

Nov. 13, 1967

Dear S

This is wholly theoretical. We have gotten bogged down with figures --it must be your specialty, or your way to "evade" philosophic or comprehensive answers. We must not allow the bourgeois (either in "private" or state form) way of thinking in circumscribed channels and divisions (between mental and manual labor, technical and political, philosophic and statistical or what have you) check us. Now that I'm working on your chapter, your views are necessary, indeed imperative. Outside of the questions I asked of Russian economic development, forget all about statistics, and even on that one limit yourself to the broad strokes.

Otherwise we get to argue on their ground--an unforgivable Hegelian as well as Marxian sin and we do not get to breaking new paths at all. Take the question of State Planning. It is very nearly an outlived question for even the bourgeois accepts it; no matter whether they call the State Plan or private planning that still has "the public good" in mind, it is state plan at all critical moments, and by that I do not mean only war, but even so "minor" a matter as a local riot.

Here we even to consider state planning as a major problem, it still could not be considered outside of technology, specifically Automation. For example, all the big State Plans, forced labor and ~~totalitarian political~~ totalitarian political holds of the Stalin era didn't do half as well in state planning as the alleged deStalinization once we had the new automated stage of production in the 1950s! Again, I don't only mean outer space and the first with the sputnik, although that surely cannot be written off when you consider that we now can also have orbital missiles! But the point is that the moment you get to a new stage of production, rather than just control, then you can first leap ahead as Russia did in the postwar world to 2nd world place and as China cannot do, with or without "Mao's Thought." It's always a question of a new energy source and if it is not technical, then there remains only sweat and the workers' sweat is given willingly only when there is vision of a new world. So all the underdeveloped countries, once they no longer wanted to rely only on those revolutionary passions, finally got sucked into the world production and not just world market.

Therefore what interests me is: What discussion on Automation? Is it ever related to a new philosophy or always just a new technique? What about China? Mao is no fool, you know, and he does recognize that all they have is his "Thought" --or some one's--and from that comes his delusion that it is a substitute for technology as well. He had no other choice once he saw that, on the one hand, the destruction of the Hungarian Revolution left Russia too much on the ground to think of helping China "leap forward", and, on the other hand, he began to distrust that Russia would ever fight the US to the end. You didn't so much as mention China in your chapter. But there must be discussion in Czechoslovakia about not alone re the Sino-Soviet conflict but in relationship to the underdeveloped world, especially since Czechoslovakia is very much in the 3rd world from Africa to Cuba and from the Middle East (Soviet troops being present in China).

What about your own attitude, views, researches? We did after all "meet" via Presence Africaine.

Also there is the question of postwar discussions on crises, especially the one around Varga's work. Far removed as that appears to be from the philosophic chapters I wrote, they are interrelated both as to the timing when the Humanist debate got going (1955-57) and their dropping of the economic debate not only because of the Stalinist pressure in the late 1940s but because of the inward looking because of actual revolt.

What I am asking is a free flowing letter from you, without a single look at a statistical table and on all questions and not only ch.1. Yours,

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