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PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION -- by Raya Dunayevskaya (Draft)
PART TWO -- The Interregnum: Void and Retrogression vs. Movement from Practice
Chapter II -- The Postwar World

A- Marx's Humanism vs. the "Thought of Mao Tse-Tung"

The East European revolts, at one end of the globe, and the African revolutions at the other end, opened a new page in the dialectic of thought as well as in world history. A reformulation of the relationship between theory and practice seemed imperative if the revolts from Communist totalitarianism, and the national independence from Western imperialism were to develop into a forward movement of humanity that would not stop halfway. Far from this being a need for intellectuals only, it was a need the masses themselves felt most deeply. It is they who demonstrated that there is a movement from practice to theory as well as from theory to practice. At the crossroads they found that without the unity of these movements a process of suction emanating from the two nuclear world powers would pull them away from their very reason for being. To use an expression of Hegel's, who had the much easier job of unifying theory and practice in the restricted realm of thought, "each of these by itself is one-sided and contains the Idea itself only as the sought beyond and unattained goal." (Science of Logic, Vol. II, p. 466)

Instead of any such reformulation of theory to practice on the part of either Marxists or non-Marxists, what we were confronted with was a theoretic void which was quickly filled by state-capitalism calling itself Communism. First, it quickly labelled the underlying Marxist-Humanist philosophy of the East European revolts "Revisionist." This "theoretical" designation was quickly accepted by Western intellectuals despite the fact that they had not been fooled by one iota by Russia's claim that the Hungarian revolutionaries led a "counter-revolution" while the Russian tanks that rolled over the Freedom Fighters were achieving a "revolution!" Whatever the reason for this strange intellectual cohabitation, it was no passing phenomenon. A decade later, when Marx's Humanism has proven itself to be neither a mere overnight sensation nor restricted to a few intellectuals, but an actual movement which keeps springing up and, as is the wont of great ideas, cannot be crushed by tanks, not only is the "Revisionist" designation still adhered to -- but by revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries alike!*

Moreover, despite the extent to which Marxist Humanism has been studied and symposiums held, the Western attitude to Marxist Humanism is still no more alive to its today-ness. They act as if it were nothing more than something Marx elaborated in 1844! But neither the East European or the African revolutionaries were conducting University seminars. Even Castro originally had called his revolution "Humanist." The one thing that united all revolutionaries was that they were determined to "realize" that philosophy, that is to say, to make freedom real. As can be seen from Czechoslovakia the East Europeans are still determined to do so. It is this unity of freedom and being which makes it impossible to kill the idea. The striving for a unity of philosophy and revolution keeps reappearing and keeps hoping that practice isn't forever to pile up its martyrs, while the movement from theory remains "over there."

Unfortunately, the only ones who appreciated both its urgency and its seriousness are the Chinese Communists. Since, however, they, like the Russians, are a state power, a state power with global aims, what has resulted is the most ominous theory of retrogression that nevertheless manages to pass itself off as "egalitarian," "uncorrupted," "Pure" and, though "utopian," and a bit out of touch with "reality" one which will,

* The sole exception in the U.S. is Socialist Humanism, edited by Erich Fromm. Also see "The Fourth International Congress on the Problems in Eastern Europe" (held in Wiesbaden, Sept. 6-9, 1966) published here under the name Elements of Change in Eastern Europe, edited by D.S. Collier & Kurt Glasor.

will, nevertheless, continue "undisturbedly" will... In order to penetrate through this delusion and, above all, to face the reality, the phenomenal reality of the 1950's, and the 1960's, we must first briefly look at the Chinese state up to the Hungarian Revolution.

The Communist achievement of state power in China in 1949 did not open a new epoch of revolutions comparable to that initiated by the Russian Revolution in the period of the First World War. Except the Chinese Revolution issued from a civil war, and came at the end of two decades of guerrilla war, it seemed to be an anti-colonial war that did achieve national independence -- "a people's war completing the bourgeois democratic revolution" as they themselves called it -- but did not establish a totally new social order. Far from being a proletarian revolution, the "People's Liberation Army" had encircled the cities and told the urban working class to remain at their production posts. This didn't mean that the masses hadn't welcomed the Red Army which had overthrown the corrupt, hated, exploitative regime of Chiang Kai-shek that had not even known how to fight the Japanese imperialist invaders before the Communist Party helped them into a United Front -- the rechristened name for the 1925 "block of four classes," "workers, peasants, petty bourgeois and national capitalists," that is to say, all except the "bureaucrat capitalists" and "comprador bourgeois" or imperialist lackeys. It did mean that the proletariat and the new Communist rulers alike knew that what they now had was "state capitalism," not socialism.

The nation was unified. The economy ravaged first by endless "extermination campaigns" of Communists, then by the invading Japanese army and again by civil war, was rehabilitated. The State Plan showed a much healthier rate of growth than India. This was the first time in history that a Communist Party not only headed a bourgeois revolution but boasted that it alone would continue to lead in the state-capitalist transformation.

From the start, Li Li-san, who was then Minister of Labor, made it clear that "Greater production is the most fundamental task of the Chinese trade union... developed labor enthusiasm... observe labor discipline... regard for both public and private interest benefit both labor and capital."

No wonder it was not deemed necessary to convoke a Congress of the Party to celebrate so momentous an event as conquest of power. The Constitution adopted at the Seventh Congress, held in 1945, was deemed sufficient for the period after conquest of power. As Lin Biao said recently, the areas in which the Peoples Liberation Army operated were always "a state in miniature." In a word, they were practiced in state power.

Such was the reality of our state capitalist age in the early 1950's.

Such was the reality of a world where the Cold War began almost directly after the hotwar ended. In fact, it started all over again with probing "little wars," such as those in Korea and in Vietnam.

Such was the reality of the post-war world where the only two remaining Big Powers the United States and Russia -- left markers all around the globe where the next war could start -- two Germanies, two Koreas, two Vietnams.

On the other hand, tales of mass unrest, be they about the miners in the U.S., who went on a prolonged (9 full months) general strike against the newly-introduced Automation machinery, or about the political underground of East Europe which seethed with opposition to the newly raised "labor norms" (speedup) signalled changes to come from below. On both continents something new was also happening in the realm of thought. Just as soon as Stalin died, in May 1953, an incubus was indeed lifted from the body, mind, and soul of the masses in East Europe and in the forced labor camps in Russia. On June 17, the dam burst open in East Germany. Begun as a strike against speed-up, the workers' revolt in East Berlin spread throughout East Germany. The movement was both spontaneous and unprecedented. It inspired rebellion in the Vorkuta forced labor camps deep inside Russia. It helped topple Beria and destroyed forever the myth of totalitarian invincibility. It had begun to practice de-Stalinization long before

Khrushchev's secret sensational speech about Stalin's "crimes." The "workers" movement, furthermore, was challenging the Communist monolith at the point of production as well as the political structure, in its philosophy as well as in the arts. "Bread and Freedom" was the slogan; Marxist Humanism the underlying philosophy. Coincidentally, that is to say, at the same time, but independent of each other, a new philosophic journal, Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie (German Journal of Philosophy) was founded under the editorship of the elder Ernst Bloch, who was not a Party member, and the young Wolfgang Harich, who was.

It is true that the two movements were independent of each other. And it was precisely because the theoreticians stood on the sidelines as the workers revolted that the Journal was permitted publication; but that in no way changes the reality, that the two movements -- one from practice from below and one from theory -- were born simultaneously. It was only after the workers' revolt that the esoteric lectures of Ernst Bloch -- which had heretofore been confined to his philosophy students in Leipzig -- gained a large following, and Bloch's first two volumes of Das Prinzip Hoffnung were published (1954, 1955). The workers' revolt had been suppressed and, in any case, these books were certainly out of the reach of the workers -- or so thought the authorities, who made no move against the editors of the philosophic journal in East Germany or Imre Nagy in Hungary, who was appealing his expulsion from the Communist Party. The thaw was still on and the most famous de-Stalinizer, Khrushchev, was convinced of the elusiveness of any unity of philosophy and revolution. By 1956, however, everything gave way under the whole Russian Empire in East Europe. The Hungarian masses rose up in outright revolution. It was then that the ruling bureaucracies in East Europe as well as in Russia moved against the intellectuals. It was then that the distinction between intellectuals and workers vanished. The unity of thought and action was achieved in the heat of revolution.

Mao's China, which had paid no attention to the East German Revolt when it occurred in 1953, the year it initiated its First Five Year Plan, was very much involved in the 1956 outbreaks in East Europe. Chou En-lai quickly stopped his flirtations with both Gomulka and Tito. Instead, Mao's China urged the sending of troops and tanks to crush the Hungarian Revolution. It had become clear beyond the peradventure of any doubt that it wasn't just intellectual dissent, whether it was as innocuous as the Polish flirtations with Sartrean Existentialism, or whether the underlying philosophy was the humanism of Marx. It was open revolution.

At the same time, horror of horrors, the revolts against Communist rule were not confined to East Europe or Vorkuta. Deep inside China, voices of revolt spoke up loudly and clearly.

It was against this revolutionary phenomenon that Mao reacted. This is the very opposite of taking arms up against Chiang Kai-shek, much less against foreign invaders. This was struggle with the Chinese masses, some of the very ones who had helped him in the revolution against external enemies and internal corrupt army clique of "comprador bureaucrat capitalists."

This time he was the man in power striking out for the preservation of the system that the Communist Party itself designated as "state-capitalist."

In September, 1956, when the Chinese Communist Party finally got around to holding a Congress, it still designated the country as state-capitalist though it staked out the claim that the workers and peasants had nothing to fear from state-capitalism because "the commanding heights" of the economy were in the hands of "the democratic dictatorship of the people led by the Communist Party."

The very next month, however, the Hungarian Revolution broke out. After a brief, a very brief, experiment with allowing freedom of criticism in China, it became all too clear that voices of revolt were not against Khrushchev, but against Mao himself.

To the extent that Mao could delude himself to think that his new opponents were all "Rightists," he could stop his experiment in the free flow of ideas, and, instead, make an 180° turn in policies, plans, perspectives for the future, and call for

"A Great Leap Forward" and the establishment of "People's Communes" which would bring them "directly" to Communism. Just like that, by fiat, by rectification, by a lot of sweat and toil, and in face of all obstacles, including nature itself. But it was impossible to carry on this charade when, after a year, instead of having brought China to Utopia, the Chinese masses were brought to near-starvation.

The failure of the experiment, the continued presence of unrest, and the new impulses in the world for a different way of life were the compulsions which went into the transformation of one who had been a revolutionary into the ideologist of the ruling class. This, then, became the great divide in China in general and in the "Thought of Mao Tse-tung" in particular. For suddenly the very failure became integral to the Maoist conception of "uninterrupted revolution." Inexorably such a mental conception had to tilt over into its absolute opposite -- retrogressionism. It struck out wildly, implacably against "Humanism."

"The West" may have thought that Humanism was something written in 1844. Mao knew it was something for which the Hungarians made a revolution, and the Chinese were flirting with the idea of doing so. As Chairman Mao Tse-tung expressed it:

Certain people in our country were delighted when the Hungarian events took place. They hoped that something similar would happen in China, that thousands upon thousands of people would demonstrate in the streets against the People's Government."

(--On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among
the People. p. 13)

The West may have thought that Workers' Councils was something like the trade unions. Mao knew that they were in operation in Hungary as a true counter-force to the State.

Though Mao assured us that the "disturbances" were the work of "small numbers of people," he never forgot that they dared to strike: "In 1956, small numbers of workers and students in certain places went on strike." (p. 59)

The West may have thought that individualism was a question of good old private enterprise. Mao feared that individual freedom as the test of social freedom meant the readiness to substitute a different social order, a classless society in place of the Communist system.

When the voices of revolt* in China questioned whether six people at the top (specifying the Chairman and Politburo members) could really know what six hundred million people wanted, Mao knew that he had on his hands six hundred million individual who felt themselves capable of deciding their own fate and desirous of establishing totally new human relations. It is true that at first Mao seemed satisfied with the Russian attacks on Humanism. "Kommunist (NO. 5-1957) gave out the line: Leninism 'needs no sort of 'humanisation' nor any of the reforms proposed by the proponents of 'humanist socialism'." By then the ruling Polish Communist bureaucracy had accepted "the line" and the attack was launched against all "revisionists." Jerzy Mirowski, Politburo member wrote on the eve of the Writers' Congress: "All revisionists describe themselves as creative Marxists. There is only one Marxism; the one that guides the party."

By 1959, when Khrushchev visited Eisenhower, Mao had other views. These were related not only to Khrushchev and the new Sino-Soviet conflict about to unfold, but, above all, to China's internal development. Mao had not embarked on "The Great Leap Forward," the "new road to socialism" in order to give way before disaster. On the contrary, he never turned his back, as we can see a decade later in the Cultural Revolution and its "leaps." Moreover, a new, third world had arisen without the help of either Communist orbit. It is to them he now turned, not so much as claimed because they were "the new storm centers of world revolution" (that would remain China's prerogative), but as the arena for the contest with Russia for the mind and body of this world. All the more reason for continuing with the internal revolution, for preparing

China to go through with it all the way. As a necessary foundation for new tasks, the fight against Humanism had to have his stamp.

There was never any doubt in his mind that Humanism was the enemy. As the Sino-Soviet conflict first unfolded, these attacks on Humanism were hardly noticed since Mao made sure that each such use of the word was preceded by the word, bourgeois. He was fighting Khrushchev as a "revisionist" and "bourgeois humanist."* Within China, on the other hand, Mao made sure to develop the attack more comprehensively, first by the manner in which the "leading cadres" would have their thought remolded by the Chinese Academy of Science, especially its Department of Philosophy, and, secondly, by attacking the head of the Higher Party School, Yang Hsien-cho, who had dared take exception to the irreconcilability of the political manifestos against Russia. Here is the way Chou Yang, then still one of Mao's chief propagandists, presented the speech, "The Fighting Task Confronting Workers in Philosophy and the Social Sciences," to the Fourth Enlarged Session of the Committee of the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Science held on October 26, 1963, at the very height of the Sino-Soviet conflict:

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has shown outstanding theoretical courage and genius in developing dialectics. For the first time in Marxism-Leninism he penetrated and systematically revealed the contradictions within socialist society in his work On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People.

Chou then launches into an attack on the RCP and Humanism going all the way back to the 1844 Manuscripts:

The modern revisionists and some bourgeois scholars try to describe Marxism as humanism and call Marx a humanist. Some people counter-pose the young Marx to the mature proletarian revolutionary Marx. In particular they make use of certain views on 'alienation' expressed by Marx in his early Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, 1844, to depict him as an exponent of the bourgeois theory of human nature. They do their best to preach so-called Humanism by using the concept of alienation. This, of course, is futile.

In the early stages of the development of their thought, Marx and Engels were, indeed, somewhat influenced by Humanist Ideas which were closely related to mechanical materialism and Utopian socialism. But, when they formulated the materialist conception of history and discovered the class struggle is the motive force of social development, they immediately got rid of this influence. (The Fighting Task Confronting Workers in Philosophy and the Social Sciences, pp. 35-36.)

The reason for prolonging this debate which, by then, was seven years old was to introduce a new element, an attack on a Chinese alleged opponent of the continuing Sino-Soviet conflict, Yang Hsien-cho, who headed the Higher Party School and had written a philosophical article defining dialectic as the unity of contradictory forces, and as is the wont of Chinese argumentation, expressing this mathematically as "2 combine into 1." Since Mao took this to mean collaboration with Russia, the order was out to show that the dialectic, far from revolving around "2 combines into 1," was, in fact, the exact opposite, that is to say, "1 divides into 2."*

Now this isn't just gobbledygook. Though, to use a characteristic phrase of Mao's, his "armies of philosophy" have here decapitated the dialectic in a crude attempt made to force the dialectic to serve both those who were for and against the conflict with

Russia, the point is that it was in his "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic" that Marx first developed his Humanist views. It is Marx the Maoists are opposing, not Hegel. Russia too began its battles with Marx's Humanism in 1955 under the guise of separating Marx's materialism from "mystical Hegelianism," and they too achieved the very opposite. For Marx used Hegel's revolutionary dialectic to attack Hegel's bourgeois idealism, his de-humanization of ideas. To develop his new, original Humanism Marx united materialism and idealism, separating it from the class society to which each, in isolation, was tied. In a word, Marx's concept of class struggle was for purposes of abolishing class society and establishing a new social order on truly humanist foundations. Mao, on the other hand, is perfectly willing to accept the state-capitalist foundations.

The failure of his "People's Communes" to achieve the Great Leap Forward, to go "directly" into Communism, to combine industry, agriculture, education and the military as a beacon light for the whole third world that would then follow the lead of China rather than Russia, convinced Mao that he must first set about the remolding of the whole nation in a way that, as he was to put it a decade later, when he launched the Cultural Revolution, would "touch their very souls."

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B. The Retrogressionism of Mao Tse-tung

"China's 600 million people have two remarkable peculiarities; they are, first of all, poor, and secondly, blank. That may seem like a bad thing, but it is really a good thing. Poor People want change, want to do things, want revolution. A clean sheet of paper has no blotches, and so the newest and most beautiful pictures can be painted on." -- Mao Tse-tung, 1958

"The Thought of Mao Tse-tung has not grown spontaneously from among the working people; rather it is the result of Chairman Mao's inheriting and developing in a talented way the ideas of Marxist-Leninism on the basis of great revolutionary practice." -- Lin Pic 1966

There are those who see every move of Mao -- be each as drastic a break with the past as the Great Leap Forward in 1958; the Sino-Soviet conflict, 1960-64; and the so-called Cultural Revolution that began in 1966 -- as a reenactment of one or another stage of development, before and after power, as one coherent whole. This would be as totally false as the Communist telling the Mao story as one continuing development "in genius," if not from birth, then surely from the birth of the Communist Party of China (1921). While it is true that once Mao became Chairman and undisputed leader of Chinese Communism in 1935, he generalized his experiences into "universal principles" -- ON Protracted War, ON Contradiction, ON Practice, ON Correcting Mistakes (Rectification) all of them are one form or another on the practicality of theory.

It is true that, without practicality, theory didn't interest Mao much. But this was nothing as simple as the myriad of Ph.D theses, which are being written these days to "prove" that Mao "isn't original," "isn't a theoretician." Nor is it a question, as some learned minds shocked by the "Cultural Revolution" think, of Mao being either senile or irrational.

Even more removed from the actualities of objective development are both those who genuflect before "The Thought of Mao," and the varied apologia for following him which base themselves on the fact that Mao alone will fight US imperialism to the end because

of their conviction of the imminence of war between the U.S. and China. Even if it weren't a fundamental Marxist truth that only the masses themselves can destroy oppressive, seemingly omnipotent U.S. imperialism, it is still a fact that it is precisely because Mao refused to line up unconditionally behind North Vietnam when it was bombarded by U.S. imperialism, beginning in February, 1965, that a further split occurred within Communism, this time within "Eastern" Communism. First, it pitted Mao against those who supported him, like the North Korean and Japanese Communist parties, and then against his own Central Committee, which brought about the "Cultural Revolution." The combination of the U.S. attack on North Vietnam and the collapse of any possibility of a Peking-Djakarta axis made Mao's own Political Bureau, which had supported him in the Sino-Soviet conflict, now feel that a united front with Russia was imperative to fight U.S. imperialism in North Vietnam. Mao himself, however, sent out probes (via his representatives in Poland who continued to have contact with U.S. representatives) to try to assure himself that U.S. would not attack China. For that matter, long before the Vietnam War had reached the stage of a direct confrontation with U.S. imperialism, Russia had become "Enemy No. 1," as should have been evident, but was not (to his C.C.) from the many challenges* to Russia's leadership of the Communist world. As Edgar Snow states it, when he considers the possibility of "final split" with Russia in 1963: "Even China's preoccupation with the U.S. as the main enemy might veer elsewhere." The fact that Mao's co-leaders did not see it that clearly even at the end of 1965, when the disaster of the attempted coup in Indonesia turned into a bloody counter-coup by the military, is exactly what sent Mao into self-isolation after which he came out with his version of preventive Civil war which he called "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

The break with the past, not the points of similarity, is decisive in "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung." Just as it is decisive in objective development. It is crucial, not because the break is "irrational," but because it will reveal the objective class compulsion tugging at Mao's Thought, and disclose the gulf between the Chinese reality, and its technological backwardness, as compared to the state of world technology in an automated, nuclear world. It is not because Mao is "willful" although he is indeed very willful: he does not live nostalgically in the past, but is very much a man of today -- but because he thinks that production is increased "by taking hold of the revolution," that he is forever calling for "uninterrupted" revolution. That this leads to the most horrifying theory of retrogression does not stop him from his "mad" onrush to disaster because he is governed by the concept of Communism (read: State-capitalism) as the stage of human development.

As in the period of class collaborationism, both with Chiang Kai-shek and with "patriotic capitalists" after the Communist conquest of power, so in the "Great Leap Forward" the concept of contradiction was denuded both of the objectivity which underlies the Hegelian concept, and the class concept which is the essence of the Marxian concept. Philosophically -- if something to which so many different and opposed meanings, attributed to one and the same notion, can be called "philosophy" -- the 1957 "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" is an updated 1937 "On Contradiction." Mao is still operating within the concept of the Communist Party as the one and only one van-guard, even as he is still operating within the concept that contradictions are allegedly manipulatable. It is not this speech that marks the break between the Mao of the Yanan period who, though he changed as he came to power, in no fundamental way deviated from his class collaborations. It is only after the Hundred Flowers and Hundred Schools of Thought bloomed and contended so vigorously as to question his Communist system that the old revolutionary begins to break. The counter-revolutionary beginning, i.e., the insistence that state power must be maintained, no matter what, no matter who the opponent, even if that opponent be the masses for whom the revolution was made!

* NOTE: HERE FOLLOWS THE SECTION: "1965, The Crucial Year," from "Mao's China and the Proletarian Cultural Revolution," New Politics, Spring, 1968.

It is true that Mao in the 1957 speech introduced the idea that contradictions existed also in "socialist society," which is certainly something new, but no newer than thinking that contradictions are manipulatable. What Mao was doing in 1958 did have its parallel with what Stalin attempted in 1950 with his "Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature," for which fantastic scheme he brought in Nikita Khrushchev from the Ukraine.* And no doubt Khrushchev told Mao a bit about that utopia -- and for once he was truthful, but Mao would not listen. As Nature refused to bend to his plans, Mao, like Stalin, had to retreat. But while Stalin could retreat, not only in fact but in thought since he had "caught up" with capitalism, but this was an altogether new, automated, nuclear-powered capitalism. So Mao began to build on the failure of the Great Leap Forward, and the very same arguments that were supposed to bring the millenium in the briefest space of time -- 20 years = 1 day -- the "People's Communes," the "mass line," the endless hours of labor -- were now being used to state the exact opposite -- that if even it took "10 generations," still this was the way to proceed. This couldn't be said at once for the disaster of the Great Leap Forward was followed by three consecutive years of natural calamities -- and not even Mao dared say: Continue on the same path. So, while the Central Committee did order a retreat, he stepped down from the presidency of the Republic.

Altogether different, then, is the way in which Mao reintroduced the concept of contradiction once a foreign power, instead of his own nation, was under attack. There in the challenge to Russia on June 14, 1963 and the other Nine pamphlet-length "letters" that followed the challenge to Russia for leadership of the Communist world, he did, indeed, introduce the class concept of contradiction. It was this break with the past that first cropped up in the Sino-Soviet conflict. However, it was enveloped by so much revolutionary verbiage regarding the Third World being the "Storm Center for World Revolution" that no one noticed that they were asked to be ready for such prolonged wars that it would take a "century" to reach even this "primitive socialism."

No one doubts that, when it comes to military questions -- theoretical or practical -- a peasant based army or a professional one, Mao is a genius. And, he is certainly an "original", when it comes to "thought remolding." No one before him had ever considered that the "remolding" of oneself was not a matter of an individual's changing convictions, but something that the collective imposes on the individual, and not necessarily by force, although Mao never hesitated to use force. It was meant to be an actual mental feat. It is utterly absurd, of course, to think that a class can be remolded mentally, no matter what its role is in production. It was fantastic enough for Stalin to think that, by fiat, he could "liquidate the Kulaks as a class." But to have the illusion that one could actually remold a class into the opposite of that which it is, both objectively and subjectively, has all the earmarks of insanity. But if it is insane, it is the natural insanity of an actually existing state capitalism, its mentality. Just as Marx, in looking at the anarchy of capitalist production, refused to consider it the opposite of capitalistic "order," holding that "its disorder is its order," so with the state capitalist mentality.

It all began directly after the shock, not from what Mao now calls "revisionism" but of the existence of a left, a proletarian left to Communism from within Communism. The Hungarian Revolution was beyond the comprehension of Mao, whether or not, as he now claims, he was the one who urged Khrushchev to send tanks in to suppress the revolution. He did not believe that this gulf between the masses and Communism was true of China.

In a word, to whatever extent Mao had originally thought that the Great Leap Forward could be achieved through "a mass line" which was not just "mass sweat" but "mass conviction," the upshot was that the failure to achieve that leap is what was translated into a "new principle." It was the counter-revolutionary principle which lurks within all abstract revolutionism that, when concretized invariably turns into retrogressionism.

Just as Stalin, once he recognized that the struggle for leadership with Leon Trotsky, was, in fact, the beginning of a new world stage of capitalist production, was perfectly willing to take responsibility for initiating it, although this was not what the Russian Revolution had been fought for, so with Mao whose strange combination of nationalism and revolutionary will make him a natural Stalinist. This does not mean that Mao was but a "follower" of Stalin who imposed his will on Mao as on the whole International. Once Russia was not the only state power calling itself "socialist," there were "originals," as could have been seen from Yugoslavia's Tito when Stalin was still alive. It is a great deal more true of Mao whose prolonged struggle for power meant a most original route to power. All appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, however, what distinguished him from Stalin was not his attitude to the peasantry as being more revolutionary than the proletariat. It is true that in 1927, in a descriptive report of the situation of the peasantry in Hunan, Mao specified just how more revolutionary the peasantry was than the proletariat. It is also true that in the first attempt at power in a limited area -- Kiangsi Soviet -- the principle he worked out in that belief was "land to the peasants." But this is precisely what he himself rejected as the road to power when he lashed out against "ultra leftists" and began instead to temporize with the middle peasant and even the "good gentry" so long as only they were "patriotic" and willing to resist the Japanese invasion. In a word, the road to power was not paved with revolutionary peasants so much as with an Army, a guerrilla army it is true, but an army nonetheless which related itself to the nation through its anti-Japanese resistance. A serious student of this period is absolutely right when he writes that "the wartime Communist peasant alliance, which actually brought the CCP to power, bore no relation to the earlier policy of 'land to the peasants.'"^{*}

At the same time there is the question of the Sinification of what is called "Marxist-Leninism." Although it is a Sinification, not of Marxism but only of Communism in power, beginning with Stalin, later called State Capitalism, it nevertheless was a definite break with the corrupt capitalism of Chiang Kai-shek. Where Tito, for example, as one who came to power on his own (rather than being brought in from above as in other East European countries) differed from Stalin to the extent of actually breaking from the Russian orbit, he was satisfied with national independence. Sinification and national independence, on the other hand, did not satisfy Mao. What this meant, least of all, is that, as a poet with a poetic imagination, he could hardly be compared to the drab and ruthless Stalin.

No, the decisive difference was in Mao's global aim, and, integral to it, Mao's own interpretation of the "dialectical principles" that, precisely because China was "poor and blank" as well as vast and cultured, it could skip industrialization, go "directly" to Communism, tangle with nuclear war itself as but "another weapon." Mao would write on his "poor and blank" Chinese masses "the most beautiful words," that is to say, a vision that China could survive a nuclear war and continue on the ruins of the whole world's civilization -- Russia, the U.S., Western Europe and anyone else who would not accept unconditionally China as sole leader -- China, not the "storm centers of the world," Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

* Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power, by Chalmers A. Johnson (Stanford U. Press, 1962) p. 237. The work is distinguished also by the fact that, though mainly based on China, it deals with the Yugoslav guerrillas and the conquest of power there by a combination of Communism and nationalism.

As against Stalin who could impose his leadership on the Communist International because his coming to power coincided with world depression and the rise of Nazism, Mao does not have the advantage of being the only "socialist" country. Moreover, his challenge to Russia's leadership is in actuality, above all, a rejection of the only truly independent Marxist philosophy and movement of liberation which the Hungarian Freedom Fighters spelled out as Workers' Councils. This is what Mao will never allow in China or elsewhere. This is not what he wishes to write on "the poor and blank" minds of the Chinese masses. His poetic imagination flowered indeed when he wrote "People's Communes," but the 700 million Chinese who labored in them knew them both as the way in which primitive accumulation of capital must have developed at the birth of capitalism which Marx so poignantly described, and, in thought, as that which Hegel described as the "senseless abstraction, empiricism."

The "original" methodology of Maoism is a methodology foretold by Marx, a methodology of uncritical positivism and uncritical idealism. Marx's most telling blow at Hegel's idealism was this: precisely because it was limited to "pure thinking," it laid the groundwork for "philosophical disintegration and resurrection of Empiricism."* Without Hegel's dialectic, however, Hegel's idealism could not be destroyed. And, though Hegel was blind to the defects in his system of "pure thought" and isolation from the impulses from below, he was not blind to the defects of his contemporary enemies (philosophically speaking, of course), Schelling, Fichte, and Jacobi. The latter's plunge backwards, into Intuitionism, Hegel characterizes both as "reactionary" and a "senseless abstraction of immediate knowledge." (Third Attitude to Objectivity.)

What Hegel was tracing, in thought, was the movement from empiricism (Hume, Descartes) through criticism (Kant, Locke) and he found that, instead of a direct route to his dialectic, there was a return backward to both the empiricism and the intuitionism. He summed up that which he only touched on in the PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIND, when he wrote the "Smaller Logic" and added to the abbreviation of his SCIENCE OF LOGIC, "The Three Attitudes to Objectivity."* It is the discovery that the third attitude is not the "synthesis," and not the Hegelian dialectic, but a leaning backward that made him see the counter-revolution within the revolution. That is what made him so alive to Lenin when confronted with the collapse of the Second International.

What Marx was tracing, in history, is how pre-Marxist materialism -- unhistorical empiricism and positivism -- differed with each changing mode of production; how it was that, in the springtime of capitalism when "all seems right with the world," its theoreticians can even discover labor as the source of value, can fight superstition and the freeing of the productive forces from feudal and church encroachments, can be "revolutionary." But once crises appear, history and changes stop dead, its philosophy is transformed into mere ideology, a false consciousness of the objective world. So that, instead of seeing crises as inherent in the system itself, which is self-contradictory and will be resolved through "history and its process" -- that is, the class struggles ending in revolution -- all relations are hypostatized as eternal.

It was clear to Marx, the discoverer of historical materialism, that without seeing "history and its process," i.e., the actual dialectical development of society through contradictions, no truly new society can emerge. Therefore, in rejecting capitalism, Marx did not stop at the first negation, the abolition of private property, as the "vulgar communists" were ready to do, but insisted on going on to the second negation, the "permanent revolution" that would not stop at the bourgeois revolution or at communism, but go on to the creation of a "new Humanism," "Beginning from itself." His attack on the Hegelian presentation of "negation of negation" distinguished itself from the Feuerbachian concept for he knew that Hegelian idealism cannot be destroyed without the Hegelian dialectic. What he reversed was Hegel's view of the perpetual quest for universality as limited to philosophers, not only by rooting it in production, in "materialism" but also in the perpetual quest in and need for free full development of the masses.

All this Mao has stood on its head, literally. He seeks to reconcile all contradictions, in production as in thought, through a synthetic formula -- "The Thought of Mao" devoid of the historical circumstances in which it arose -- a regulative principle applicable to everything and anything, and learned as a catechism. Whether this, as formerly, is administered by the Party leaders, or, as now, by the Red Guards, the truth is that, without uprooting the production relations inherent in the practice of primitive accumulation of capital which produces Party State bureaucrats, himself among them, these will constantly reappear, no matter what you name them. Once Mao has declared contradictions in a "socialist society" to be "non-antagonistic" as if there is such a thing as classless materialism; once he has refused to accept the workers' solution, whether as spelled out today by Workers Councils or as "philosophized" by Marx as a "new Humanism," he cannot escape travelling down the road to bourgeois rationalism which produced uncritical materialism and uncritical idealism. Its rationalism led to the division of society into an "active elite" (themselves, the philosophers, the leaders of society) and "passive masses" (the laboring masses whose thought was not solicited). It is this historic barrier from which Hegel could not extricate himself. Only one aligned with the masses and their historic, creative initiative could. Marx so aligned himself. Mao repeats the Marxian language, but did not, cannot and will not align with them. And it is this which has produced the crises that led to the disaster of the Great Leap Forward, the Sino-Soviet Conflict, and now the Cultural Revolution. It is true that he has broken from the Party "bureaucrats" (all except himself, THE ONE), and has created something called "the Red Guards." If even for a moment we forget its failures and hence the replacement by the "Triple Alliance" (the Army, the Red Guards, and "revolutionary cadres", i.e., the "good" Party leaders), the fact remains that, as he formerly aimed to substitute the Party for the workers' accumulation of their historic experience, putting them at the disposal of the Party as they had previously been put at the disposal of capital, so now he puts these "spontaneous committees" (carefully organized and controlled by the Army) at the disposal of primitive accumulation of capital. By a remorseless logic therefore, the "representative" of the masses has turned into his opposite, the administrator over them. His poetic imagination extends only to the name, not the content. On the contrary, since Mao deems "protracted war," were it even to take "several generations, or a century," as "The Way", the Maoist way, it is this he introduces in thought as in production, including the "abolition of economism," that is to say, the workers' say over the conditions of labor and life which would look to "betterment" rather than to "participation in uninterrupted revolution."

Moving completely within the superstructure of abstract consciousness -- culture-- Mao believes that the conflict in policies between workers, peasants, and youth, on the one hand, and himself on the other, can be "resolved" by the "remolding of thoughts", "touching the souls of men."

Idealism, bourgeois or Maoist, is not a matter of choice. In every period when masses have either undergone defeat, or demonstrated a new revolutionary way the leaders refused to accept, crushing it, there is a tendency to regard the masses as unhistorical "poor and blank," as Mao puts it. Hence he arrogates to himself alone the role of making history. Stalin, instead of merely feeling his way through a struggle for power with Trotsky, one who knew where he was going and knew what objective force he represented-- State power, the State Plan, the State economy, the State Party -- declared there would be no "withering away" of his state. So Mao, now that he recognizes it is impossible "to catch up" with an industrialized world which has learned to Plan, has decided to concentrate on "Science" (read: H-bomb) where he can catch up, and on his Thought as the only way, and not alone for China. All ideological differences are resolved into one irreconcilable difference -- his and the others, all others. Hence the "philosophy of the Cultural Revolution -- its beginning, center and end -- is the cult of Mao himself."

"History and its process," however, has long proven that only the creativity of the masses can overcome the crises, contradictions, and wars tearing society apart. Short of that creativity, there is nothing but barbarism and intellectual disintegration, the supreme example of which today, is the cult of "Mao's Thought."