with the Kuomintang, more specifically in April of that year when the Kuomintang set up a Peasant Institute which Mao would head. For her, 1925 was not so much the outbreak of revolution as the year "the city-oriented leftists in the Party" dared to consider Mao "right-wing" whereas, she writes, with his return to the village of Shaoshan "he had begun to see the problem of the Chinese Revolution in the utterly concrete, down to earth, yet incomparably larger vision that was to be known as Mao Tse-tung Thought."

How, with such history-twisting flights of fancy, could she be expected to record the fact that, as early as 1925 (at the August Plenum) Ch'en Tu-hsiu had proposed that the Chinese Communist Party withdraw from the Kuomintang, while Mao continued his collaboration until Fall 1927? Between February and September of 1927, the forces of counterrevolution were released by Chiang Kai-shek. In April, Chiang carried out the massacre of the Shanghai workers. True, Stalin continued the united front for another five months; true, the tragedy was prolonged by adventurist "city-taking," but the August conference, which removed Ch'en Tu-hsiu from leadership, sent Mao to lead the Autumn Harvest Uprising.

The Central Committee, far from the battlefield, may not have had the right to accuse Mao of "military opportunism" and "betrayal" when, confronted by overwhelming force and triumphant counterrevolution everywhere, he "abandoned" Changsha and retreated to the countryside. The real point, the important point, is that Mao in September-October 1927 was a different person than the Mao of January-February 1927. While the peasant masses had appeared to be a spontaneous and overwhelming force at the beginning of the year, the enveloping counterrevolution was having a disintegrating effect and Mao began to rely more and more heavily on the Army, his army, considering it the vanguard.

Be that as it may, Dr. Suyin, with nearly a half-century of hindsight, preoccupied with identifying philosophy with military battles, and unencumbered by the suffering of the Chinese masses during that period, begins to roam the countryside for new acts. She is armed with Mao's statement: "The long, open struggle for power now began," and adds with foreseen hindsight: "It would last twenty-two years."

She tells us that she has done her own research and begins to fill in "details," offering readers a map which extends the view of the Autumn Harvest Uprising, September-October 1927, to the establishment of Juichin

4. A good antidote to Dr. Suyin on this period is the scholarly chapter, "Collaboration with the Kuomintang" in Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-tung*.

Central Base, January-June, 1929. As against the 3-4 pages she devoted to the original Hunan Report, she devotes 40 pages to the Autumn Harvest Uprising and the first "red base." More important, she writes of the period of the Autumn Harvest Uprising as if Mao already knew that it was "the first step taken . . . toward the creation of a new kind of revolutionary war—that of 'the countryside surrounding the cities' . . ." by predating the later-period theory to 1924-27. Dr. Suyin is able to tell a straight, simple, coherent story; its total falsity poses no hindrance. On the contrary, she goes on to describe Mao's struggles for leadership, first against Li Li-san and then against Wang Ming, as though Mao symbolized "the revolutionary masses" and the other contending revolutionary tendencies were "the enemy."

Another 65 pages bring her to the climax of Part I: the Long March. Her talent with words, and a stunning selection of photos, help make this event live, but even here her predilection for quoting 1971 interviews as though they were spoken in 1935 (neither a 36-year time lapse nor life under a monolithic state power seems to have adumbrated the interviewees' memories or sharpness of focus) puts her account in second place to Edgar Snow who told it all in 4½ pages in *Red China Today*.

#### Philosophy and Power in Happy Cohabitation

Mao's philosophic texts, written in Yanan, *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*, are today Marxist classics . . . peasants and workers now literate apply the dialectics learned by reading Mao to their work. They learn to "think like Mao" . . . From irrational, unscientific, feudal consciousness to the use of a scientific approach to phenomena is a thousand years' leap in the history of man's maturation of spirit.

TWO CONTRADICTIONARY PROBLEMS—military and philosophical—faced Dr. Suyin in writing Part II of *The Morning Deluge*. As is her wont, she treats contradictions as a unified whole, while dividing any naturally unified whole "into two." So enamored is she of the Cultural Revolution's slogan, "one divides into two," that she predates it some 30 years by analyzing the two essays, *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*, as though in the mid-1930s they had been governed by the mid-1960s discovery that "one divides into two." All of which is supposed to prove Mao's most original contribution to the Marxist-Leninist dialectic. It is true that Mao quotes Lenin's *On Dialectics*, and central to the very concept of dialectics is the unity and struggle of opposites, but Mao was not to coin the expression "one divides into two" (if indeed he and not a publicist did so) for another three decades. In any case, more crucial than a specific formulation is the specificity of the historic period which gave birth to one articulation rather than another.

Concretely, in the Yanan period Mao was undisputed Chairman, in a

5. One never knows from the manner in which notes are officially appended to writings whether they are requested by Mao from Stalin (his *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* seemed to have been the veritable bible of the Chinese C.P. and it included his essay *On Dialectical Materialism*), or quoted from Lenin or, indeed, whether they had ever been appended by Mao at all, since the date of publication for a foreign work is never the date the work was written but rather the latest date published.

position both to set policy for a new united front with Chiang against the Japanese invasion and to transform that policy into a "philosophy" governing all activity by a new rectification campaign within the Party. This campaign "remolded" everyone's thought, especially that of the youth who seemed too concerned with "book learning." Mao was famous in those days for statements about Marx's theory being less useful than "cow dung" which has practical uses. Han Suyin is right when she says that Mao always considered *On Practice* the more important essay, although *On Contradiction* became the one most often quoted. In both, however, he used a totally new, non-Hegelian, anti-Marxian methodology, denuding philosophic categories of their objective content. By dividing the question of contradiction in two; by separating the "principal" contradiction (the economic base) from the "secondary" one (superstructure); by introducing a further division between principal contradiction and principal "aspect" of contradiction; and, finally, by interchanging principal and secondary so that either can be the other, Mao Tse-tung, that master of substitution, emptied the basic philosophic category, contradiction, of its class content. So self-conscious was he about his revisionism that, in self-defense, he added: "While we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental, and social being determines social consciousness, we also . . . and indeed must . . . recognize the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being, and of the superstructure on the economic base."

Dr. Suyin is so impressed with Mao that she italicizes the last half of the sentence and, in underlining Mao's reversed relationship of superstructure to base, she concludes: "This paragraph is plangent with meaning; for it is the key to the whole process of cultural revolution (which is an idea transformation) as motive force for a material transformation (pushing the basic structures of revolution forward)." We should not be at all surprised by this updating; after all, Dr. Suyin had previously assigned the following views to the Mao of 1919, not yet even a Marxist: "Already in creating the New People's Study Society, Mao Tsetung held the germ of the idea which would come to full blossoming at the Cultural Revolution: the conscious remodeling of man and his outlook, which in turn transforms the world." All comes to pass just as she knew it would.

However, it is not Shaoshan in 1919 but Yen-an in 1935-47 that is decisive in Mao's life. He had survived Chiang's five "extermination campaigns"; he had attained undisputed leadership of the Party and the Army—two institutions that were to be one, decidedly not a "one" that "divides into two"; and in 1943, the year of the dissolution of the Comintern, the "rectification campaign" reached its peak: "It was in 1943 that the Thought of Mao Tsetung began to be mentioned as an entity. It would be consecrated at the Seventh Congress in April 1945."

It does not follow, however, that Mao thereby made a phenomenal contribution to Marxism and originated a whole new era in thought (*world thought*, mind you; Dr. Suyin does not settle for the "Sinification" of Marxism). Nor did the "consecration" of Mao Thought signify preparation for a social revolution of the scope of the October Revolution in Russia. Indeed, Dr. Suyin

subtitled the Yen-an period "Second United Front," which shows what a distance *backward* had been travelled. Whatever one thinks of the "Sian Incident" of December 1936, when Mao undertook to save Chiang Kai-shek from his own officers, it should be understood that Mao's policies of that period aroused spontaneous mass opposition. The students who called for a "Second Lenin Front" were just as serious in their armed opposition to the Japanese invasion as any of those who followed the Mao line.<sup>6</sup> But it was the patriotic war of resistance, fought as such, that transformed the Chinese Communist Party into a mass movement representing a genuine national liberation struggle and at the same time allowed the alliance with the United States.

EVEN THOUGH *The Morning Deluge* covers the period of civil war which, of course, ended the U.S. alliance, Dr. Suyin uses that alliance to talk softly about the United States today. She manages to remember Mao's "often repeated belief that the forces of history were bound to bring the two peoples together again in Friendship. It was due to his clearly stated principle of peaceful coexistence, stated in 1944 and in 1949, and carried out the years through." At which point, on the very last page of her work, she reflects on the whole of Mao's life, especially the two decades since he came to power, and writes: "During those two decades, the people of China, under the leadership of Mao Tsetung, had carried on the construction of New China. They had rebuilt their country, had learned new ways of thought and behavior, and made heaven and earth change places."

Faced with such genuflections, what can one say?

6. The jacket blurb claims that Dr. Suyin spent no less than "15 years in research, reading and documenting the works of other writers," but there is no trace of even so famous an on-the-spot source as *My Yen-an Notebooks* by Nym Wales (Mrs. Edgar Snow). (See the five volumes called the Nym Wales Collection on the Far East in the Hoover Institute, 1959-1961.) I happen to have been with Trotsky during those crucial years, 1937-38 when, in the midst of answering the fantastic charges leveled at him during the Moscow Frame-Up Trials, he was restudying the 1925-27 Revolution in China because he was writing the introduction to Harold Isaacs' book. My feeling is that had Trotsky known the extent of the Chinese Left Opposition's opposition to Mao's policy, he would have been a great deal more optimistic about the whole situation.

RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA, National Chairwoman of News & Letters Committee, is the author of *Marxism and Freedom* and a contributor to *Notes on Women's Liberation*. Her new work, *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Max to Mao*, will be published by Dell in October.