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POST-MAO CHINA: WHAT NOW?

Mao Tse-tung

THE DEATH of Mao Tse-tung, and with it, the organized mourning which confined the natural outpouring of grief at the leader's death to the specified times and places, making sure there was no interruption in production, may have created the illusion that unity prevailed in the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, in the Army, in the Peoples' Congress, not to mention "the people of all nationalities." But in fact, 1976 was indeed the year of "troubles under Heaven," by no means limited to the struggle for Mao's mantle.

It began with Chou En-lai's death in January; was followed by the campaign against Teng Hsiao-ping soon after he delivered the eulogy for Chou. Throughout February and March, there were many strikes. The Chinese also showed that they considered the attacks on Teng to be actually directed against Chou himself. An editorial in the March issue of the People's Daily, that was definitely under the control of the so-called "radicals," linked the first meteorite shower which hit Kirin Province to another ancient one which had been followed by an historic earthquake that had occurred 300 B.C.: "Some people made use of a meteorite to start the reactionary rumor that 'the land will be divided after death of the First Emperor.'"

Touched off by the removal of the wreaths from the grave of Chou, the masses by the hundreds of thousands poured into Tien An Men Square. So massive, militant and spontaneous a demonstration China had not seen since the Cultural Revolution, and it definitely was in opposition to the so-called "radicals" as well as the "moderates." But the two factions collaborated with the Army and crushed the demonstration, blaming Teng for "conspiring" in it. He was removed from all his posts. Hua Kuo-feng was his replacement.

It was to be Mao's last hurrah; and it tells a great deal about how threadbare was Mao's Thought, what a void there was in any Last Testament, written or unwritten. The "year of troubles under Heaven" was rushing onward as Mao's life was sinking from him.

By July, nature itself erupted: the most devastating earthquake hit China at its most industrial centers. The three main industrial casualties of the Tangshan earthquake were coal, steel and electricity, plus great damage in China's third largest city, Tientsin. For the first time ever in Mao's China, editorials reported looting.

No figures were ever given as to how many people died, but it is thought that there were as many as 100,000. Such a natural disaster, for which the Central Committee is certainly not responsible, nevertheless produced a series of slogans like: "Do not become entangled in old grudges among revolutionary

masses." "Do not engage in organized fighting teams, and still less in struggles by force." In a word, evidently the struggle for power continued unabated. The only thing all rulers agreed on was to demand that the workers "increase production."

There clearly had been quite a bit of unrest in the country, especially, among the most militant of the workers. This further intensified the struggle for power at the top. This became clearer still when Mao died on Sept. 9. First, the rulers waited 16 hours before making the announcement. By then it was clear that the mourning would be confined to designated times and places. Then the funeral list which was published revealed that three important leaders were absent — the Director of the Press Agency, the Minister of Education, and most telling of all, Wan Li, the Minister of Railways. The last strikes were in the railways. What was soon to follow was not clear since all other members of the Central Committee and members of Mao's family stood "unified."

THE VERY APPEARANCE of unity of the leadership, of whatever faction, standing together on the specially-built platform in Tien An Men Square while Premier Hua Kuo-feng delivered the eulogy to the million gathered there, was, however, belied by the speech itself which, while proclaiming unity, meant it only for the masses to continue to work and work harder as Hua lashed out against "factionalism."

The unanimity of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on display was hardly to last more than a single day. And it took only a month for Hua Kuo-feng to win over the other fighting heirs. It is the speed of that victory over Chiang Ching, Mao's widow and leader of the so-called radicals, that amazed everyone and got the Western world scurrying about for explanations of this unexpected "miracle." The two opposing "last wills" that surfaced cannot substitute for an analysis of "the Thought of Mao Tse-tung" against the objective situations in the world as they developed since Mao gained state power, especially the last decade he had designated as "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." The light they shed is the opposite of what either heir intended.

The rapid victory of Hua Kuo-feng over the major known tendency — Chiang Ching, Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan — makes his version of Mao's "Will," if any such exists, the one that pours out of all mass media. It is, however, first necessary to look at what Chiang Ching claimed to be the "Will," not because that is necessarily any truer than Hua's version, but because one of these was circulated while Mao was still alive, whether or not he knew about it. Moreover, the circulation came directly after Mao's last hurrah, with his victory over Teng and choice of Hua Kuo-feng as his replacement. It was supposed to have been written in the form of a poem which, far from manifesting estrangement between Mao and Chiang, exuded warm feelings for her: "You have been wronged. Today we are separating in two worlds. May each keep his peace. These few words may be my last message to you."¹

Far from accusing Chiang of "wild ambitions," Mao had allegedly pointed a warning and a way to continue the fight:

"Human life is limited . . . In the struggle of the past ten years, I have tried to reach the peak of revolution, but I was not successful. But you could reach the top . . . If you fail, you will plunge into a fathomless abyss. Your body will shatter. Your bones will break . . . It will be necessary to wage partisan warfare once again."

The final warning was against "foreigners." Just as the collapse of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang was due to belief in "foreigners," so she must

¹The most complete quotes in English from what Chiang Ching circulated appear in Victor Zorza's "Mao's Last Will and Testament" (Manchester Guardian, 11-7-76).

beware of both the U.S. and Russia — "The bird and the northern bear are equally to be distrusted."

Let us for the moment disregard that that seems to fly in the face of the fact that Mao was the one who rolled out the red carpet for Nixon (and that after ridding himself of Lin Piao who evidently opposed that move); that Mao was the one who also invited Schlesinger to China the moment Ford fired him for resisting detente with Russia; and that, in that respect at least, Hua surely carried through Mao's "Will" and now has the U.S. government's promise to sell China the Cyber computer which can easily be used for military purposes.

The will which Hua Kuo-feng refers to as "forged" refers not at all to the "Will" which was circulated back during the summer, at the very time when Teng was removed and Hua was designated as Teng's replacement. Instead, the accusation of forgery against Chiang Ching is based on the fact that she is supposed to have been "arrested while they were forging Mao's will on the transfer of political power. The group of conspirators were surrounded by security forces which, according to another reliable source, were composed of the personal bodyguards of Hua."² Another dispatch said that Chiang brought that "forged" document to the session of the Central Committee on Oct. 6, and was arrested Oct. 7 with the whole Committee voting for Hua as Chairman.

Along with these dispatches from London and New York came one from Peking by the *Le Monde* correspondent, Alain Jacob. It quoted the *People's Daily*, *Red Star*, and *Liberation Daily*, all of which published a common editorial on Oct. 25, to the effect that Mao sent a note to Hua, April 30, in his own handwriting. It read: "It's you who'll be running the show so my mind's at rest." Further, it is claimed Mao "made certain arrangements to settle this problem," that is to say, the question of the "gang of four." Moreover, it is first now reported that, as far back as 1974, Mao appealed to the "small group of four persons" not to set up a "faction." Even more seriously, Mao is supposed to have warned others that "Chiang Ching has crazy ambitions . . . She wants Wang Hung-wen to be Chairman of the People's National Congress Standing Committees, and she herself wants to be Chairman of the Party Central Committee."

WHAT IS A FACT is the disagreement on the Chou-Teng way of carrying out a Five Year Plan, and a long-range 20-year Plan to make China a global economic power. The campaign against Teng was really an attack on Chou En-lai. The Chinese masses evidently had felt all along that Chou En-lai had escaped an unnatural death by dying a natural death. Thus, the April 1976 demonstration was the first spontaneous one since the Cultural Revolution and it was in opposition to the new rulers. Chiang Ching topped that list. But Hua Kuo-feng, as top cop, differed not at all with Chiang in putting down that demonstration. The arrests were followed by the removal of Teng. All, all — Mao himself and Chiang Ching and Hua Kuo-feng — were as one when it comes to hitting out against the Chinese masses.

One provable fact about her "wild ambitions" is that Chiang sat mum at the last National People's Congress, in 1975, and while she was not removed from the Central Committee, neither she, nor her colleagues, had gotten government posts. But then it is also the Congress Mao himself had not attended. At the same time, he made himself visible — and it was not by opposing "foreigners," but the

²The *New York Times* reports (9-30-76, 10-14-76) are from Hong Kong. The *Toronto Globe* and *Mall* does date from Peking, but I found the most thorough official press report to be the one in the *Le Monde* section of the *Manchester Guardian* (10-31-76). See also the article by Merle Goldman (*Christian Science Monitor*, 10-21-76), and "The Coming Power Struggle" by Tiziano Terzani (*La Repubblica*, Rome), excerpted in *Atlas Report*, November 1976.

very opposite. Far from keeping equidistance from the U.S. and Russia, he was entertaining no less a reactionary than Franz Josef Strauss, and arranging for a Boeing 707 to fly to California for the purpose of bringing Nixon to China.

No doubt Chiang had been viewing herself as leadership ever since the Cultural Revolution started and Mao had chosen her to head the Arts. With Chen Po-ta and Chang, she had become overseer of the Cultural Revolution, though all had to work under the slogan: "Learn from the Army." The fact that she had no historic past, other than being the wife of Mao, could not have diminished her view of herself, since no one else was asked to have had a past for this new venture into this type of revolution, which was not a social revolution, and which both the proletariat and the peasantry were asked to keep away from. It was their duty to keep production going.

Indeed, the fourth member of that overseer group — Wang — who is played up as "worker," and whom Mao and Lin Piao had raised to Central Committee status to prove just how "proletarian" the leadership had become as a result of the Cultural Revolution, was in that Shanghai cotton mill, not as worker but as member of the police force there. He was appointed to trade-union leadership by the "radical Shanghai group," i.e., Chang, Yao and Chiang, because he was so ruthless in breaking strikes by rank-and-file workers demanding pay increases and better conditions of labor, for which he promptly dubbed them "economists." After all, Yao, the press tsar for Mao, had declared the correct treatment for every critic of Mao's Thought as "beat the wild dog to death."

Whether or not the Army thought Chiang had anything to contribute — and that is very doubtful indeed — surely Mao gave her such illusions. In any case, she thought herself so important and, like Mao, so distrustful of anyone else, that without telling either Mao or the Central Committee, she chose a Western historian, Roxanne Witke, to pour her heart out to. It was the beginning of the end for her. I believe it was so, not because the present ruling clique is using it against her and concocting a story of "betrayal of state secrets," but because Mao, judging by all he did to more worthy successors like Liu and Lin, would have resented any Ego parading him or herself as the new type of person to emerge out of China.

There is no point in waiting for the juicy story Roxanne Witke is readying for publication. The point is that the mild flurry of posters against Chiang back in 1973-74, when it became known she told her life's story to a Western historian, had not proceeded further, unless that was the reason behind her not being given a state post in 1975. What has happened since 1974, when Mao first warned Chiang against building factions? None have explained that, or what happened during the whole period between April 30 when Mao wrote Hua, choosing him as successor and warning him of Chiang's "wild ambitions," and Mao's death, Sept. 8, 1976.

THE MASS MEDIA had remained in that faction's hands. Tantalizing is the fact that just before the removal of Teng (but when the campaign against him was already in full swing), there was such total concentration against "capitalist roaders" that Mao once again (March 10, 1976) pinpointed the struggle as one within the Communist Party: "A socialist revolution is being conducted without knowing where the bourgeoisie are. They are in the Communist Party."

Now, however, foreign policy is brought into the campaign against "the gang of four": "At the international level, it was planning to jettison the principle of proletarian internationalism and capitulate to imperialism." Whether Hua Kuo-feng and his cohorts meant to include "social imperialism," meaning Russia, was not clear. But when Brezhnev tried to interpret the Chinese telegram on the anniver-

sary of the Russian Revolution as a "softening" of relations between Russia and China, Hua Kuo-feng promptly called Brezhnev "a liar."

There has always been no small amount of ambivalence on the question thrown in, most deliberately, throughout Mao's campaign of "Russia is Enemy No. 1." That was so during periods when all of the actual activity and relations seemed to favor the U.S. The fact that they want to have it both ways is pure Big Power politicking. We must instead see what flows logically from Mao's legacy. The fact that one can interpret the "Will" (no matter which Will one chooses) any way one pleases, testifies to one thing and one thing only, and it is not just a question of what the interpreter says. Rather it is the many gaping lacunae in Mao's heritags.

What is of the essence is not that he has not designated any one, singly or collectively, as the "inheritors." It is that he has stripped all — and not only those he physically eliminated — of any actual roots in the Chinese Revolution, or its philosophy. Thus, it is not only that those he had first designated as "closest comrades-in-arms" — first Liu Shao-chi as Party, then Lin Piao as Army — he then called traitors. It is that all history has been so rewritten that none exists with any historic past. Since the elimination was achieved, not via an open struggle of "two lines" that had equal access, if not to the mass media, at least to the "cadres" of the Party, or the Army, or the State, but via declaring them to be "capitalist roaders," and to have "always" been that, there is no history other than that of Mao and Mao alone.

In a word, there is no history of the Chinese masses except as an abstraction. The history of the Chinese Revolution is the history of Mao; the thought of that revolution is the Thought of Mao. None who now fight for his mantle have roots in either.

Unity, then, could hardly have meant more than a temporary road to power. As the world has known ever since the days of Stalin, when he unleashed the attack on Trotsky as "egotist" who wanted the mantle of Lenin for himself, while he, humble Stalin, saw the possibility of Lenin's work in a "collective leadership," such collectivity has ever been the path to Single Man Rule. Every revolution seems to devour its own children; the Chinese, Mao made sure, in devouring its children, left One and only One untainted.

Is Hua really the anointed one? Is Hua really that much stronger than Stalin, that he could, in one month, achieve the expulsion of the "radicals," when it took Stalin years to achieve the expulsion of Trotsky and the Left Opposition? It took Stalin another whole decade to eliminate the whole General Staff of the Russian Revolution in the Moscow Frame-Up Trials of 1936-38. Is it that Lenin had left the General Staff of the Revolution intact, while Mao had eliminated all his "closest comrades-in-arms"? And since Mao did so, not by an open clash of ideas of differences in policy, but through out-and-out calumny, hasn't Mao thus laid the political ground for the Minister of Public Security to proceed that recklessly, just because he had no ideological need to prove anything?

The point is that neither the so-called "moderates" headed by Hua, who succeeded at once to get the Army with him, nor the so-called "radicals" headed by Chiang Ching, who had none of either the charisma or the Long March experience, much less the original authorship (philosophy) of Mao Tse-tung Thought, can lay believable claim to "Maoism," its legacy, its totality — philosophy, politics and practice — stretching over nearly a half-century.

WE MUST never forget Mao's penchant for the extreme right-wing world leaders, out of, as well as in power, so long as they saw Russia as Enemy

No. 1. The meeting with Strauss was followed by the sending of a Boeing 707 to California for the sole purpose of bringing the disgraced, Watergate-soaked Richard Milhous Nixon to Peking. Judging by the praise showered on Defense Secretary Schlesinger when Ford dismissed him for opposing such close detente with Russia, it was clear that Mao would have preferred getting Schlesinger to China. And that is exactly what did happen when Mao was already on his death bed and Hua carried through with a lavish welcome to Schlesinger who, in turn, was quick to "learn" all about "people's wars" and, at the same time, speak of the need for "modern weaponry."

Since Russia still remained "Enemy No. 1," Mao did not even exclude a possible alliance with apartheid South Africa. It is true that his support for the African puppets of USA-South Africa-Zaire backfired, and he had to claim that he had cut off all relations with them. What he didn't change was the continuing fight against Russia.

Nevertheless, it is not foreign policy that dominated over the domestic policy, but vice versa, and that was not limited to the years, 1975-76, but was the motivating force for Mao's original philosophy. What, however, is decisive is the actual class struggles between capital and labor, as against those Mao chose to designate as "capitalist roaders." And, what disturbed Mao most about the National People's Congress he didn't attend was the fact that there had been strikes throughout the country, that labor unrest also permeated the countryside, and that the new Constitution had granted them the right to strike as well as some "small plots of land for personal needs" and some private livestock.

Instead of attending the Congress, Mao unleashed a "theoretical" debate on the need to strengthen the "dictatorship of the proletariat." "Economism" was the designation Mao directed against the workers who demanded better conditions of labor and a raise in their miserly wages. In its place, he demanded "revolutionary energy" which would release untold hours of unpaid labor rather than "give in" to "material incentives." Despite the sameness of clothing between the rulers and the ruled, there are many sufficient inequalities, all tipped against the masses.³ It is not that the rest of the leadership, Teng especially, were not as sharply directed for more and more production. It is that Mao felt he could get it via "rectification" and "politics," "Mao's Thought" in command.

WHAT, THEN, is Mao's legacy? Is it what it appeared to be when he first gained undisputed leadership in the Chinese Communist Party after the Long March and when he first gave his own version of what contradiction is in 1937? Is it what it became in the Cultural Revolution — a fight against his co-leaders of the Long March? Or is it what it was in the last year of his life, after all the original founders of Maoism had been eliminated and he had to reach down to the top cop in the land, Hua Kuo-feng?

Maoism — historically, philosophically, globally — reached its apogee during the Cultural Revolution. Friend and foe alike agree that that is the greatest legacy of Mao Tse-tung Thought. It by no means signifies that it is what its interpreters say it is, whether they be "moderates," or "radicals," or "objective" scholars. It is an historic fact that the legacy does include both the conquest of power and the "continuous revolutions" that are supposed to follow. It is this which became the challenge to the previously-existing world revolutionary center

³For the latest study, see "Inequality and Stratification in China," by Martin King Whyte in *The China Quarterly*, #84 (London, Dec. 1975), pp. 684-711. Besides tracing inequality as best possible when sources are deliberately so meager, the author also points to just how difficult it is to trace the phenomenon of the new class since "the children of a commune Party secretary who rose from poor peasant status at the time of land reform can still claim poor peasant origins."

— Lenin's Russia, not Stalin's, that is to say, the proletarian revolution of 1917, not Stalin's "bloc of four classes." Thereby it also claimed originality, i.e., to be "spokesman" for the Third World.

The most compressed expression of what was new, as Mao saw it, occurred during the Cultural Revolution. It had three central points: (1) Mao's concept of the philosophy of *On Contradiction*; (2) Mao's concept of rectification; and (3) the role of the Army.

Once Mao had gained undisputed leadership in 1935, and in 1937 developed his contribution philosophically — *On Contradiction* — which to this day remains his main "original" contribution, he insisted that it was not true that the economic contradiction between capital and labor was the decisive break, the motive force of revolution. That was the "main aspect" of the contradiction, but, Mao maintained, the "secondary" contradiction, politics, can become the decisive factor. And since primary and secondary contradictions "can" thus change places, politics becomes primary.

What was "just" theory in 1937, permitting Mao nevertheless the practical politics of saving Chiang Kai-shek from the wrath of his troops who had him arrested (once Chiang consented to a united front with Mao) became, in 1957, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*. Or, how, at one and the same time, China could be insulated from a revolt similar to that of the Hungarian Revolution, and: "To increase production, greater, faster, better and more economical must be stressed." Let us never forget the way the word "revisionism" arose in our epoch. It was against the Hungarian revolutionaries who had opposed Russian Communist totalitarianism. It was when Mao and Khrushchev acted together to put down that revolt.

Recently, critical documents called *Wan-sui*⁴ that appeared in China in 1967 and 1969 have become available, and give a still different view both of the relations to Stalin's Russia and to the whole question of the primacy of superstructure. It is for this reason that what is most relevant is to also look at superstructure with the eyes of the Cultural Revolution on the question of Mao's relation to Stalin. Much ado was made of his criticism of Stalin in 1959. As against those who cite that to prove Mao's originality, the fact is that Mao followed Stalin's revisions of Marxism on the law of value, disagreeing with him only on Stalin's not giving primacy to the superstructure.

MAO BEGAN his critique of Stalin's last work, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the Soviet Union*, by pointing to this "error": "This book has not a word on superstructure from beginning to end." Otherwise, Mao not only accepted Stalin's revision of Marx's analysis of the law of value as the motive force of capitalism, insisting that it did indeed work both in Russia and in China, though each is a "socialist land," but also insisted that commodity production will continue to operate, and insisted also that to talk of "the abolition of commodity and commodity production and the announcement of ownership by all the people would deprive peasants of their production."

Like Stalin, Mao denied that labor is exploited, and like Stalin's purges, Mao's "rectifications" were said to make the difference in labor's role: "At present in our system, to say that labor is a commodity and the workers are 'hired' is

⁴Mao Tse-tung *Ssu-hsiang Wan-sui* (Long Live Mao Tse-tung Thought), totalling 996 pages, appeared in China in two volumes in 1967 and 1969. It was published in English under the title *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought (1949-1968)*, Part 1, February 20, 1974, and distributed by NTIS, U.S. Department of Commerce, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22151. Modified translations and excerpts appear also in *The World and China, 1922-1972*, by John Gittings, published in Great Britain; and *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters, 1956-1971*, edited by Stuart Schram and published by Pantheon, New York.

absolute nonsense. After rectification and the anti-Rightist campaigns, labor is no longer a commodity."

Mao's critique of Stalin's underestimation of the peasantry did not refer to economics, but politics: "All these belong to superstructure, to the ideological. Stalin only talked of economics, not politics . . . Some attribute the saying ('all for one, one for all') to Marx, but we do not need to spread it even if Marx did." Moreover (not waiting till 1971 when Lin Piao accused him of being today's Emperor Ch'in), Mao launched into praise of Ch'in Shih-huang (259-210 B.C.), who had been "wrongly branded as an evil man."

What Mao forgot then (1959), and in 1971, and especially in 1976, was that it was precisely that ancient period of unification of the nation and book burning and most brutal oppression of the peasantry that did indeed produce the first great peasant revolt in recorded history.

In the 1959 criticism of Stalin, Mao did not limit it to contradiction but correctly cited its pivotal point to be "negation of negation":

"Things will invariably head toward their opposites. The dialectics of Greece, the metaphysics of the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance . . . It was a negation of negation. China was also like this. The contention of one hundred schools of thought in the period of Warring States was dialectics and the classical learning of feudal times was metaphysics. Now we have returned to talking about dialectics . . . Lenin's dialectics, Stalin's metaphysics, and present-day dialectics. All this is also a negation of negation."

Contrast this 1959 article, "Examples of Dialectics," to the most popular one during the Cultural Revolution, where Mao said quite the opposite in "Talk on Problems of Philosophy." There, Mao took a 180-degree turn-about, decreeing that "there is basically no negation of the negation":

"Engels spoke about the three categories, but I don't believe two of them . . . there is basically no negation of negation . . . there is no such thing as the negation of negation . . . When we speak about the destruction of mankind, we are saying that something more advanced than mankind will be produced."⁵

It was not, however, so much the ending of "continuous revolutions" as directing it all against Russia.

No need now to rehash those three years, 1966-69, which made Mao elevate Lin Piao to "closest comrade-in-arms and successor" to himself, and insert that command directly into the Party Constitution. Mao was too well versed in intra-party leadership squabbles and fights for power and "wearing the Master's mantle," not only in China but in Russia — and there are too many parallels with what happened when Stalin died and this was followed, first by the Beria purge, and then the ouster of Malenkov, and finally Khrushchev's de-Stalinization — to have any illusions on the score of Hua Kuo-feng's ability to withstand the challenges, especially from the masses in the countryside.

In choosing Hua at the end of life, it did not necessarily mean that Hua

⁵The extent to which Mao's "dialectics" have obfuscated thought also in "the West" amidst the Sinologists is nowhere more evident than in the latest work on just these Wan-sui documents by one of the top scholars, Stuart Schram, who sees "Olympian detachment in which he (Mao) looks forward not only to the ultimate supersession of communism itself by a higher social form, but to the extinction of the human race, and to the advent of creatures evolved from horses, cows, sheep or insects. 'When theologians talk about doomsday,' he declared, 'they are pessimistic and larrily people. We say the end of mankind is something that will produce something more advanced than mankind.'" Chairman Mao Talks to the People, Stuart Schram, ed., pp. 26-27. In contrast to current scholars is Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy (Yale University Press, 1964), the most profound study, by Etienne Balazs, which illuminates the present situation and especially so on Thought and History.

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became the appointed one. What never left Mao, however — and that was the Great Delusion — was that all was well once what prevailed was "Mao Tse-tung Thought." Production is not, however, a matter of "Thought" or "superstructure," with the primary and secondary "aspects" of the contradictions changing places on command with "rectification" being the judge.

AFTER ALL is said and done, what sent Mao into another spin was not the "subjective" situation, but the very real objective world developments during the period since he had initiated his own detente with U.S. imperialism. U.S. imperialism had its own reasons for not giving up detente with Russia, when it was not China, but Russia, that had been scoring "victories." It was the possibility of a global realignment that once again led to Mao's revisionist philosophical concept of the primacy of superstructure, this time applying it not only within China, but in the straight capitalistic world, now dubbed the "Second World."

Thus, after China's entry into the UN, with Teng as spokesman (and Mao's Thought dominant), China espoused a new division of the world, designating Western European and Japanese capitalism as "Second World," with which "socialism" could collaborate. NATO seemed to listen—until an actual Portuguese revolution occurred and threatened totally to undermine NATO. Thereupon NATO found and preferred the Second International helping the Portuguese Socialist Party to keep Portugal in line with "the West."

As for the Communist Parties in each country, both the Italian Communist Party and the French, who certainly are departing from the Russian monolith, do so not in order to go with China, but because they themselves, nationalistically, strive for class collaborationism, "sharing power." A state-capitalist world, Balkanized, is in no way ready to move China up to the center of the world.

Thus, in Africa, where Mao's China certainly seemed to make great headway, both with the Tan-Zam railway and concepts of guerrilla warfare, the Angolan revolution was helped so substantially by Russia and Cuba, that Mao could not hope to recapture the momentum of being considered the "most revolutionary," much less of greatest assistance to national revolutionary movements. Indeed, the attempts to work with one of the puppets, even where that was helped by apartheid South Africa, boomeranged; Mao had (so he claimed) withdrawn all aid there.

Thus, what good was it for him to show the Chinese leadership that he, Mao, had been right all along, not to go all out for North Vietnam, when now, right on the doorstep of China, the whole of Vietnam was with Russia. Russia was everywhere "surrounding China," in Southeast Asia, in West Europe, on the southern flank of NATO, in Africa, and in the Arab Middle East, where Mao had always played up that, whereas Russia had recognized Israel, China never had (never mind that Mao's China did not exist then!), China this time had to tell the PLO in the UN Security Council that Russia was "even worse" than Israel!

All these objective events internationally came at the very time when inside the land, the Chou-Teng new Constitution, though constantly "quoting" Mao Tse-tung Thought, had announced the right to strike, the right to small plots of land. And small as they might have been, it was certainly "revisionism" to rely on "material incentives" and to sharpen the division between worker and intellectual, as could be evidenced by having that "capitalist roader," Nieh Jung-chen, heading Science and Technology.

Actually, Mao's last hurrah was itself weak-voiced. He had not unfolded a new banner, or "unified" the classes; and the slogan, "Dig trenches deep," came to the U.S. via the disgraced has-been Nixon. The crisis is world-wide, not just

In Russia, or in China. The whole world is in deep recession with endless nuclear build-up to end civilization. And whom could Mao inspire with Maoisms such as "the end of mankind is something that will produce something more advanced than mankind"?

IT IS PRECISELY the totality of the crisis of the existing world, state-capitalist calling itself Communist as well as private capitalist calling itself welfare, that has produced not only recessions but revolts. The disgust along with the misery will not be done away with, by "the West" or "the East" daring to think the unthinkable as "possible" by adding the little adjective, "limited," to nuclear warfare, as if that did not signify the end of civilization as we have known it!

Mao, too, could not "negate" the truth — the masses are not just poor, they are rebellious. He could not forget that calling those rebellious masses "ultra-lefts" and having Lin Piao put them down had not extinguished such manifestos as *Whither China?* by the Sheng Wu-jien.⁶ All it did was drive them underground. The fact that Hua has survived both the "ultra-left" and the "radicals" in no way assures him long life. It only heightens the contradictions within China as its foreign policy has but one principle — Russia is Enemy No. 1 — thus allowing China to play with U.S. imperialism.

After the publication of *Philosophy and Revolution*, those who criticized my analysis of "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung" wrote:

"The Chinese Revolution was not only the greatest revolution to emerge out of World War II, and not only stopped the U.S. in its tracks in Korea; but so much does Mao move from revolution to revolution to revolution that he also initiated the struggle against his own co-leaders and his own Party and his own Army.

"Although these revolutionaries had been with him during the Long March which paved the way for that most original and most massive of revolutions, Mao thinks only of the people, and not in past but present terms. His thought is greater even than Marx and Lenin (and this in a tiny whisper, for my critics don't really wish to be heard on this) and Stalin, because it is our age, it is today, it is the future. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution pointed the way for the world."

For the sake of argument, and that only, let's shut out of our minds the global struggle that is not at all limited to U.S.-Russia, but includes that crucial most massive power on earth — 800 million Chinese. Let's also delude ourselves that that massive power, being part of the Third World that is the real focal point of revolution, can obviate the truth that Mao himself is the head of an existing state power that exploits its own masses, as do all rulers. Let's even be willing, for a moment, to blind ourselves to all reality, and listen, listen, listen only to Mao's Thought, that the Cultural Revolution would put an end, once and for all, to all division between mental and manual labor. Let's take all Mao's undisciplined verbiage for the only, the total truth.

What is that Thought, that philosophy of pure, unadulterated and continuous "great proletarian cultural revolutions"? It is, first, what it had been from the moment Mao started his most original path to military power by taking the peasant army he led on a different path than the proletarian revolution Chiang Kai-shek had just destroyed, after which Chiang continued his endless extermination campaigns against Mao's army. Philosophically, it had blossomed as *On Contradiction*.

⁶The Sheng Wu-jien documents have been printed in Peking and the *New Left: At Home and Abroad*, by Klaus Mahner, Center for Chinese Studies, Berkeley, Cal., 1968. The most important of these Sheng Wu-jien documents, *Whither China?*, which singles out Hua Kuo-feng as a chief capitalist roader, is reproduced in *Philosophy and Revolution*, p. 278.

Suppose we were willing to forget that, strictly philosophically, it is a vitiation both of Marxian class struggle and Hegelian objectivity of knowledge which emerges through contradiction. Suppose further, we allow Mao to convince us that Japan's invasion of China made it correct to reunite with Chiang Kai-shek (after all, nothing succeeds like success and Mao did win power in 1949). Have we not the right to ask: how does it happen that a decade after the 1949 conquest of power the 1937 *On Contradiction* and the 1957 *How To Handle Contradictions Among the People* are directed, not against a class enemy, but against the very masses who made the revolution?

One other original Mao concept — the "Second World" — is distinctly of the 1970s. This departure from Marxism is spoken of as if it were the needed bringing-up-to-date of Marxism itself, a la Mao's Thought. This Mao Thought of the 1970s was developed after the Cultural Revolution, after Russia had already been declared Enemy No. 1, after not only the removal of Liu (the Party man), but Lin (the Army man), and this though Lin had been the one who had initiated, carried through, and brought to a climax the Cultural Revolution, for which he was judged to be the "closest comrade-in-arms" of Mao, and named, within the Constitution itself, as the successor to Mao. It was a period when Mao, and Mao alone, had absolute, undisputed, total power.

And what was the apex of the originality which came after all that travail and "continuous revolutions"? It was the concept of the "Second World."

THE RHETORIC notwithstanding, Mao's concept of the Second World vitiates proletarian internationalism, replacing it with the narrowest nationalist "anti-imperialism" with global reach, even as *On Contradiction* vitiates the class struggle and subordinated it to political superstructure. In both historic periods — 1937-49 and 1966-76 — philosophy was transformed from theoretic preparation for social revolution into military strategy and tactics of reaching power.

For all factions now involved in the power struggle for Mao's mantle, including "radicals," Russia is Enemy No. 1. But it isn't just "preparedness" as something that concerns a war; it is military prowess that has always been the predominant concept. After all, hadn't the whole "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" begun — and ended — under the motto, "Learn From the Army"? It is no accident that the "anointed one," Hua, was the Minister of Public Security, and that he knew that to win the kind of battle Chiang Ching was conducting, he needed the Army on his side. Along with the wall posters mounted against the "anti-party plotters," in which Chiang Ching is singled out as "maggot," came a Hsinhua dispatch, saying that Army, Navy and Air Force units Mao had once inspected all vowed to "rally most closely round the party's Central Committee headed by Comrade Hua Kuo-feng and obey the orders of the party's Central Committee in all actions."

The dispatch continued: "Any action undermining unity is a crime . . . We must wage resolute struggles against those who practice revisionism and factionalism and engage in intrigues and conspiracies."

This isn't all there is to the legacy of Mao, but from the very first start of Mao's now legendary Hunan Report, followed by his 1934 Long March to escape the many extermination campaigns of Chiang Kai-shek; through *On Contradiction* and *On Practice*, followed by the rectification campaigns which had led not only

*This does not exclude the possibility that there may very well be, among the ruling elite, those who, despite a strong opposition to Russia, would rather not have Russia the enemy over U.S. imperialism, preferring equidistance from both. As of this moment, however, Hua surely prefers Schlesinger who returned from his trip to China and reported interest in getting U.S. military hardware for China to bring it up to "competitive strength" with Russia.

to collaboration with Chiang, but also Mao's 1942 rejection of Stalin's proposals to direct his army to the Russian front;⁹ to the concept of the Second World, the military has been the determining factor. Even among Communist countries, China was the only one that had raised the Army, along with the Party, as two focal points of the State.

As a theoretician of guerrilla warfare, as philosopher of contradictions who held that no theory existed outside of practice, Mao somehow spoke of war as if it were a synonym for revolution, though clearly the practice he was talking about was not, was not, the practice of proletarian revolution. What Trotsky wrote of Stalin's theories — "the empiricism of a machine gun" — is even more applicable to Mao.

That empiricism, moreover, is by no means limited to the question of Mao's most famous saying, "Power comes out of the barrel of a gun," which, after all, was also flanked by a "but" — "but politics commands the gun." No, the fatal aspect of empiricism, for revolutionaries, is the separateness of philosophy and revolution, the separability of production, where workers do all the work and "Mao Tse-tung Thought" sets the speed of the line which is ordered to equal "20 years in one day."

Ironic as it may seem, it is no accident whatever that about the only one left from the Long March, Li Hsien-nien — to whom Hua has given one of his hats, that of Premier — is the one who had retorted to the so-called "ultra-left" like Sheng Wu-lien during the Cultural Revolution: "Is earning money a crime? . . . To think that only profit counts is wrong, but to ignore profit completely is also wrong. If one does not make a reasonable profit, one has made a mistake."

Which doesn't mean that the workers will get "profits." But while production for production's sake develops, there will be some let-up in the attack on "material incentives." Like the capitalists' early discovery that piece-work is the best way of exploitation, the new rulers will be "discovering" how to raise productivity by a division of the working class, between skilled and unskilled, under whatever name the ancient "divide and rule" will now be practiced.

THE FACT that Hua Kuo-feng is presently the definitive winner in the struggle for Mao's mantle does not put a "finis" to that power struggle, either internally or in China's external relations. Whatever the consequences of Mao's Cultural Revolution's legacy that Russia is "Enemy No. 1," countering Russia's detente with U.S. imperialism with China's own detente with U.S. globalism reaching into Africa, specifically Angola, rewinding itself via Portugal to Western Europe, the fact is that the Chinese people have not yet had their final say.

Let us not forget that at a time when none outside China paid any attention to him who now rules China — Hua kuo-teng — the Chinese Left¹⁰ not only warned against the "Red" capitalist class "in general," but singled out Hua in particular as among those who were behaving as if the Cultural Revolution were no more than a matter of "dismissing officials, or a movement of dragging out people, or a purely cultural revolution," rather than "a revolution in which one class overthrows another." Finally, quoting Lenin — "without a revolutionary theory, there is no revolutionary movement" — Sheng Wu-lien's document held that: "Contemporary China is the focus of world contradictions, and the center of the storm

⁹A Canadian reporter, Mark Cavn, who had been in Yanan, has written that 1942, the year of the first rectification campaign, was the period when Stalin wanted Mao to attack Japan from a direction which would stop any possible attack on Russia. Mao refused, wanting to husband all his forces for the final victory in China (Toronto Star, 9-1-76).

¹⁰See Sheng Wu-lien's document, *Whither China?*, quoted in Chapter 5 of *Philosophy and Revolution*.



G. W. F. Hegel



V. I. Lenin

DIALECTICS OF LIBERATION IN THOUGHT AND IN ACTIVITY: ABSOLUTE NEGATIVITY AS NEW BEGINNING

IN THE BEGINNING was the Word (das unsprüngliche Wort), not as a command, but as the philosophic utterance which vanishes into thin air. The release of the self-movement of the Absolute Idea unfolds, not as if it were in repose, but so totally infected with negativity that throughout the 27 paragraphs that constitute the final chapter of the Science of Logic, starting with the very first paragraph, we learn that the Absolute Idea contains "the highest opposition in itself" (den höchsten Gegensatz in sich).¹

The dialectic wouldn't be the dialectic and Hegel wouldn't be Hegel if the moment of encounter with the Absolute Idea was a moment of quiescence. Thus, far from the unity of Theoretical and Practical Idea being an ultimate, or pinnacle, of a hierarchy, the Absolute Idea is a new beginning, a new beginning that is inevitable precisely because the Absolute Idea is a "concrete totality" and thus entails differentiation and impulse to transcend. To follow Hegel, step by step, without for a single moment losing sight of negativity as the driving force toward ever-new beginnings, it may be best to divide the 27 paragraphs into three principal areas. The first three paragraphs, centering around that highest contradiction contained in the Absolute Idea at the very moment of the unification of the Theoretical and Practical Idea, show self-determination disclosing, not a new content, but its universal form, the Method, i.e., the dialectic.

Once Hegel asserts (in the fourth paragraph) that "Notion is everything and its movement is the universal absolute activity, the self-determining and self-realizing movement" (p. 926), Hegel divides his field of concentration in what I call the second subdivision into two: a) paragraphs 5 to 7, stressing the new beginnings, immediacy that has resulted from mediation, and b) further opens the

¹Hegel, G. W. F., *Sämtliche Werke, Jubiläe*, V, p. 327 (F. Frommann: Stuttgart, 1949). The English translation is A. V. Miller's, and the pagination in the text, above, will be to that edition (George Allen & Unwin: London, 1969, p. 824).

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scope wider (paragraphs 8 to 15) as he sketches the development of the dialectic historically, from Plato to Kant, and differentiates his concept of second negativity as the

"turning point of the whole movement of the Notion . . . the innermost source of all activity, of all inanimate and spiritual self-movement, the dialectical soul that everything true possesses and through which alone it is true; for on this subjectivity alone rests the sublation of the opposition between Notion and reality, and the unity that is truth" (p. 835).

The third subdivision that I make covers the last 12 paragraphs which disclose concretions both in its totality and in each sphere, in each of which, as well as in the whole, inheres the impulse to transcend, and this includes the system itself. The intimation of totally new beginnings is not restricted to the fact that there will be other spheres and sciences Hegel plans to develop — Nature and Spirit. Inherent in these intimations are the consequences of what we will have been grappling with in the whole of the Science of Logic.

The Absolute Idea as new beginning, rooted in practice as well as in philosophy, is the burden of this writer's contribution. While this cannot be "proven" until the end of Hegel's rigorous and yet free-flowing final chapter, it is necessary here, by way of anticipation, to call attention to the three final syllogisms in the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences, which, we all know, had not been included in the first edition of the work. To this writer these crucial additions to the 1827 and 1830 editions constitute the summation, not alone of the Encyclopaedia, but of the whole cycle of knowledge and reality throughout the long, tortuous trek of 2,500 years of Western civilization that that encyclopedic mind of genius Hegel, was trying to bring to a conclusion. Just as the first of these syllogisms (paragraph 575) shows that the very center of its structure — Logic, Nature, Mind — to be, not Logic, but Nature, so does the very last paragraph in the Science of Logic.

WHETHER one conceives Nature as "externality" in the Hegelian sense, or "exteriority" in the Sartrean manner, or as "Practice" in Lenin's World War I view, the point is that Hegel, not Sartre, nor Lenin, but Hegel, conceives Nature as mediation. When I develop this further at the end of the paper, we'll see what illumination our age casts on the movement from practice that helps us in grappling with the dialectic, but here it is best to continue with the three central divisions I suggested:

(1) The same first paragraph of the Absolute Idea that riveted our attention to the highest opposition cautioned against imposing on the new unity of opposites reached — the Theoretical and Practical Idea — an old duality: "Each of these by itself is still one-sided . . ." The new, the highest opposition, rather, has to self-develop: "The Notion is not merely soul, but free subjective Notion that is for itself and therefore possesses personality." But this individuality is not "exclusive," but is "explicitly universality and cognition and in its other, has its own objectivity for its object" (p. 824). All that needs to be done therefore is for the Absolute Idea "to hear itself speak," to "outwardize" (Ausserung). Its self-determination is its self-comprehension. Or, put more precisely, "its own completed totality" is not any new content. Rather it exists wholly as form and "the universal aspect of its form — that is, method." From that moment on Hegel will not take his mind's eye from the dialectic for, as he puts it, "nothing is known in its truth unless it is totally subject to method" (als es der Method vollkommen unterworfen ist).

(2) No less than 11 paragraphs follow the pronouncement that the Absolute form, the Method, the Notion is the whole. The pivot around which they all revolve, Hegel stresses over and over again, is the "universal absolute activity,"

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the Method which "is therefore to be recognized as 'unrestrictedly universal' . . ." (p. 826). In a word, this is not just another form of cognition; it is the unity of the Theoretical and Practical Idea we have reached. Far from being a "merely external form" or the instrument it is in inquiring cognition, the method is no "mere aggregate" of determinations but "the Notion that is determined in and for itself," the middle, the mediation, because it is objective and it is "posited in its identity," "subjective Notion" (p. 827).

TO BE SWEEPED UP by the dialectic is to experience a plunge to freedom. Since, however, the rigor of thought cannot be allowed to dissolve into "Bachannalian revelry," it's necessary to work through these paragraphs without missing any links. First is the beginning, the Absolute as beginning. When Hegel refers us back to the very start of the Doctrine of Being, where he first posed "With What Must Science Begin?", it is not for purposes of proving that Absolute is mere unfoldment of what was implicit from the start, the manifestations. It also becomes a totally new foundation — absolute negation. Although from the start Hegel emphasized that everything, no matter how simple it sounded, equally contained immediacy and mediation (p. 68), it now is so permeated with negativity that it is no mere remembrance of things past when he writes that "there is nothing, whether in actuality or in thought, that is as simple and abstract as is commonly imagined" (p. 829).

The long passageway through "concrete totality" of diverse, contradictory forces and relations from the Doctrine of Being through Essence to Notion makes it clear that though every beginning must be made with the Absolute, it becomes Absolute "only in its completion." It is in the movement to the transcendence of the opposition between Notion and Reality that transcendence will be achieved in subjectivity and subjectivity alone. In a word, this new beginning is both in thought and in actuality, in theory and practice, that is to say, in dialectical "mediation which is more than a mere beginning, and is a mediation of a kind that does not belong to a comprehension by means of thinking . . ." Rather, "what is meant by it is in general the demand for the realization of the Notion, which realization does not lie in the beginning itself, but is rather the goal and the task of the entire further development of cognition" (p. 828).

Whether or not one follows Marx's "subversion" of Absolute's goal, the "realization of philosophy" as a "new Humanism," the unity of the ideal and the real, of theory and practice, of (if you will) philosophy and revolution,³² one cannot fail to perceive Hegel's Absolute's advance (Weitergehen) and "completion" as the conclusion and fulfillment, as the beginning anew from the Absolute, for he never departed from conceiving all of history, of human development, not only as a history in the consciousness of freedom, but, as we shall see later, as achievement in actuality. Even here, where Hegel limits himself strictly to philosophic categories, to the history of thought, Hegel maintains the need to face reality. In tracing the conceptual breakthroughs of the dialectic from Plato to Kant to his own view of second negativity, he calls attention to Plato's demand of cognition

³²"Marx takes over the task of the philosophy which ended with Hegel and puts revolutionary Marxism, as reason become practice, in the place of the whole previous tradition," writes Professor Lewith, and then footnotes his commentary by referring to M. Riedel's *Theorie und Praxis im Denken Hegels* (Stuttgart, 1955). It is there, continues Lewith, "where it is established for the first time that, for Hegel, theory and practice share an equal primacy, since spirit as will is a will to freedom and freedom is the origin of all historical practice." Mediation and Immediacy in Hegel, Marx and Feuerbach, incl. Warren E. Steinkraus' edition of *New Studies in Hegel's Philosophy*, p. 122 (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971).

³³See Chapter 2, "A New Continent of Thought, Marx's Historical Materialism and Its Inseparability from the Hegelian Dialectic" in *Philosophy and Revolution, from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*, by Raya Dunayevskaya (N.Y., Delacorte Press, 1973).

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"that it should consider things in and for themselves, that is, should consider them partly in their universality, but also that it should not stray away from them catching at circumstances, examples and comparisons . . ." (p. 830).

Considering things "in and for themselves," Hegel maintains, has made possible the working out of ever-new unities and relations between practice and theory. That is the achievement of Absolute Method. To what extent the method is analytic, to what extent synthetic as it exhibits itself as Other, the dialectic moment is not reached until, as the unity of the two, the "no less synthetic than analytic moment" determines itself as "the other of itself." The point is that it is the power of the negative which is the creative element; it is not the synthesis, but the absolute negativity which assures the advance movement. Since this is what separates Hegel from all other philosophers, and this philosophic ground, precisely, the now a "universal first, considered in and for itself, shows itself to be the other of itself," it will dominate the last 12 paragraphs following the encounter with "the turning point of the movement of the Notion . . . the dialectical soul that everything true possesses and through which alone it is true; for on this subjectivity alone rests the sublation of the opposition between Notion and Reality, and the unity that is truth" (p. 835).

BEFORE, however, we go to those paragraphs developing second negativity to its fullest, I'd like to retrace our steps to the threshold of the Absolute Idea, "The Idea of the Good," and call attention of this learned audience to the Russian Communist celebration of the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth, which coincided with Hegel's 200th, as this will illuminate the problematic of our day. Academician Kedrov, Director of the Institute of History of Science and Technology, embarked on still another attempt to "disengage" Lenin from Hegel with the claim that the word, "alias" before the quotation, "Cognition not only reflects the world but creates it," shows Lenin was merely restating Hegel, not bowing to Hegel's "bourgeois idealism."¹

The simple truth, however, is that the most revolutionary of all materialists, Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin, witnessing the simultaneity of the outbreak of World War I and the collapse of the Socialist International, felt compelled to return to Hegel's dialectics as that unity of opposites which might explain the counter-revolution within the revolutionary movement. Absolute negativity became Lenin's philosophic preparation for revolution, as Lenin's *Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic*² shows. By the time his notes reach the *Doctrine of the Notion*, Lenin states that none of the Marxists (and the emphasis on the plural makes it clear he includes himself) had fully understood Marx's greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, "especially its first chapter," since that is impossible "without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's *Logic*" (p. 180). His passion at the approach of the *Doctrine of the Notion* — "NB Freedom = Subjectivity, ("or") End, Consciousness, Endeavor, NB" — had made it clear that Lenin now (1914) sees in freedom, in subjectivity, notion, the categories with which both to transform the world and to gain knowledge of the objectively real because he had already, in the *Doctrine of Essence*, recognized, in Hegel's critique of causality, the limitation of "science" to explain the relation between mind and matter.

Lenin then proceeded to grapple with the role of practice in Hegel, especially when Hegel writes of the Practical Idea as having "not only the dignity of the Universal, but also the simply actual." Lenin's quotation about cognition

¹Soviet Studies in Philosophy, Summer, 1970.

²I'm using my own translation which I published as Appendix to *Marxism and Freedom* (New York, 1958). However, I am cross-referencing here the "official" translation, finally published out of context in 1961, "Conspectus of Hegel's Book, *The Science of Logic*" in Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. 38. The pagination above is to this volume.

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that the Communists are presently trying to expunge is significant, not because he accords such "creativity" to cognition. Rather, it is due to the fact that Lenin, in "granting" that creativity to cognition, had followed it up with calling attention to the fact that Hegel had used the word, Subject, "here suddenly instead of 'Notion'" (p. 213). And to make matters worse still for those Russian epigoni, it was all in the sentence about "the self-certainty which the subject has in the fact of its determinateness in and for itself, is a certainty of its own actuality and the non-actuality of the world."

Vulgar materialists are so utterly shocked at Lenin writing about the "non-actuality of the world" and the "self-certainty of the Subject's actuality" that they quote, not Hegel, as Lenin did, but Lenin's "translation": "i.e., that the world does not satisfy man and man decides to change it by his activity." But the point is that, after that "translation," Hegel is quoted in full on the contrast between inquiring cognition where "this actuality appeared merely as an objective world, without the subjectivity of the Notion, here it appears as an objective world whose inner ground and actual subsistence is the Notion. This is the Absolute Idea" (p. 823).

IT IS THIS appreciation of the Absolute Idea, not as something in heaven or in the stratosphere, but in fact in the objective world whose very ground is the Notion, that has statist Communism so worried about Lenin. Ever since the June 17, 1953, East German Revolt and the emergence of a movement from practice to theory and a new society, they have rightly sensed that Lenin's break with his own philosophic past of the photocopy theory of reality plus voluntarism produced the Great Divide in the Movement that has yet to run its course.¹ We will take up the illumination the actual movement from practice these past two decades sheds on the problematic of our day at the end of the paper. Here it is necessary to resume Hegel's own concentration on and development of, second negativity, in those last 12 paragraphs of Absolute Idea.

(3) Beginning with paragraph 15, and all the way to the end of the chapter, we no sooner face the subjectivity that has overcome opposition between Notion and Reality than we learn that, since this subjective is the "innermost," it is also the "most objective moment" (p. 836) and it is this subjectivity as objectivity which is "subject, a person, a free being . . ." Clearly, free creative power assures the plunge to freedom. It is the unifying force of the Absolute Idea. And since absolute negativity, the new foundation, is not "something merely picked up, but something deduced and proved" (p. 838), this subjective couldn't but be objective, so much so that it extends to the system itself.

There too we learn that the content belongs to the method; is the extension of method so that the system, too, is but another "fresh beginning" which has been arrived at through an infinite remembrance of things past and advance signposts (Weitergehen). Which is why paragraphs 20 through 25 not only never depart from absolute negativity as the transcending mediation, but every advance in the system of totality becomes "richer and more concrete."

The expression, "richer and more concrete," no more than the categories of subjectivity, reason, freedom, may not have led the reader to think of any such "materialistic" movement as the movement by which man makes himself free, but here is how Hegel spells out "Free Mind" in *The Philosophy of Mind*:

"When individuals and nations have once got in their heads the abstract concept of full-blown liberty, there is nothing like it in its uncontrollable strength,

¹Elsewhere I have developed more fully the ramification and break in Lenin's philosophic development (See Ch. 3, "The Shock of Recognition and the Philosophic Ambivalence of Lenin" in *Philosophy and Revolution*, pp. 95-120).

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just because it is the very essence of mind, and that as its very actuality . . . The Greeks and Romans, Plato and Aristotle, even the Stoics did not have it . . . If to be aware of the Idea — to be aware, that is, that men are aware of freedom as their essence, aim and object — is a matter of speculation, still this very Idea itself is the actuality of men — not something which they have, as men, but which they are" (Paragraph 482).

The fact that, in the Science of Logic, the stages in dialectical advance are not shown as so many stages in the historic development of human freedom, but, in the end, unwind as a circle, become a circle of circles, is, however, a constant reminder that every absolute is a new beginning, has a before and an after; if not a "future," surely a consequence, a "successor" — or, expressed more accurately, has only the antecedent and indicates its successor in its conclusion" (p. 842). Whatever Hegel said, and meant, about the Owl of Minerva spreading its wings only at dusk simply does not follow from the objectivity of the drive, the summation in which the advance is immanent in the present. While he neither gave, nor was interested in, any blueprints for the future, he was not preoccupied with death, the "end" of philosophy, much less of the world. His philosophy is "the end" only in the sense that "up to this moment" philosophy has reached this point with "my" philosophy of absolute negativity. From way back, when his first and greatest elemental work, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, ended with nothing short of the Golgotha of the Spirit, Hegel had succeeded in describing the final act as if it were an unfolding of the everlasting. When subjected to the dialectic method which, according to Hegel, no truth can escape, the conclusion turns out to be a new beginning. There is no trap in thought; though it is finite, it breaks through the barriers of the given, reaches out, if not to infinity, surely beyond the historic moment.

And in the final two paragraphs we see that there is no rest for the Absolute Idea, the fulfilled Being, the Notion that comprehends itself, the Notion that has become the Idea's own content. The negativity, the urge to transcend, the ceaseless motion that will go into new spheres and sciences and first then achieve "absolute Befreiung." The absolute liberation experienced by the Absolute Idea as it "freely releases itself" does not make it ascend to heaven. On the contrary, it first then experiences the shock of recognition, "the externality of space and time existing absolutely in its own without the moment of subjectivity" (p. 843).

SO MUCH for those who consider that Hegel lived far, far away from the concrete objective world, in some mystic ivory tower in which he "deduced" Nature from the Idea. Equally wrong, however, are those who, while recognizing that Hegel presents the transition to Nature as an actual process of reality, conclude that Hegel is standing on his head. Proud as Hegel might have been of the feat, we need to turn to both the Science of Logic and the Philosophy of Mind, especially the three final syllogisms, to see what Hegel was telling us.

What was an intimation in the Logic about Nature being the mediation is spelled out as the first syllogism at the end of the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences: Logic — Nature — Mind*. In the paragraph (575) Hegel further assures us that "Nature, standing between Mind in its essence, sunders them, not indeed to extremes of finite abstraction, nor stands aloof from them . . ."

One of the most relevant of the scholarly studies of the 1960's — Reinhart Klemens Maurer's *Hegel und das Ende der Geschichte: Interpretationen zur Phänomenologie* — holds that it may very well be true that the first of these final

*A. V. Miller, the new translator of Hegel, called my attention to the fact that in the Wallace translation "sio" (them) is mistakenly read as "sich" (itself).

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sylogisms (paragraph 575), which has Nature as the mediation, gives the appearance that "Hegel turns to Darwin, turns to dialectical materialism and other nature-geneses of man and would also mean to 'Liberty,' there leading the course of necessity," but Hegel himself brings in a "correction" with paragraph 576, where the sequence then reads: Nature-Mind-Logic. Professor Maurer then proceeds to "appropriate" that syllogism as expressing the dialectic of the Phenomenology. Whatever one may think of that analysis as a philosophy of history or whatever, the point most Hegel scholars do agree with is that the final syllogism (paragraph 577), at least since Otto Pöggeler wrote about it in 1961, is this: "in opposition to the usual interpretations of the Hegelian text, I should like to propose the following: that the actual science of Spirit is not the Logic, but the philosophy of Spirit."

Thus the focus of the third syllogism has shifted and the stress (correctly to this writer) has been laid on the fact that Logic has been replaced and, in its stead, we get, not the sequential, but the consequential Self-Thinking Idea. To Hegel this has resulted from the fact that "it is the nature of the fact, the notion which causes the movement and development, yet this same movement is equally the action of cognition."

Hegel's Absolutes never were a series of ascending ivory towers. Revolutionary transformation is immanent in the very form of thought. As we saw from the Absolute Idea chapter, the unifying force was free creative power. By the time we reach the mediated final result, Absolute Mind, the absolute negativity that was the moving force in Logic, in Nature, in Geist where we saw them as concrete stages of human freedom, there no longer is any difference between theory and practice. Which is why our age, which has been witness to a movement from practice for two long decades (ever since the death of Stalin lifted the incubus from the heads of the masses in East Europe), can best understand Hegel's Absolutes. To this writer Hegel's genius is lodged, precisely, in the fact that his "voyage of discovery" becomes one endless process of discovery for us, and the "us" includes both Marx's new continent of thought of materialist dialectics, and Hegel scholars, and the movement from practice that was itself a form of theory once its spontaneity discovered the power of thought along with its physical might. This writer has followed very closely this movement of revolt ever since June 17, 1953, and saw in it a quest for universality because she had already discerned in the dialectic movement of the three final syllogisms in Absolute Mind a new point of departure in the Idea and in the movement from practice.⁷

THIS MOVEMENT from practice hardly had the ear of contemporary Hegelians, "orthodox" or Marxist, as witness the erudite and Left, late director of the famous Frankfurt School, Theodor Adorno, whose very reason for being, for thinking, for acting was Dialectics, that is to say, for negation of what is. He entitled the summation of his life's thought, which he certainly considered his intellectual legacy, *Negative Dialectics*.⁸ This, however, has little to do with dialectics of negativity, least of all with the concept of Subject, with which Hegel distinguished his from all other philosophers who left the search for truth at Substance only. As "concretized" by Marx for the proletarian class, Subject is supposed to have been accepted also by Adorno, but, again, he keeps his distance

⁷The letters on the Absolute Idea and the three final syllogisms of Absolute Mind (May 12, and May 20, 1953) I have turned over to the Labor History Archives of Wayne State University, Detroit, as part of the collection on "Marxist-Humanism: Its Origin and Development in America, 1941 to 1975" (listed as the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection) and are available on microfilm for other libraries.

⁸The original German edition was published in 1966. I will be quoting from the English translation by E. B. Ashton, published in 1973 (The Seabury Press, N.Y.).

and originality locked into what he calls *Negative Dialectics*. From the very start of the Preface of his work, Adorno informs us that the positive in the negative, "the negation of the negation," is the enemy: "This book seeks to free dialectics from such affirmative traits without reducing its determinacy" (p. xix). The "theoretical inadequacies of Hegel and Marx" revolve around what he sees as the all-encompassing evil, the concept, that "subsuming cover," its "autarchy."

Naturally Adorno also keeps his distance from "positivists" and the vulgarisms of the knighted Karl Popper of the infamous "Hegel and fascism" school. Nevertheless, Adorno, very nearly out of nowhere, suddenly brings in Auschwitz, seeing some sort of kinship between it and absolute negativity: "Genocide is the absolute integration . . . Auschwitz confirmed the philosopheme of pure identity as death . . . Absolute negativity is in plain sight and has ceased to surprise anyone" (p. 362).

By "nearly out of nowhere" I naturally do not mean Auschwitz wasn't the reality of fascism, nor do I mean only the suddenness and shock of introducing the subject-matter in the climax to the book, "Meditations on Metaphysics." Rather I mean it is "wrong," that is to say, totally illogical, non-dialectical, from his own point of view of an adult lifetime devoted to fighting fascist "ideology" as the very opposite of Hegelian dialectics, its very death in Nazi Germany.

Perhaps a better word than "wrong" would be Adorno's own swearword: "naive." I mean that, as late as 1957, in *Aspects of the Hegelian Dialectic*, he was — almost — defending even subject-object identity: "Subject-object cannot be dismissed as mere extravagance of logical absolutism . . . in seeing through the latter as mere subjectivity, we have already passed beyond the Speculative idealism . . . cognition, if it is genuine, and more than simple duplication of the subjective, must be the subject's objectivity." And indeed in *Negative Dialectics* he reiterates the same truth when he writes that, despite the fact that Hegel "deifies" subjectivity, "he accomplishes the opposite as well, an insight into the subject as a self-manifesting objectivity" (p. 350).

Why, then, the vulgar reduction of absolute negativity? Therein is the real tragedy of Adorno (and the Frankfurt School): one-dimensionality of thought once you "give up" Subject, once you do not listen to the voices from below — and they certainly were loud and clear and demanding in that decade of mid-1950 to mid-1960 — once you yourself return to the ivory tower and reduce your purpose: "the purpose of discussing key concepts of philosophic disciplines and centrally intervening in those disciplines . . ." (p. xx). Irresistibly came the next step, the substitution of a permanent critique not alone for absolute negativity, but also for "permanent revolution."

NOW, WHETHER the enduring relevance of Hegel has stood the test of time because of the devotion and rigor of analysis of Hegel scholars, or because from below there upsurged a movement for freedom and was followed by new cognition studies, there is no doubt that because Absolute Negativity signifies transformation of reality, the dialectic of contradiction and totality of crises, the dialectic of liberation, that Hegel comes to life at critical points of history which Hegel himself characterized as "birth-time of history." And there were Marxist scholars, revolutionary dissidents, who built on new ground. Where a scholar from the West like Maurer was preoccupied with Hegel's concept of where to end, the Czechoslovak philosopher, Karel Kosik, was preoccupied with where to begin anew. Of the East European studies that accompanied the revolts, and revolved

¹Adorno's accusation of "conceptual fetishism" against Marx's famous "Fetishism of Commodities" as "truly a piece from the heritage of classic German philosophy" (pp. 109-90), is not relevant here. Contrast it to Karel Kosik's analysis of the very same section (See footnote 10).

around Marx's Humanism, especially Marx's "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," one of the most rigorous studies was Karel Kosik's *The Dialectic of the Concrete*.¹⁰

Nor were these serious studies limited to the "East."¹¹ As Frantz Fanon saw it, the Africans' struggle for freedom was "not a treatise on the universal, but the untidy affirmation of an original idea propounded as an absolute."¹² There is no doubt, of course, that once action supersedes the subjectivity of purpose, the unity of theory and practice is the form of life out of which emerge totally new dimensions. To this writer this is only the "proof" of the ending of Science of Logic, the Absolute as new beginning, the self-bringing forth of liberty. Because Hegel's great work held in sight new horizons — Nature, Spirit — the Absolute Idea had to undergo "absolute liberation" (absolute Befreiung). No mere transition (Uebergang) here; Freedom is unrestricted. It will "complete" (vollendet) its liberation in the Philosophy of Mind (Geist). But there is no doubt either in the Science of Logic about the Notion being Subject, being Reality, and not some sort of closed ontology. To think that when Hegel wrote about "the pivot on which the impending world revolution turns" that he referred only to the idea¹³ of Christianity in the Graeco-Roman world, is both to forget the Christians thrown to the lions and that it was the "resigned" Hegel of the Philosophy of Right, not the young Hegel who toasted the great French Revolution, who wrote about "the impending world revolution."

IS IT MERE ACCIDENT that, after 150 years of indifference, two simultaneous translations of the Philosophy of Nature appear in English? Or that in the new studies on Hegel, one (Riedel) suddenly sees in Hegel an equal primacy to the Theoretical and the Practical Idea? Or that new studies cover East and West, North and South? Or that many of the conferences throughout the world on Hegel coincide with Marx and Lenin as philosophers? Isn't it, rather, that the problematic of our crisis-ridden world impinges in no incidental way on the whole question of the relationship of theory to practice, not just on the immediate level, but one grounded in philosophy? No doubt, as Hegel put it, to accept a category at face value is an "uninstructed and barbarous procedure." But it is also a fact that the single dialectic process upsurges from thought as well as from actuality, and it would be equally "uninstructed" for philosophers to act as if the relationship of theory to practice is a "job for politicians." Just as the objective world and the elemental quest for universality have a crucial meaning for students of the dialectic, so do the students of the dialectic have for the movement from practice.

¹⁰Two of the chapters of the *Dialectic of the Concrete* have been published in English in *Telos*, Fall, 1968, and Fall, 1969. Where, in the latter issue, Kosik contrasts the empty absolutes of Schelling to those of Hegel who characterized the absolutes of the Romantics as having got to the Absolute "like a shot out of the pistol," in the 1968 issue, Kosik wrote: (Marx's beginning his analysis of Capital with "Commodity" means) "it can be characterized in Hegelian terms, as the unity of being and non-being, of distinction and similarity, of identity and non-identity. All further determinations and richer definitions are characterizations of this 'absolute' of capitalist society. The dialectic of interpretation or of exegesis cannot eclipse the central problem: how does science reach the necessary beginning of the exposition. . . . The dialectic is not a method of reduction, but the method of spiritual and intellectual reproduction of reality." The only one in the academic world in Hegel studies in the West who has dealt seriously, not with existing, given, established, state Communism, but with Marx himself and sees the transformation of the commodity as phenomenon into Notion, is Karl Lowith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*.

¹¹I have limited myself to East Europe, but of course I mean really the East, the Orient, and Mao's perversion of Hegelian dialectics, especially the concept of Contradiction, with which I dealt elsewhere (See Ch. 5, "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung," pp. 128-150, *Philosophy and Revolution*).

¹²Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, N.Y., 1966, p. 33.

¹³See T. M. Knox's "Notes to Hegel's Philosophy of Right," especially the one relating to this phrase, "impending world revolution."

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Just as the movement from the abstract universal to the concrete individual through the particular necessitates a double negation — and that, after all, comprises the whole movement of the Science of Logic — so does "comprehension" of it. If philosophers learn to eschew elitisms, then the unity of theory and practice, of absolute as new beginning, won't remain abstract desire, or mere will, but philosophy become action.

In his re-examination of Hegel, Professor Findlay was right when he stated Hegel's exegeses "can seem arid and false to those who see nothing mysterious and god-like in the facts of human thought." But isn't it equally true that philosophers who stand only in terror before revolution not only do not "comprehend" it, they cannot fully comprehend the revolution in thought? And Hegel did revolutionize philosophy. Absolute Idea as new beginning can become a new "subjectivity" for realizing Hegel's principle, that "the transcendence of the opposition between Notion and Reality, and that unity which is truth, rest upon this subjectivity alone." This is not exactly a summons to the barricades, but Hegel is asking us to have our ears as well as our categories so attuned to the "Spirit's urgency" that we rise to the challenge of working out, through "patience, seriousness, suffering and labor of the negative," a totally new relationship of philosophy to the actuality and action as befits a "birth-time of history." This is what makes Hegel a contemporary.



LEON TROTSKY AS MAN AND AS THEORETICIAN

Leon Trotsky

LEON TROTSKY at no time let subjectivism enter into an analysis of a situation, whether he was a creator of that situation or its victim. Because of the high tragedy of Trotsky's murder at the hands of an NKVD assassin who drove a pick-axe into the skull of the "Man of October" — so called because the day of his birth coincided with the date of the successful Bolshevik Revolution, October 25 — the last years of his life seem to have provided a field day for psychological approaches even on the part of political analysts.¹ The reason the present study is of Trotsky As Man and As Theoretician is not to add to the myriad writings about him which claim "subjectivism." By relating his behavior during the crucial period of the Moscow Trials, when all the "General Staff" of the Revolution was killed off by Stalin, and Trotsky himself was accused of the most heinous crimes, I hope, instead, to clear the air of such trite characterizations as "great egotist," "dictatorial and exacting," "arrogant and conceited." The inadequacies of his theories, unrooted as they are in philosophy, are far too deep to sink into such subjectivism.

In these Gulag Archipelago publicity days it may seem unnecessary to talk of such truisms as Stalin's monolithism, the nightmarish terror of Lubyanka and torture. But the Gulag Archipelago is both 37 years beyond the period which I'm describing, and it, too, is neither the whole truth nor objective history. It is necessary, instead, to return to the year 1937, when a lonely exile of the heroic mold of the former Commissar of War is suddenly confronted with the results of the whole decade of Stalin's victory over Trotsky; when Russia uses its state power, its Army, its brutality, its total disregard for history to fabricate the greatest frame-up in all of history; and when it is only through the sympathy of President Cardenas of Mexico that the Mexican press does hold open two columns of space for a few hours of time for Trotsky to answer the charges that it took the Stalinist bureaucracy a decade to fabricate.

Trotsky didn't know either what the accusation would be, or the year he was alleged to have done this or that. Moreover, the Trials had come at a time of the greatest personal grief in the Trotsky family, for the long arm of the GPU had

Isaac Deutscher's massive three-volume biography of Trotsky notwithstanding, there is yet to appear an objective biography worthy of the man and his times. This is no place to review *The Prophet Armed*, *The Prophet Unarmed*, and *The Prophet Outcast*, but two matters cannot be left unaid. One concerns Deutscher's many adjectives in praise of Trotsky, but he ends with a Stalinist apology: "By a feat of history's irony, Stalinism itself malgré lui broke out of its national shell" (Vol. III, p. 516). The second and truly damning point is that the last volume is devoted to the worst and pettiest type of gossip, with hardly a whiff of the life Trotsky lived: Trotsky the founder of the Fourth International, devoting his life to the Trotskyist parties at the expense of all else, is submerged by Trotsky the faithful lover of Natalia.

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reached out to kill the only living son of Trotsky, Leon Sedov. It was a predetermined, insidiously planned feat of a master intrigant, calculated to give Trotsky the blow that Stalin hoped would render him incapable of answering the accusations against himself. The lapse between the two events was but two short weeks.

The death of Leon Sedov did indeed inflict the deepest wound, and in the most vulnerable spot. Lev Davidovich and Natalia Ivanovna locked themselves in their room and would see no one. For a whole week they did not come out of their room, and only one person was permitted in — the one who brought them the mail, and food, of which they partook little.

Those were dismal days for the whole household. We did not see either L.D. or Natalia. We did not know how they fared, and feared the consequences of the tragedy upon them. We moved typewriters, the telephone, and even doorbells to the guard house, out of sound of their room. Their part of the house became deathly quiet. There was an oppressive air, as if the whole mountain chain of Mexico were pressing down upon this house.

The blow was the harder not only because Leon Sedov had been their only remaining living child, but also and especially because he had been Trotsky's closest literary and political collaborator. When Trotsky was interned in Norway, gagged, unable to answer the monstrous charges levelled against him in the First Moscow Trials (August 1936), Sedov had penned *Le Livre Rouge*, which, by brilliantly exposing the Moscow falsifiers, dealt an irreparable blow to the prestige of the GPU.

IN THE DARK DAYS after the tragic news had reached us, when L.D. and Natalia Ivanovna were closeted in their room, Trotsky wrote the story of their son's brief life. It was the first time since pre-revolutionary days that Trotsky had written by hand.

On the eighth day, Leon Trotsky emerged from his room. I was petrified at the sight of him. The neat, meticulous Leon Trotsky had not shaved for a whole week. His face was deeply lined. His eyes were swollen from too much crying. Without uttering a word, he handed me the handwritten manuscript, *Leon Sedov, Son, Friend, Fighter*, which contained some of Trotsky's most poignant writing.

One passage read: "I told Natalia of the death of our son — in the same month of February in which, 32 years ago, she brought to me in jail the news of his birth. Thus ended for us the day of February 16, the blackest day in our personal lives . . . Together with our boy has died everything that still remained young within us . . ."

The very next morning, the morning papers carried the announcement of the Third Moscow Trials (March 1938).

Trotsky labored late into the night. One day he was up at 7 a.m., and wrote until midnight. The next day he arose at 8 a.m. and worked straight through to 3 a.m. the following morning. The last day of that week, he did not go to sleep until 5 in the morning. He drove himself harder than any of his staff.

Leon Trotsky wrote an average of 2,000 words a day. He gave statements to the NANA, the UP, the AP, Havas Agency, France, the *London Daily Express*, and to the Mexican newspapers. His declarations were also issued in the Russian and German languages.

The material was dictated in Russian. While I transcribed the dictation, the other secretaries checked every date, name, and place mentioned at the Moscow Trials. Trotsky demanded meticulous, objective research work, for the accusers had to be turned into the accused.

So unused to subjectivism was this revolutionary that, at the very moment of the Moscow Trials, he was deeply incensed when the papers printed "rumors" that Stalin had at no time been a revolutionist but had always been an agent of the Tsar and was now merely wreaking vengeance.

When I brought L.D. the newspapers that carried this explanation of the blood purge, he exclaimed, "But Stalin was a revolutionist!"

"Wait a moment," he called to me as I was leaving the room, "We'll add a postscript to today's article."

He dictated: "The news has been widely spread through the press to the effect that Stalin supposedly was an agent-provocateur during Tsarist days, and that he is now avenging himself upon his old enemies. I place no trust whatsoever in this gossip. From his youth Stalin was a revolutionist. All the facts about his life bear witness to this. To reconstruct his biography ex post facto means to ape the present bureaucracy."

No, Trotsky was not guilty of any subjectivism. This does not mean he did not suffer from theoretical deficiencies, but these stemmed not from any subjectivism, a failure to be "dispassionate." Rather, the analysis of the objective situation, including objectively grounded reason of the proletarian forces of revolution, were sans philosophic roots, and thereby lacked a unifying objective-subjective vision. Since all of Marx's revolutionary theories flowed dialectically from his philosophy of liberation, and since the first appearance of Revisionism in Marxian theory (Bernstein) by no accident arose with the demand to have done with "Hegel's dialectic scaffolding" and to return to "facts" — Bernstein's demands — revolutionary Marxists felt the strong need to reassert their "allegiance" to dialectics and rejection of "Kantianism." Insofar as not being guilty of any departure from the class struggle, or being guilty of a concept of the dependence on "men of good will" to resolve class contradictions, this certainly held true of Trotsky the revolutionary. Unfortunately, this did not lead to deep digging into the philosophic origins of Marxism in the Hegelian dialectic. It is here, and not in subjectivism, where dualism emerged in Trotsky's theory at its highest point of development—his most original theory, the Permanent Revolution.

I. The Permanent Revolution and "Conciliationism"

"It will always remain a matter for astonishment how the Kantian philosophy knew that relation of thought to sensuous existence, where it halted for a merely relative relation of bare appearance and fully acknowledged and asserted a higher unity of the two in the Idea . . . but stopped dead . . . so that it affirmed as true what it pronounced to be finite knowledge, and declared to be superfluous and improper figments of thought that which it recognized as truth, and of which it established the definite notion."

Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Vol. II, p. 226

SURELY no more brilliant prognostication has ever been made of an historic event. When no Marxist, let alone other theoreticians, projected for Tsarist Russia anything but a "bourgeois democratic revolution," Trotsky — at the time he was a young man of 26, and already the head of the St. Petersburg Soviet of 1905 — elaborated a theory which stated that the revolution in Russia would continue "in permanence," that is, go over from the bourgeois to the proletarian or

socialist stage. Here are the main theses as Trotsky wrote them:

"In a country economically more backward the proletariat may come to power sooner than in a country capitalistically advanced . . . Marxism is above all a method of analysis — not an analysis of texts, but an analysis of social relations . . ."

"We have shown above that the objective premises of socialist revolution have already been created by the economic development of the advanced capitalist countries . . ."

"It is the purpose of every Socialist party to revolutionize the minds of the working class in the same way as development of capitalism has revolutionized social relations . . . The colossal influence of the Russian revolution manifests itself in killing party routines, in destroying Socialist conservatism, in making a clean contest of proletarian forces against capitalist reaction a question of the day . . ."

Despite the sweeping prediction made with Parvus³ in 1904 and elaborated into the specifically Trotskyist theory, 1905-6, the theory underwent r.o. "suffering, seriousness, patience, labor of the negative,"⁴ that is to say, was not fleshed out either as to the actually developing forces for revolution or deepening of theory to meet the new reality. It was still-born throughout the period 1906-1917, as well as after Lenin's death when Trotsky began claiming it was "proved." It remained like a bolt out of the blue, not only when it was written, not only in the period between the 1905 and 1917 Revolutions, but also in the period of actual workers' power.

Above all — and that is the most telling and authentic manifestation of its failure to undergo objective-subjective dialectical development, that is, meet the challenge of new times and new problems — the theory of permanent revolution was never used as foundation for the establishment of an independent political tendency, grouping or party. That was true when Trotsky was a Menshevik, when he considered himself "above" all "factions," and tried to "unify" all tendencies, when he became a Bolshevik in 1917, and even when he finally did call for the creation of a new Fourth International against the Stalinized Third International. When he lost out to Stalin the struggle for the mantle of Lenin, and wrote *My Life* on the island of Prinkipo, he said:

"Finally, I never endeavored to create a grouping on the basis of the theory of the permanent revolution. My inner-party stand was a conciliatory one and when in certain moments I strove for groupings, then it was precisely on this basis. My conciliationism was derived from a certain Social Revolutionary fatalism. I believed that the logic of the class struggle would compel both factions to pursue the same revolutionary line . . ."

He quoted and accepted Lenin's characterization: "Conciliationism was represented most consistently by Trotsky, who, almost alone, endeavored to lay a theoretical foundation for this current."⁵

³See Leon Trotsky's *Our Revolution* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1918). Also see *The Permanent Revolution* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1931) and "Historic References on the Theory of Permanent Revolution," which is Appendix Three to Vol. II of *The History of the Russian Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937).

⁴For a biography on the life of Parvus as well as his role in the elaboration of the theory of permanent revolution, see *The Merchant of Revolution* by Z. A. B. Zeman and W. B. Scharlau (London: Oxford University Press, 1965). Also see Deutscher's *The Prophet Armed* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 104, ff.

⁵G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. by J. B. Baillie (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1931), p. 81.

⁶Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution*, p. 20.

⁷V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. IV (New York: International Publishers, 1943), p. 93.

Was the dualism then only between the decisive, "correct" theory and "derivative," "organizational" questions? Didn't it rather characterize the theory of revolution? Lenin's remarks on conciliationism were limited to the organizational question, were written before World War I, while the pivotal, objective, shocking, all-determining question became philosophic: why did the Second International collapse at the very moment when the imperialist war broke out? The simultaneity of the two events could not be answered only by pointing to the all-too-obvious betrayal of established Socialism. They demanded a re-examination of the very mode of thought which led those who did not betray not to have anticipated such a development, much less prepare in a totally new way now (1914) "to meet destiny," that is, to assure the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war.

Or so Lenin, who felt a compulsion to return to the origins of Marxism in the Hegelian dialectic, thought. As not only the Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic² but all that he wrote and did between 1914-1924 showed, Lenin had singled out two dialectical principles — "transformation into opposite," and "Cognition not only reflects the world but creates it" — to theoretically prepare himself for revolution as he worked out a new relationship of the movement from theory to the movement from practice, the experiences of the masses. This is not the place to deal with what I consider the Great Divide in Marxism — Lenin's break not only with the Second International but with his own philosophic past and philosophic preparation for both the Russian Revolution and the world revolution, to enlist "all the toilers to a man in the government of the state" since "socialism cannot be introduced by a minority, a party."³

HERE what is of concern are the consequences of Trotsky's failure to do any re-examination, or application for that matter, of his theory of permanent revolution. This was so in 1914-17, and 1917-24. In 1919 (and again in 1923) when his *Collected Works* began being published in Russia, and 1905, which included of course the theory of permanent revolution, was reproduced, the volume also included his wild 1909 attack on Bolshevism: "While the anti-revolutionary aspects of Menshevism are already expressed in full force today, the anti-revolutionary features of Bolshevism threaten to be of great danger only in the event of revolutionary victory." This was footnoted as follows: "As is known, this didn't take place for Bolshevism, which under the leadership of Lenin (though not without internal struggle) accomplished ideological re-arming in this most important question in Spring of 1917, that is, before the seizure of power."⁴

It is true that except for Lenin, the Bolsheviks were found wanting on the question of putting the struggle for proletarian power on the order of the day in October, that Lenin had to "re-arm" the Party and did so from the moment he returned to Russia in April, 1917. It is not true that Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution was "proven correct" or that the rearming was "belated" because Lenin was not armed with the theory of permanent revolution. What Lenin was "armed" with, and Trotsky was not, was having faced the reality of 1914 with a totally new concept of Hegelian dialectics as self-developing "Subject." Naturally Lenin at once "translated" Subject as the masses — proletarian and peasant.

² I was the first to translate this into English and it appears as Appendix B to *Marxism and Freedom*, first edition (New York: Bookman, 1958). In 1961 it finally appeared in "official" translation as "Conspectus of Hegel's Book *The Science of Logic*" in *Lenin's Collected Works*, Vol. 38, pp. 85-238.

³ Elsewhere I have developed this fully. See Ch. 3, "The Shock of Recognition and the Philosophic Ambivalence of Lenin," in *Philosophy and Revolution* (New York: Dell, 1973) pp. 95-120.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 320.

⁵ Leon Trotsky, *Collected Works*, Vol. I, "War and Revolution," second Russian edition, Moscow, 1923.

Where Lenin called for "transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war," Trotsky called for "a struggle for peace," "peace without annexations." Where Lenin called for the approval by name of Liebknecht who alone voted against granting war credits to the Kaiser, Trotsky led the "internationalists" at Zimmerwald to reject that as "a perversion of tactical evaluations, conformable to German conditions alone" as "inappropriate in the given documents." And where to Lenin "self-development of the Idea" imparted a new urgency to the "principle" of self-determination of nations by the "dialectic of history" which makes it possible for small nations to become "the bacilli" for proletarian revolution, Trotsky concentrated his fire on calling for an "end to circle exclusiveness," "factional insulation."

Now, even if we were willing to "skip over" the differing theories as to how to fight against the imperialist war as not necessarily related to any preconceived theories of revolution, and held that what counts is 1917 and 1917 alone, how does that "prove" Trotsky's conclusion that the November Revolution "liquidated" all differences between him and Lenin?

Much later he was to claim "correctness" for his theory, not only as it concerned Russia, 1917, but China, 1927: "The conception of the permanent revolution was confirmed once more, this time not in the form of a victory, but of a catastrophe."¹¹ The defeat of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution by Chiang Kai-shek's counter-revolution was related to Stalin's mistakes vs. Trotsky's "correct" estimation of the peasantry as incapable of "an independent role and even less a leading one." This integrity of the lowly role of the peasantry in his concept of the theory of the permanent revolution was so all-pervasive that as late as 1937 Trotsky continued laughing at Mao's claim of having established peasant Soviets.

Up to the very end (1940) he reiterated; "I repeatedly returned to the development and the grounding theory of the permanent revolution . . . the peasantry is utterly incapable of an independent political role."¹² We cannot but conclude that it is not only a question that Trotsky's words speak louder than any of Stalin's allegations about Trotsky's "underestimation of the peasantry," but, above all, that a theory so far removed from the realities of the age of imperialism and state-capitalism had to collapse of its own hollowness.¹³

Dialectics takes its own toll of theory and theoreticians: the dualism in the theory of permanent revolution resides not alone in the artificially impenetrable division between proletariat and peasantry, nor between theory and organizational "conciliationism," but in uniting at one moment what the previous moment had been declared impossible of unification. At the same time, the lack of a dialectical unifying force is best seen within the theory, precisely on the level which gave it the greatest authority — world revolution vs. nationalism. I'm not here referring to the struggle against Stalin's concept of "socialism in one country," but to the National Question within the context of the U.S.S.R.-to-be-created as outpost of world revolution which totally preoccupied Lenin on his deathbed.

Clearly, by now "conciliationism" was not the issue. Quite the contrary, Lenin had called Trotsky "the best Bolshevik," and Trotsky himself, now that he

¹¹Leon Trotsky's Preface to the original 1938 edition of Harold Isaacs' *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*. Mr. Isaacs, who eliminated this from subsequent editions, also took liberties with later editions of his own work.

¹²Leon Trotsky, *Stalin*, (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), p. 425. For that matter, directly in *The History of the Russian Revolution* and directly after Trotsky himself shows that the Land Committees were being transformed "from chambers of conciliation into weapons of agrarian revolution," he still repeats "This fact that the peasantry while round it possible once more . . . the real issue in their history — to act as a revolutionary factor strength." Vol. 1, p. 407.

¹³See the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection at the Wayne State University Library of Labor History and Urban Affairs, Detroit, Michigan, which has all my documents available on microfilm.

accepted the 1903 concept of the vanguard party, did so without any of the modifications Lenin had introduced through the two decades 1903-23.¹⁴ It had become a veritable fetish. Moreover, Lenin had fully entrusted him to conduct the fight against Stalin who acted the Great Russian chauvinist against the Georgians. Lenin was too ill to appear at the Congress and Trotsky was asked to act out for him, as Lenin put it: "I am declaring war against Russian chauvinism . . . It is said we need a single apparatus. From where comes such assertions? Is it not from the same Russian apparatus . . . borrowed from Tsarism and only barely anointed with a Soviet chrism?"¹⁵

To Lenin, the National Question was inseparable from internationalism, from proletarian internationalism, and what he was writhing in agony about was that now that the Communists were in power, they were acting as imperialists: "scratch a Communist and you'll find a Great Russian chauvinist." This bomb he was going to release against Stalin, and indeed it formed the very ground for which, in his Will, he was to ask for "the removal of Stalin," once again ended in "conciliationism," that which Lenin feared and warned against most — "a rotten compromise." Here is Trotsky's explanation: "I do agree with Lenin in substance. I want a radical change in the policy on the national question, a discontinuance of persecutions of the Georgian opponents of Stalin . . . The last thing I want is to start a fight at the congress for any changes in organization. I am for preserving the status quo . . . I am against removing Stalin . . . There should be no more intrigues, but honest co-operation."¹⁶

Whether that fatal compromise was bound in part, as Professor Lewin holds, by "magnanimity,"¹⁷ or was the inescapable result of the dualism in theory not grounded in philosophy, will be put to the severest test at the time of the Hitler-Stalin Pact after "Trotskyism" reached its peak both in the proclamation for world revolution and the establishment of the Fourth International, and yet also clung to the defense of Stalin's Russia as a workers' state! Thus had Trotsky, who proclaimed the "higher truth" to be world revolution, stopped dead, as Kant had on a different level, at bare appearance — the very "socialism in one country" he fought so bitterly and correctly for two long decades.

II. The Fourth International and Leadership, Leadership, Leadership

WHETHER TROTSKY could not or did not wish to fathom the phenomenon of the workers' state being transformed into its opposite — a state-capitalist society¹⁸ — the point is that his theory, unrooted as it was in philosophy, had him face reality stuck in the fixed particular of nationalized property, as if that equalled socialism. In any case, he denied the fact. Yet, clearly, just as every thing had changed in the private capitalist world since the Depression caused its collapse and it had to accept state intervention, state planning (be it in the form of the so-called "combined development" as New Dealism or as total statism as

¹⁴Marxism and Freedom, Ch. XI, "Forms of Organization: The Relationship of the Spontaneous Self-Organization of the Proletariat to the 'Vanguard Party,'" pp. 177-193.

¹⁵The latest edition of Lenin's Collected Works, Vol. 45, as well as Vol. 36, finally have reproduced both the Will and the disputes on the National Question. The original inspiration and reproduction of these documents were first published by Trotsky in *The Stalin School of Falsification* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1937).

¹⁶Leon Trotsky, *My Life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), pp. 485-6.

¹⁷Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (New York: Vintage, 1970), pp. 140-1.

¹⁸I was the first to analyze the three Five Year Plans in my study of state capitalism in *The New International*, 1942. This series of articles has since been reproduced as *Russia as State-Capitalist Society* (Detroit: News & Letters, 1973).

in Nazi Germany), so had it in Stalin's Russia. Though he himself entitled his most comprehensive economic analysis of Russia *The Revolution Betrayed*; though he knew of the most oppressive conditions of labor, including forced labor; though he had written against Stalin's fantastic scheme of "liquidating" the peasantry; though he fought the Moscow Trials, 1936-38,¹⁹ which had decapitated the whole "General Staff of the Revolution" as the greatest frame-up trials in all history; and though with a non-existent "socialism in one country" and existing Big Power politics; Stalin had reduced the Third International to nothing but outposts of defense of national Bolshevism, still Trotsky denied any change in the class structure of Russia. He denied the very theory: "The first concentration of the means of production in the hands of the state to occur in history was achieved by the proletariat with the method of social revolution, and not by capitalists with the method of trustification."²⁰ The role of the totalitarian bureaucracy was defined as that of policeman arrogating to himself a greater share of wealth.

And because to Trotsky Stalinist Russia was still considered to be a workers' state, he held that the Moscow Trials had weakened Stalinism. Actually, they consolidated that rule. But to Trotsky the macabre Kremlin purges only proved that "Soviet society organically tends toward the ejection of the bureaucracy!" Like all fetishisms, the fetishism of state property blinded Trotsky from following the course of the counter-revolution in the relations of production. The legitimization of the counter-revolution against October — the Stalinist Constitution of 1936 — Trotsky viewed merely as something that first "created the political premise for the birth of a new possessing class." As if classes were born from political premises!

The struggle against Stalinism had the air of self-defense, not because he was subjective, but because, objectively, he saw nothing totally new in world capitalist development except that it continued to be in "death agony." Nothing had changed since Lenin's death except leadership. Stalin was the "organizer of defeats" — and he, Trotsky, could organize victories, if the proletariat followed him. This is not meant sarcastically. He certainly was a leader of the only victorious proletarian revolution in history. Whether as Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee, which had planned the actual insurrection, builder of a Red Army out of raw peasant recruits that withstood all counter-revolutionary attacks from Tsarist generals as well as all foreign militarists who attacked the newly born workers' state; whether as Commissar of War or Foreign Minister or fighter against Stalin, history will not deny him his victories.

But that is not the mark of a revolutionary Marxist theoretician whose philosophic perspective charts the course of actual historical development on the basis of the most profound analysis of the objective situation, in strict relationship to the subjective development, the new form of workers' revolt, and on the basis of the objective and subjective, working out dialectically of a new relationship of theory to practice, in a way that the philosophy of revolution and the actual forces of revolution do not get separated. But Trotsky, since he never moved away from that fixed particular, nationalized property (any more than Kant from the thing-in-itself), stated in nothing less fundamental than "The Imperialist War and Proletarian Revolution," the manifesto of a new Fourth International: "To turn one's back on the nationalization of the means of production on the ground that, in and of itself, it does not create the well-being of the masses, is tantamount to sentencing the granite foundation to destruction on the ground that it is impossible to live without walls and a roof."²¹

¹⁹See *The Case of Leon Trotsky* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1937) and *Not Guilty: Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1938).

²⁰Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1937), pp. 247-8.

²¹*The Founding Conference of the Fourth International*, published by the Socialist Workers Party, New York, 1939.

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THE MAN OF OCTOBER couldn't have fallen any deeper into the mire of the ideas and methodology of the Russian bureaucracy which, instead of theory, was presenting an administrative formula for minimum costs and maximum production — the true gods of all class rulers. Empiricism does indeed wreak its greatest vengeance on Marxist revolutionaries whose universalism sinks to abstract revolutionism disconnected from the self-developing Subject, and they get stuck in a fixed particular like nationalized property. Ever since the rise of Nazism and the capitulation to Stalin of the greatest (except, of course, Trotsky himself) Left opposition theoretician, Christian Rakovsky, Trotsky faced a historic What Next? but answered it as if what is required is "five years of uninterrupted work to insure succession."²²

If only Trotsky had developed a theory to measure up to the challenge of the times, even if the "cadre" had not. But, no, as the world crises moved from Depression to War and the Hitler-Stalin Pact signaled a green light for that holocaust, Trotsky operated on the basis of the Fourth International Manifesto, once again reducing the whole question to a matter of leadership: "The world situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat." And again: "The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership." And once again, for the last time in his lifetime, the organization he founded was not founded on the theory of permanent revolution, either as he conceived it in 1905-06, or without further development, he had seen it "proven" in 1917 in victory and in 1927 in defeat, or throughout the struggle against Stalin's "socialism in one country," or when he finally broke away from being a "Left oppositionist" to something as total as founder of the Fourth International.

The duality between the concept of world revolution and that of defense of Stalinist Russia; between socialism as a classless society that can only realize itself as a world society, and socialism = nationalized property isolated from the world economy; between workers as the vanguard and workers who need to submit to "the militarization of labor"; between "Party" as leader of the proletarian revolution and "Party" as ruling over workers' own instincts and demands — all these dualities were compounded by, but not limited to, the contradiction between the dialectics of the revolution and the specific Subject who constituted the majority of "the masses," when they happened to be peasant rather than proletarian. No wonder Trotsky ended up by tailending Stalinism both on the question that he himself first articulated — the State Plan — and on the "vanguard party to lead."

The greatness of Leon Trotsky as revolutionary, as historian and pamphleteer will far exceed his conceptual perceptions, the cognition which gives action its direction. Leon Trotsky as man will tower above Leon Trotsky as theoretician.

²²Leon Trotsky, *Trotsky's Diary in Exile, 1935* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 46-7; states "After his [Rakovsky's] capitulation there is nobody left . . . and still I think that the work which I am engaged in now, despite its insufficient and fragmentary nature, is the most important work in my life. More important than the period of the Civil War, or any other. For the sake of clarity I would put it this way: Had I not been present in 1917 in St. Petersburg, the October Revolution would have taken place on the condition that Lenin was present and in command. The same can, by and large, be said of the civil war period . . . Thus I cannot speak of the indispensability of my work even about the period from 1917-21. But now my work is indispensable in the full sense of the word . . . There is now no one except the 2nd and 3rd Internationals. I need at least five years of uninterrupted work to insure the succession."

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Studies in Contemporary Communism submitted the preceding essay on Trotsky to Ernest Mandel for his critique, which is printed below with Raya Dunayevskaya's rejoinder.

Mrs. Dunayevskaya's contribution touches on some key questions. She does it from the standpoint of a particular shibboleth ("Trotsky was theoretically wrong, because he didn't study Hegelian philosophy"), which, to say the least, is rather peculiar. Needless to say, I cannot agree with her assessment.

I will single out a series of points, where, it seems to me, most students of Marxist thought, or at least of the writings of Trotsky and Lenin, will agree with me that she is wrong.

She holds against Trotsky (and against his theory of the permanent revolution, which is his main theoretical achievement) his statement that "the peasantry is utterly incapable of [playing] an independent political role." She adds to that that "Trotsky's words speak louder than any of Stalin's allegations about Trotsky's underestimation of the peasantry," and above all, "that a theory so far removed from the realities of the age of imperialism and state-capitalism had to collapse of its own hollowness."

To this I would reply (besides the point that "state-capitalism," in Mrs. Dunayevskaya's sense, far from being a "reality," is a concept which doesn't correspond to any social reality anywhere in the world; where you have capitalism, it isn't state capitalism; and where you have statified planned economy, you don't have capitalism, as the present world slump should again convince anybody who is not blinded by prejudice):

1. That Trotsky, in his theory of permanent revolution, explicitly states that the peasantry will play the major role qua number of combatants in any revolution in a backward country, which isn't exactly "underestimating the peasantry";

2. That his point about the impossibility of an independent political role of the peasantry means simply that there have never existed, will never exist or cannot exist in the bad world in which we live since the capitalist system spread globally, any "peasant state" or "peasant government," and that therefore, whenever the working class and (or) its revolutionary party does not establish hegemony over the rebellious peasant masses, even the broadest peasant uprisings and revolutions will only lead to capitalist counter-revolution and to a bourgeois state.

Now far from this being a "hollow" theory "far removed from the realities of the age of imperialism," I would contend that it explains what happened in all revolutions in all backward countries in the 20th century, positively and negatively. And I would cap my argument by reminding Mrs. Dunayevskaya that Lenin, who supposedly in opposition to Trotsky had understood Hegelian dialectics, came to exactly the same conclusion at the end of his life as Trotsky had formulated on the transport workers congress of March 27, 1921: "Notre expérience nous a appris — et nous en trouvons la confirmation dans le développement de toutes les révolutions du monde, si l'on considère la nouvelle époque, disons les 150 dernières années — que partout et toujours il en a été de même: toutes les tentatives faites par la petite bourgeoisie en général, et les paysans en particulier, pour prendre conscience de leur force, pour diriger à leur manière l'économie et la politique, ont abouti à un échec. Ou bien ils doivent se placer sous la direction du prolétariat, ou bien sous celle des capitalistes. Il n'y a pas de milieu. Ceux qui rêvent d'un moyen terme sont des rêveurs, des songe-creux" (*Oeuvres Choisies en deux volumes*, p. 839, Moscou, Editions en Langues étrangères, 1947).

Mrs. Dunayevskaya holds against Trotsky that he "equalled nationalized

property with socialism." Nothing was further from his mind. He thought (correctly so) that the suppression of private property of the means of production was a necessary but insufficient prerequisite for a socialist society. But he never for one minute defended the idea that you had "socialism" in Russia; that was one of the main contents of his fight against Stalin, to deny strongly any such utopia. For Trotsky Russia was a society in transition between capitalism and Socialism, which could fall back towards capitalism (if private property was restored and a new class of buyers of labor power would become a ruling class) or advance towards socialism (if the revolution spread towards large parts of the world and the monopoly of power of the bureaucracy in state and economy was abolished). Mrs. Dunayevskaya, by eliminating all these nuances, eliminates transition, i.e. mediation, from her thinking, which is not very suitable for a student of Hegel, who, after all, saw in mediation one of the key characteristics of dialectics.

Mrs. Dunayevskaya takes up against Trotsky the slander of his being in favor of "militarization of labor," whereas the concrete measures this refers to were taken by a unanimous decision of the Bolshevik Central Committee in 1919, in the midst of a civil war (including the vote of the later "workers opposition" leaders). She then goes on to make Trotsky's defense of the Leninist theory of organization equivalent with the defense of the "party ruling over workers' own instincts and demands," without explaining: (1) why Lenin who in opposition to Trotsky had studied Hegelian dialectics, clung to these concepts till the end of his life; (2) why workers, in innumerable massive revolutions throughout the 20th century, showed themselves unable to overthrow capitalism through spontaneous actions, "basing themselves on their own instincts and demands."

Two of the most difficult problems of contemporary Marxism, if not sociology and social sciences in general, the problem of the formation of proletarian class consciousness in a society hostile to socialism and dominated by the enemies of the workers, and the problem of bureaucracy, beginning with that of the bureaucratization of the workers' organizations, are dismissed with the sleight of hand as nonexistent or irrelevant, and all evil is brought back to the wrong ideas of a single person. This doesn't sound very "dialectical," not to say "materialist" or "Marxist," to me.



Ernest Mandel has devised several straw men, grouped under a single wifely designation, Mrs., whom he accuses of slandering Trotsky: "Mrs. Dunayevskaya takes up against Trotsky the slander of his being in favor of 'militarization of labor' whereas the concrete measures this refers to were taken by a unanimous decision of the Bolshevik Central Committee in 1919, in the midst of civil war . . ." In the process of his expose of "Mrs. Dunayevskaya" as "blinded by prejudice," Mandel achieves some remarkable feats:

One, the revolutionary role of the peasantry does a disappearance act, first by being reduced "qua number of combatants," then by claiming that Trotsky's thesis of the impossibility of the peasantry's playing a political role "means simply that there have never existed, will never exist . . . any 'peasant state' or 'peasant government'," and, finally, by proclaiming that "Mrs. Dunayevskaya" needs "reminding that Lenin came to exactly the same conclusion at the end of his life as Trotsky had formulated . . ." If even we leave aside the fact that this flies in the face of Trotsky's own pronouncement that, on the question of the peasantry, he was Lenin's "pupil," how could we disregard the irony of Mandel's choice of speeches from which to quote? It was the speech delivered to the very union that initiated the fight against Trotsky's "militarization of labor," demanding the return of the union to their own control, and Lenin referred to the disagreement by citing the fact that the Ninth RCP Congress had dealt with "the mistakes that required rectification" and did so "by subordinating the upper ranks to the lower

ranks." That part of Lenin's speech Mandel does not quote; what he does quote was not the point at issue between Lenin and Trotsky for some two decades.

Two, "the slander." It was not I, but Trotsky, who used the expression, "militarization of labor." He held that each worker must feel himself "to be a soldier who cannot freely dispose of himself . . . That is the militarization of labor." The "concrete measures" this referred to were not what the CC approved, rather it referred to the merging of the trade unions into the state which not only the CC but the whole Congress rejected. It was not proposed "in the midst of civil war," but at the end of it. The Congress, instead, approved Lenin's Resolution because it agreed with his analysis: "Taken as a whole, Trotsky's policy is one of bureaucratically nagging the trade unions . . . There is valuable military experience, heroism, zeal, etc. There is the bad experience of the worst elements of the military: bureaucracy and conceit."

Three, "the particular shibboleth" attributed to "Mrs. Dunayevskaya": "Trotsky was theoretically wrong, because he did not study Hegelian philosophy." Although Mandel enclosed the sentence in quotation marks, I not only never made any such ludicrous assertions, I was taking issue with Trotsky's concept of "belated" (April, 1917) "rearming of the Party," with its underlying assumption that by then it was somehow anchored in Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution. In arguing that "what Lenin was armed with and Trotsky was not, was having faced the reality of 1914 with a totally new concept of Hegelian dialectics as self-developing Subject . . . 'translated' as the masses — proletarian and peasant." I held that the decisive test came after 1917, at a time when Lenin launched his last struggle against "great Russian chauvinism" (Stalin), asked Trotsky to present it to the Congress he himself was too ill to attend, warning against any "rotten compromise." I wrote: "Whether the fatal compromise was bound, in part, as Professor Lewin holds, by 'magnanimity,' or was the inescapable result of the dualism in theory not grounded in philosophy will be put to the severest test at the time of the Hitler-Stalin Pact after 'Trotskyism' reached its peak in the proclamation of the world revolution . . . and yet also clung to the defense of Stalin's Russia as a workers' state!"

Now, Ernest Mandel, evidently not totally satisfied with his economic-political-sociological feats, wanders also into the philosophic field where he is at his most ambitious. At one and the same time, he empirically reduces Hegel's concept of mediation to transition and ties "transition" to that totalitarian state-capitalist monstrosity, Russia, which he calls "a society in transition" as if the concept of Stalin's Russia as a "workers' state, though degenerated," which had split the Trotskyist party into smithereens during World War II, had never existed. Of what use is all that when one can point a finger at "Mrs. Dunayevskaya (who by eliminating all these nuances ["society in transition between capitalism and socialism"], eliminates transition, i.e., mediation, from her thinking, which is not very suitable for a student of Hegel . . ."

Whether or not Ernest Mandel will ever stoop to becoming "a student of Hegel," I do hope he will grapple with Marx's concept of mediation, specifically on the question of Communism, specifically when Marx discovered his own unique continent of thought and revolution, and wrote: "Only by the transcendence of this mediation (Communism) . . . does there arise positive Humanism beginning from itself."

It is, after all, a question of nothing short of a totally new, classless society, which alone can also re-establish the greatness of Trotsky as revolutionary, if not as great theoretician.

*I had not footnoted the phrase, but this and all other quotations cited here can be found in The Stenographic Report of the 9th RCP; the English quotations (which include the Lenin speech Mandel quotes) can be found in Lenin's Selected Works, Vol. IX.



COMMENTARY:

a critique of B. J. Harrell's
"Marx and Critical
Thought"

Karl Marx

Bill J. Harrell's "Marx and Critical Thought" is the primary essay published in the May 1976 issue of PAUNCH, a scholarly journal concerned with the relationships of literature to body to radical vision. Published twice a year, the journal (123 Woodward Ave., Buffalo, NY 14214) is edited by Arthur Efron, who submitted Mr. Harrell's study to several persons for their commentary, including Raya Dunayevskaya whose critique of the essay follows.

Time is the place of
human development--Marx

Marx's Humanism--and that is what Marx named his discovery of a new continent of thought: "a new Humanism"¹--is either a revolutionary philosophy of liberation or it is nothing at all. Just as a revolutionary philosophy of liberation is not just a "philosophy" (much less Harrell's concept of "sociology"), but a struggle for actuality, the actuality of freedom, so the uprooting of the exploitative system, existing reality, is a great deal more than freedom from economic exploitation, rooted though it is in that necessity. Rather, the process of liberation--"the negation of the negation"--creates what Marx called "new forces, new passions."² Having uprooted the exploitative class structure of society, the Subject (the proletariat) has achieved a whole new human dimension. Because "the individual is the social entity,"² the contradiction between the individual and society is transcended. Even when this was still expressed in the abstract philosophic language of Hegel, instead of Marx's analysis of concrete class struggles and historic revolutions, the dialectics of liberation were unambiguous: "Individuality

purified of all that interferes with its Universalism, i.e., freedom."⁴

Harrell is right when he says labor is "central to Marxian critical analysis" (my emphasis)--and totally wrong when he speaks of it as "ultimate end" as if it were not Marx's specific description of capitalism and capitalism only, but of any society. All that did was permit Harrell to impose on Marx's "ambiguous" conception some sort of kinship with today's state-capitalist societies that call themselves Communist. Though Harrell feels compelled to qualify that allegedly theoretical affinity, holding that the "totalitarian result" "clearly violates its /Marx's/ spirit," he never lets go of his perverse definition:

Perhaps the most succinct way in which one could summarize Marxian political-economy is: a theory of the development of workers' control as the prerequisite for a society based upon work.

Far from looking toward "a society based upon work" as an "ultimate end," Marx was so appalled by labor that he, at first, called for "the abolition of labor."⁵ What convinced him otherwise, that is to say, had him concretize the concept, and call, instead, for "the emancipation of labor" was the laborer, his class struggles, his daily resistance at the point of production, where the instrumentality, machinery, dead labor dominated living labor. The revolt of the laborer against his exploiter, the capitalist, was also directed against the ideology, the false consciousness, which represented him as what he is not.

Marx's critique of classical political economy's great discovery that labor was the source of all value was that labor was treated only as "source," not as Subject, the "gravedigger" of the system resting on alienated labor. Naturally, workers' control of production would change that mode of labor, but for that to be the absolute opposite of capitalistic reification of labor, transformation of man into thing, labor has to become self-activity, development not only of production, but the self-development of man/woman,⁶ the human dimension. Over 100 years

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before Hannah Arendt discovered the difference between labor and work, and profoundly misread Marx, and Harrell read Arendt as an improvement on Marx's concept, Marx had spent a lifetime developing the concept of the duality of labor. It is "about"⁷ the only category Marx takes credit for creating.

~~This is no empty concern with who was the "first."~~ Rather, my point is the dialectics, which so escape Harrell who is busy piling up "failures" of Marx as if he were the first in this century plus 33 years to be burying Marx, and this, though he himself admits that Marx keeps living, living globally, agreeing with George Sorel's accounting for Marxism's "historic tenacity." Instead of rushing to declare labor and freedom "ambiguous in conception and unclear in its implications," ought Harrell not at least have asked himself: "though I deny Marx is any such genius as his adherents claim him to be, how does it happen that a genius credited with discovering a whole new continent of thought, lays claim to originality in but a single category, the duality in labor? What is so crucial in Marx's concept of alienated labor (whether or not 'lifted' from Hegel's theory of alienation), that has, in Marx's hands, led (1) to break with other socialists, revolutionaries, so that, on the one hand stands Marx and his evaluation of the class struggles, and, on the other hand, all others, from the anarchist Proudhon to Marx's adherent, Lassalle (whom Marx called "first workers' dictator"). (2) A century before "Third World" as concept was developed, why did Marx himself move from the concept of China as "vegetating in the teeth of barbarism" to such "embrace"⁸ of the T'ai ping Revolution as to necessitate a second deeper look at labor as work of artisans? Moreover, (3) the concepts of labor and of freedom and of "becoming"⁹ were so deepened that, if anything moved Marx from being an "economist" to being a "sociologist" that surely is clearest seen in the Grundrisse which I, Harrell, have dismissed as if it simply proved there was no difference between the young and the mature Marx? Finally, (4) in Capital, Marx claims originality for the concept of duality of labor, a split sharpened as "concrete and abstract labor." Marx feels an urgency to work out a totally new section, "The Fetishism of Commodities" which, to this day, has

served schools of thought as different as Existentialism in France and the Frankfurt School in Germany (not to mention political economists and sociologists and other specialized "sciences" Marx as revolutionary has rejected), but I, Harrell, concerned with the 'inadequacy of Marxian thought as a critical sociology' fail to examine."

Now then, since I had to ask the questions "for Harrell, but Harrell hims. If spent not a single word on them, limiting himself to some isolated quotations from Marx, let us take a look at Marx's thought, as a totality, no matter in what abbreviated form allotted space demands. Great as the Marx quotations were that Harrell chose, they are no substitute for the singularity of that split in the category, labor. Because it is original with Marx, and "is the pivot on which a clear comprehension of political economy turns,"¹⁰ Marx raises it in the very first chapter of Volume I of *Capital*, no matter how many new discoveries of economic laws (none of which are "iron"),¹¹ leading to the discernment of "the law of motion of capitalism," to its collapse; and no matter how broad the historical developments, philosophic insights and literary allusions Marx traces through in the four volumes--he does not stray far from the duality of labor as pivot since, indeed, it is not only pivot for comprehension of political economy, but is ground for revolution--the dialectical development from the revolution in philosophy to philosophy of revolution to actuality.

None before Marx had split the category, labor, but it is this, just this, which discloses the perversity of capitalism whose mode of production, with its factory clock, pounds all the many varieties of concrete labor, into one abstract mass of "socially-necessary labor-time."¹² Marx, having followed the worker from the market place, where the worker, though "free," had sold himself, or rather his ability to labor, labor power, as a commodity, proceeded to the workshop. The center point of Marx's *Capital* is the analysis of 'The Labor Process and the Process of Producing Surplus-Value.' There he traces the laborer as he is turned into an appendage of a machine. This dead labor (labor congealed into the form of machine) dominates living labor, after which "it," as

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commodity, be he employed or unemployed, is traced back into the market. There--and this there is not only in the market place but includes the whole of bourgeois culture--"The Fetishism of Commodities" reigns supreme not only over capital/labor, but also over independent intellectuals, including the discoverers of labor as the source of all value.¹³ This is no accident, says Marx, as only "freely associated men" can strip the fetishism from commodities.

Obviously, Harrell thinks he is the exception and can give a more "substantive" view of freedom whose thought, as it moved to materialist "political economy" was "so wrong as to be irrelevant" and became "progressively narrower." To correct that Harrell empties the specificity of Marxian categories, introducing such total confusion into that most precise expression, "capital accumulation," as to make it both equivalent to bourgeois culture and acceptable to Marx since "bourgeois culture provides the necessary capital accumulation as well as the abstract insight as to the ultimate end of universal freedom." On the way to his conclusion of the know-it-all, be-it-all "sensual needs," Harrell arms himself with what he conceives as support from "Critical Thought." (Incidentally, while that is what the Frankfurt School called itself and also what it directed toward Marx, it is not what Marx named his new continent of thought. So opposed was he to labels that, outside of "the new Humanism" as the dialectic unity of the material and the ideal, he never tried pasting labels upon his total outlook. Historical Materialism was Engels' expression; Dialectical Materialism was Plekhanov's. And, while the Frankfurt School tried to leave their designation "open" enough to "include" Marxism, it is they, not revolutionary Marxism, that narrowed itself to "Critical.")

Unfortunately, though his sympathy lies in their direction, Harrell hardly presents a total picture of them, whether in relation to Marx, or "as such." First, he fails to show the division within: what they were in the 1930s and early 1940s, and what they became in the postwar years hardly makes them a unified outlook--not totalitarian, need it be added--but nevertheless motivated by Marxism, independent, and separate from both the German Social Democracy

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and the Russian "state socialism." Secondly, he acts as if the present "school"--the Habermas "school" is altogether removed from both Marxism and the original Critical school--speaks with a like voice.

The most telling mixup relates to the one--Herbert Marcuse--Harrell so admires as to credit one of his works, Eros and Civilization, as being nothing short of "one of the most important works in social philosophy since Marx." We do not see the Herbert Marcuse of Reason and Revolution, from which work Harrell could have learned a great deal about both Marx and Hegel. He makes no note of the open departures from Marxism since then.¹⁴ And, though he analyzes more of Marcuse's works as against none of Adorno's and little of Horkheimer, the founders of Frankfurt School, the truth is that his preoccupation is just Eros and Civilization. Or, more precisely put, sensuality sans history, applicable to "all" cultures, as substitute, not just for Marx's "economics" or "sociology"--but passions, striving to reconstruct exploitative capitalism on humanist beginnings. Instead, Harrell redefines needs as "timeless erotic needs." That, of course, is Harrell's privilege, but it certainly wasn't Marx's perspective, and I doubt it is Marcuse's.

Harrell may argue that, that was precisely his point, a critique of Marx which showed that "in the effort to avoid considering" just such sensual human needs and restricting "his analysis to the negative or given historical trends, the critical perspective is crippled." The trouble is that thereby Harrell rejects more than Marx and/or "critical thought" as he rushes, helter skelter, to conclude: "There must not only be the negation of the negation but negation through the identification of positive possibilities."

Language is no stranger to reductionism, but this violates simple common sense which I am sure Harrell has plenty of. But so anxious was he to drive in the nail into his accusation of just how far "Marxian theory fell short of its liberating purpose" that he violated even the simple linguistic meaning of two negatives equalling a positive.

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Before Harrell, to friend and foe alike, negation of negation meant a positive, not just a positive "possibility," but a positive, a new positive. Marx took seriously the Hegelian dialectic which, at the very apex of second negativity, affirmed "the most important part of rational cognition" to be "to hold fast to the positive in the negative . . ."15 As Marx opposed blueprinting the future, he allowed but one intimation of "the future" and that because it was so rooted in the concrete, in the present. He spelled it out as "permanent revolution."16 That "negation of negation" would assure not stopping at first negation--the overthrow of the exploitative system--but would recognize and develop "the wealth of human needs" so that "there arises positive Humanism, beginning from itself."17

As for Harrell's dramatic climax, that the inclusion of "sensual needs" into "socio-historical categories" would assure the conquest of "unhappy consciousness"-- "unhappy consciousness" resolves itself through the discovery of the sensual in the form of its particularity. "--I wish him happiness. But let him not forget that the "unhappy consciousness" is only a quite early stage in Hegel's Phenomenology, and in Marx's new continent of thought and in critical thought to the present; there is a long, long road still ahead.

NOTES

¹Lest this be identified only with the young Marx of the famous 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts, consider also Volume III of Capital (p. 954) where he defines freedom as "development of human power, which is its own end, the true realm of freedom."

²Capital, Vol. I, (p. 835) contains a paragraph on "new forces and new passions," and (p. 837) "negation of the negation." (Charles H. Kerr edition is used throughout.)

³Again, lest only the 1844 Manuscripts be thought of when identifying individual and social, consider the expression in The Communist Manifesto: "the free development of each is the condition for free development of all."

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⁴Hegel, Philosophy of Mind, par. 481.

⁵The German Ideology, p. 69.

⁶In the same Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts where Marx wrote, "The secret of the relationship of man to man finds its unambiguous definitive, open, obvious expression in the relationship of man to woman" he attacked not only capitalist private property but also "quite vulgar and unthinking communism" which thought all evils would be done away with once private property was abolished instead of going on to "second negation" and going on to self-development of mankind, putting all his stress on the fact that it must not be only a "to have," but a "to be": "Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that . . . in place of all physical and spiritual senses, there is the sense of possession, which is the simple alienation of all these senses . . . Each of his human relations to the world--seeing, hearing, smell, taste, feeling, thought, perception, experience, wishing, activity, loving . . . To such absolute poverty has human essence had to be reduced in order to give birth to its inner wealth."

(I am using my own translation as I was first to translate these now famous essays, but they can be found in many editions.)

⁷The only other category Marx claimed credit for is the split in the category of capital into constant capital and variable capital, but since capital was treated not as a thing but a relationship of production of capitalist to laborer, and since constant capital was but another name for dead labor and variable capital for living labor, the latter is the only element that underwent a variation in magnitude because of all the millions of commodities exchanged daily; this alone was living and could be and was exploited to produce all surplus values as well as its own exchange-value, wages. They all ended with the split in the category labor, thus: concrete and abstract; labor/labor power; living labor/dead labor; constant/variable capital; fetishism of commodities.

⁸Read especially the articles he wrote for The New

York Daily Tribune, reproduced now in The American Journalism of Marx and Engels. (N.Y., The American Library.) And if you cannot read the massive Grundrisse, at least read those parts reproduced in abbreviated form, Pre-Capitalist Economic Formation (N.Y. International Publishers). Marx also brought the question of T'aping into a footnote in Capital itself, which the American edition omitted.

⁹Grundrisse: "When the narrow bourgeois form has been peeled away, what is wealth, if not the universality of needs, capacities, enjoyments, productiveness powers, etc. of individuals, produced in universal exchange? . . . What is this, if not a situation where man does not reproduce himself in any determined form, but produces his totality. Where he does not see to remain something formed by the past, but is in the absolute movement of becoming?"

¹⁰Capital, Vol. I, p. 48.

¹¹Harrell encloses "iron laws" in quotation marks as if they summed up Marx's own attitude. In fact, he directed one of his latest works against such expressions used by Lassalle whose famous expression was "iron law of wages"; "If I abolish wage labor, then naturally I abolish its laws also, whether they are 'iron' or sponge." (Critique of the Gotha Program).

Capital is, generally, referred to as a 3 volume study because that is all that bear that name. But, in fact, The Theories of Surplus Value, edited and misedited by Kautsky was, by Marx, considered Volume 4 of Capital, and I always include those volumes as integral to Capital.

¹²Contrast this view of time by factory clock and world market to Marx's concept, quoted at the top of my commentary, which maintains that time is the "place of human development." The same totally different world relates to all the criticisms piled on "immiseration" as against Marx's insistence that, be the worker's payment "high or low," capital ("value big with value") "vampire-like" sucks him dry of "free individuality." (See the whole of Part VII, "Accumulation of Capital," and the penultimate chapter, "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation." Capital, I.).

¹³In The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx explained why it was he considered intellectuals "petty bourgeois" like "shopkeepers," though in "their education and individual position they may be separated from them as widely as heaven from earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not go beyond the limits which the latter do not go beyond in life, that they are consequently driven theoretically to the same tasks and solutions to which material interests and social position practically drive the latter."

¹⁴Marcuse surely makes no secret of this, with the sole exception that the 1960 new preface to Reason and Revolution, originally published in 1941, is presented as if the author had not undergone some very fundamental changes that were quite discontinuous. We have been friendly enemies for many years, and I believe the first serious change is seen in his re-examination of Marxism that he wrote as Preface, in 1957, to my Marxism and Freedom. (It has been recently reproduced in the 4th English edition of my work.)

¹⁵Hegel, Science of Logic, Vol. II, p. 476. In the new 1-volume translation by A. V. Miller, the quotation appears on p. 834. (N.Y., Humanities Press).

¹⁶The idea of permanent revolution was first developed by Marx after the defeat of the 1848 revolutions, in his 1850 Address to the Communist League. It has been developed, first, by Trotsky who, however, while holding to the concept of world revolution, nevertheless introduced a duality into it by glossing over the revolutionary role of the peasantry. Then, in the hands of Mao as "uninterrupted revolution," it not only violated the Hegelian concept of negation of negation by "declaring" it "non-existent," but Marx's concept of proletarian revolution which got lowered to "cultural revolution." There are all kinds of ways of decapitating the dialectic since the first revisionist, Bernstein, found its revolutionary nature burdensome up until the present Russian chief philosopher, Kedrov, who tried to force a separation between Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks, and the Hegelian concept of negativity. See "Why Hegel? Why Now?" in