

# **Understanding Maoist Dialectics**

by Jason Unruhe

**WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES UNITE!**

# Understanding Maoist Dialectics

*A beginners guide to understanding the  
dialectics in Mao Tse-tung Thought*

J A S O N U N R U H E

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Study Chairman Mao's writings, follow his teachings and act according to his instructions.

Lin Piao

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	6
Dialectical Materialism	
Part 1 Idealism and Materialism .....	19
Part 2 Dialectical Materialism .....	26
Notes on Mao's "On Contradiction" .....	33
On Contradiction .....	46
Notes On "Revolution Means Solving Contradictions" .....	93
Revolution Means Solving Contradictions .....	98
Notes on "On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People" .....	108
On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People . . .	143
Where Do Correct Ideas Come From? .....	190
Notes On "A Dialectical Approach To Inner-Party Unity" .....	193
A Dialectical Approach To Inner-Party Unity. ....	199
Notes On "Talk on Questions of Philosophy" .....	203
Talk on Questions of Philosophy .....	212
Appendix A	
Mao Tse-tung's Late Views on Resolution of Contradictions. .	234
Appendix B	
"Affirmation, Negation, Affirmation, Negation"? .....	236
Acknowledgements .....	238
End Notes .....	239

# Introduction

Dialectical Materialism is the single most powerful tool for analysis that we as Marxists have in our arsenal of ideas. It lays the foundation of our thought behind current phenomenon and past social change. Understanding contradictions allows us to see the processes of the world and everything contained within it in motion. It also shows us how that motion causes change. Two forces working against each other to create the motion and change of reality around us. This is a rejection of the liberal idealist view where things exist and have meaning merely by thinking them, "If we think nice things, we'll have nice things." It is also a rejection of the conservative view where one simply accepts material reality and believes, "This is the way we are, how things are, and we must accept that."

We as Marxists reject this! We are not idealists who "think" themselves into a better world. We also reject being drones who simply allow material conditions to make us who we are. We are material dialecticians who see how the material conditions work, and then we alter them in order to change ourselves. In no way can we be blind to how the world works, and more importantly how to change it.

The most common example we see is how revolution comes about as a result of social contradiction. There is a contradiction between the capitalist class and the working class. Both struggle for control of the surplus value (profits) generated by the capitalist enterprise. The workers create it through their labour while the capitalist takes it simply by "virtue" of owning the means of production. Both sides struggle for it because ownership of the social product is power. This struggle is what leads to all kinds of social phenomenon in capitalist society. The workers go on strike to receive more of the surplus value while the capitalist hires goons to assault them as scabs fill in for production. The issue of taxation on corporations is bound up with this contradiction as well. Workers demand that what surplus value can't be kept be used for the benefit of society.

People want that money used for healthcare and education to benefit the worker and his class. The capitalist wants to keep as much of the money he "earned" as possible. These two sides will contend with each other until the contradiction is resolved.

Both workers and the capitalist reach out to the state to moderate their battles. Workers demand laws protecting rights to collective bargaining, while the capitalist demands back-to-work legislation. Capitalists (particularly in finance) demand greater and greater laws protecting their class. This manifests itself in harsher and more fascist laws to suppress the working and poor class. One need only look as far as the recent example of New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's stop and frisk law. A law designed to criminalize the working and poor class, unfairly targeting minorities. Even worse he has now called for people in public housing to be finger printed, to literally be treated like criminals for being poor.

This hostility between these two camps accelerates or becomes more antagonistic until it reaches the point where it erupts into change. The social pressure builds up until there is an explosion of class warfare where one class overthrows the other. Typically we have seen this result in the destruction of the capitalist class. The workers can survive and produce without the boss, the boss cannot exist without the worker. This pressure against the poor and working class (especially with the misery of WW1) is what led the public to supporting the Bolsheviks uprooting and destroying the power of the Czar. Similar contradictions within China, those of WW2 and Japanese imperialism, are what led hundreds of millions to rise up against the occupiers and the US puppet Chung Kai-shek.

These contradictions happen on an even larger scale with imperialism. The First World wages war on the Third World for its resources and cheap supply of labour. The victories by the working class in the First become too successful, so the capitalist



responds by moving production to the Third World. The First World worker is bought off with cheaper commodities so that he doesn't complain too much. We obtain cheaper fuel, more affordable luxuries at the expense of the suffering and increasing poverty of the Third World worker. Thus we can see there is now a contradiction between the proletariat of the First and Third World.

Today we see what I hope are the death throes of capitalism. The contradictions inherent within it are tearing it apart and still have not recovered from its recent height before the 2008 recession. Unproductive finance capital is reaching greater and greater heights, even greater than before the recession. This is being done instead of productive capital which generates value through commodity production. Derivatives alone have now ballooned to 1.5 quadrillion dollars.<sup>1</sup> This is a staggering amount of money that is in a financial bubble that is threatening to burst. That is to say that it *will* burst. The death of capitalism might very well be at hand.

Contradictions exist throughout everything in our universe. Our goal as Marxists is to be the ones who recognize this and fight to resolve all contradictions between people to lead us to the communist society. Contradictions exist between sex, race, religions and national identities. All of these contradictions must be swept aside if we are to reach that better world. Before we can do that, we must understand contradiction. Only by doing that can we resolve them.

\* \* \*

Someone who was already familiar with dialectics might ask the question: "So what's so unique about Maoist dialectics? What did Mao do with it that was so different than those before him?"

I'd like to answer that question in two parts.

First, the purpose of this book is to explain what it is Mao wrote so that the reader will understand what Mao meant. Much is lost in translation due to the tremendous difference between Mandarin and English. That is not to say that I have read Mao's works in the original language. What I do mean is that in translation some meaning can be lost and requires a bit more study to grasp it. Some people have difficulty understanding the way in which he writes. I've certainly had that problem when dealing with the antiquated language used by Marx and to some extent Lenin. We all have our own ways of reading and learning. I have found it very useful to read an essay or explanation of what a work means and then read the work itself. I've noticed other people find this helpful as well. That is my intent with this book, to make it easier for people to understand Mao's words.

As Marxists we should always make our writings, the writing of our leaders more accessible to people in the working class. We should not always write so academically as to alienate those who have no previous experience in Marxist works. Lenin said very specifically we must reach the lower and deeper sections of the proletariat. Didn't Mao bring revolutionary ideas to the countryside to people who were almost all illiterate? Mao created titles and explanations of concepts in simple phrases so that those who could not read could easily remember them. "Don't Hit Out in All Directions" was written to explain the concept of being inclusive to all people who want revolution, even if they are not "full" communists. "Unity, Struggle, Unity" was written to teach us how to include everyone into the struggle and win them over to our side. We unite with them on things we agree upon, say ending the war or occupation. Struggle with them over why the war or occupation happens, and then unite with them once they've been won over to our side.

By no means am I saying that the working and poor are the same as illiterate peasants. I am only saying that Marxist writings must

be made more accessible to the masses, especially those with little experience in philosophy.

Our goal in our writings regardless of what "brand" of Marxist we are, must be to bring ideas to the masses. We must bring the Marxist ideas to the people because the ruling establishment, controlled by the bourgeoisie does everything it can to suppress them. When it cannot suppress them they slander and distort them in order to demonize and ridicule them. We must bring the truth of our ideas to the masses in order to bypass the lies and distortions perpetuated by the ruling class. We are the holders of Marxist thought, we the people... so to speak.

Second, the purpose of this book was not to go into the philosophical differences in Mao's view of dialectics. However I should give the subject some attention. It would be a little shallow of me not to talk about the differences between particular views of dialectics and their sources. However I hope that the reader appreciates that this was not the intention of the book. Instead it is supposed educate the reader in the works on dialectics put forward by Mao during the Revolution and the revolutionary process.

It should be noted (and obvious) that the works on dialectics in China was heavily influenced by the language in China itself. It was also influenced by classical Chinese philosophy. The Chinese languages are different from the European languages and thus different meanings can come across. A word may mean one thing in one language, but have the same meaning with a different connotation in another language.

Vsevolod Holubnychy noted the following in the China quarterly:

*In place of the Western logical judgments, "this is right" or "this is wrong," Chinese philosophers used merely implicit, to them self-evident, identifications, "this is this" (shih) or "this is not this" (fei). They also had one single word yu (negative, wu), for*

*our two entirely different words, "have" and "there is." As a result, instead of our "There are horses in the world," they would say, "The world has (contains) horses." The ultimate in this type of thinking was reached in the well-known Essay on the White Horse, by Kung-sun Lung (ca. 300 B.C.): There where a Westerner would have said, "A horse is not necessarily a white horse," Lung concluded unequivocally that "A white horse is not a horse."*

Yes, this is very confusing and can seriously cloud an understanding of any subject spoken. Fortunately people who understand this problem have translated Mao's writings so we can be fairly certain their original meaning remains as intact as possible. However I think it is important that I acknowledge this problem.

\* \* \*

In my opinion the Maoist dialectic collection is the greatest contribution to dialectics. This is of course not counting the founding of dialectics itself. Mao's writing speaks directly to the main use of the subject, the resolving of contradictions. Some could criticize many socialist countries for actually forgetting this. For instance I think in Cuba this has been forgotten. I understand that the country is firing on all pistons towards economic development, and that theory can get left by the side in such situations. Regardless the transformation of society should always be the main goal of any policy that it implements. If you're not struggling towards communism, what are you struggling towards?

I see this phenomenon wide spread in First World Marxist thought and actions. The dialectic has been almost completely forgotten and instead has been replaced by petty identity politics. This should be no surprise as even the largest and most dedicated of Marxist forces (in the West) are "Facebook revolutionaries" who don't actually study and instead go around attacking other groups and people on a personal level. They do

this rather than engage in study. Name calling and making up lies about people seems to be the new norm in place of actual principled arguments. A serious return to actual Marxist work is sorely needed. Thankfully I do see at least a few people willing to do so.

The point of Mao's works on the dialectic is to resolve all contradictions among the people. That *is* the path to the communist society. It is only by resolving them that we get to the best of all possible worlds. Mao said straight out, once some contradictions are eliminate others will appear. Those too must be combated and resolved. Each one must be taken to task when they appear to us.

Take for example the contradiction between the kulaks and the people. Once the heat wave struck and the famine engulfed Ukraine, there was an immediate need for the collectivization of agriculture in order to speed up and increase the production of grain. The needs of the people stood in contradiction to the interests of the kulaks. They wanted their land to remain in their hands to have control over it. They began hoarding grain to increase the price, and they began producing less as a form of protest. The hungry in the country cared little for their arrogant self-interest and demanded food. The government stepped in and began forced collectivization and tossing people from their land that were refusing to produce food.

In response to this, the kulaks carried out terrorist attacks against the collective farms, destroyed crops and attacked government officials. With this terrorism designed to starve people happening, government forces rolled in and squashed the kulaks committing these acts. Eventually the class of kulaks was eliminated altogether. All land was collectivized and the famine was being combated. People felt little sympathy for them after they tried to increase starvation in order to increase profits. Never mind actually killing people and burning crops

because the government dared respond to the increase in of suffering among the people.

What we saw was the whole process of the dialectic. A contradiction arose from the material conditions. People needed to eat during a shortage of food and the profit motive (or class interest) of the kulaks. As the situation intensified and starvation increased, the contradiction became more antagonistic leading to quantitative changes. By this I mean the violent actions of the kulaks and the collectivization of agriculture. This antagonism intensified to the point of forcing a qualitative change: the liquidation of the kulaks as a class.

The contradiction was solved and the famine was brought under control.

There were two possibilities in solving this contradiction. The antagonism could have continued until starvation killed everyone, or the kulaks were eliminated as a class. The antagonistic nature of the contradiction was going to increase quantitative changes until it finally burst out into a qualitative change. Thankfully that change was the destruction of the kulaks.

This is only a well known example of the contradictions that existed among the people that need to be resolved.

This was the primary focus of Mao's work on dialectics, the resolving of contradictions among the people. Other people who have made contributions have been more towards the advancement of dialectical theory. This is not necessarily the same thing, but both are important. I think Mao's were designed to deal with the immediate task. This is not to say that anyone's contributions were better or worse than anyone else's. This is not a claim I am trying to make.

As a final note I'd like to speak to Mao's views on the Negation of the Negation. There is confusion as to whether or not Mao believed in it. The most famous statement is *On Contradiction* where Mao says there is no such thing. Yet in the same work in the unofficial version he criticizes formal logic for not being able to deal with the concept.

*"Engels talked about the three categories, but as for me I don't believe in two of those categories. (The unity of opposites is the most basic law, the transformation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity of the opposites quality and quantity, and the negation of the negation does not exist at all.)"*

Here he outright says "the negation of the negation does not exist at all". Yet in the pre-liberation version of this same work he says it does.

*"Correct thought should not exclude the third factor, should not exclude the law of the negation of the negation ... . The law of excluded middle in formal logic also supplements its law of identity, which only recognizes the fixed condition of a concept, and which opposes its development, opposes revolutionary leaps, and opposes the principle of the negation of the negation ... . Why do formal logicians advocate these things? Because they observe things separate from their continual mutual function and interconnection; that is, they observe things at rest rather than in movement, and as separate rather than in connection. Therefore, it is not possible for them to consider and acknowledge the importance of contradictoriness and the negation of the negation within things and concepts, and so advocate the rigid and inflexible law of identity."<sup>iii</sup>*

So it seems during the Yan'an period he was showing that the Negation of the Negation is true.

In January 1957 he criticized Stalin by accusing him of lacking sufficient skill in dialectical materialism. He did so by employing

the concept of Negation of the Negation: *“Stalin made mistakes in dialectics. 'Negation of the negation'. The October Revolution negated capitalism but he refused to admit that socialism may be negated too”*.<sup>iii</sup>

There are other quotes in his works that indicate that he does indeed believe in it.

*"This kind of reversal is also possible in socialist countries. An example of this is Yugoslavia which has changed its nature and become revisionist, changing from a workers' and peasants' country to a country ruled by reactionary nationalist elements. In our country we must come to grasp, understand and study this problem really thoroughly... otherwise a country like ours can still move towards its opposite. Even to move towards its opposite would not matter too much because there would still be the negation of the negation, and afterwards we might move towards our opposite yet again."*<sup>iv</sup>

There is a great deal of confusion as to exactly what Mao's position on the Negation of the Negation was. I for the life of me can't figure it out. I believe it will require someone with far greater academic skills to solve this mystery.

\* \* \*

The main body of this book will begin with Mao's work "Dialectical Materialism" as a kind of second introduction just to get the reader familiar with the whole thing. If you are already familiar with the subject you probably don't need to read it and may skip ahead. However I'd always suggest that a refresher is always useful. I've only included it because it will be useful to some people.

The book contains a sampling of the works Mao has written on the subject of dialectics. I've given an explanation of each work first, and then I give the work so as to make it easier for the lay



person to understand. There is by no means any contribution to dialectics by me here; I am simply making Mao's work more accessible.

# Dialectical Materialism

April - June, 1938

Part 1  
Idealism and Materialism

## 1. The Struggle Between Two Armies in Philosophy

The whole history of philosophy is the history of the struggle and the development of two mutually opposed schools of philosophy -- idealism and materialism. All philosophical currents and schools are manifestations of these two fundamental schools.

All philosophical theories have been created by men belonging to a definite social class. The ideas of these men have moreover been historically determined by a definite social existence. All philosophical doctrines express the needs of a definite social class and reflect the level of development of the productive forces of society and the historical stage in men's comprehension of nature . . .

The social origins of idealism and materialism lie in a social structure marked by class contradictions. The earliest appearance of idealism was the product of the ignorance and superstition of savage and primitive man. Then, with the development of the productive forces, and the ensuing development of scientific knowledge, it stands to reason that idealism should decline and be replaced by materialism. And yet, from ancient times to the present, idealism not only has not declined, but, on the contrary has developed and carried on a struggle for supremacy with materialism from which neither has emerged the victor. The reason lies in the division of society into classes. On the one hand, in its own interest, the oppressing class must develop and reinforce its idealist doctrines. On the other hand, the oppressed classes, likewise in their own interest, must develop and reinforce their materialist doctrines. Both idealism and materialism are weapons in the class struggle, and the struggle between idealism and materialism cannot disappear so long as classes continue to exist. Idealism, in the process of its historical development, represents the ideology of the exploiting classes and serves reactionary purposes. Materialism, on the other hand, is the world view of the revolutionary class; in a

class society, it grows and develops in the midst of an incessant struggle against the reactionary philosophy of idealism. Consequently, the history of the struggle between idealism and materialism in philosophy reflects the struggle of interests between the reactionary class and the revolutionary class.... A given philosophical tendency is in the last analysis a manifestation in a particular guise of the policy of the social class to which the philosophers belong.

The distinguishing characteristic of Marxist philosophy -- i.e., dialectical materialism -- is its effort to explain clearly the class nature of all social consciousness (including philosophy). It publicly declares a resolute struggle between its own proletarian nature and the idealist philosophy of the propertied class. Moreover, it subordinates its own special and independent tasks to such general tasks as overthrowing capitalism, organizing and building a proletarian dictatorship, and edifying a socialist society.

## 2. The Difference Between Idealism and Materialism

Wherein lies the basic difference between idealism and materialism? It lies in the opposite answers given by the two to the fundamental question in philosophy, that of the relationship between spirit and matter ( that of the relationship between consciousness and existence). Idealism considers spirit (consciousness, concepts, the subject) as the source of all that exists on earth, and matter (nature and society, the object) as secondary and subordinate, Materialism recognizes the independent existence of matter as detached from spirit and considers spirit as secondary and subordinate..

## 3. The Source of The Growth and The Development of Idealism

Idealism see matter as the product of the spirit. This is turning the real world upside down. Where is the source of the growth and the development of such a philosophy?

As mentioned above, the earliest manifestation of idealism was brought about by the superstition and ignorance of primitive, savage man. But with the development of production, the separation between manual labour and intellectual labour was responsible for ranking idealism first among currents of philosophical thought. With the development of the productive forces of society, the division of labour made its appearance; the further development of the division of labour saw the emergence of persons devoting themselves entirely and exclusively to intellectual labour. But when the productive forces are still weak, the division between the two does not reach the stage of complete separation. Only after classes and private property appear and exploitation becomes the foundation of the existence of the ruling class do great changes occur. Intellectual labour then becomes the exclusive privilege of the ruling class, while manual labour becomes the fate of the oppressed classes. The ruling class begins to examine the relationship between themselves and the oppressed classes in an upside-down fashion: It is not the labourers who furnish them with means for existence, but rather they who supply the labourers with these means. Hence, they despise manual labour and develop idealist conceptions. To eliminate the distinction between manual labour and intellectual labour is one of the preconditions for eliminating idealist philosophy.

The social root that makes possible the development of idealist philosophy lies principally in the fact that this kind of philosophical consciousness is the manifestation of the interests of the exploiting class ... The final decline of idealism will come with the elimination of classes, after the establishment of a communist society.

The source that enables idealism to develop and deepen and gives it the strength to struggle with materialism must be sought

in the process of human knowing.. When men think, they must use concepts. This can easily cause our knowledge to be split into two aspects: reality, which is of an individual and particular character; and concepts, which are of a general character... In the nature of things, the particular and the general are inseparably linked; once separated, they depart from objective truth... To separate the general from the particular, and to view the general as objective reality and the particular merely as the form in which the general exists— this is the method adopted by all idealists. All idealists put consciousness, spirit, or concepts in place of objective reality existing independently from human consciousness... They cannot point out the materialist truth according to which consciousness is limited by matter, but believe that only consciousness is active, whereas matter is only an inert composite entity. Urged on moreover by their own class nature, the idealists then use every method to exaggerate the activity of consciousness, developing this aspect unilaterally... Idealism in economics exaggerates beyond measure a nonessential aspect of exchange,, raising the law of supply and demand to the status of the fundamental law of capitalism... Idealist historians regard heroes as the makers of history. Idealist politicians regard politics as omnipotent. Idealist military leaders practice the methods of desperate combat [p'ing-ming-chu-i-ti tso-chan]. Idealist revolutionaries advocate Blanquism. The diehards say that the only way to revive our nation is to restore the old morality. All this results from exaggerating subjective factors beyond measure...

Pre-Marxist materialism (mechanistic materialism) did not stress the thought process in the development of knowledge, but regarded thought merely as the object of action, as the mirror that reflects nature... Only dialectical materialism correctly shows the active role of thought, and at the same time points out the limitation imposed upon thought by matter. It points out that thought arises from social practice and at the same time actively shapes practice. Only this kind of dialectical theory of

the unity of knowledge and action can thoroughly vanquish idealism.

#### 4. The Origin of The Inception and The Development of Materialism

The recognition that matter exists independently and apart from consciousness in the external world is the foundation of materialism. Man created this foundation through practice... Obligated to submit to natural forces, and capable of using only simple tools, primitive man could not explain the surrounding phenomena and hence sought help from spirits. This is the origin of religion and idealism. But in the long-range process of production, man came into contact with surrounding nature, acted upon nature, changed nature, and created things to eat, to live in, and to use, and adapted nature to the interests of man and caused man to believe that matter has an objective existence.

In the social existence of humanity, reciprocal relationships and influences arise between individuals. In a class society there is moreover a class struggle. The oppressed class considers the circumstances and estimates its strength, and then makes its plans. When they succeed in the struggle, the members of this class are convinced that their views are not the product of fantasy, but the reflection of the objectively existing material world. Because the oppressed class fails when it adopts the wrong plans and succeeds by correcting its plans it learns to understand that it can achieve its purpose only when its subjective plans rest upon the accurate understanding of the material nature of the objective world and the fact that the objective world is governed by laws. The history of science furnishes man with proof of the material nature of the world and of the fact that it is governed by laws and helps man to see the futility of the illusions of religion and idealism and to arrive at materialist conclusions. In sum, the history of man's practice



comprises the history of his struggle with nature, the history of the class struggle, the history of science. Owing to the necessity to live and struggle, men have thought about the reality of matter and its laws, have proved the correctness of materialism, and have found the necessary intellectual tool for their struggle— materialist philosophy. The higher the level to which social production develops, the greater the development of the class struggle, and the more scientific knowledge reveals the 'secrets' of nature, the greater the development and consolidation of materialist philosophy. Thus man can be delivered gradually from the dual and crushing oppression of nature and society.

Part 2  
Dialectical Materialism

## 1. Dialectical Materialism Is The Revolutionary Arm of the Proletariat

The Chinese proletariat, having assumed at the present time the historical task of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, must make use of dialectical materialism as its mental-arm... The study of dialectical materialism is even more indispensable for the cadres who lead the revolutionary movement, because the two erroneous theories and methods of work of subjectivism and mechanism frequently subsist among the cadres, and as a result frequently cause the cadres to go against Marxism, and lead the revolutionary movement on to the wrong path. If we wish to avoid or correct such deficiencies, the only solution lies in conscious study and understanding of dialectical materialism, in order to arm one's brain anew.

## 2. The Relative Between The Old Philosophical Heritage and Dialectical Materialism

After the May 4th Movement of 1919, as a consequence of the conscious appearance of the Chinese proletariat on the political stage, and the rise in the scientific level of the country, a Marxist philosophical movement arose and developed in China. In its first period, however, the level of understanding of materialist dialectics within the materialist current of thought was rather weak, and mechanistic materialism influenced by the bourgeoisie, as well as the subjectivism of Deborin, were its principal components. Following the defeat of the revolution in 1927 the level of understanding of Marxism and Leninism progressed, and the thinking of materialist dialectics gradually developed. Just recently, because of the severity of the national and social crisis, and also because of the influence of the movement for liquidating deviations in Soviet philosophy, a broad movement of materialist dialectics has developed in China's intellectual circles.

Because of the backwardness of China's social development the dialectical materialist philosophical currents developing in China today do not result from taking over and reforming our own philosophical heritage, but from the study of Marxism-Leninism. However, if we wish to ensure that dialectical materialist thought shall penetrate profoundly in China and continue to develop, and shall moreover give firm direction to the Chinese revolution and lead it to final victory in the future, then we must struggle with all the old and rotten philosophical theories existing in China on the ideological front throughout the whole country, raise the flag of criticism and in this way liquidate the philosophical heritage of ancient China. Only thus we can attain our goal.

### 3. The Unity of World View and Methodology In Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical materialism is the world view of the proletariat. At the same time it is the method of the proletariat for taking cognizance of the surrounding world, and the method of revolutionary action of the proletariat. It is the unity of world view and methodology....

### 4. The Question Of The Object Of Materialist Dialectics -- What Do Materialist Dialectics Serve To Study?

Marx, Engels and Lenin all explained materialist dialectics as the theory of development...

Under the heading of the object of philosophy we must still solve another problem, namely the problem of the unity of dialectics, logic and epistemology. . .

Materialist dialectics is the only scientific epistemology, and it is also the only scientific logic. Materialist dialectics studies the origin and development of our knowledge of the outside world. It studies the transition from not knowing to knowing and from

incomplete knowledge to more complete knowledge; it studies how the laws of the development of nature and society are daily reflected more profoundly and more extensively in the mind of humanity. This is precisely the unity of materialist dialectics with epistemology...

The essence of the concept of development consists in regarding laws as the reflection in and transplanting to our minds (moreover further elaborated in our minds) of the manifestations of the movement of matter...

Only by using materialism to arrive at a solution of the problem of the relations between existence and thought, only by taking one's stand on the theory of the reflection, can one arrive at a thorough solution to the problems of dialectics, logic and epistemology....

## 5. On Matter

The very first condition for belonging to the materialist camp consists in recognizing the independent existence of the material world, separate from human consciousness -- the fact that it existed before the appearance of humanity, and continues to exist since the appearance of humanity, independently and outside of human consciousness. To recognize this point is a fundamental premise of all scientific research.

How shall we demonstrate this? The proofs are extremely numerous. Humanity is constantly in contact with the external world and must, moreover, struggle fiercely against the pressure and resistance of the outside world (nature and society). Moreover, we not only must, but can overcome this pressure and resistance. All of these real circumstances of the social practice of humanity, as manifested in the historical development of human society, are the best proof [of the existence of the material world ]. China does not doubt the

objective existence of Japanese imperialism which has invaded our country, nor of the Chinese people themselves. The students of the Anti-Japanese Military-Political University also do not doubt the objective existence of this university and of the students themselves...

If we consider this thing known as consciousness in the light of thoroughgoing materialism ( that is to say in the light of materialist-dialectics), then what we call consciousness is nothing else but a form of the movement of matter, a particular characteristic of the material brain of humanity; it is that particular characteristic of the material brain which causes the material processes outside consciousness to be reflected in consciousness. From this we see that when we distinguish matter from consciousness and when, moreover we oppose them one to another, this is only conditional that is to say, it has meaning only from the standpoint of epistemology.

In a word, matter is everything in the universe. 'All power belongs to Ssu-Ma- I.' We say, 'All power belongs to matter.' This is the source of the unity of the world.

## 6. On Movement (On Development)

The first fundamental principle of dialectical materialism lies in its view of matter... This principle of the unity of the world has already been explained above in discussing matter.

The second fundamental principle of dialectical materialism lies in its theory of movement (or theory of development). This means the recognition that movement is the form of the existence of matter, an inherent attribute of matter, a manifestation of the multiplicity of matter. This is the principle of the development of the world. The combination of the principle of the development of the world with the principle of the unity of the world, set forth above, constitutes the whole of the world view of dialectical materialism. The world is nothing

else but the material world in a process of unlimited development...

Dialectical materialism's theory of movement is in opposition first of all with philosophical idealism and with the theological concepts of religion. The fundamental nature of all philosophical idealism and religious theology derives from their denial of the unity and material nature of the world; and in imagining that the movement and development of the world takes place apart from matter, or took place at least in the beginning apart from matter, and is the result of the action of spirit, God, or divine forces, The German idealist philosopher, Hegel, held that the present world results from the development of the so-called 'world idea'. In China the philosophy of the Book of Changes, and the metaphysics of the Sung and Ming, all put forward idealist views of the development of the universe. Christianity says that God created the world, Buddhism and all of China's various fetishist religions attribute the movement and development of all the myriad phenomena (Wan Wu) of the universe to spiritual forces. All of these doctrines which think about movement apart from matter are fundamentally incompatible with dialectical materialism...

Dialectical materialism... considers that rest or equilibrium are merely one element of movement, that they are merely one particular circumstance of movement... A sentence popular with the metaphysical thinkers of ancient China, 'Heaven does not change and the Way also does not change,' corresponds to... a theory of the immobility of the universe. . . In their view, the basic nature of the universe and of society was eternally unchanging. The reason why they adopted this attitude is to be found primarily in their class limitations. If the feudal landlord class had recognized that the basic nature of the universe and of society is subject to movement and development, then most certainly they would have been pronouncing in theory a death sentence on their own class. The philosophies of all reactionary

forces are theories of immobilism. Revolutionary classes and the popular masses have all perceived the principle of the development of the world, and consequently advocate transforming society and the world; their philosophy is dialectical materialism..

The causes of the transformation of matter is to be found not without, but within. It is not because of the impulsion of external mechanical forces, but because of the existence within the matter in question of two components different in their nature and mutually contradictory which struggle with one another, thus giving an impetus to the movement and development of the matter. As a result of the discovery of the laws of such movement and transformation, dialectical materialism is capable of enlarging the principle of the material unity of the world, extending it to the history of nature and society. Thus, not only it is possible to investigate the world considered as matter in perpetual movement, but the world can also be investigated as matter endlessly in movement from a lower form to a higher form. That is to say, it is possible to investigate the world as development and process.

Dialectical materialism investigate the development of the world as a progressive movement from the inorganic to the organic, and from thence to the highest form of the movement of matter (society).

What we have just discussed is the theory of the movement of the world, or the principle of the development of the world in accordance with dialectical materialism. This doctrine is the essence of Marxist philosophy. If the proletariat and all revolutionaries take up this consistently scientific arm, they will then be able to understand this world, and transform the world.



## Notes on Mao's "On Contradiction"

## The Universality of Contradiction

The universality of contradiction is well known, this is the basis for all of dialectics. No one in dialectics disputes this. All things have contradictions in them. This universality has a twofold meaning.

1. Contradiction exists in the process of the development of all things.
2. In the process of development of each thing, a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end.

The problem that arose here is that some denied the existence of contradiction at the beginning of each process. The Soviet Deborin school claimed that contradiction did not appear at the beginning of a process. They claim it appeared only when a process has reached a certain stage. This is essentially claiming that the cause of development, before the contradiction appears, would be external and not internal. This would be claiming that contradiction is not universal. We know external influences are secondary to internal causes. The Deborin school is using metaphysical theories of external causality.

If we accept this view as correct we would see only differences, not contradiction. This how it was put by Mao : "*...the Deborin school sees only differences but not contradictions between the kulacks and the peasants in general under existing conditions in the Soviet Union, thus entirely agreeing with Bukharin.*"

They are incorrectly asserting presence or absence of contradiction. They should be seeing different kinds of contradiction. Contradiction is universal and absolute, it is in every process in the development of all things.

The truth of contradiction within a process is as follows: The old process with its own contradictions creates the new process that

has its own contradictions. At no time is there an absence of contradictions within a process.

### The Particularity of Contradiction

In each form of motion of matter there is a contradiction which has its own particularity. Because there is only matter in the universe, that matter in motion must assume certain forms. When we look at each form of motion of matter we take note of the similarities it has with other forms of motion. What is essential is that we identify what particularities are different in each motion of matter, meaning we "*observe the qualitative difference between this form of motion and other forms.*"

Every form of motion has its own particular contradiction. The particular contradiction is what makes one contradiction distinguishable from another. The differences in the motions of matter come from the differences in contradiction. The difference in the motion of matter can be seen in many different things. "*There are many forms of motion in nature, mechanical motion, sound, light, heat, electricity, dissociation, combination, and so on. All these forms are interdependent, but in its essence each is different from the others. The particular essence of each form of motion is determined by its own particular contradiction.*" This is the same for every society and every form of ideology, they each have their own particular contradiction and particular essence.

These particular contradictions make up and determine the basis of each science that investigates each motion of matter. In mathematics there is positive and negative numbers, in chemistry there is dissociation and combination, classes and class struggle in social science.

Dialectics is universal contradiction, it is in everything everywhere. if we do not accept this we can never understand how matter is in motion, thus preventing us from understanding

the development of things. If we don't study the particularity of contradiction we have no way of understanding the essence of a particular contradiction that which makes it different from other contradictions. We need this to learn, "*the particular cause or particular basis for the movement or development of a thing.*" Without it we wouldn't be differentiating between different fields of science.

The same can be seen in the development of mankind's knowledge. First he knows himself and knows particular things about his existence. With that basis he can expand his knowledge to a general knowledge of things and subjects. This means a person has to learn the specific essence of many different general things before he can know the common essence of things.

This is the basis for the two processes of cognition: from the particular to the general and from the general to the particular. When the scientific method is followed properly this cycle advances mankind's knowledge to higher and higher stages.

These two processes of cognition are connected, they make up the whole of the Marxist Theory of Knowledge.

The main point Mao is making in this is how a good and proper investigation is supposed to be carried out.

- Study each particular contradiction and the essence of it.
- Study the particular contradiction and the essence of each process in the long course of development of each form of motion and matter.
- In every form the development which is material, is qualitatively different.

Each qualitatively different contradiction can only be resolved with a qualitatively different method. For example: contradiction between the working class and the capitalist class is solved by the method of socialist revolution. This recognition that it takes different methods to resolve different contradictions is one Marxist-Leninists must follow.

Mao gave an example of this in the work:

*"...there exist the contradiction between all the oppressed classes in Chinese society and imperialism, the contradiction between the great masses of the people and feudalism, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the contradiction between the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other, the contradiction between the various reactionary ruling groups, and so on. These contradictions cannot be treated in the same way since each has its own particularity; moreover, the two aspects of each contradiction cannot be treated in the same way since each aspect has its own characteristics."*

Subjectivity must never be used in investigation. This also comes with the rejection of one-sidedness and superficiality. We must look at it objectively and not use the materialist view point. The key is to look at problems from all sides. this would be looking at the individual parts and not the whole. It would be not looking at the characteristics of both aspects of a contradiction.

The fundamental contradiction in a process of a development of a thing (and the corresponding essence determined by that contradiction) will not disappear until that process is completed. However, in a lengthy process the conditions differ at each stage.

There is a reason for this. The fundamental contradiction in a process doesn't change. The fundamental contradiction will go through a quantitative change (become more intensified) as it

travels through one stage to the next in a lengthy process. (This is not like the Deborin school which thinks the contradiction appears later, Mao says the contradiction goes through changes.)

Along with this, some of the major and minor contradictions (which are influenced or determined by the fundamental contradiction) will intensify, some temporarily or partially be resolved and some new ones will emerge. This shows that the process is marked by stages. If this is not acknowledged, its contradictions cannot be dealt with properly.

### The Principal Contradiction and The Principal Aspect of a Contradiction

When studying the problem of the particularity there are two points we must remember to look at for analysis: the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction.

In the process of the development of a complex thing there is a principal contradiction. This one contradiction has the ability to develop, influence the existence of, and/or determine other contradictions in the process.

As a brief example we can show the principal contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This influences the contradiction between different groups of bourgeoisie. One group of capitalists want a "freer" bourgeois democracy to help smaller capitalists, while bourgeois fascists would rather have as little in the way of regulation that would help smaller capitalists compete. There is the principal contradiction of classes and it influences the contradiction between the interests of different groups of capitalists.

When American imperialists launched their war against Iraq, Iraq and the imperialists became the principal contradiction. The various rival (in contradiction) groups temporarily unite as a

force against the invaders. Sunni and Shiite militants who normally fight each other, began to work together. The new primary contradiction of Iraq/US Imperialism influenced and altered the contradictions between normally rival militant groups.

Mao saw the necessity of this when he offered a temporary alliance with Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists against the Japanese imperialists. The Japanese aggression against China became the primary contradiction and altered the contradiction between the Nationalists and the Communists. Because there was also a contradiction between US and Japanese imperialism, it influenced/alterd the US capitalist contradiction with communism, in which they gave weapons to communist forces to fight the Japanese. Once the Japanese were defeated, the principal contradiction became the nationalists against the communists once again. This also led to the US contradiction with communism reverting back to where it was. (But not in the same way once the US had armed them.)

When dealing with a complex process we must identify the primary contradiction, then identify the secondary or subordinate contradictions that will be influenced by the primary one. This is the method used by Marx in studying capitalist society. This is the same method used by Lenin and Stalin in studying imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism and when they studied the Soviet economy.

When looking at the principal contradiction we should not see both aspects as equal. One aspect will be seen as primary and the other as secondary. At times it may appear as though they are in equilibrium, but it will only be temporary or be an illusion. The principal aspect will play a leading role in the contradiction, once it has gained a dominant position. For us, this would be the capitalist class who owns the social power and the repressive mechanisms.

This situation is not static. The two aspects influence each other and may change the nature of things. There be a switch of positions where the principal aspect becomes the non-principal aspect. This occurs due to increases and decreases in the force exerted by an aspect.

This also applies to "the new superseding the old". It is a general and eternal law that one thing transforms into another. This transformation takes place due to its essence and external conditions. In this process there is contradiction between its new and its old aspects. This leads to a series of struggles. These struggles take the new aspect(s) from being minor to major. The reverse is true of the old aspects. The new aspects take over, changes the thing qualitatively into a new thing.

*"... It can thus be seen that the nature of a thing is mainly determined by the principal aspect of the contradiction, the aspect which has gained predominance. When the principal aspect which has gained predominance changes, the nature of a thing changes accordingly."*

### The Identity and Struggle of The Aspects of A Contradiction

After you understand the universality and particularity of a contradiction, you must move onto understanding the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction.

Two points:

- In the process of the development of a contradiction there is two aspects to it. They presuppose each other's existence and the both exist in a single entity.
- In given conditions each of the two contradictory aspects transforms itself into its opposite. This is the meaning of identity.



Lenin said:

*"Dialectics is the teaching which shows how opposites can be and how they happen to be (how they become) identical-- under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another,--why the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another."*

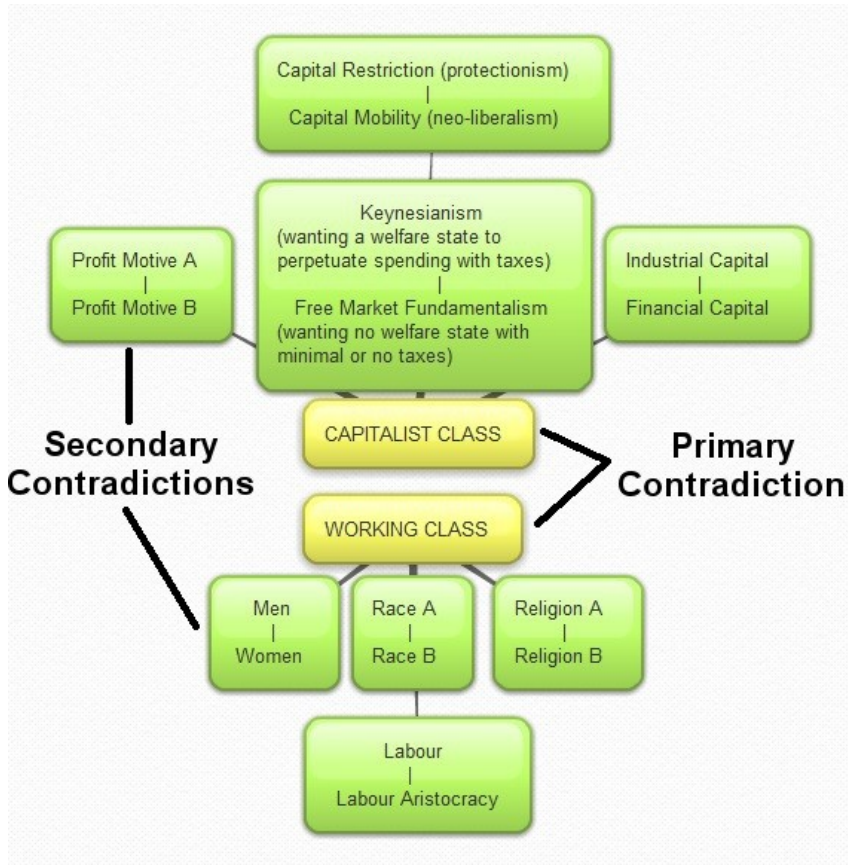
There are contradictory aspects in every process. They exclude each other, struggle with each other and are in opposition to each other. This happens in the process of development of all things including human thought. A small process may contain only a single pair of opposites. A complex process will have any number of them. In addition, pairs of opposites are in contradiction with each other.

This is how all things in the objective world and human thought are made up. This is also how they are set in motion.

From this we might get the idea that there is no unity and no identity. This is not true and is explainable. None of these contradictory aspects can exist in isolation, they need each other in order to exist. Can any contradictory aspect exist independently of its opposite? Cold cannot exist without hot, without life there can be no death, there is no above without a below. Without landlords there are no tenants. Without a bourgeoisie there would be no proletariat. This is how on one hand they are opposites and in contradiction; while on the other hand they are interconnected and interdependent. This character is what gives them their identity. They only have an identity as they are connected.

*"...In given conditions, all contradictory aspects possess the character of non-identity and hence are described as being in contradiction. But they also possess the character of identity and hence are interconnected. This is what Lenin means when he*

*says that dialectics studies 'how opposites can be ... identical'. How then can they be identical? Because each is the condition for the other's existence. ..."*



This does not end with merely acknowledging that their contradictory aspects are necessary for each other's existence. What we also need to include is their transformation into each other. In given conditions each of the contradictory aspects within a thing transforms itself into its opposite, changes its position to that of its opposite.

This transforming into its opposite is what revolution is about. The process of revolution takes the contradiction of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and makes that change. The

proletariat goes from ruled to the ruler. The bourgeoisie from ruler to being ruled. They each take the position that was occupied by its opposite. If there was no identity of opposites, how could such a change take place?

This is the full meaning of the identity of opposites. All contradictory things are interconnected. They coexist in a single entity in given conditions, under other conditions they transform themselves into each other. This is what Lenin meant when he said, *"how they happen to be (how they become) identical - under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another."*

If this is identity, then what is struggle? What is the relation between identity and struggle?

*"All processes have a beginning and an end, all processes transform themselves into their opposites. The constancy of all processes is relative, but the mutability manifested in the transformation of one process into another is absolute."*

The two contradictory elements in a thing have two states of motion. First a state of relative rest and second, that of obvious change. The first is quantitative change and can appear outwardly as being at rest. The second is the qualitative change that is very visible when the first reaches a boiling point.

The unity of the first state of motion, the "state of relative rest" can appear in different ways: harmony, balance, equilibrium or attraction. All these appearances are really just a state of quantitative change not readily apparent to our eyes. This is the process of change from the first state to the second. The struggle of opposites goes on in both states, but the contradiction is resolved in the second. *"That is why we say that the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and relative, while the struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute."*

The two opposite things can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other because there is an identity between them. Two contradictory things can be united and transformed under certain conditions, under different conditions they cannot be united and transformed. This is what is meant by conditionality. The identity of opposites in existence is conditional and relative. The struggle between opposites exist from beginning to the end of a process. Because of this we say struggle is unconditional and absolute.

The movement of opposites of all things is as follows: conditional, relative identity and unconditional, absolute struggle.

"In identity there is struggle, in particularity there is universality, and in individuality there is generality. To quote Lenin, '. . . *there is an absolute in the relative.*'"

### The Place of Antagonism In Contradiction

When we are looking at the question of contradiction we also look at the question of "what is antagonism"?

In the history of human social struggle, antagonism is a manifestation of the struggle of opposites. This would be the contradiction between the exploiting and exploited classes. They both coexist until it becomes an open antagonism that develops into revolution. This is why there is peace between classes and then there is war. (It is also quantitative change becoming qualitative change.)

Here is an example by Mao:

*"Before it explodes, a bomb is a single entity in which opposites coexist in given conditions. The explosion takes place only when a new condition, ignition, is present. An analogous situation arises in all those natural phenomena which finally assume the*

*form of open conflict to resolve old contradictions and produce new things."*

We need to grasp this fact firmly if we are to understand why class war happens. Contradiction exists between classes, develops into an antagonism which eventually develops into class war. The different sides are not just in contradiction, they are antagonistic. The capitalist class thinks we need each other in order for us to survive and function. It maintains that this is the only world outlook there is, in doing so they make two mistakes:

1. It doesn't see contradiction, it doesn't believe the two classes have separate interests. It doesn't see how that contradiction leads to antagonism.
2. If their theory was true, revolutions would never have happened.

We do however have to keep in mind that we must do a concrete study of all the circumstances of each struggle of opposites. Contradiction and struggle are universal, but the method of resolving them is not. Some have open antagonisms while others do not. Some have the antagonisms develop after a certain amount of time or changes in condition.

Lenin said, "*Antagonism and contradiction are not at all one and the same. Under socialism, the first will disappear, the second will remain.*"

To finish, Mao says: "*That is to say, antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites; the formula of antagonism cannot be arbitrarily applied everywhere.*"

# On Contradiction

August 1937

[This essay on philosophy was written by Comrade Mao Tse-tung after his essay "On Practice" and with the same object of overcoming the serious error of dogmatist thinking to be found in the Party at the time. Originally delivered as lectures at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yen-an, it was revised by the author on its inclusion in his Selected Works.]

The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the basic law of materialist dialectics. Lenin said, "Dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradiction in *the very essence of objects*."<sup>v</sup> Lenin often called this law the essence of dialectics; he also called it the kernel of dialectics.<sup>vi</sup> In studying this law, therefore, we cannot but touch upon a variety of questions, upon a number of philosophical problems. If we can become clear on all these problems, we shall arrive at a fundamental understanding of materialist dialectics. The problems are: the two world outlooks, the universality of contradiction, the particularity of contradiction, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction, the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction, and the place of antagonism in contradiction.

The criticism to which the idealism of the Deborin school has been subjected in Soviet philosophical circles in recent years has aroused great interest among us. Deborin's idealism has exerted a very bad influence in the Chinese Communist Party, and it cannot be said that the dogmatist thinking in our Party is unrelated to the approach of that school. Our present study of philosophy should therefore have the eradication of dogmatist thinking as its main objective.

### 1. The Two World Outlooks

Throughout the history of human knowledge, there have been two conceptions concerning the law of development of the universe, the metaphysical conception and the dialectical

conception, which form two opposing world outlooks. Lenin said:

*"The two basic (or two possible? or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, and development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation)."<sup>vii</sup>*

Here Lenin was referring to these two different world outlooks.

In China another name for metaphysics is *hsuan-hsueh*. For a long period in history whether in China or in Europe, this way of thinking, which is part and parcel of the idealist world outlook, occupied a dominant position in human thought. In Europe, the materialism of the bourgeoisie in its early days was also metaphysical. As the social economy of many European countries advanced to the stage of highly developed capitalism, as the forces of production, the class struggle and the sciences developed to a level unprecedented in history, and as the industrial proletariat became the greatest motive force in historical development, there arose the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. Then, in addition to open and barefaced reactionary idealism, vulgar evolutionism emerged among the bourgeoisie to oppose materialist dialectics.

The metaphysical or vulgar evolutionist world outlook sees things as isolated, static and one-sided. It regards all things in the universe, their forms and their species, as eternally isolated from one another and immutable. Such change as there is can only be an increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place. Moreover, the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but outside them, that is, the motive force is external. Metaphysicians hold that all the different kinds of things in the universe and all their characteristics have been the same ever since they first came into being. All subsequent changes have simply been increases or decreases in quantity.



They contend that a thing can only keep on repeating itself as the same kind of thing and cannot change into anything different. In their opinion, capitalist exploitation, capitalist competition, the individualist ideology of capitalist society, and so on, can all be found in ancient slave society, or even in primitive society, and will exist for ever unchanged. They ascribe the causes of social development to factors external to society, such as geography and climate. They search in an over-simplified way outside a thing for the causes of its development, and they deny the theory of materialist dialectics which holds that development arises from the contradictions inside a thing. Consequently they can explain neither the qualitative diversity of things, nor the phenomenon of one quality changing into another. In Europe, this mode of thinking existed as mechanical materialism in the 17th and 18th centuries and as vulgar evolutionism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. In China, there was the metaphysical thinking exemplified in the saying "Heaven changeth not, likewise the Tao changeth not",<sup>viii</sup> and it was supported by the decadent feudal ruling classes for a long time. Mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism, which were imported from Europe in the last hundred years, are supported by the bourgeoisie.

As opposed to the metaphysical world outlook, the world outlook of materialist dialectics holds that in order to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things; in other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self-movement, while each thing in its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it. The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing, hence its motion and development. Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary causes. Thus

materialist dialectics effectively combats the theory of external causes, or of an external motive force, advanced by metaphysical mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism. It is evident that purely external causes can only give rise to mechanical motion, that is, to changes in scale or quantity, but cannot explain why things differ qualitatively in thousands of ways and why one thing changes into another. As a matter of fact, even mechanical motion under external force occurs through the internal contradictoriness of things. Simple growth in plants and animals, their quantitative development, is likewise chiefly the result of their internal contradictions. Similarly, social development is due chiefly not to external but to internal causes. Countries with almost the same geographical and climatic conditions display great diversity and unevenness in their development. Moreover, great social changes may take place in one and the same country although its geography and climate remain unchanged. Imperialist Russia changed into the socialist Soviet Union, and feudal Japan, which had locked its doors against the world, changed into imperialist Japan, although no change occurred in the geography and climate of either country. Long dominated by feudalism, China has undergone great changes in the last hundred years and is now changing in the direction of a new China, liberated and free, and yet no change has occurred in her geography and climate. Changes do take place in the geography and climate of the earth as a whole and in every part of it, but they are insignificant when compared with changes in society; geographical and climatic changes manifest themselves in terms of tens of thousands of years, while social changes manifest themselves in thousands, hundreds or tens of years, and even in a few years or months in times of revolution. According to materialist dialectics, changes in nature are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in nature. Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and

the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new. Does materialist dialectics exclude external causes? Not at all. It holds that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes. In a suitable temperature an egg changes into a chicken, but no temperature can change a stone into a chicken, because each has a different basis. There is constant interaction between the peoples of different countries. In the era of capitalism, and especially in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the interaction and mutual impact of different countries in the political, economic and cultural spheres are extremely great. The October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history as well as in Russian history. It exerted influence on internal changes in the other countries in the world and, similarly and in a particularly profound way, on internal changes in China. These changes, however, were effected through the inner laws of development of these countries, China included. In battle, one army is victorious and the other is defeated, both the victory and the defeat are determined by internal causes. The one is victorious either because it is strong or because of its competent generalship, the other is vanquished either because it is weak or because of its incompetent generalship; it is through internal causes that external causes become operative. In China in 1927, the defeat of the proletariat by the big bourgeoisie came about through the opportunism then to be found within the Chinese proletariat itself (inside the Chinese Communist Party). When we liquidated this opportunism, the Chinese revolution resumed its advance. Later, the Chinese revolution again suffered severe setbacks at the hands of the enemy, because adventurism had risen within our Party. When we liquidated this adventurism, our cause advanced once again. Thus it can be seen that to lead the revolution to victory, a

political party must depend on the correctness of its own political line and the solidity of its own organization.

The dialectical world outlook emerged in ancient times both in China and in Europe. Ancient dialectics, however, had a somewhat spontaneous and naive character; in the social and historical conditions then prevailing, it was not yet able to form a theoretical system, hence it could not fully explain the world and was supplanted by metaphysics. The famous German philosopher Hegel, who lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, made most important contributions to dialectics, but his dialectics was idealist. It was not until Marx and Engels, the great protagonists of the proletarian movement, had synthesized the positive achievements in the history of human knowledge and, in particular, critically absorbed the rational elements of Hegelian dialectics and created the great theory of dialectical and historical materialism that an unprecedented revolution occurred in the history of human knowledge. This theory was further developed by Lenin and Stalin. As soon as it spread to China, it wrought tremendous changes in the world of Chinese thought.

This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyse the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions. It is therefore most important for us to understand the law of contradiction in things in a concrete way.

## 2. The Universality of Contradiction

For convenience of exposition, I shall deal first with the universality of contradiction and then proceed to the particularity of contradiction. The reason is that the universality of contradiction can be explained more briefly, for it has been widely recognized ever since the materialist-dialectical world outlook was discovered and materialist dialectics applied with

outstanding success to analysing many aspects of human history and natural history and to changing many aspects of society and nature (as in the Soviet Union) by the great creators and continuers of Marxism--Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; whereas the particularity of contradiction is still not dearly understood by many comrades, and especially by the dogmatists. They do not understand that it is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides. Nor do they understand how important is the study of the particularity of contradiction in the concrete things confronting us for guiding the course of revolutionary practice. Therefore, it is necessary to stress the study of the particularity of contradiction and to explain it at adequate length. For this reason, in our analysis of the law of contradiction in things, we shall first analyse the universality of contradiction, then place special stress on analysing the particularity of contradiction, and finally return to the universality of contradiction.

The universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a twofold meaning. One is that contradiction exists in the process of development of all things, and the other is that in the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end.

Engels said, "Motion itself is a contradiction."<sup>ix</sup> Lenin defined the law of the unity of opposites as "the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive*, opposite tendencies in *all* phenomena and processes of nature (*including* mind and society)".<sup>x</sup> Are these ideas correct? Yes, they are. The interdependence of the contradictory aspects present in all things and the struggle between these aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward. There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist.

Contradiction is the basis of the simple forms of motion (for instance, mechanical motion) and still more so of the complex forms of motion.

Engels explained the universality of contradiction as follows:

*If simple mechanical change of place contains a contradiction, this is even more true of the higher forms of motion of matter, and especially of organic life and its development. ... life consists precisely and primarily in this--that a being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is therefore also a contradiction which is present in things and processes themselves, and which constantly originates and resolves itself; and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end, and death steps in. We likewise saw that also in the sphere of thought we could not escape contradictions, and that for example the contradiction between man's inherently unlimited capacity for knowledge and its actual presence only in men who are externally limited and possess limited cognition finds its solution in what is--at least practically, for us--an endless succession of generations, in infinite progress.*

*... one of the basic principles of higher mathematics is the contradiction that in certain circumstances straight lines and curves may be the same....*

*But even lower mathematics teems with contradictions.<sup>xi</sup>*

Lenin illustrated the universality of contradiction as follows:

*In mathematics: + and - . Differential and integral.*

In mechanics: action and reaction.

In physics: positive and negative electricity.

In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.

In social science: the class struggle.<sup>xii</sup>

In war, offence and defence, advance and retreat, victory and defeat are all mutually contradictory phenomena. One cannot exist without the other. The two aspects are at once in conflict and in interdependence, and this constitutes the totality of a war, pushes its development forward and solves its problems.

Every difference in men's concepts should be regarded as reflecting an objective contradiction. Objective contradictions are reflected in subjective thinking, and this process constitutes the contradictory movement of concepts, pushes forward the development of thought, and ceaselessly solves problems in man's thinking.

Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society. If there were no contradictions in the Party and no ideological struggles to resolve them, the Party's life would come to an end.

Thus it is already clear that contradiction exists universally and in all processes, whether in the simple or in the complex forms of motion, whether in objective phenomena or ideological phenomena. But does contradiction also exist at the initial stage of each process?

Is there a movement of opposites from beginning to end in the process of development of every single thing?

As can be seen from the articles written by Soviet philosophers criticizing it, the Deborin school maintains that contradiction appears not at the inception of a process but only when it has developed to a certain stage. If this were the case, then the cause of the development of the process before that stage would be external and not internal. Deborin thus reverts to the

metaphysical theories of external causality and of mechanism. Applying this view in the analysis of concrete problems, the Deborin school sees only differences but not contradictions between the kulaks and the peasants in general under existing conditions in the Soviet Union, thus entirely agreeing with Bukharin. In analysing the French Revolution, it holds that before the Revolution there were likewise only differences but not contradictions within the Third Estate, which was composed of the workers, the peasants and the bourgeoisie. These views of the Deborin school are anti-Marxist. This school does not understand that each and every difference already contains contradiction and that difference itself is contradiction. Labour and capital have been in contradiction ever since the two classes came into being, only at first the contradiction had not yet become intense. Even under the social conditions existing in the Soviet Union, there is a difference between workers and peasants and this very difference is a contradiction, although, unlike the contradiction between labour and capital, it will not become intensified into antagonism or assume the form of class struggle; the workers and the peasants have established a firm alliance in the course of socialist construction and are gradually resolving this contradiction in the course of the advance from socialism to communism. The question is one of different kinds of contradiction, not of the presence or absence of contradiction. Contradiction is universal and absolute, it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end.

What is meant by the emergence of a new process? The old unity with its constituent opposites yields to a new unity with its constituent opposites, whereupon a new process emerges to replace the old. The old process ends and the new one begins. The new process contains new contradictions and begins its own history of the development of contradictions.



As Lenin pointed out, Marx in his *Capital* gave a model analysis of this movement of opposites which runs through the process of development of things from beginning to end. This is the method that must be employed in studying the development of all things. Lenin, too, employed this method correctly and adhered to it in all his writings.

In his *Capital*, Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday relation of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz. the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals all the contradictions (or the germs of all the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development (both growth and movement) of these contradictions and of this society in the [summation] of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end.

Lenin added, "Such must also be the method of exposition (or study) of dialectics in general."<sup>xiii</sup>

Chinese Communists must learn this method; only then will they be able correctly to analyse the history and the present state of the Chinese revolution and infer its future.

### 3. The Particularity of Contradiction

Contradiction is present in the process of development of all things; it permeates the process of development of each thing from beginning to end. This is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction which we have discussed above. Now let us discuss the particularity and relativity of contradiction.

This problem should be studied on several levels.

First, the contradiction in each form of motion of matter has its particularity. Man's knowledge of matter is knowledge of its

forms of motion, because there is nothing in this world except matter in motion and this motion must assume certain forms. In considering each form of motion of matter, we must observe the points which it has in common with other forms of motion. But what is especially important and necessary, constituting as it does the foundation of our knowledge of a thing, is to observe what is particular to this form of motion of matter, namely, to observe the qualitative difference between this form of motion and other forms. Only when we have done so can we distinguish between things. Every form of motion contains within itself its own particular contradiction. This particular contradiction constitutes the particular essence which distinguishes one thing from another. It is the internal cause or, as it may be called, the basis for the immense variety of things in the world. There are many forms of motion in nature, mechanical motion, sound, light, heat, electricity, dissociation, combination, and so on. All these forms are interdependent, but in its essence each is different from the others. The particular essence of each form of motion is determined by its own particular contradiction. This holds true not only for nature but also for social and ideological phenomena. Every form of society, every form of ideology, has its own particular contradiction and particular essence.

The sciences are differentiated precisely on the basis of the particular contradictions inherent in their respective objects of study. Thus the contradiction peculiar to a certain field of phenomena constitutes the object of study for a specific branch of science. For example, positive and negative numbers in mathematics; action and reaction in mechanics; positive and negative electricity in physics; dissociation and combination in chemistry; forces of production and relations of production, classes and class struggle, in social science; offence and defence in military science; idealism and materialism, the metaphysical outlook and the dialectical outlook, in philosophy; and so on--all these are the objects of study of different branches of science precisely because each branch has its own particular

contradiction and particular essence. Of course, unless we understand the universality of contradiction, we have no way of discovering the universal cause or universal basis for the movement or development of things; however, unless we study the particularity of contradiction, we have no way of determining the particular essence of a thing which differentiates it from other things, no way of discovering the particular cause or particular basis for the movement or development of a thing, and no way of distinguishing one thing from another or of demarcating the fields of science.

As regards the sequence in the movement of man's knowledge, there is always a gradual growth from the knowledge of individual and particular things to the knowledge of things in general. Only after man knows the particular essence of many different things can he proceed to generalization and know the common essence of things.

When man attains the knowledge of this common essence, he uses it as a guide and proceeds to study various concrete things which have not yet been studied, or studied thoroughly, and to discover the particular essence of each; only thus is he able to supplement, enrich and develop his knowledge of their common essence and prevent such knowledge from withering or petrifying. These are the two processes of cognition: one, from the particular to the general, and the other, from the general to the particular. Thus cognition always moves in cycles and (so long as scientific method is strictly adhered to) each cycle advances human knowledge a step higher and so makes it more and more profound. Where our dogmatists err on this question is that, on the one hand, they do not understand that we have to study the particularity of contradiction and know the particular essence of individual things before we can adequately know the universality of contradiction and the common essence of things, and that, on the other hand, they do not understand that after knowing the common essence of things, we must go further and

study the concrete things that have not yet been thoroughly studied or have only just emerged. Our dogmatists are lazy-bones. They refuse to undertake any painstaking study of concrete things, they regard general truths as emerging out of the void, they turn them into purely abstract unfathomable formulas, and thereby completely deny and reverse the normal sequence by which man comes to know truth. Nor do they understand the interconnection of the two processes in cognition-- from the particular to the general and then from the general to the particular. They understand nothing of the Marxist theory of knowledge.

It is necessary not only to study the particular contradiction and the essence determined thereby of every great system of the forms of motion of matter, but also to study the particular contradiction and the essence of each process in the long course of development of each form of motion of matter. In every form of motion, each process of development which is real (and not imaginary) is qualitatively different. Our study must emphasize and start from this point.

Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods. For instance, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the method of socialist revolution; the contradiction between the great masses of the people and the feudal system is resolved by the method of democratic revolution; the contradiction between the colonies and imperialism is resolved by the method of national revolutionary war; the contradiction between the working class and the peasant class in socialist society is resolved by the method of collectivization and mechanization in agriculture; contradiction within the Communist Party is resolved by the method of criticism and self-criticism; the contradiction between society and nature is resolved by the method of developing the productive forces. Processes change, old processes and old contradictions disappear, new processes

and new contradictions emerge, and the methods of resolving contradictions differ accordingly. In Russia, there was a fundamental difference between the contradiction resolved by the February Revolution and the contradiction resolved by the October Revolution, as well as between the methods used to resolve them. The principle of using different methods to resolve different contradictions is one which Marxist-Leninists must strictly observe. The dogmatists do not observe this principle; they do not understand that conditions differ in different kinds of revolution and so do not understand that different methods should be used to resolve different contradictions; on the contrary, they invariably adopt what they imagine to be an unalterable formula and arbitrarily apply it everywhere, which only causes setbacks to the revolution or makes a sorry mess of what was originally well done.

In order to reveal the particularity of the contradictions in any process in the development of a thing, in their totality or interconnections, that is, in order to reveal the essence of the process, it is necessary to reveal the particularity of the two aspects of each of the contradictions in that process; otherwise it will be impossible to discover the essence of the process. This likewise requires the utmost attention in our study.

There are many contradictions in the course of development of any major thing. For instance, in the course of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, where the conditions are exceedingly complex, there exist the contradiction between all the oppressed classes in Chinese society and imperialism, the contradiction between the great masses of the people and feudalism, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the contradiction between the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other, the contradiction between the various reactionary ruling groups, and so on. These contradictions cannot be treated in the same way since each has its own particularity; moreover,

the two aspects of each contradiction cannot be treated in the same way since each aspect has its own characteristics. We who are engaged in the Chinese revolution should not only understand the particularity of these contradictions in their totality, that is, in their interconnections, but should also study the two aspects of each contradiction as the only means of understanding the totality. When we speak of understanding each aspect of a contradiction, we mean understanding what specific position each aspect occupies, what concrete forms it assumes in its interdependence and in its contradiction with its opposite, and what concrete methods are employed in the struggle with its opposite, when the two are both interdependent and in contradiction, and also after the interdependence breaks down. It is of great importance to study these problems. Lenin meant just this when he said that the most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.<sup>xiv</sup> Our dogmatists have violated Lenin's teachings; they never use their brains to analyse anything concretely, and in their writings and speeches they always use stereotypes devoid of content, thereby creating a very bad style of work in our Party.

In studying a problem, we must shun subjectivity, one-sidedness and superficiality. To be subjective means not to look at problems objectively, that is, not to use the materialist viewpoint in looking at problems. I have discussed this in my essay "On Practice". To be one-sided means not to look at problems all-sidedly, for example, to understand only China but not Japan, only the Communist Party but not the Kuomintang, only the proletariat but not the bourgeoisie, only the peasants but not the landlords, only the favourable conditions but not the difficult ones, only the past but not the future, only individual parts but not the whole, only the defects but not the achievements, only the plaintiff's case but not the defendant's, only underground revolutionary work but not open revolutionary work, and so on. In a word, it means not to

understand the characteristics of both aspects of a contradiction. This is what we mean by looking at a problem one-sidedly. Or it may be called seeing the part but not the whole, seeing the trees but not the forest. That way it is impossible to find the method for resolving a contradiction, it is impossible to accomplish the tasks of the revolution, to carry out assignments well or to develop inner-Party ideological struggle correctly. When Sun Wu Tzu said in discussing military science, "Know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat",<sup>xv</sup> he was referring to the two sides in a battle. Wei Cheng<sup>xvi</sup> of the Tang Dynasty also understood the error of one-sidedness when he said, "Listen to both sides and you will be enlightened, heed only one side and you will be benighted." But our comrades often look at problems one-sidedly, and so they often run into snags. In the novel *Shui Hu Chuan*, Sung Chiang thrice attacked Chu Village.<sup>xvii</sup> Twice he was defeated because he was ignorant of the local conditions and used the wrong method. Later he changed his method; first he investigated the situation, and he familiarized himself with the maze of roads, then he broke up the alliance between the Li, Hu and Chu Villages and sent his men in disguise into the enemy camp to lie in wait, using a stratagem similar to that of the Trojan Horse in the foreign story. And on the third occasion he won. There are many examples of materialist dialectics in *Shui Hu Chuan*, of which the episode of the three attacks on Chu Village is one of the best. Lenin said:

*... in order really to know an object we must embrace, study, all its sides, all connections and "mediations". We shall never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity.*<sup>xviii</sup>

We should remember his words. To be superficial means to consider neither the characteristics of a contradiction in its totality nor the characteristics of each of its aspects; it means to deny the necessity for probing deeply into a thing and minutely

studying the characteristics of its contradiction, but instead merely to look from afar and, after glimpsing the rough outline, immediately to try to resolve the contradiction (to answer a question, settle a dispute, handle work, or direct a military operation). This way of doing things is bound to lead to trouble. The reason the dogmatist and empiricist comrades in China have made mistakes lies precisely in their subjectivist, one-sided and superficial way of looking at things. To be one-sided and superficial is at the same time to be subjective. For all objective things are actually interconnected and are governed by inner laws, but instead of undertaking the task of reflecting things as they really are some people only look at things one-sidedly or superficially and who know neither their interconnections nor their inner laws, and so their method is subjectivist.

Not only does the whole process of the movement of opposites in the development of a thing, both in their interconnections and in each of the aspects, have particular features to which we must give attention, but each stage in the process has its particular features to which we must give attention too.

The fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process determined by this fundamental contradiction will not disappear until the process is completed; but in a lengthy process the conditions usually differ at each stage. The reason is that, although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process remain unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified as it passes from one stage to another in the lengthy process. In addition, among the numerous major and minor contradictions which are determined or influenced by the fundamental contradiction, some become intensified, some are temporarily or partially resolved or mitigated, and some new ones emerge; hence the process is marked by stages. If people do not pay



attention to the stages in the process of development of a thing, they cannot deal with its contradictions properly.

For instance, when the capitalism of the era of free competition developed into imperialism, there was no change in the class nature of the two classes in fundamental contradiction, namely, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or in the capitalist essence of society; however, the contradiction between these two classes became intensified, the contradiction between monopoly and non-monopoly capital emerged, the contradiction between the colonial powers and the colonies became intensified, the contradiction among the capitalist countries resulting from their uneven development manifested itself with particular sharpness, and thus there arose the special stage of capitalism, the stage of imperialism. Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution precisely because Lenin and Stalin have correctly explained these contradictions and correctly formulated the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution for their resolution.

Take the process of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, which began with the Revolution of 1911; it, too, has several distinct stages. In particular, the revolution in its period of bourgeois leadership and the revolution in its period of proletarian leadership represent two vastly different historical stages. In other words, proletarian leadership has fundamentally changed the whole face of the revolution, has brought about a new alignment of classes, given rise to a tremendous upsurge in the peasant revolution, imparted thoroughness to the revolution against imperialism and feudalism, created the possibility of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, and so on. None of these was possible in the period when the revolution was under bourgeois leadership. Although no change has taken place in the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process as a whole, i.e., in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic-revolutionary nature of the

process (the opposite of which is its semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature), nonetheless this process has passed through several stages of development in the course of more than twenty years; during this time many great events have taken place-- the failure of the Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of the regime of the Northern warlords, the formation of the first national united front and the revolution of 1924-27, the break-up of the united front and the desertion of the bourgeoisie to the side of the counterrevolution, the wars among the new warlords, the Agrarian Revolutionary War, the establishment of the second national united front and the War of Resistance Against Japan. These stages are marked by particular features such as the intensification of certain contradictions (e.g., the Agrarian Revolutionary War and the Japanese invasion of the four northeastern provinces), the partial or temporary resolution of other contradictions (e.g., the destruction of the Northern warlords and our confiscation of the land of the landlords), and the emergence of yet other contradictions (e.g., the conflicts among the new warlords, and the landlords' recapture of the land after the loss of our revolutionary base areas in the south).

In studying the particularities of the contradictions at each stage in the process of development of a thing, we must not only observe them in their interconnections or their totality, we must also examine the two aspects of each contradiction.

For instance, consider the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Take one aspect, the Kuomintang. In the period of the first united front, the Kuomintang carried out Sun Yat-sen's Three Great Policies of alliance with Russia, co-operation with the Communist Party, and assistance to the peasants and workers; hence it was revolutionary and vigorous, it was an alliance of various classes for the democratic revolution. After 1927, however, the Kuomintang changed into its opposite and became a reactionary bloc of the landlords and big bourgeoisie. After the

Sian Incident in December 1936, it began another change in the direction of ending the civil war and co-operating with the Communist Party for joint opposition to Japanese imperialism. Such have been the particular features of the Kuomintang in the three stages. Of course, these features have arisen from a variety of causes. Now take the other aspect, the Chinese Communist Party. In the period of the first united front, the Chinese Communist Party was in its infancy; it courageously led the revolution of 1924-27 but revealed its immaturity in its understanding of the character, the tasks and the methods of the revolution, and consequently it became possible for Chen Tu-hsiuism, which appeared during the latter part of this revolution, to assert itself and bring about the defeat of the revolution. After 1927, the Communist Party courageously led the Agrarian Revolutionary War and created the revolutionary army and revolutionary base areas; however, it committed adventurist errors which brought about very great losses both to the army and to the base areas. Since 1935 the Party has corrected these errors and has been leading the new united front for resistance to Japan; this great struggle is now developing. At the present stage, the Communist Party is a Party that has gone through the test of two revolutions and acquired a wealth of experience. Such have been the particular features of the Chinese Communist Party in the three stages. These features, too, have arisen from a variety of causes. Without studying both these sets of features we cannot understand the particular relations between the two parties during the various stages of their development, namely, the establishment of a united front, the break-up of the united front, and the establishment of another united front. What is even more fundamental for the study of the particular features of the two parties is the examination of the class basis of the two parties and the resultant contradictions which have arisen between each party and other forces at different periods. For instance, in the period of its first cooperation with the Communist Party, the Kuomintang stood in contradiction to foreign imperialism and

was therefore anti-imperialist; on the other hand, it stood in contradiction to the great masses of the people within the country--although in words it promised many benefits to the working people, in fact it gave them little or nothing. In the period when it carried on the anti-Communist war, the Kuomintang collaborated with imperialism and feudalism against the great masses of the people and wiped out all the gains they had won in the revolution, and thereby intensified its contradictions with them. In the present period of the anti-Japanese war, the Kuomintang stands in contradiction to Japanese imperialism and wants co-operation with the Communist Party, without however relaxing its struggle against the Communist Party and the people or its oppression of them. As for the Communist Party, it has always, in every period, stood with the great masses of the people against imperialism and feudalism, but in the present period of the anti-Japanese war, it has adopted a moderate policy towards the Kuomintang and the domestic feudal forces because the Kuomintang has pressed itself in favour of resisting Japan. The above circumstances have resulted now in alliance between the two parties and now in struggle between them, and even during the periods of alliance there has been a complicated state of simultaneous alliance and struggle. If we do not study the particular features of both aspects of the contradiction, we shall fail to understand not only the relations of each party with the other forces, but also the relations between the two parties.

It can thus be seen that in studying the particularity of any kind of contradiction--the contradiction in each form of motion of matter, the contradiction in each of its processes of development, the two aspects of the contradiction in each process, the contradiction at each stage of a process, and the two aspects of the contradiction at each stage--in studying the particularity of all these contradictions, we must not be subjective and arbitrary but must analyse it concretely. Without concrete analysis there can be no knowledge of the particularity

of any contradiction. We must always remember Lenin's words, the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.

Marx and Engels were the first to provide us with excellent models of such concrete analysis.

When Marx and Engels applied the law of contradiction in things to the study of the socio-historical process, they discovered the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, they discovered the contradiction between the exploiting and exploited classes and also the resultant contradiction between the economic base and its superstructure (politics, ideology, etc.), and they discovered how these contradictions inevitably lead to different kinds of social revolution in different kinds of class society.

When Marx applied this law to the study of the economic structure of capitalist society, he discovered that the basic contradiction of this society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This contradiction manifests itself in the contradiction between the organized character of production in individual enterprises and the anarchic character of production in society as a whole. In terms of class relations, it manifests itself in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Because the range of things is vast and there is no limit to their development, what is universal in one context becomes particular in another. Conversely, what is particular in one context becomes universal in another. The contradiction in the capitalist system between the social character of production and the private ownership of the means of production is common to all countries where capitalism exists and develops; as far as capitalism is concerned, this constitutes the universality of contradiction. But this contradiction of capitalism belongs only to a certain historical stage in the general development of class

society; as far as the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society as a whole is concerned, it constitutes the particularity of contradiction. However, in the course of dissecting the particularity of all these contradictions in capitalist society, Marx gave a still more profound, more adequate and more complete elucidation of the universality of the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society in general.

Since the particular is united with the universal and since the universality as well as the particularity of contradiction is inherent in everything, universality residing in particularity, we should, when studying an object, try to discover both the particular and the universal and their interconnection, to discover both particularity and universality and also their interconnection within the object itself, and to discover the interconnections of this object with the many objects outside it. When Stalin explained the historical roots of Leninism in his famous work, *The Foundations of Leninism*, he analysed the international situation in which Leninism arose, analysed those contradictions of capitalism which reached their culmination under imperialism, and showed how these contradictions made proletarian revolution a matter for immediate action and created favourable conditions for a direct onslaught on capitalism. What is more, he analysed the reasons why Russia became the cradle of Leninism, why tsarist Russia became the focus of all the contradictions of imperialism, and why it was possible for the Russian proletariat to become the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. Thus, Stalin analysed the universality of contradiction in imperialism, showing why Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, and at the same time analysed the particularity of tsarist Russian imperialism within this general contradiction, showing why Russia became the birthplace of the theory and tactics of proletarian revolution and how the universality of contradiction is contained in this particularity.

Stalin's analysis provides us with a model for understanding the particularity and the universality of contradiction and their interconnection.

On the question of using dialectics in the study of objective phenomena, Marx and Engels, and likewise Lenin and Stalin, always enjoin people not to be in any way subjective and arbitrary but, from the concrete conditions in the actual objective movement of these phenomena, to discover their concrete contradictions, the concrete position of each aspect of every contradiction and the concrete interrelations of the contradictions. Our dogmatists do not have this attitude in study and therefore can never get anything right. We must take warning from their failure and learn to acquire this attitude, which is the only correct one in study.

The relationship between the universality and the particularity of contradiction is the relationship between the general character and the individual character of contradiction. By the former we mean that contradiction exists in and runs through all processes from beginning to end; motion, things, processes, thinking--all are contradictions. To deny contradiction is to deny everything. This is a universal truth for all times and all countries, which admits of no exception. Hence the general character, the absoluteness of contradiction. But this general character is contained in every individual character; without individual character there can be no general character. If all individual character were removed, what general character would remain? It is because each contradiction is particular that individual character arises. All individual character exists conditionally and temporarily, and hence is relative.

This truth concerning general and individual character, concerning absoluteness and relativity, is the quintessence of the problem of contradiction in things; failure to understand it is tantamount to abandoning dialectics.

#### 4. The Principal Contradiction and The Principal Aspect of A Contradiction

There are still two points in the problem of the particularity of contradiction which must be singled out for analysis, namely, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction.

There are many contradictions in the process of development of a complex thing, and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions.

For instance, in capitalist society the two forces in contradiction, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, form the principal contradiction. The other contradictions, such as those between the remnant feudal class and the bourgeoisie, between the peasant petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, between the proletariat and the peasant petty bourgeoisie, between the non-monopoly capitalists and the monopoly capitalists, between bourgeois democracy and bourgeois fascism, among the capitalist countries and between imperialism and the colonies, are all determined or influenced by this principal contradiction.

In a semi-colonial country such as China, the relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions presents a complicated picture.

When imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes, except for some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction, between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are



temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position. So it was in China in the Opium War of 1840, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the Yi Ho Tuan War of 1900, and so it is now in the present Sino-Japanese War.

But in another situation, the contradictions change position. When imperialism carries on its oppression not by war, but by milder means--political, economic and cultural--the ruling classes in semi-colonial countries capitulate to imperialism, and the two form an alliance for the joint oppression of the masses of the people. At such a time, the masses often resort to civil war against the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes, while imperialism often employs indirect methods rather than direct action in helping the reactionaries in the semi-colonial countries to oppress the people, and thus the internal contradictions become particularly sharp. This is what happened in China in the Revolutionary War of 1911, the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, and the ten years of Agrarian Revolutionary War after 1927. Wars among the various reactionary ruling groups in the semi-colonial countries, e.g., the wars among the warlords in China, fall into the same category.

When a revolutionary civil war develops to the point of threatening the very existence of imperialism and its running dogs, the domestic reactionaries, imperialism often adopts other methods in order to maintain its rule; it either tries to split the revolutionary front from within or sends armed forces to help the domestic reactionaries directly. At such a time, foreign imperialism and domestic reaction stand quite openly at one pole while the masses of the people stand at the other pole, thus forming the principal contradiction which determines or influences the development of the other contradictions. The assistance given by various capitalist countries to the Russian reactionaries after the October Revolution is an example of armed intervention. Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal in 1927 is an example of splitting the revolutionary front.

But whatever happens, there is no doubt at all that at every stage in the development of a process, there is only one principal contradiction which plays the leading role.

Hence, if in any process there are a number of contradictions, one of them must be the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role, while the rest occupy a secondary and subordinate position. Therefore, in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved. This is the method Marx taught us in his study of capitalist society. Likewise Lenin and Stalin taught us this method when they studied imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism and when they studied the Soviet economy. There are thousands of scholars and men of action who do not understand it, and the result is that, lost in a fog, they are unable to get to the heart of a problem and naturally cannot find a way to resolve its contradictions.

As we have said, one must not treat all the contradictions in a process as being equal but must distinguish between the principal and the secondary contradictions, and pay special attention to grasping the principal one. But, in any given contradiction, whether principal or secondary, should the two contradictory aspects be treated as equal? Again, no. In any contradiction the development of the contradictory aspects is uneven. Sometimes they seem to be in equilibrium, which is however only temporary and relative, while unevenness is basic. Of the two contradictory aspects, one must be principal and the other secondary. The principal aspect is the one playing the leading role in the contradiction. The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction, the aspect which has gained the dominant position.

But this situation is not static; the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other and the nature of the thing changes accordingly. In a given process or at a given stage in the development of a contradiction, A is the principal aspect and B is the non-principal aspect; at another stage or in another process the roles are reversed--a change determined by the extent of the increase or decrease in the force of each aspect in its struggle against the other in the course of the development of a thing.

We often speak of "the new superseding the old". The supersession of the old by the new is a general, eternal and inviolable law of the universe. The transformation of one thing into another, through leaps of different forms in accordance with its essence and external conditions--this is the process of the new superseding the old. In each thing there is contradiction between its new and its old aspects, and this gives rise to a series of struggles with many twists and turns. As a result of these struggles, the new aspect changes from being minor to being major and rises to predominance, while the old aspect changes from being major to being minor and gradually dies out. And the moment the new aspect gains dominance over the old, the old thing changes qualitatively into a new thing. It can thus be seen that the nature of a thing is mainly determined by the principal aspect of the contradiction, the aspect which has gained predominance. When the principal aspect which has gained predominance changes, the nature of a thing changes accordingly.

In capitalist society, capitalism has changed its position from being a subordinate force in the old feudal era to being the dominant force, and the nature of society has accordingly changed from feudal to capitalist. In the new, capitalist era, the feudal forces changed from their former dominant position to a subordinate one, gradually dying out. Such was the case, for example, in Britain and France. With the development of the

productive forces, the bourgeoisie changes from being a new class playing a progressive role to being an old class playing a reactionary role, until it is finally overthrown by the proletariat and becomes a class deprived of privately owned means of production and stripped of power, when it, too, gradually dies out. The proletariat, which is much more numerous than the bourgeoisie and grows simultaneously with it but under its rule, is a new force which, initially subordinate to the bourgeoisie, gradually gains strength, becomes an independent class playing the leading role in history, and finally seizes political power and becomes the ruling class. Thereupon the nature of society changes and the old capitalist society becomes the new socialist society. This is the path already taken by the Soviet Union, a path that all other countries will inevitably take.

Look at China, for instance. Imperialism occupies the principal position in the contradiction in which China has been reduced to a semi-colony, it oppresses the Chinese people, and China has been changed from an independent country into a semi-colonial one. But this state of affairs will inevitably change; in the struggle between the two sides, the power of the Chinese people which is growing under the leadership of the proletariat will inevitably change China from a semi-colony into an independent country, whereas imperialism will be overthrown and old China will inevitably change into New China.

The change of old China into New China also involves a change in the relation between the old feudal forces and the new popular forces within the country. The old feudal landlord class will be overthrown, and from being the ruler it will change into being the ruled; and this class, too, will gradually die out. From being the ruled the people, led by the proletariat, will become the rulers. Thereupon, the nature of Chinese society will change and the old, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society will change into a new democratic society.

Instances of such reciprocal transformation are found in our past experience. The Ching Dynasty which ruled China for nearly three hundred years was overthrown in the Revolution of 1911, and the revolutionary Tung Meng Hui under Sun Yat-sen's leadership was victorious for a time. In the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, the revolutionary forces of the Communist-Kuomintang alliance in the south changed from being weak to being strong and won victory in the Northern Expedition, while the Northern warlords who once ruled the roost were overthrown. In 1927, the people's forces led by the Communist Party were greatly reduced numerically under the attacks of Kuomintang reaction, but with the elimination of opportunism within their ranks they gradually grew again. In the revolutionary base areas under Communist leadership, the peasants have been transformed from being the ruled to being the rulers, while the landlords have undergone a reverse transformation. It is always so in the world, the new displacing the old, the old being superseded by the new, the old being eliminated to make way for the new, and the new emerging out of the old.

At certain times in the revolutionary struggle, the difficulties outweigh the favourable conditions and so constitute the principal aspect of the contradiction and the favourable conditions constitute the secondary aspect. But through their efforts the revolutionaries can overcome the difficulties step by step and open up a favourable new situation; thus a difficult situation yields place to a favourable one. This- is what happened after the failure of the revolution in China in 1927 and during the Long March of the Chinese Red Army. In the present Sino-Japanese War, China is again in a difficult position, but we can change this and fundamentally transform the situation as between China and Japan. Conversely, favourable conditions can be transformed into difficulty if the revolutionaries make mistakes. Thus the victory of the revolution of 1924-27 turned into defeat. The revolutionary base areas which grew up in the southern provinces after 1927 had all suffered defeat by 1934.

When we engage in study, the same holds good for the contradiction in the passage from ignorance to knowledge. At the very beginning of our study of Marxism, our ignorance of or scanty acquaintance with Marxism stands in contradiction to knowledge of Marxism. But by assiduous study, ignorance can be transformed into knowledge, scanty knowledge into substantial knowledge, and blindness in the application of Marxism into mastery of its application.

Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the mechanical materialist conception, not the dialectical materialist conception. True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role. The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."<sup>xix</sup> When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy. When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. Are we going against materialism when

we say this? No. The reason is that while we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness, we also--and indeed must--recognize the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base. This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism.

In studying the particularity of contradiction, unless we examine these two facets--the principal and the non-principal contradictions in a process, and the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction--that is, unless we examine the distinctive character of these two facets of contradiction, we shall get bogged down in abstractions, be unable to understand contradiction concretely and consequently be unable to find the correct method of resolving it. The distinctive character or particularity of these two facets of contradiction represents the unevenness of the forces that are in contradiction. Nothing in this world develops absolutely evenly; we must oppose the theory of even development or the theory of equilibrium. Moreover, it is these concrete features of a contradiction and the changes in the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction in the course of its development that manifest the force of the new superseding the old. The study of the various states of unevenness in contradictions, of the principal and non-principal contradictions and of the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction constitutes an essential method by which a revolutionary political party correctly determines its strategic and tactical policies both in political and in military affairs. All Communists must give it attention.

#### 5. The Identity and Struggle of The Aspects of A Contradiction

When we understand the universality and the particularity of contradiction, we must proceed to study the problem of the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction.

Identity, unity, coincidence, interpenetration, interpermeation, interdependence (or mutual dependence for existence), interconnection or mutual co-operation--all these different terms mean the same thing and refer to the following two points: first, the existence of each of the two aspects of a contradiction in the process of the development of a thing presupposes the existence of the other aspect, and both aspects coexist in a single entity; second, in given conditions, each of the two contradictory aspects transforms itself into its opposite. This is the meaning of identity.

Lenin said:

*Dialectics is the teaching which shows how opposites can be and how they happen to be (how they become) identical--under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another,--why the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another.<sup>xx</sup>*

What does this passage mean?

The contradictory aspects in every process exclude each other, struggle with each other and are in opposition to each other. Without exception, they are contained in the process of development of all things and in all human thought. A simple process contains only a single pair of opposites, while a complex process contains more. And in turn, the pairs of opposites are in contradiction to one another.)



That is how all things in the objective world and all human thought are constituted and how they are set in motion.

This being so, there is an utter lack of identity or unity. How then can one speak of identity or unity?

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The fact is that no contradictory aspect can exist in isolation. Without its opposite aspect, each loses the condition for its existence. Just think, can any one contradictory aspect of a thing or of a concept in the human mind exist independently? Without life, there would be no death; without death, there would be no life. Without "above", there would be no "below") without "below", there would be no "above". Without misfortune, there would be no good fortune; without good fortune, these would be no misfortune. Without facility, there would be no difficulty) without difficulty, there would be no facility. Without landlords, there would be no tenant-peasants; without tenant-peasants, there would be no landlords. Without the bourgeoisie, there would be no proletariat; without the proletariat, there would be no bourgeoisie. Without imperialist oppression of nations, there would be no colonies or semi-colonies; without colonies or

semicolonies, there would be no imperialist oppression of nations. It is so with all opposites; in given conditions, on the one hand they are opposed to each other, and on the other they are interconnected, interpenetrating, interpermeating and interdependent, and this character is described as identity. In given conditions, all contradictory aspects possess the character of non-identity and hence are described as being in contradiction. But they also possess the character of identity and hence are interconnected. This is what Lenin means when he says that dialectics studies "how opposites can be ... identical". How then can they be identical? Because each is the condition for the other's existence. This is the first meaning of identity.

But is it enough to say merely that each of the contradictory aspects is the condition for the other's existence, that there is identity between them and that consequently they can coexist in a single entity? No, it is not. The matter does not end with their dependence on each other for their existence; what is more important is their transformation into each other. That is to say, in given conditions, each of the contradictory aspects within a thing transforms itself into its opposite, changes its position to that of its opposite. This is the second meaning of the identity of contradiction.

Why is there identity here, too? You see, by means of revolution the proletariat, at one time the ruled, is transformed into the ruler, while the bourgeoisie, the erstwhile ruler, is transformed into the ruled and changes its position to that originally occupied by its opposite. This has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place throughout the world. If there were no interconnection and identity of opposites in given conditions, how could such a change take place?

The Kuomintang, which played a certain positive role at a certain stage in modern Chinese history, became a counter-revolutionary party after 1927 because of its inherent class

nature and because of imperialist blandishments (these being the conditions); but it has been compelled to agree to resist Japan because of the sharpening of the contradiction between China and Japan and because of the Communist Party's policy of the united front (these being the conditions). Things in contradiction change into one another, and herein lies a definite identity.

Our agrarian revolution has been a process in which the landlord class owning the land is transformed into a class that has lost its land, while the peasants who once lost their land are transformed into small holders who have acquired land, and it will be such a process once again. In given conditions having and not having, acquiring and losing, are interconnected; there is identity of the two sides. Under socialism, private peasant ownership is transformed into the public ownership of socialist agriculture; this has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place everywhere else. There is a bridge leading from private property to public property, which in philosophy is called identity, or transformation into each other, or interpenetration.

To consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the people is in fact to prepare the conditions for abolishing this dictatorship and advancing to the higher stage when all state systems are eliminated. To establish and build the Communist Party is in fact to prepare the conditions for the elimination of the Communist Party and all political parties. To build a revolutionary army under the leadership of the Communist Party and to carry on revolutionary war is in fact to prepare the conditions for the permanent elimination of war. These opposites are at the same time complementary.

War and peace, as everybody knows, transform themselves into each other. War is transformed into peace; for instance, the First World War was transformed into the post-war peace, and the

civil war in China has now stopped, giving place to internal peace. Peace is transformed into war; for instance, the Kuomintang-Communist co-operation was transformed into war in 1927, and today's situation of world peace may be transformed into a second world war. Why is this so? Because in class society such contradictory things as war and peace have an identity in given conditions.

All contradictory things are interconnected; not only do they coexist in a single entity in given conditions, but in other given conditions, they also transform themselves into each other. This is the full meaning of the identity of opposites. This is what Lenin meant when he discussed "how they happen to be (how they become) identical--under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another".

Why is it that "the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another"? Because that is just how things are in objective reality. The fact is that the unity or identity of opposites in objective things is not dead or rigid, but is living, conditional, mobile, temporary and relative; in given conditions, every contradictory aspect transforms itself into its opposite. Reflected in man's thinking, this becomes the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. It is only the reactionary ruling classes of the past and present and the metaphysicians in their service who regard opposites not as living, conditional, mobile and transforming themselves into one another, but as dead and rigid, and they propagate this fallacy everywhere to delude the masses of the people, thus seeking to perpetuate their rule. The task of Communists is to expose the fallacies of the reactionaries and metaphysicians, to propagate the dialectics inherent in things, and so accelerate the transformation of things and achieve the goal of revolution.

In speaking of the identity of opposites in given conditions, what we are referring to is real and concrete opposites and the real and concrete transformations of opposites into one another. There are innumerable transformations in mythology, for instance, Kua Fu's race with the sun in Shan Hai Ching,<sup>xxi</sup> Yi's shooting down of nine suns in Huai Nan Tzu,<sup>xxii</sup> the Monkey King's seventy-two metamorphoses in Hsi Yu Chi,<sup>xxiii</sup> the numerous episodes of ghosts and foxes metamorphosed into human beings in the Strange Tales of Liao Chai,<sup>xxiv</sup> etc. But these legendary transformations of opposites are not concrete changes reflecting concrete contradictions. They are naive, imaginary, subjectively conceived transformations conjured up in men's minds by innumerable real and complex transformations of opposites into one another. Marx said, "All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature."<sup>xxv</sup> The myriads of changes in mythology (and also in nursery tales) delight people because they imaginatively picture man's conquest of the forces of nature, and the best myths possess "eternal charm", as Marx put it; but myths are not built out of the concrete contradictions existing in given conditions and therefore are not a scientific reflection of reality. That is to say, in myths or nursery tales the aspects constituting a contradiction have only an imaginary identity, not a concrete identity. The scientific reflection of the identity in real transformations is Marxist dialectics.

Why can an egg but not a stone be transformed into a chicken? Why is there identity between war and peace and none between war and a stone? Why can human beings give birth only to human beings and not to anything else? The sole reason is that the identity of opposites exists only in necessary given conditions. Without these necessary given conditions there can be no identity whatsoever.

Why is it that in Russia in 1917 the bourgeois-democratic February Revolution was directly linked with the proletarian socialist October Revolution, while in France the bourgeois revolution was not directly linked with a socialist revolution and the Paris Commune of 1871 ended in failure? Why is it, on the other hand, that the nomadic system of Mongolia and Central Asia has been directly linked with socialism? Why is it that the Chinese revolution can avoid a capitalist future and be directly linked with socialism without taking the old historical road of the Western countries, without passing through a period of bourgeois dictatorship? The sole reason is the concrete conditions of the time. When certain necessary conditions are present, certain contradictions arise in the process of development of things and, moreover, the opposites contained in them are interdependent and become transformed into one another; otherwise none of this would be possible.

Such is the problem of identity. What then is struggle? And what is the relation between identity and struggle?

Lenin said:

*The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.*<sup>xxvi</sup>

What does this passage mean?

All processes have a beginning and an end, all processes transform themselves into their opposites. The constancy of all processes is relative, but the mutability manifested in the transformation of one process into another is absolute.

There are two states of motion in all things, that of relative rest and that of conspicuous change. Both are caused by the struggle between the two contradictory elements contained in a thing. When the thing is in the first state of motion, it is undergoing only quantitative and not qualitative change and consequently presents the outward appearance of being at rest. When the thing is in the second state of motion, the quantitative change of the first state has already reached a culminating point and gives rise to the dissolution of the thing as an entity and thereupon a qualitative change ensues, hence the appearance of a conspicuous change. Such unity, solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity, attraction, etc., as we see in daily life, are all the appearances of things in the state of quantitative change. On the other hand, the dissolution of unity, that is, the destruction of this solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity and attraction, and the change of each into its opposite are all the appearances of things in the state of qualitative change, the transformation of one process into another. Things are constantly transforming themselves from the first into the second state of motion; the struggle of opposites goes on in both states but the contradiction is resolved through the second state. That is why we say that the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and relative, while the struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute.

When we said above that two opposite things can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other because there is identity between them, we were speaking of conditionality, that is to say, in given conditions two contradictory things can be united and can transform themselves into each other, but in the absence of these conditions, they cannot constitute a contradiction, cannot coexist in the same entity and cannot transform themselves into one another. It is because the identity of opposites obtains only

in given conditions that we have said identity is conditional and relative. We may add that the struggle between opposites permeates a process from beginning to end and makes one process transform itself into another, that it is ubiquitous, and that struggle is therefore unconditional and absolute.

The combination of conditional, relative identity and unconditional, absolute struggle constitutes the movement of opposites in all things.

We Chinese often say, "Things that oppose each other also complement each other."<sup>xxvii</sup> That is, things opposed to each other have identity. This saying is dialectical and contrary to metaphysics. "Oppose each other" refers to the mutual exclusion or the struggle of two contradictory aspects. "Complement each other" means that in given conditions the two contradictory aspects unite and achieve identity. Yet struggle is inherent in identity and without struggle there can be no identity.

In identity there is struggle, in particularity there is universality, and in individuality there is generality. To quote Lenin, ". . . there is an absolute in the relative."<sup>xxviii</sup>

## 6. The Place of Antagonism In Contradiction

The question of the struggle of opposites includes the question of what is antagonism. Our answer is that antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites.

In human history, antagonism between classes exists as a particular manifestation of the struggle of opposites. Consider the contradiction between the exploiting and the exploited classes. Such contradictory classes coexist for a long time in the same society, be it slave society, feudal society or capitalist society, and they struggle with each other; but it is not until the contradiction between the two classes develops to a certain



stage that it assumes the form of open antagonism and develops into revolution. The same holds for the transformation of peace into war in class society.

Before it explodes, a bomb is a single entity in which opposites coexist in given conditions. The explosion takes place only when a new condition, ignition, is present. An analogous situation arises in all those natural phenomena which finally assume the form of open conflict to resolve old contradictions and produce new things.

It is highly important to grasp this fact. It enables us to understand that revolutions and revolutionary wars are inevitable in class society and that without them, it is impossible to accomplish any leap in social development and to overthrow the reactionary ruling classes and therefore impossible for the people to win political power. Communists must expose the deceitful propaganda of the reactionaries, such as the assertion that social revolution is unnecessary and impossible. They must firmly uphold the Marxist-Leninist theory of social revolution and enable the people to understand that social revolution is not only entirely necessary but also entirely practicable, and that the whole history of mankind and the triumph of the Soviet Union have confirmed this scientific truth.

However, we must make a concrete study of the circumstances of each specific struggle of opposites and should not arbitrarily apply the formula discussed above to everything. Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions. Some contradictions are characterized by open antagonism, others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones.

As already mentioned, so long as classes exist, contradictions between correct and incorrect ideas in the Communist Party are reflections within the Party of class contradictions. At first, with regard to certain issues, such contradictions may not manifest themselves as antagonistic. But with the development of the class struggle, they may grow and become antagonistic. The history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union shows us that the contradictions between the correct thinking of Lenin and Stalin and the fallacious thinking of Trotsky, Bukharin and others did not at first manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but that later they did develop into antagonism. There are similar cases in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. At first the contradictions between the correct thinking of many of our Party comrades and the fallacious thinking of Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao and others also did not manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but later they did develop into antagonism. At present the contradiction between correct and incorrect thinking in our Party does not manifest itself in an antagonistic form, and if comrades who have committed mistakes can correct them, it will not develop into antagonism. Therefore, the Party must on the one hand wage a serious struggle against erroneous thinking, and on the other give the comrades who have committed errors ample opportunity to wake up. This being the case, excessive struggle is obviously inappropriate. But if the people who have committed errors persist in them and aggravate them, there is the possibility that this contradiction will develop into antagonism.

Economically, the contradiction between town and country is an extremely antagonistic one both in capitalist society, where under the rule of the bourgeoisie the towns ruthlessly plunder the countryside, and in the Kuomintang areas in China, where under the rule of foreign imperialism and the Chinese big comprador bourgeoisie the towns most rapaciously plunder the

countryside. But in a socialist country and in our revolutionary base areas, this antagonistic contradiction has changed into one that is non-antagonistic; and when communist society is reached it will be abolished.

Lenin said, "Antagonism and contradiction are not at all one and the same. Under socialism, the first will disappear, the second will remain."<sup>xxix</sup> That is to say, antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites; the formula of antagonism cannot be arbitrarily applied everywhere.

## 7. Conclusion

We may now say a few words to sum up. The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the fundamental law of nature and of society and therefore also the fundamental law of thought. It stands opposed to the metaphysical world outlook. It represents a great revolution in the history of human knowledge. According to dialectical materialism, contradiction is present in all processes of objectively existing things and of subjective thought and permeates all these processes from beginning to end; this is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. Each contradiction and each of its aspects have their respective characteristics; this is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. In given conditions, opposites possess identity, and consequently can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other; this again is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. But the struggle of opposites is ceaseless, it goes on both when the opposites are coexisting and when they are transforming themselves into each other, and becomes especially conspicuous when they are transforming themselves into one another; this again is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. In studying the particularity and relativity of contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the principal contradiction

and the non-principal contradictions and to the distinction between the principal aspect and the non-principal aspect of a contradiction; in studying the universality of contradiction and the struggle of opposites in contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the different forms of struggle. Otherwise we shall make mistakes. If, through study, we achieve a real understanding of the essentials explained above, we shall be able to demolish dogmatist ideas which are contrary to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and detrimental to our revolutionary cause, and our comrades with practical experience will be able to organize their experience into principles and avoid repeating empiricist errors. These are a few simple conclusions from our study of the law of contradiction.

Notes On  
"Revolution Means Solving Contradictions"

This next writing is different from the other writings because it was not authored by Mao. It was written by a plumber named Li Kuo-tsai who put it together to demonstrate how he had applied Mao Tse-tung Thought to his work. I think this is very important because it shows that Mao's writings can be applied to everyday situations. They were intended to be used in society even down on the level of the workshop floor. Resolving contradictions among the workers, more specifically the people, is the actual purpose of socialism and whole point of Mao's works. The demonstration of how it can be applied on the shop floor level is very important to proving this true.

For these reasons I found this particular text quite interesting. It's awesome when a worker can display how dialectics can be used in the work place to make production more efficient. It's even greater to see how it is used to make the workplace less antagonistic and stressful by uniting the workers. Typically we would see some form of alienation or another within production. A good example would be skilled workers assumed to be of greater value than unskilled workers. The truth is that both groups are needed to carry out production. They both have the same relationship to the capitalist as workers who are employed in his means of production.

Contradictions exist between workers of all trade and skills. The division of labour in a single factory can lead to many problems in the construction of a socialist society. All antagonisms, all contradictions must be resolved if we are to reach a point where all workers can be on equal footing to each other. The key to resolving those contradictions is a dialectical analysis. Understand what the contradiction is and seek out its resolution. Pay differentials are one source, working conditions are another. Resolve them and bring them together to increase production and efficiency. Let all the workers work as one.

Even in the physical production itself contradictions exist. Li Kuo-tsai gave the great example of the development of acid-resistant materials for factories. Originally the Soviets were providing stainless steel in which to produce towers. When the country turned revisionist they cancelled the contracts and left the builders hanging in the wind. Knowing that no set back can stop the process of revolution permanently, they found new means by which to continue producing those towers. Investigations showed that glazed bricks could do the same job. They were even more durable and more economical while being acid resistant. Out of this loss came not just a recovery, but advancement as well!

Unfortunately when this contradiction was resolved another appeared. The tower is round, and as such the bricks must be shaped accordingly. At first when they produced these bricks, process of cutting them was poor and there was much waste. All the bricks were useless. The cutting methods were poor and ineffective. As it seemed hopeless they reminded themselves that this is a contradiction and it too like the last can be solved. They tried several other methods, but neither gas nor metal cutting could get the job done. Metal saws merely witnessed their blades become ruined with their effort. The workers struggled collectively and created a machine that could cut dozens of bricks without any waste. Once again the contradiction was not only resolved, but it increased technological development as well!

While this machine could cut glazed bricks, it could not cut glazed pipes which were also needed. It was suggested that they order foreign equipment to get that job done. Li Kuo-tsai collected his work mates together and they became determined to show that since they could make a glazed brick cutter, they could make a glazed pipe cutter too. Two weeks later they achieved this goal. It was a great advancement that tremendously increased efficiency in production. He said, "*In*

*two weeks we turned out two glazed pipecutters which cost us only 3.7 yuan whereas an imported cutter of this kind would cost 17,000 yuan. Moreover, our machine was ten times as efficient. It was able to cut a pipe in three minutes as against 30 minutes required by an imported machine."*

During the construction of the acid-resistant towers they came up against contradiction after contradiction. When all of the contradictions were resolved, the project was completed. Struggle against contradictions is what builds socialism and everything else!

Now we ask the question: What were the contradictions here? It is easy to look at what happened, but it's important to identify the contradictions in the process.

The primary contradiction here was the antagonistic one between China and the revisionist USSR. It led to the ending of a contract for much needed stainless steel to build the tower. That caused the shortage of needed materials that was resolved by the idea of glazed bricks. The second contradiction appeared when it was not possible to produce the bricks when cutting them. This was a contradiction between the initial plan and objective reality. The resolution of it came with a readjustment of the plan in order to accomplish the task.

The product of these contradictions was the developments in cutting glazed bricks and glazed pipes. The resolving of these contradictions led to "revolutions" in the productive forces that solved a problem and made an existing process more efficient! This is what is meant by resolving contradictions to create revolution. This same process is to be used on society to create the communist world.

*"Solving contradictions is a struggle. Wherever there is struggle there is sacrifice. When we have fostered wholehearted devotion to the public interest, we will fear neither hardship nor death in*



*the struggle to transform the objective world, and we will really consider it a great honour to sacrifice for the cause of the revolution."*

This is why dialectics is important and why Mao placed so much emphasis on it. This is only a small example of what we need to do and how it works. The resolving of contradictions is what brings us closer to the victory of the better world for all.

Li Kuo-tsai's writing shows how this can be applied to everyday industrial life.

# Revolution Means Solving Contradictions

by Li Kuo-tsai

A worker in the Kirin No. 1 Chemical  
Engineering Construction Company

April 16, 1971

I am a plumber. I began studying Chairman Mao's philosophical works in 1958. Armed with Chairman Mao's philosophical thinking, I've used it for more than ten years as my guide in the three great revolutionary movements — class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment — and have overcome many difficulties and solved many contradictions on the road of continuing the revolution. Through practice I've come to understand that revolution means solving contradictions. Solving a small contradiction means a small victory, solving a big contradiction means a big victory, and continuously solving contradictions means continuous victories.

### Tackling Contradictions in a Revolutionary Spirit

As a boy, I hardly had any schooling because my family was very poor. So there were many difficulties when I first began studying Chairman Mao's philosophical works. I used to be frightened when someone said philosophy wasn't meant for people with little schooling and that only the educated could study it. "This can't be true," I thought. "Chairman Mao's works are written for the workers, peasants and soldiers. If we can't study them, who can?" Disregarding their discouraging talk, I kept at my studies and, linking them with practice, I learnt some basic concepts in Chairman Mao's philosophical works and understood many revolutionary truths.

In On Contradiction, Chairman Mao has taught us: "There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist." Studying this teaching of Chairman Mao's in the light of revolutionary practice, one came to a still deeper understanding: There are contradictions among people and within the Party, and the whole world is full of contradictions without which nothing would exist. The course of revolution, therefore, is one of ceaselessly solving contradictions.

In the old society, we workers all had a family history of bitter suffering. Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party led the Chinese people in overthrowing imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism in China which pressed down on them like three big mountains. Solution of the contradiction between the Chinese people and these three enemies won liberation for us and we became the masters of the country. Revolution means solving contradictions and solving contradictions means struggle. Whenever a contradiction is solved, the revolution advances and society progresses. In closely following Chairman Mao and continuing the revolution today, we are solving contradictions in the period of socialist revolution and carrying the revolution through to the end!

Contradictions are an objective reality. We must not steer clear of contradictions that crop up in the course of the revolution, but the attitude we take to solve them should be an active one. In 1960, the Kirin Chemical Plant started building some acid-resisting towers with imported stainless steel. When the whole project was half finished, the Soviet revisionists tore up the contracts and refused to supply any material. They thought they could strangle us in this way. What should we have done? Chairman Mao taught us: "Whether Chinese nation have the spirit to fight the enemy to the last drop of our blood, the determination to recover our lost territory by our own efforts, and the ability to stand on our own feet in the family of nations." I told myself: 'The Soviet revisionists have torn up the contracts, so what? We'll carry on without their material, and we'll do our job even better! We use stainless steel because it's acid-resistant. Glazed bricks also resist acid, why can't we use them to replace stainless steel?' We made many experiments proving that glazed bricks, which are durable and more economical, exactly served the purpose.

However, having solved one contradiction, we ran into another. Building a round acid-resisting tower required lots of glazed

bricks cut to shape. At first, there was a lot of waste because none of the bricks we cut could be used. Was there any way to solve the problem? Seeing that some of the workers were a bit worried, I cheered them up by saying: "Don't worry. Where there's a contradiction, there's a way of solving it. Haven't we succeeded in substituting glazed bricks for stainless steel? Surely we'll find a way to solve the new contradiction arising from cutting glazed bricks."

Many suggestions were made, but neither metal arc cutting nor gas cutting could do the job. When we tried using saws, that also didn't work; hardly had the saws made an impression on the surface of the bricks when their teeth were blunted. Some workers got discouraged at this point. Should we take the bull by the horns or cave in before this new contradiction? Relying on Chairman Mao's philosophical thinking, we pooled our collective wisdom and finally succeeded in making a glazed brick cutting machine which could cut dozens of bricks at once without any waste.

This machine, which helped solve the problem of cutting glazed bricks, couldn't handle glazed pipes. At this point, someone remarked: "Let's get the necessary equipment from abroad before we go on with our work." I talked things over with my workmates, and we agreed that since we could find a method to cut glazed bricks, we surely could make a machine to cut glazed pipes. Applying the same principle, we started to make one ourselves. In two weeks we turned out two glazed pipe cutters which cost us only 3.7 yuan whereas an imported cutter of this kind would cost 17,000 yuan. Moreover, our machine was ten times as efficient. It was able to cut a pipe in three minutes as against 30 minutes required by an imported machine. In this way we probed for the correct methods of doing things as we continued our work and, solving one contradiction after another, we soon completed the acid-resisting towers.

Solving contradictions is a struggle. Wherever there is struggle there is sacrifice. When we have fostered wholehearted devotion to the public interest, we will fear neither hardship nor death in the struggle to transform the objective world, and we will really consider it a great honour to sacrifice for the cause of the revolution.

An accident during a scientific experiment injured both my eyes, and I was sent to Peking for treatment. While in hospital I heard that a chemical plant there badly needed a large number of bends (pipe elbows), but there were no concrete measures yet for meeting the need. The news made me restless in bed. Refusing to be dissuaded, I bought a train ticket and returned to my factory. When I told my comrades of the plant's urgent need and the significance of supplying the necessary bends, they said: "We'll make Chinese-designed bends and win honour for Chairman Mao. We'll do the job."

The workers took their bedding to the shops and worked day and night without letting difficulties stand in their way. My eyes became bloodshot and got worse. But when the comrades tried to talk me into going back to the hospital for treatment, I replied: "We have to be tough if we want to make revolution." All of us persisted in the battle and in 27 days we built three hydraulic presses for making the bends, thereby fulfilling the important task of aiding our fraternal plant ahead of time.

Practice has helped me get a deep understanding of the great truth of Chairman Mao's teaching: "The ceaseless emergence and cease less resolution of contradictions is the dialectical law of the development of things." The attitude of revolutionary workers towards contradictions is to struggle against them. We rely on the thoroughgoing revolutionary spirit of fearing neither hardship nor death to struggle against heaven and earth and the class enemies. This is our proletarian outlook on contradictions.

### Analyse and Solve Contradictions

Chairman Mao has taught us: "This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyse the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions." Human society progresses in the course of continually knowing and resolving contradictions. Wisdom comes from practice and skill from work. We the proletariat must use Chairman Mao's philosophical thinking to continuously blaze new trails through practice to arrive at the truth.

At one time, the draining ditch in the Kirin Calcium Carbide Plant was all but clogged up with chemical sludge. Production would be held up if it was not removed promptly. As the ditch was some four kilometres long, ten metres wide and about two metres deep, it would take several hundred workers one year to clear it out. With only 12 men in our group, it was very difficult for us to do such a heavy job within a short time.

How should we have solved this contradiction? Some suggested using a suction pump. However, this could only drain off the water but not the sludge. We thought about building a dredger, but none of us had ever seen one. Chairman Mao has taught us: "There are no such things as difficulties for Communists, for they can surmount them." We are vanguard fighters of the proletariat; if we use materialist dialectics as our sharp weapon, we'll be able to take any fortress by storm. Since we are workers with practical experience, we surely could find a way to remove the sludge if we used our brains and thought hard while doing our work.

First we studied steam boats. When the propellers revolve, they push the water back, and the reaction of the water moves the boat forward. However, the water is not pushed back very far. To make a boat able to push the water ashore, a method has to be found to collect it in a mass. This, of course, cannot be done by an ordinary boat. So we thought about jet planes. Like steam

boats, they go forward on the principle of the reaction of forces. These planes have combustion chambers; they take in air through orifices at the front, and the jet ejected through the exhaust nozzles in the rear is powerful and far - reaching. If we could apply this principle to make a boat for dredging, there would be no question of removing the sludge in the ditch.

On the basis of this principle, we designed a dredging device which gave the expected results. But the ditch was too narrow for the boat to turn round. By applying the same principle as that used in motor cars, we attached a mechanism to the boat enabling it to move forward or backward. In this way, we made the design while going on with our work, and improving it in the course of practice, we gradually enabled our knowledge to correspond with objective laws. After repeating the process of "practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge," we finally succeeded in making the dredger which quickly removed the sludge and cleared the ditch.

When we took part in a rush job to make repairs at a factory in November 1968, some ten reinforced concrete pillars, each more than ten metres high, had to be removed in order to rebuild a workshop. We first spent three days trying to knock them down with big 12-pound hammers but made no progress; we only left some holes in the pillars. Everybody knew that wasn't the way. Anxious about it, I didn't go to bed for several nights. My eyes became bloodshot and my head was swimming. Seeing that I wasn't going to get any rest, some comrades hustled me into a room and locked me in. I still couldn't get to sleep even when I lay on the bed. Suddenly a picture of Tung Tsun-jui using explosives to destroy a pillbox flashed through my mind. Could explosives level the cement pillars quickly and safely? I suggested that we try. The comrades agreed but feared that the blast would damage the workshop's equipment, pipes and wiring.



How to go about it? We used Chairman Mao's philosophical thinking to analyse the question of explosives and concluded that they are most effective against hard objects and less useful against soft objects. Basing ourselves on this analysis, we wrapped thick straw matting around the pillars before setting off the blasts. It worked. When the blasts came, the reinforced concrete pillars flew into pieces, while the equipment, pipes and wiring were not affected. The rush job was thus completed in 15 days and nights.

Practice has proved to me that materialist dialectics is the key to the treasure house of the universe. If we get a firm grip on this ideological weapon, we can see clearly and become wiser and can know and grasp the laws governing objective things and overcome difficulties in moving ahead.

#### Resolving Contradictions in Struggle Between the Two Lines

In my work I often run up against specific contradictions in production. Of course all these contradictions should be resolved by applying Chairman Mao's philosophical thinking. But the purpose of our studying Chairman Mao's philosophical thinking is primarily to apply it to guide us in class struggle and to solve the principal contradiction of the struggle between the proletarian revolutionary line and the bourgeois reactionary line. Only in this way can we continue the revolution and consolidate and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. If we are engrossed in grasping specific contradictions in production, we'll lose our bearings in the complicated class struggle and the struggle between the two lines and vacillate. Only when we implant the Party's basic line in our minds can we have a clear political orientation.

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, we severely criticized the counter-revolutionary revisionist rubbish of "giving first place to technique" and understood more clearly that whether we gave first place to technique or let politics take

command was a struggle between the capitalist road and the socialist road and between the two lines. The renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi and his agents insisted on "giving first place to technique" to realize their aim of restoring capitalism.

Last year, eight young workers joined our team. At first, they worked quite well. But they soon became unwilling to be plumbers, thinking that the work was exhausting and dirty. One time when we were making pipe elbows, all of us were tired and soaked in sweat. One of them remarked how much one had to sweat in this work. We told him: "In making revolution, we must not be afraid of sweating and getting tired. We should take up the heavy load for the revolution even if our sweat is enough to float a ship."

Later, I thought that education in ideology and political line should not be done piecemeal. We should fundamentally raise the young workers' consciousness of class struggle and the struggle between the two lines and help them mature into successors to the revolutionary cause.

At a class education meeting, I said to Comrade Pao Ching-hung, a veteran worker in our team, "Pao, how about you telling us about how you were exploited and oppressed by the landlord and how you and your elder brother had to beg a living in the old society. . . ." As Pao gave his account in nearly half a day, the young workers got a profound education from the contrast between the new and old societies. In the light of the ideas that made the young workers feel they had grievances in making pipe elbows, we talked to them about this kind of high-pressure elbow in connection with our team's history of struggle. Small as the elbow is, I told them, it was also a product of our struggle against the counter-revolutionary revisionist line and against the imperialists and revisionists.

Before the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, we imported these elbows from capitalist countries which tried to make as much trouble as they could for us. We workers made up our minds to change the situation by making the elbows ourselves. We encountered many difficulties in our experiments. For example, while a locomotive pulling a train needs a pressure of 17 atmospheres, it calls for a pressure of 600 atmospheres to make the elbows. Technically and in equipment, many difficulties had to be overcome. One reactionary "authority" tried to bluff us: "An oxygen cylinder which can stand a pressure of 100 atmospheres rises about 300 metres when it explodes. Since 600 atmospheres are needed in making these elbows, oil will spurt out of even a tiny hole like an arrow and pierce your belly if you're not careful" That didn't frighten us.

Chairman Mao teaches us; "Will the Chinese cower before difficulties when they are not afraid even of death?" We had courage to face up to every obstacle. Undeterred by failure in our experiments, we repeatedly summed up our experience and trial-produced a hydraulic press with 600 atmospheres of pressure and finally produced the elbow on our own, and its quality was far superior to the imported ones. Education in ideology and political line by living examples like this helps young workers gradually raise their awareness of class struggle and the struggle between the two lines.

Practice in struggle has helped me get a deeper understanding that dialectical materialism and historical materialism are the theoretical basis of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Only by arming ourselves with materialist dialectics and conscientiously remoulding our world outlook can we constantly raise our consciousness in implementing Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

Notes on  
"On The Correct Handling of Contradictions  
Among The People"

## Introduction

Society is made up of many different kinds of people, many of whom have desires and aspirations which run in contradiction to those of others. Distribution of resources between the countryside and the city is an example. In a more modern sense, we see the distribution of resources between the First and Third World.

There are other contradictions as well like those between the majority and the minority nationalities. People can have all kinds of contradictions between them. Our goal as Marxists is to push the transformation as forward towards communism as much as possible. We must be the consciousness that influences matter that makes the quantitative change that eventually breaks out into qualitative change. The resolving of all contradictions leads us directly to the communist society.

This work by Mao is a major step in that process as it gives us the beginning of an understanding of contradictions among the people and how to handle them. As society progresses and new contradictions are revealed, this basis will help us deal with them.

After the revolution Mao and the Chinese communist party were left with the task of bringing all the peoples of China together to build the new socialist society. The chaos of the revolutionary war left much in the way of a confusion, a confusion of "what to do now", especially with the particular nationalities in the country. Previously they had a common identity as a united force against the nationalists and Chiang Kai-shek, they had an identity of opposites. Now that they were defeated, that identity ceased to exist. The question now left before them was how to build the socialist society without that identity?

Here in this work we can see the real genius in contradiction handling. In our Western bourgeois democracies we have

opposing sides enter into parliament or congress and make presentations to each other and the public. They yell at each other and don't often deal with the criticisms of the other side in a real way. At the end we have two differing opinions that rarely agree on anything. Then they enter into a vote where one side is disappointed and goes on to undermine the decision.

What has happened here is that the contradiction between the two sides on an issue remains, nothing is resolved, and it is only voted upon to be possibly repealed later. The problem of the contradiction between the two sides is not dealt with. Essentially it relies on a consensus fallacy; nothing is shown to be correct or incorrect, only which side is more popular is determined. This is where Mao's method is different. They see where this contradiction comes from, investigates it and finds the solution to the contradiction by *resolving* it. This is what bourgeois debate in bourgeois democracy cannot accomplish. This is why their politics is such a mess. When this method is followed a socialist country can overcome any problem.

Of course this contradiction resolving is not possible in the politics of capitalism. The entire system requires the existence and the maintaining of contradiction. That contradiction is of course being between the capitalist class and the working class. There is no desire by capitalism to resolve the contradictions because those contradictions make up what the very system is. Peace and the resolution of the antagonisms in capitalism is a literal impossibility. This only reminds us why revolution is necessary.

### 1. Two Types of Contradiction Differing in Nature

To begin to identify the two types of contradictions we must first understand the different sides in those conflicts. We must correctly identify who are "the people" and who is "the enemy". What we define as the people varies given the current state of a society, its development and its material conditions. Mao gives

the example of the war against Japanese imperialism. The people consisted of the revolutionaries and the soldiers of the Kuomintang and even some elements at the bourgeoisie. The enemy was the imperialists and Chinese collaborators. During the War of Liberation the enemy was US imperialism, bureaucrat-capitalists, landlords etc.. The people were all the oppressed classes struggling for liberation. What we face now is a different set of conditions. Right now we differentiate between socially progressive forces who advance the goal of equality (social justice) and those who oppose such achievements. After revolution we must differentiate between those who support the cause of socialist construction (and all social groups therein) and those who actively seek to undermine that construction.

Here we can begin to see the two contradictions. The ones between us and the enemy are antagonistic contradictions. Contradictions that take place among the workers are generally non-antagonistic. Contradictions between the exploited and the exploiting classes have a non-antagonistic and an antagonistic aspect. Mao pointed out that there are always contradictions between people; but those contradictions have a different content at different moments during revolution and during the construction of socialism.

*"In the conditions prevailing in China today, the contradictions among the people comprise the contradictions within the working class, the contradictions within the peasantry, the contradictions within the intelligentsia, the contradictions between the working class and the peasantry, the contradictions between the workers and peasants on the one hand and the intellectuals on the other, the contradictions between the working class and other sections of the working people on the one hand and the national bourgeoisie on the other, the contradictions within the national bourgeoisie, and so on."*

Mao was also well aware that contradiction continued in socialism between the government and the people. Even in a people's government, regardless of what country it is in, there is still that contradiction. There is, plain to see, a contradiction between *"the contradictions between the interests of the state and the interests of the collective on the one hand and the interests of the individual on the other, between democracy and centralism, between the leadership and the led, and the contradictions arising from the bureaucratic style of work of some of the state personnel in their relations with the masses."*

An important point to remember is what underlies the contradictions among the people is, generally speaking, the fundamental identity of the people's interests.

When resolving contradictions between the Party and the people and the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy, we must use different methods to resolve them. We are not like the bourgeoisie who simply demand obedience. This tactic will fail. Either they resolve nothing and end up in a major conflict never dealing with the contradiction, or they send in the oppressive apparatuses of the state to literally kill disagreement.

Contradiction with the enemy must be clearly seen as such. The reactionary classes, once in complete contradiction with the people (not secondary contradiction circumstances) must be recognized as the enemy and combated as such. Contradictions between the people are non-antagonistic and should be seen and dealt with differently. Contradictions among the people must be seen as a clear case of right and wrong among the people. We are not enemies, nor should we be treated as such. Investigation is the path we take for dealing with contradictions among the people. We look into the contradiction and discover which path will arrive at the desired outcome. The contradiction aims to be resolved with the correct path chosen.



Mao demonstrates how this distinction bound up with the very nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the example Mao gives, he explains how the Chinese state is a people's democratic dictatorship. Its main functions is internal, to suppress the reactionary classes, those who try to sabotage the socialist construction, meaning to resolve the contradictions between the people and the internal enemy. As example Mao gives arresting and sentencing certain counter-revolutionaries, deprive landlords and bureaucrat-capitalists of their right to vote and free speech for a certain time. The second function is to protect the country from subversion from external enemies. The purpose is to resolve the contradictions between the people and the external enemy. The aim of the dictatorship of the proletariat is to protect the people so they can dedicate themselves to building socialism.

The working class and the people under its leadership exercise this dictatorship. The people do not use the dictatorship against each other, nor can they use it on themselves. It is not a tool for one group to use against another. How is this accomplished? By using the principles of democratic centralism. The Constitution of China demanded that they use it; they must rely on the masses in order to serve the people.

This is where the opposites of a single unity come into play. Both democracy and freedom exist, not in absolutes, but in unity with each other. This also applies to other things: "*Within the ranks of the people, democracy is correlative with centralism and freedom with discipline.*" They stand as opposites of a single entity. They cannot go without freedom, nor can they go without discipline. Under the Chinese system the people enjoy freedom and democracy, but at the same time they are bound by socialist discipline.

Democratic centralism abhors the use of force in settling ideological questions. Force does not determine which

ideological position is right and which is wrong. Such actions are harmful and do not work in the resolving of contradictions of socialist society. The proper way according to Mao in the work is "*the democratic method, the method of discussion, criticism, persuasion and education*". When using democratic centralism to resolve contradictions among the people we do not just use administrative means, it is combined persuasion and education.

In the Chinese Communist Party this appeared in 1942 under the name "unity, criticism, unity". The idea is simple, unity is held and protected. The Party is united in the revolution, differences and disagreements appear, they are struggled over to determine the correct line the correct idea, then the Party emphasizes unity once again to go forward with revolution. In 1942 this primarily took the form of struggling with dogmatists in inner-party conflict.

While non-antagonistic contradictions exist among the people, we must be vigilant in dealing with them. If they are left unchecked, meaning they are not resolved, reactionary forces can gain a foothold and use them to destroy the revolution and socialist society. As example Mao gives the "Hungarian Incident".<sup>1</sup>

This is how socialist society differs from a capitalist society. The contradictions have different forms, but they are fundamentally different. In a capitalist society contradictions manifest themselves in acute class struggle. Capitalism thus, obviously, cannot resolve those contradictions. They can only be resolved through socialism. In socialism there are non-antagonistic contradictions and have the ability and the responsibility to resolve them.

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<sup>1</sup> Hungarian Incident was a revolt in Budapest where reactionaries organized a counter-revolution but were eventually defeated.

The basic contradiction remains the same, between the relations of production and the productive forces against the superstructure and economic base. This contradiction is however completely different under socialism than it is under all previous systems. The more developed they are, the more they are able to meet the needs and wants of the people. When China chose socialism over capitalism, the productive forces expanded rapidly.

Here Mao moves on to show some of the contradiction that still existed between capitalism and socialism in China. He noted how there was still some joint state-private industrial and commercial enterprises where a capitalist gets a fixed rate of interest on their capital. These enterprises are not yet fully socialist in nature, relations between production and exchange in accordance with socialist principles was still being worked on. He said the socialist construction was under way but that it was "far from perfect".

*"To sum up, socialist relations of production have been established and are in correspondence with the growth of the productive forces, but these relations are still far from perfect, and this imperfection stands in contradiction to the growth of the productive forces."*

In addition to this there is also a contradiction between the superstructure and the economic base. The superstructure is made up of the state, the laws and "*the socialist ideology guided by Marxism-Leninism*". Those are promoting the socialist way of organizing labour, this is in correspondence with the socialist economic base, "*that is, with the socialist relations of production*". This stands in contradiction to remaining bourgeois elements. These would be "*a certain bureaucratic style of work in state organs*" as well as links in state institutions.

Mao here is specifically warning cadres and the public that the socialist transformation is not yet complete and that they must

watch their backs for revisionists. These exist via contradiction and that we must always be not only always solving them, but always looking out for the new ones. He also laid out some ways to solve them:

*"For instance, a constant process of readjustment through state planning is needed to deal with the contradiction between production and the needs of society, which will long remain an objective reality. Every year our country draws up an economic plan in order to establish a proper ratio between accumulation and consumption and achieve an equilibrium between production and needs. Equilibrium is nothing but a temporary, relative, unity of opposites. By the end of each year, this equilibrium, taken as a whole, is upset by the struggle of opposites; the unity undergoes a change, equilibrium becomes disequilibrium, unity becomes disunity, and once again it is necessary to work out an equilibrium and unity for the next year. Herein lies the superiority of our planned economy. As a matter of fact, this equilibrium, this unity, is partially upset every month or every quarter, and partial readjustments are called for. Sometimes, contradictions arise and the equilibrium is upset because our subjective arrangements do not conform to objective reality; this is what we call making a mistake. The ceaseless emergence and ceaseless resolution of contradictions constitute the dialectical law of the development of things."*

Mao concludes this by saying that the turbulent class struggles of revolutionary war are over, but that class war is not yet over, it continues in socialism. There is a new system in place that has dealt with the worst of the contradictions but more remain and new ones appear. The new system changes how contradictions are dealt with, meaning they have new tools that the people are still unfamiliar with because they are new. The government personnel are also inexperienced and still need to learn their new jobs as well. Being in the socialist government is not like operating a bourgeois one where people yell points and bark

orders to the people. The socialist government serves the people through democratic centralism, a process the people in the new government were learning.

"On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People" was written precisely for this experience. Mao made the main point that we have to identify distinguishing the difference between the people and the enemy. Each requires a different method of resolving them. The proper path in a contradiction must be found through investigation. The proper resolving of the contradiction unites the people against antagonisms and allows the people to move forward to the continued construction of the socialist society. Eventually, when all contradictions have been dealt with sufficiently, we will arrive at communism.

## 2. The Question of Eliminating Counter-Revolutionaries

The other contradiction is between the people and the enemy. Earlier we dealt with contradictions among the people and how they should be resolved. Now we'll see Mao speak on resolving contradictions between the people and the enemy, these ones being antagonistic. Here is where Mao makes the famous distinction. He says that there are Rightists in the party who don't make a distinction between contradictions between the people and the enemy. This is one good reason how reactionaries like Deng and Khrushchev manage to stay in the Party and how Rightists supported them by falsely thinking they are merely a contradiction among the people. Left deviation people in the party have the opposite problem. They see enemies everywhere even when there are none to be found. Even slight contradictions among the people are seen as enemies, even where there is merely a disagreement among which idea is the proper line. Both of these views are wrong and both prevent contradictions from being resolved and prevent the elimination reactionaries.

To give an example of how this is supposed to be done Mao once again returns to the Hungarian incident. He says that there were disagreements among the Chinese intellectuals about what happened. Yet there was no squabbling. The reason he gives for this is that they were successful in "*eliminating counter revolutionaries fairly thoroughly*".

He also says this is not entirely because of its work against counter-revolutionaries, but because they have a Party and armed forces that are experienced as well as working people, which came about from the protracted revolution:

*"A number of democratic personages have also been tempered in the struggle in varying degrees, and they have gone through troubled times together with us. Some intellectuals were tempered in the struggles against imperialism and reaction; since liberation many have gone through a process of ideological remoulding aimed at enabling them to distinguish clearly between ourselves and the enemy. In addition, the consolidation of our state is due to the fact that our economic measures are basically sound, that the people's life is secure and steadily improving, that our policies towards the national bourgeoisie and other classes are correct, and so on. Nevertheless, our success in eliminating counter-revolutionaries is undoubtedly an important reason for the consolidation of our state. For all these reasons, with few exceptions our college students are patriotic and support socialism and did not give way to unrest during the Hungarian incident, even though many of them come from families of non-working people. The same was true of the national bourgeoisie, to say nothing of the basic masses--the workers and peasants."*

When the civil war came to an end the worst elements from the enemy were executed and it was absolutely necessary. Not only were they guilty of terrible crimes, they were reactionary elements that were in contradiction with the people. If they had

been allowed to stay, they would have forced a revival of all the aspects of the old order that the people fought so hard to abolish. By 1956 the majority of counter-revolutionaries had already been swept aside and China was in a radically new situation that had new contradictions to deal with and a new method of doing so that corresponded to them. Counter-revolutionaries continued to exist but they existed in a new form, in a different form of struggle.

The initial drive against counter-revolutionaries was not a 100 percent success. It had its errors, some of which allowed reactionary elements to "slip through our net", some people were punished unjustly. A new method of eliminating counter-revolutionaries was called the Mass Line. Through this the masses gain the experience to deal with contradictions through struggle. It will teach the masses how to struggle, they will also learn from any mistakes that are made. It is scientific to learn from mistakes everyone must grasp this.

At this time Mao saw that wrong tactics were used in eliminating counter-revolutionaries. He suggested policy of -- "exoneration or rehabilitation" instead of the mistakes that have been made. After that he proposed an investigation into handling counter-revolutionary work, learn from that experience and "*promote justice and counter unjust attacks*". Party organs should work with the people and their organizations to resolve these problems, not just simply tell them what to do. Doing that would be soul crushing and beat the drive for a revolution and the desire for a new world out of them. He emphasized that people and the government need to be vigilant and use this experience to craft laws and prosecution in a new way, but always with rehabilitative labour as the method of reform.

At that point in time when the essay was written, most counterrevolutionaries had been defeated with some still remaining. Some people in the party and people in the society

had claimed that they were all gone and had been defeated. Mao rejected this idea and emphatically stated that they did remain. We can see how true this was when we look at the counter-revolution that swept through China gobbling it up under the Deng Xiaoping reforms. Mao also knew that new counter-revolutionaries would emerge as well as some that remained hidden under the surface since the victory of the civil war. The main emphasis here was that even after the revolution, counter-revolutionaries still exist in new and old forms, so they should not let their guard down. They should be flexible and learn how to deal with the new ones that appear with new methods.

### 3. The Question of The Co-operative Transformation of Agriculture

To begin Mao said that since the peasant population was so large (500 million) their development was of the utmost importance in keeping the power of the state intact and the development of the national economy. When writing this he said that it had been accomplished and that it was strong. Here he points out one of the contradictions in the development of China as a largely individual peasant based population alongside a socialist industrialization. Peasant work was largely done by single families or as individuals working on larger farms. It was very individualistic in nature and this would clash with the collectivist nature of socialist industrialization. This would have caused problems in the national economy. The solution to this contradiction was nothing new, nothing that hadn't already been done before: the co-operative transformation of agriculture. The successes of it was plain to see as Mao noted, "*... The peasants are working with a will, and last year there was an increase in the country's grain output despite the worst floods, droughts and gales in years.*" At the time some claimed that there was nothing beneficial to the collectivization of



agriculture and thus it was unnecessary. Mao pointed to a co-operative in Tsunhua County, Hopei Province that was very hilly and in the past needed grain relief from the People's Government for years. This is the situation it began with in 1953 and in four years it produced a surplus of grain. As the co-operation continued it got increasingly better to the point where it was producing more than what was ever possible when done individually.

To achieve the goal of building these co-operatives that are successful they had to identify who was supportive of them and who was not. In their analysis the vast majority, the poor and lower-middle peasants, 70 percent were in agreement with the construction of the co-operatives. Many others were supportive of the idea but were very skeptical of it. Very few actively opposed them; these people did little or no investigation into the successes and have simply aggressively insisted they were a failure. This minority caused a great deal of upheaval in discussion making all kinds of fanciful claims that didn't correspond to the experiences and successes of the co-operatives.

With this Mao said it was still going to take some time to defeat all the baseless negative statements, several years going into the next national plan. He also said there were remaining contradictions that needed to be resolved while the co-operatives were consolidating like, "*those between the state and the co-operatives and those in and between the co-operatives themselves*".

From here Mao identified and laid out how to resolve some of those contradictions. He saw them mainly as problems of production and distribution. "...*On the question of production, the co-operative economy must be subject to the unified economic planning of the state, while retaining a certain flexibility and independence that do not run counter to the*

*state's unified plan or its policies, laws and regulations." Every household in a co-operative must abide by the plan of that co-operative, although it may make its own plans in regards "to land allotted for personal needs and to other individually operated economic undertakings." To deal with the latter: "On the question of distribution, we must take the interests of the state, the collective and the individual into account. We must properly handle the three-way relationship between the state agricultural tax, the co-operative's accumulation fund and the peasants' personal income, and take constant care to make readjustments so as to resolve contradictions between them. Accumulation is essential for both the state and the co-operative, but in neither case should it be excessive. We should do everything possible to enable the peasants in normal years to raise their personal incomes annually through increased production."*

Mao then took on the statement that the peasants lead a hard life now. Mao looked at this statement within its context, not divorced from the material conditions as the people making the statement. *"In one sense it is"*, the peasants lived under the boot of imperialist and landlord oppression. They had a horrible life and were brutally oppressed for centuries under Emperors as well. The standard of living for the peasants also remained relatively low, their access to education was still lacking as well as other things. Mao said it would be decades of struggle to bring the peasants up to their full potential. However in another sense it is not true. There were improvements made since the revolution that were fantastic. Some said there was only an improvement for the workers not for the peasants, this was not true. The revolution freed the peasants from the brutal landlord exploitation and increased their agricultural production. *"Take grain crops. In 1949, the country's output was only something over 210,000 million catties. By 1956, it had risen to more than 360,000 million catties, an increase of nearly 150,000 million catties. The state agricultural tax is not heavy, only amounting to*

*something over 30,000 million catties a year. State purchases of grain from the peasants at standard prices only amount to a little over 50,000 million catties a year. These two items together total over 80,000 million catties. Furthermore, more than half this grain is sold back to the villages and nearby towns."* There were solid gains made, but those gains needed to be consolidated to achieve further gains. Some small places ceased being grain dependant on others and began producing surpluses. Once all peasant areas were to be risen up to their full potential it would signal the end of poverty in the countryside. Unfortunately this never came about because of the counter-revolution of Deng and others. He also recognized other problems:

*"Since the labour productivity of the workers is much higher than that of the peasants and the latter's cost of living is much lower than that of workers in the cities, the workers cannot be said to have received special favours from the state. The wages of a small number of workers and some state personnel are in fact a little too high, the peasants have reason to be dissatisfied with this, and it is necessary to make certain appropriate adjustments according to specific circumstances."*

#### 4. The Question of The Industrialists and Businessmen

During the transition of capitalism to socialism, in 1956 there was a selection of privately owned industrial and commercial enterprises that were turned into joint private-state enterprises along with handicrafts and agriculture being turned into co-operatives. This transition was smooth, there wasn't the outrage and problems the Soviets faced. Mao attributed this to the Party's treating this conversion as a contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie as a contradiction among the people. When this work was produced, Mao acknowledged that the contradiction had not been resolved yet. This is where Mao differed for the Soviets. Often Mao is

criticized (primarily by the dishonest Hoxhaists) of being reactionary by allying with the national bourgeoisie. Yet his plan was to treat the contradiction differently than the Soviets did. In doing so China managed to take over privately owned companies without all the violence and upheaval there was in the Soviet Union. Mao's plan seems reactionary to people who don't understand it. He was also careful to properly understand that contradiction as well. Some said the capitalists had been remolded and thus required no more work on them. Some even went so far as to say that capitalists were more socialist than the workers were. Based on this, those same people thought that the workers need more molding than the capitalists did. Mao answered saying that this line of thinking was all wrong.

Here Mao reiterates that everyone needs remolding, which to us would be translated to developing a new consciousness, the socialist consciousness. Not just the exploiters, but the workers as well, there is no reason to think that the consciousness of the workers will suddenly change overnight. Everyone needed to learn the new social order and learn new ways of seeing things. The working class uses it's new found power to remold society and uses that same ability remold itself. This is perfectly in line with dialectical materialism. People's consciousness is determined by matter and we use our consciousness to influence matter in return. We remake the world and in turn those alterations change ourselves. It is through this process that the masses learn many things. They learn how to deal with conflicts, contradictions and learn new methods of work and how to run society. Over time through trial and error people discover how to reshape their world to their goals.

The real reformation of the bourgeoisie did not yet take place as some had asserted. While yes, they were made to live off their own labour as the workers do, many still received a fixed rate of interest on their capital in joint enterprises. This being so, Mao insisted that they had "*not yet cut themselves loose from the*

*roots of exploitation. Between them and the working class there is still a considerable gap in ideology, sentiments and habits of life".* Even when the interest payments stop there would still require a great amount of time for their consciousness to be shaped as well.

But Mao emphasized was not all there was to the situation. Many of them had been willing to work hard and become members of the new society, but this transformation can only take place through work. Mao said they must be encouraged to engage in the worker study groups and work alongside the regular workers as they toil. Above all else they needed to keep hounding away at transforming themselves into truly being one of the people.

### 5. The Question of The Intellectuals

As I see it, it presents three problems:

A problem that arises in a radical reconstitution of society is the role of intellectuals once the change takes place. These people have had relative unquestioned authority on matters. Capitalism (and Feudalism) relies on a heavy "appeal to authority" fallacy when dealing with intellectual matters. Almost always when someone disagrees with the ruling establishment it is claimed that the person questioning things is wrong because they are not an expert. True, being an expert makes one's case much stronger, particularly when a new idea is presented. It does not however make a person correct. An incorrect expert is still incorrect. An idea must be backed up with sufficient argumentation and facts, if this is not supplied why should someone believe them? It is unfortunate that we live in a system where we are expected to simply submit to intellectuals in the media, education system and elsewhere. This should not be the case, we should be investigating ideas for ourselves, the people must struggle ideas and see for themselves why correct ideas

are correct and why incorrect ideas are incorrect. This should not solely be the realm of intellectuals.

The second problem is a question of ideology. When the Chinese society turned from a feudal/capitalist order to the new socialist one there was a great contradiction with the intellectuals. They are of a particular set of beliefs on which they were educated. When that set of beliefs ceases to be the ruling ideology, they find themselves rather on the outside of intellectual life. They were taught to believe that capitalism is the only system that works and that revolution is wrong. Has this not been proven to them to be incorrect? Are the people, the peasants and workers wrong to throw off their shackles and obtain their liberation? No! The intellectuals were educated in a particular system to think in a particular ideological way. They are already taught that what the revolution is doing is wrong, but they cannot demonstrate this. Certainly not to the hundreds of millions of peasants who have finally rid themselves of the oppressive landlords. The intellectuals must learn to think in new ways just as the people are doing now. They too must remold themselves according to the new society. Their bourgeois Confusionist way of thinking, particular with regards to blind obedience to superiors and experts, is no longer the way of things. They too must change with the times.

The third problem is the question of their privileged position. The previous system has declared them to be the masters of their fields and the people were not allowed to question them. This has now all changed with the radical reconstitution of society. The new society has thrown them from their privilege, forcing them to learn all new ways of thinking just as the people have to. In reaction to this they adamantly deny the achievements of the revolution, they demand a return to the old order so that they may preserve the power and privilege they once had. Many believed that they did not have to learn anything new, there is no need for a new way of thinking, they have declared

themselves experts and as such they cannot be questioned! As a result they will do all that is necessary to bring back the old exploitative order and that cannot be allowed to happen.

Mao noted at the time of the writing that many had changed and shown progress in facilitating the socialist system. More were joining and that this was a good sign of commitment to being of use to the new society. He said there were still some intellectuals who didn't approve, but they were a minority. These people have skills the uneducated masses don't have, thus they are very important. Thus while there is an inherent distrust of people who used to lord over the people, but they are still needed; Meaning there was a contradiction. Regardless Mao said that the people should trust those that want to help build the new society.

In this speaking on this contradiction Mao pointed out that many people were very skeptical of the intellectuals considering they had spent so much time as important parts in the repressive way of things before the revolution. Some people have been dismissive and distrusting to the point where it had interfered with scientific development and cultural matters. The intellectuals can also be made into the people, they too are a part of society and their education can be used to benefit the people in the way they were used in the past to benefit the elites of the old order. If one truly wishes to change, should they not be allowed to do so? They should begin a deep education themselves into Marxism-Leninism so that they too can add their talents into building the new world, hopefully across the entire world itself. They should be given some leeway in trying to make that adjustment; many are set in their ways and have difficulty changing.

*"Actually, there are bound to be some who ideologically will always be reluctant to accept Marxism-Leninism and communism. We should not be too exacting in what we demand*

*of them; as long as they comply with the requirements laid down by the state and engage in legitimate pursuits, we should let them have opportunities for suitable work."*

Unfortunately Mao also noticed that among students and intellectuals there was a tendency to disregard political work and Marxist-Leninist study. The mindset was that, if one already was an intellectual or one was on the way to becoming one, that's all they needed to do. If someone was going to become a chemist they didn't need to know politics or social theory. All people must strengthen their ideological work if they are to take their studies and knowledge in the right direction. Think of it this way, Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla had a legendary rivalry in the sciences. Edison thought of nothing but getting paid, and thus he created only for that purpose. Tesla on the other hand saw science as a mechanism for liberation (sort of in a way). His idea of free energy would be tremendously useful in a socialist society. His intent was to get that kind of energy to everyone to free people from a dependence on particular means for it.

Was Tesla a Marxist? Of course not, I'm saying no such thing. My point is about the orientation and goal of the development of science he had. He wanted it to be liberating, not profit making. When scientists too have such political and social theory training, they can orientate their work towards the liberation of humanity. This is what I believe Mao was getting at in the work, but I don't think it came across very well.

What Mao suggested was that everyone had a responsibility to keep ideological work at the fore of their minds in whatever they do and that this applied to the intellectuals as well.

## 6. The Question of The Minority Nationals

Unfortunately with all reactionary societies racism is a problem. The Hanchauvinism built into Chinese society was a problem that needed to be overcome. In a sense, this was the problem of



contradiction among the races that needed to be resolved. These minority groups *"constitute only 6 per cent of the total population, they inhabit extensive regions which comprise 50 to 60 per cent of China's total area."* There is the possibility of real hostilities if this contradiction is not resolved, because, this same kind of chauvinism exists among the minority group as well. It is imperative that this situation be addressed as quickly as possible to maintain social cohesion to facilitate the drive towards socialism.

The main mechanism by which this was to be carried out was democratic reform, allowing those minority populations to have control over their fate just as the rest of the Chinese people. It would make sense; part of being a minority is being dominated by a majority. The only way to relieve that oppression is to be given power in a society where there wasn't any before.

*"Han chauvinism and local-nationality chauvinism still exist to a serious degree, and this demands full attention. As a result of the efforts of the people of all nationalities over the last few years democratic reforms and socialist transformation have in the main been completed in most of the minority nationality areas."*

Before he finishes Mao speaks about the situation that was going on in Tibet. He noted that the situation to carry out full change in the region was yet "ripe". This was due to an agreement that was set up between Central People's Government and the government of Tibet. The change was coming but it was not to be carried out until *"...the great majority of the people of Tibet and the local leading public figures consider it opportune..."*. This contrasts sharply with the lies we are fed today about how the Red Army supposedly stormed into Tibet and began a wholesale slaughter of people there "who disagreed with them".

There was a plan drawn up to deal with the contradictions between the races that existed in China. This is far different from

what we have today in the West; which is essentially nothing at all. Here there are no structural changes to a system that creates racism; instead it just wastes resources in an unproductive way. Nor do the people who attempt to make such changes ever stop to think about why they can't create equality in a system based on inequality.

### 7. Over-all Consideration and Proper Arrangement

By over-all Mao is referring to the entire population of China in which there is to be struggle with the people and to include everyone in the transformation. He says that there are 600 million people and that many tend to ignore this fact and only focus on a "small circle", groups that have already had intimate contact with people in the government. Mao wants everyone in the society included so that the entire transformation can be carried out. There was a tendency that he was criticizing where only some of those groups were being taken into consideration. Their error was not uniting with everyone that it was possible to unite with.

This 600 million population fact needed to be accepted as Mao saw the large population as both strength and a weakness. Construction of the socialist society was going very well yet at the same time there will still many difficulties yet to be solved.

The point is to always keep the over-all in mind when making decisions on everything from food to political change. Any decision regarding any group of people must look at how it will affect other groups in society; as well as determine how it will facilitate the transition to socialism. Will something increase the standard for one but cause antagonism with another? This was an important question to ask before implementing any policy. No action should be taken that doesn't embrace the whole of society.

## 8. On "Let A Hundred Flowers Blossom Let A Hundred School of Thought Contend" and "Long-Term Coexistence and Mutual Supervision"

The Hundred Flowers campaign was the unleashing of scientific and cultural thought on a level that had never been seen before in the world. The old society was quite repressive in this way, as I referred to previously with the intellectuals in China assuming unquestioned authority. The whole point of the campaign was to allow new ideas to flourish; then to struggle over them in order to determine which ones were correct.

*"Different forms and styles in art should develop freely and different schools in science should contend freely. We think that it is harmful to the growth of art and science if administrative measures are used to impose one particular style of art or school of thought and to ban another. Questions of right and wrong in the arts and science should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and through practical work in these fields. They should not be settled in an over-simple manner. A period of trial is often needed to determine whether something is right or wrong. Throughout history at the outset new and correct things often failed to win recognition from the majority of people and had to develop by twists and turns through struggle."*

This is a manner of resolving a contradiction; the contradiction between good ideas and bad ideas. Often with Western thought we are taught that there are only "matters of opinion". There is no real right and wrong. Of course this is not true, something is objectively right or objectively wrong. Two sides will present different ideas, often contradictory. Only through a struggle over evidence and investigation can we determine which is correct and which is incorrect. That is what Mao is saying here; new ideas must be presented in all fields to discover what potential they have in scientific advance and in the realm of culture. Each

thing must be investigated to see how it can help the transformation of society to socialism.

To tell the public, the Party and the educational institutions to what to avoid, Mao gives a few classic examples:

*"Often, correct and good things were first regarded not as fragrant flowers but as poisonous weeds. Copernicus' theory of the solar system and Darwin's theory of evolution were once dismissed as erroneous and had to win out over bitter opposition. Chinese history offers many similar examples. In a socialist society, the conditions for the growth of the new are radically different from and far superior to those in the old society. Nevertheless, it often happens that new, rising forces are held back and sound ideas stifled. Besides even in the absence of their deliberate suppression, the growth of new things may be hindered simply through lack of discernment. It is therefore necessary to be careful about questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences, to encourage free discussion and avoid hasty conclusions. We believe that such an attitude will help ensure a relatively smooth development of the arts and sciences."*

From here Mao describes how Marxism was treated in China and the rest of the world. By namely pointing how it too was treated like a poisonous weed and distained by the intellectuals. Marxism developed through its application and investigations into new ideas, hence Marxism-Leninism.

*"Marxists remain a minority among the entire population as well as among the intellectuals. Therefore, Marxism must continue to develop through struggle. Marxism can develop only through struggle, and this is not only true of the past and the present, it is necessarily true of the future as well. What is correct invariably develops in the course of struggle with what is wrong. The true, the good and the beautiful always exist by contrast with the false, the evil and the ugly, and grow in struggle with them. As soon as something erroneous is rejected and a particular truth*

*accepted by mankind, new truths begin to struggle with new errors. Such struggles will never end. This is the law of development of truth and, naturally, of Marxism."*

Mao knows this process of change from the old society of capitalism to socialism will be a long struggle fraught with dangers. He acknowledges that this is due the fact that the bourgeois and the intellectuals still have the basis of understanding and thinking in the reactionary capitalist way. That past influences their way of thinking and how they deal with ideas and conflicts. If this is not understood and the struggle over ideas taking this into consideration is not made, the country can fall into reaction. This is what we can see is what happened in China with Deng Xiaoping and others of his group.

*"It will take a fairly long period of time to decide the issue in the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country. The reason is that the influence of the bourgeoisie and of the intellectuals who come from the old society, the very influence which constitutes their class ideology, will persist in our country for a long time. If this is not understood at all or is insufficiently understood, the gravest of mistakes will be made and the necessity of waging struggle in the ideological field will be ignored. Ideological struggle differs from other forms of struggle, since the only method used is painstaking reasoning, and not crude coercion. Today, socialism is in an advantageous position in the ideological struggle. The basic power of the state is in the hands of the working people led by the proletariat. The Communist Party is strong and its prestige high. Although there are defects and mistakes in our work, every fair-minded person can see that we are loyal to the people, that we are both determined and able to build up our motherland together with them, and that we have already achieved great successes and will achieve still greater ones. The vast majority of the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals who come from the old society are patriotic and are willing to serve their flourishing socialist*

*motherland; they know they will have nothing to fall back on and their future cannot possibly be bright if they turn away from the socialist cause and from the working people led by the Communist Party."*

So what was Mao's plan for dealing with non-Marxist ideas? Once again he returned to the question of "two types". Meaning there are two types of non-Marxist ideas. (He doesn't explicitly say he is returning to the "two types", but he is doing just that.) There are people who spread non-Marxist ideas that are, "*unmistakable counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs of the socialist cause are concerned*". These people are to be silenced immediately, have their freedom of speech taken away without haste. They act directly as people attempting to sabotage the revolution and cannot be considered people that can be struggled with. (i.e. the enemy as opposed to the people.) The second is non-Marxist ideas among the people. Mao believed simply banishing such ideas is wrong and would not lead to their destruction. To quote Mao: "*You may ban the expression of wrong ideas, but the ideas will still be there.*" The non-Marxist ideas must be struggled over to demonstrate why and how they are wrong. An idea can only be defeated in a society when it is proven wrong.

Mao also tells us that it is important that Marxist ideas come up against non-Marxist ideas in the realm of ideological struggle. When one doesn't have to defend their ideas they become weak in doing so. This can lead to all kinds of weaknesses appearing in it because they were never identified. Someone cannot be good at debate if they never have to engage in the defense of their ideas. An idea can only grow and change as necessary if it is continually questioned and reinvestigated. What would have happened if Lenin had not looked at Marxist theory in the context of imperialism? What would have happened in the Second International had not been saved by Lenin?

Mao put it this way:

*"...if correct ideas are pampered in hothouses and never exposed to the elements and immunized against disease, they will not win out against erroneous ones. Therefore, it is only by employing the method of discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas and overcome wrong ones, and that we can really settle issues."*

At the same time as 100 flowers bloomed there was a necessary struggle against revisionism and dogmatism. Mao considered revisionism, or Right opportunism, as being worse than a bourgeois trend in thought. Revisionists attack Marxism from the inside meanwhile pretending to be Marxists. They attack the very essence of Marxist trying to weaken and destroy the socialist transformation. They will often attack (what they claim is) dogmatism, but in essence are trying to introduce reactionary ideas.

Ideas are seen as either fragrant flowers or poisonous weeds. Depending on where you stand the view is different. The bourgeois see anything that challenges their unjust and murderous power as poisonous; we as the proletariat see anything that hinders the revolution as poisonous. Mao then asks the question as to how to determine the differences between poisonous ideas and fragrant ones. How can we judge their political activities, a person's deeds, to see if they are right or wrong? Mao gave a criterion according to the principles of the Constitution that was drawn up. That criterion was as follows:

- (1) Words and deeds should help to unite, and not divide, the people of all our nationalities.
- (2) They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to socialist transformation and socialist construction.

(3) They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, the people's democratic dictatorship.

(4) They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, democratic centralism.

(5) They should help to strengthen, and not shake off or weaken, the leadership of the Communist Party.

(6) They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to international socialist unity and the unity of the peace-loving people of the world.

Mao emphasizes the points that contain the socialist path and leadership of the Party. The use they serve is to create dialogue among the people. Even if one didn't approve of this criteria Mao said it was still possible to debate as long as they remained within the deeds and words, while also containing criticism and self-criticism. This is what can be used to determine if they are poisonous weeds or fragrant flowers.

*"These are political criteria. Naturally, to judge the validity of scientific theories or assess the aesthetic value of works of art, other relevant criteria are needed. But these six political criteria are applicable to all activities in the arts and sciences. In a socialist country like ours, can there possibly be any useful scientific or artistic activity which runs counter to these political criteria?"*

The views set out, as Mao said, were specific to China. Any country wishing to do the same must proceed in their own way and determine their own criteria on which to go by. Understanding this flexibility is a necessity.

Mao said that the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois should be given an opportunity to contribute to society and that includes debate among ideas as well. This does not mean to simply allow



the bourgeois to just spread reactionary ideas like the dishonest Hoxhaists would have people believe. It means allowing those who can contribute to be able to do so. They have skills and education in matters that the general public does not have and it is very valuable. Many of them had showed an interest in contributing to the revolution and to transforming themselves. If someone wants to help, why should they be denied?

*"The people and their government have no reason to reject anyone or deny him the opportunity of making a living and rendering service to the country, provided he is really willing to serve the people and provided he really helped and did a good turn when the people were faced with difficulties and keeps on doing good without giving up halfway."*

#### 9. On The Question of Disturbances Created by Small Numbers of People

Problems can arise among the people; small groups dissatisfied can raise their heads and cause a ruckus anywhere, from the cities to the countryside. But Mao asks why this happens; we know that all such things happen because of contradiction. The key is to understand these contradictions and resolve them. These contradictions can happen because of many things. It can be from politically uneducated people living in a new political system, to class antagonisms, to contradiction between the masses and a particular bureaucracy. The point is to acknowledge these contradictions exist and that they must be resolved if the goal of the transformation of society to socialism is to be achieved.

Here Mao speaks specifically of a 1956 incident in which a "*small number of workers or students in certain places went on strike.*" Looking into the situation he said that the strike was based on needs of the people that were not being met by society. The people had demands and the system was not providing them to them, in many cases Mao said, it should have been given to

them and could have been given to them. Mao placed responsibility for this situation directly on the shoulders of higher level bureaucrats for lacking proper leadership and for failing to carry out educational work among the masses.

On the other side of that in some cases, Mao said, were small groups of people thinking only of their own immediate personal interests and not of the overall political and material situation. They didn't see the long-term plan that was in place and Mao criticized the bureaucrats and Party members for not adequately educating the people in the goal of the new society. Conversely there were students that merely made demands that were ahead of the development of the nation. They did not understand what hardships the people went through before the revolution; they don't see what gains have been made. It is difficult for them to comprehend the extent to which the people went to liberate themselves. Often they have no experience in the military struggle that went on for so many decades to make things better. Although Mao does not say this, I believe it would be a contradiction between the youth and (in our language) the age of majority. It is a contradiction that can only be resolved through the education of the young in what the people went through to get to that point in time. These people are not enemies; they are the people who lack an education that need to be given it.

Mao disapproved of disturbances because they hindered the correct way to handle contradictions among the people - through the system of "unity, criticism, unity". Disturbances cause losses and hinder the development of revolution. But however, Mao does not think that they carry out such disturbances for no reason. The people want socialism and actively work towards that goal. What needs to be done in society is to determine how to handle these disturbances by investigating them.

(1) In order to root out the causes of disturbances, we must resolutely overcome bureaucracy, greatly improve ideological and political education, and deal with all contradictions properly. If this is done, generally speaking there will be no disturbances.

(2) When disturbances do occur as a result of poor work on our part, then we should guide those involved onto the correct path, use the disturbances as a special means for improving our work and educating the cadres and the masses, and find solutions to those problems which were previously left unsolved.

The correct way to handle them is to not use "over-simple methods" or to rush through the problem and declare it resolved when it has not been. Mao spoke quite specifically that the leaders of such disturbances should not be summarily expelled, only if they have committed criminal offenses or are known counter-revolutionaries. There is a difference between groups of the people being angry at a legitimate problem that exists and people who are determined to undermine the gains of the revolution. Some of these people put forward unreasonable demands simply with the goal of causing disruptions in society. Counter-revolutionaries should be punished according to the law and not with summary execution.

Finally Mao concludes:

*"In a large country like ours, there is nothing to get alarmed about if small numbers of people create disturbances; on the contrary, such disturbances will help us get rid of bureaucracy."*

### 10. Can Bad Things Be Turned Into Good Things?

We've often heard about turning bad situations into good ones. You know the philosophy of taking advantage of a negative situation and making it useful. Largely people today find this to be a lofty concept rooted in religious thinking. However, this can be accomplished if one uses the proper method. After all, in

dialectics each thing contains within it the seeds for its own negation. A thing is transformed into its opposite as Lenin said. There is no reason why we can't turn a negative situation into a positive one. As an example Mao uses the Hungarian incident.

*"Everybody knows that the Hungarian incident was not a good thing. But it too had a dual character. Because our Hungarian comrades took proper action in the course of the incident, what was a bad thing has eventually turned into a good one. Hungary is now more consolidated than ever, and all other countries in the socialist camp have also learned a lesson."*

Despite being in disapproval of disturbances by the masses in society which are a bad thing, they do have a positive aspect to them. *"...when disturbances do occur, they enable us to learn lessons, to overcome bureaucracy and to educate the cadres and the masses. In this sense, bad things can be turned into good things. Disturbances thus have a dual character. Every disturbance can be regarded in this way."*

Mao draws another example from the global drive against communism in the latter half of 1956. The reaction to the victory of the Soviet Union over the Nazis, Eastern Europe turning towards communism, and China the world's largest country turning to communism was a frightening event to the bourgeoisie. They said to themselves right then and there that the spread of communism must stop. Repression was carried out globally against working class people across many nations to stop their advance towards liberation. Without a doubt this did harm to the movement. Many people during this time of stress and challenge ended up leaving various parties; many were killed by bourgeois states as well. There is however also a positive side to it. This period of difficulty also forged the will and skill of the main Party members; it made them stronger in their determination to carry out revolution. It has also forced the remaining Party members to become more united with each

other in the struggle leading to a more cohesive Party. Mao asks, "why isn't this a good thing?"

Mao is making the point how a situation has two aspects or two sides to a contradiction. As dialectics teaches us, one transforms itself into the other. As the ultimate example of this Mao makes his famous statement about a possible Third World War:

*"We stand firmly for peace and against war. But if the imperialists insist on unleashing another war, we should not be afraid of it. Our attitude on this question is the same as our attitude towards any disturbance: first, we are against it; second, we are not afraid of it. The First World War was followed by the birth of the Soviet Union with a population of 200 million. The Second World War was followed by the emergence of the socialist camp with a combined population of 900 million. If the imperialists insist on launching a third world war, it is certain that several hundred million more will turn to socialism, and then there will not be much room left on earth for the imperialists; it is also likely that the whole structure of imperialism will completely collapse."*

To add more:

*"The United States now controls a majority in the United Nations and dominates many parts of the world--this state of affairs is temporary and will be changed one of these days. China's position as a poor country denied its rights in international affairs will also be changed--the poor country will change into a rich one, the country denied its rights into one enjoying them--a transformation of things into their opposites. Here, the decisive conditions are the socialist system and the concerted efforts of a united people."*

## Prologue

The rest of the essay speaks about the economic construction of the country which is fairly self-explanatory and does not need anyone to describe it. It merely speaks of a contradiction in the development of China's industry that needs to be resolved. The main meat of this work was to give China a guide to resolving the various contradictions that have come up between different groups of people and problems that have appeared in China at that time. There is much here that someone could make use of in the formation of a new country and use it as a launching point for tackling their own unique contradictions. But for now, my purpose here is to merely make Mao's work easier to understand for the new reader.

On The Correct Handling of Contradictions  
Among The People

February 27, 1957

## 1. Two Types of Contradiction Differing in Nature

Never before has our country been as united as it is today. The victories of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and of the socialist revolution and our achievements in socialist construction have rapidly changed the face of the old China. A still brighter future lies ahead for our motherland. The days of national disunity and chaos which the people detested are gone, never to return. Led by the working class and the Communist Party, our 600 million people, united as one, are engaged in the great task of building socialism. The unification of our country, the unity of our people and the unity of our various nationalities -- these are the basic guarantees for the sure triumph of our cause. However, this does not mean that contradictions no longer exist in our society. To imagine that none exist is a naive idea which is at variance with objective reality. We are confronted with two types of social contradictions -- those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people. The two are totally different in nature.

To understand these two different types of contradictions correctly, we must first be clear on what is meant by "the people" and what is meant by "the enemy". The concept of "the people" varies in content in different countries and in different periods of history in a given country. Take our own country for example. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, all those classes, strata and social groups opposing Japanese aggression came within the category of the people, while the Japanese imperialists, their Chinese collaborators and the pro-Japanese elements were all enemies of the people. During the War of Liberation, the U.S. imperialists and their running dogs -- the bureaucrat-capitalists, the landlords and the Kuomintang reactionaries who represented these two classes -- were the enemies of the people, while the other classes, strata and social groups, which opposed them, all came within the category of the people. At the present stage, the period of building



socialism, the classes, strata and social groups which favour, support and work for the cause of socialist construction all come within the category of the people, while the social forces and groups which resist the socialist revolution and are hostile to or sabotage socialist construction are all enemies of the people.

The contradictions between ourselves and the enemy are antagonistic contradictions. Within the ranks of the people, the contradictions among the working people are non-antagonistic, while those between the exploited and the exploiting classes have a non-antagonistic as well as an antagonistic aspect. There have always been contradictions among the people, but they are different in content in each period of the revolution and in the period of building socialism. In the conditions prevailing in China today, the contradictions among the people comprise the contradictions within the working class, the contradictions within the peasantry, the contradictions within the intelligentsia, the contradictions between the working class and the peasantry, the contradictions between the workers and peasants on the one hand and the intellectuals on the other, the contradictions between the working class and other sections of the working people on the one hand and the national bourgeoisie on the other, the contradictions within the national bourgeoisie, and so on. Our People's Government is one that genuinely represents the people's interests, it is a government that serves the people. Nevertheless, there are still certain contradictions between this government and the people. These include the contradictions between the interests of the state and the interests of the collective on the one hand and the interests of the individual on the other, between democracy and centralism, between the leadership and the led, and the contradictions arising from the bureaucratic style of work of some of the state personnel in their relations with the masses. All these are also contradictions among the people. Generally speaking, the fundamental identity of the people's interests underlies the contradictions among the people.

In our country, the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie comes under the category of contradictions among the people. By and large, the class struggle between the two is a class struggle within the ranks of the people, because the Chinese national bourgeoisie has a dual character. In the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, it had both a revolutionary and a conciliationist side to its character. In the period of the socialist revolution, exploitation of the working class for profit constitutes one side of the character of the national bourgeoisie, while its support of the Constitution and its willingness to accept socialist transformation constitute the other. The national bourgeoisie differs from the imperialists, the landlords and the bureaucrat-capitalists. The contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and the working class is one between exploiter and exploited, and is by nature antagonistic. But in the concrete conditions of China, this antagonistic contradiction between the two classes, if properly handled, can be transformed into a non-antagonistic one and be resolved by peaceful methods. However, the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie will change into a contradiction between ourselves and the enemy if we do not handle it properly and do not follow the policy of uniting with, criticizing and educating the national bourgeoisie, or if the national bourgeoisie does not accept this policy of ours.

Since they are different in nature, the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy and the contradictions among the people must be resolved by different methods. To put it briefly, the former entail drawing a clear distinction between ourselves and the enemy, and the latter entail drawing a clear distinction between right and wrong. It is of course true that the distinction between ourselves and the enemy is also one of right and wrong. For example, the question of who is in the right, we or the domestic and foreign reactionaries, the imperialists, the feudalists and bureaucrat-capitalists, is also one of right and

wrong, but it is in a different category from questions of right and wrong among the people.

Our state is a people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance. What is this dictatorship for? Its first function is internal, namely, to suppress the reactionary classes and elements and those exploiters who resist the socialist revolution, to suppress those who try to wreck our socialist construction, or in other words, to resolve the contradictions between ourselves and the internal enemy. For instance, to arrest, try and sentence certain counter-revolutionaries, and to deprive landlords and bureaucrat-capitalists of their right to vote and their freedom of speech for a certain period of time -- all this comes within the scope of our dictatorship. To maintain public order and safeguard the interests of the people, it is necessary to exercise dictatorship as well over thieves, swindlers, murderers, arsonists, criminal gangs and other scoundrels who seriously disrupt public order. The second function of this dictatorship is to protect our country from subversion and possible aggression by external enemies. In such contingencies, it is the task of this dictatorship to resolve the contradiction between ourselves and the external enemy. The aim of this dictatorship is to protect all our people so that they can devote themselves to peaceful labour and make China a socialist country with modern industry, modern agriculture, and modern science and culture. Who is to exercise this dictatorship? Naturally, the working class and the entire people under its leadership. Dictatorship does not apply within the ranks of the people. The people cannot exercise dictatorship over themselves, nor must one section of the people oppress another. Law-breakers among the people will be punished according to law, but this is different in principle from the exercise of dictatorship to suppress enemies of the people. What applies among the people is democratic centralism. Our Constitution lays it down that citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association,

procession, demonstration, religious belief, and so on. Our Constitution also provides that the organs of state must practice democratic centralism, that they must rely on the masses and that their personnel must serve the people. Our socialist democracy is the broadest kind of democracy, such as is not to be found in any bourgeois state. Our dictatorship is the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance. That is to say, democracy operates within the ranks of the people, while the working class, uniting with all others enjoying civil rights, and in the first place with the peasantry, enforces dictatorship over the reactionary classes and elements and all those who resist socialist transformation and oppose socialist construction. By civil rights, we mean, politically, the rights of freedom and democracy.

But this freedom is freedom with leadership and this democracy is democracy under centralized guidance, not anarchy. Anarchy does not accord with the interests or wishes of the people.

Certain people in our country were delighted by the Hungarian incident. They hoped that something similar would happen in China, that thousands upon thousands of people would take to the streets to demonstrate against the People's Government. Their hopes ran counter to the interests of the masses and therefore could not possibly win their support. Deceived by domestic and foreign counter-revolutionaries, a section of the people in Hungary made the mistake of resorting to violence against the people's government, with the result that both the state and the people suffered. The damage done to the country's economy in a few weeks of rioting will take a long time to repair. In our country there were some others who wavered on the question of the Hungarian incident because they were ignorant of the real state of affairs in the world. They think that there is too little freedom under our people's democracy and that there is more, freedom under Western parliamentary democracy. They ask for a two-party system as in the West, with

one party in office and the other in opposition. But this so-called two-party system is nothing but a device for maintaining the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie; it can never guarantee freedoms to the working people. As a matter of fact, freedom and democracy exist not in the abstract, but only in the concrete. In a society where class struggle exists, if there is freedom for the exploiting classes to exploit the working people, there is no freedom for the working people not to be exploited. If there is democracy for the bourgeoisie, there is no democracy for the proletariat and other working people. The legal existence of the Communist Party is tolerated in some capitalist countries, but only to the extent that it does not endanger the fundamental interests of the bourgeoisie; it is not tolerated beyond that. Those who demand freedom and democracy in the abstract regard democracy as an end and not as a means. Democracy as such sometimes seems to be an end, but it is in fact only a means. Marxism teaches us that democracy is part of the superstructure and belongs to the realm of politics. That is to say, in the last analysis, it serves the economic base. The same is true of freedom. Both democracy and freedom are relative, not absolute, and they come into being and develop in specific historical conditions. Within the ranks of the people, democracy is correlative with centralism and freedom with discipline. They are the two opposites of a single entity, contradictory as well as united, and we should not one-sidedly emphasize one to the exclusion of the other. Within the ranks of the people, we cannot do without freedom, nor can we do without discipline; we cannot do without democracy, nor can we do without centralism. This unity of democracy and centralism, of freedom and discipline, constitutes our democratic centralism. Under this system, the people enjoy broad democracy and freedom, but at the same time they have to keep within the bounds of socialist discipline. All this is well understood by the masses.

In advocating freedom with leadership and democracy under centralized guidance, we in no way mean that coercive

measures should be taken to settle ideological questions or questions involving the distinction between right and wrong among the people. All attempts to use administrative orders or coercive measures to settle ideological questions or questions of right and wrong are not only ineffective but harmful. We cannot abolish religion by administrative order or force people not to believe in it. We cannot compel people to give up idealism, any more than we can force them to embrace Marxism. The only way to settle questions of an ideological nature or controversial issues among the people is by the democratic method, the method of discussion, criticism, persuasion and education, and not by the method of coercion or repression. To be able to carry on their production and studies effectively and to lead their lives in peace and order, the people want their government and those in charge of production and of cultural and educational organizations to issue appropriate administrative regulations of an obligatory nature. It is common sense that without them the maintenance of public order would be impossible. Administrative regulations and the method of persuasion and education complement each other in resolving contradictions among the people. In fact, administrative regulations for the maintenance of public order must be accompanied by persuasion and education, for in many cases regulations alone will not work.

This democratic method of resolving contradictions among the people was epitomized in 1942 in the formula "unity -- criticism - - unity". To elaborate, that means starting from the desire for unity, resolving contradictions through criticism or struggle, and arriving at a new unity on a new basis. In our experience this is the correct method of resolving contradictions among the people. In 1942 we used it to resolve contradictions inside the Communist Party, namely, the contradictions between the dogmatists and the great majority of the membership, and between dogmatism and Marxism. The "Left" dogmatists had resorted to the method of "ruthless struggle and merciless

blows" in inner-Party struggle. It was the wrong method. In criticizing "Left" dogmatism, we did not use this old method but adopted a new one, that is, one of starting from the desire for unity, distinguishing between right and wrong through criticism or struggle, and arriving at a new unity on a new basis. This was the method used in the rectification movement of 1942. Within a few years, by the time the Chinese Communist Party held its Seventh National Congress in 1945, unity was achieved throughout the Party as anticipated, and consequently the people's revolution triumphed. Here, the essential thing is to start from the desire for unity. For without this desire for unity, the struggle, once begun, is certain to throw things into confusion and get out of hand. Wouldn't this be the same as "ruthless struggle and merciless blows"? And what Party unity would there be left? It was precisely this experience that led us to the formula "unity -- criticism -- unity". Or, in other words, "learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and cure the sickness to save the patient". We extended this method beyond our Party. We applied it with great success in the anti-Japanese base areas in dealing with the relations between the leadership and the masses, between the army and the people, between officers and men, between the different units of the army, and between the different groups of cadres. The use of this method can be traced back to still earlier times in our Party's history. Ever since 1927 when we built our revolutionary armed forces and base areas in the south, this method had been used to deal with the relations between the Party and the masses, between the army and the people, between officers and men, and with other relations among the people. The only difference was that during the anti-Japanese war we employed this method much more consciously. And since the liberation of the whole country, we have employed this same method of "unity -- criticism -- unity" in our relations with the democratic parties and with industrial and commercial circles. Our task now is to continue to extend and make still better use of this method throughout the ranks of the people; we want all our factories, co-operatives,

shops, schools, offices and people's organizations, in a word, all our 600 million people, to use it in resolving contradictions among themselves.

In ordinary circumstances, contradictions among the people are not antagonistic. But if they are not handled properly, or if we relax our vigilance and lower our guard, antagonism may arise. In a socialist country, a development of this kind is usually only a localized and temporary phenomenon. The reason is that the system of exploitation of man by man has been abolished and the interests of the people are fundamentally identical. The antagonistic actions which took place on a fairly wide scale during the Hungarian incident were the result of the operations of both domestic and foreign counter-revolutionary elements. This was a particular as well as a temporary phenomenon. It was a case of the reactionaries inside a socialist country, in league with the imperialists, attempting to achieve their conspiratorial aims by taking advantage of contradictions among the people to foment dissension and stir up disorder. The lesson of the Hungarian incident merits attention.

Many people seem to think that the use of the democratic method to resolve contradictions among the people is something new. Actually it is not. Marxists have always held that the cause of the proletariat must depend on the masses of the people and that Communists must use the democratic method of persuasion and education when working among the labouring people and must on no account resort to commandism or coercion. The Chinese Communist Party faithfully adheres to this Marxist-Leninist principle. It has been our consistent view that under the people's democratic dictatorship two different methods, one dictatorial and the other democratic, should be used to resolve the two types of contradictions which differ in nature -- those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people. This idea has been explained again and again in many Party documents and in speeches by many leading



comrades of our Party. In my article "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship", written in 1949, I said, "The combination of these two aspects, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, is the people's democratic dictatorship." I also pointed out that in order to settle problems within the ranks of the people "the method we employ is democratic, the method of persuasion, not of compulsion". Again, in addressing the Second Session of the First National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference in June two, I said:

The people's democratic dictatorship uses two methods. Towards the enemy, it uses the method of dictatorship, that is, for as long a period of time as is necessary it does not permit them to take part in political activity and compels them to obey the law of the People's Government, to engage in labour and, through such labour, be transformed into new men. Towards the people; on the contrary, it uses the method of democracy and not of compulsion, that is, it must necessarily let them take part in political activity and does not compel them to do this or that but uses the method of democracy to educate and persuade. Such education is self-education for the people, and its basic method is criticism and self-criticism.

Thus, on many occasions we have discussed the use of the democratic method for resolving contradictions among the people; furthermore, we have in the main applied it in our work, and many cadres and many other people are familiar with it in practice. Why then do some people now feel that it is a new issue? Because, in the past, the struggle between ourselves and the enemy, both internal and external, was most acute, and contradictions among the people therefore did not attract as much attention as they do today.

Quite a few people fail to make a clear distinction between these two different types of contradictions--those between

ourselves and the enemy and those among the people -- and are prone to confuse: the two. It must be admitted that it is sometimes quite easy to do so. We have had instances of such confusion in our work in the past; In the course of cleaning out counter-revolutionaries good people were sometimes mistaken for bad, and such things still happen today. We are able to keep mistakes within bounds because it has been our policy to draw a sharp line between ourselves and the enemy and to rectify mistakes whenever discovered.

Marxist philosophy holds that the law of the unity of opposites is the fundamental law of the universe. This law operates universally, whether in the natural world, in human society, or in man's thinking. Between the opposites in a contradiction there is at once unity and struggle, and it is this that impels things to move and change. Contradictions exist everywhere, but their nature differs in accordance with the different nature of different things. In any given thing, the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and transitory, and hence relative, whereas the struggle of opposites is absolute. Lenin gave a very clear exposition of this law. It has come to be understood by a growing number of people in our country. But for many people it is one thing to accept this law and quite another to apply it in examining and dealing with problems. Many dare not openly admit that contradictions still exist among the people of our country, while it is precisely these contradictions that are pushing our society forward. Many do not admit that contradictions still exist in socialist society, with the result that they become irresolute and passive when confronted with social contradictions; they do not understand that socialist society grows more united and consolidated through the ceaseless process of correctly handling and resolving contradictions. For this reason, we need to explain things to our people, and to our cadres in the first place, in order to help them understand the contradictions in socialist society and learn to use correct methods for handling them.

Contradictions in socialist society are fundamentally different from those in the old societies, such as capitalist society. In capitalist society contradictions find expression in acute antagonisms and conflicts, in sharp class struggle; they cannot be resolved by the capitalist system itself and can only be resolved by socialist revolution. The case is quite different with contradictions in socialist society; on the contrary, they are not antagonistic and can be ceaselessly resolved by the socialist system itself.

In socialist society the basic contradictions are still those between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base. However, they are fundamentally different in character and have different features from the contradictions between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base in the old societies. The present social system of our country is far superior to that of the old days. If it were not so, the old system would not have been overthrown and the new system could not have been established. In saying that the socialist relations of production correspond better to the character of the productive forces than did the old relations of production, we mean that they allow the productive forces to develop at a speed unattainable in the old society, so that production can expand steadily and increasingly meet the constantly growing needs of the people. Under the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, the productive forces of the old China grew very slowly. For more than fifty years before liberation, China produced only a few tens of thousands of tons of steel a year, not counting the output of the northeastern provinces. If these provinces are included, the peak annual steel output only amounted to a little over 900,000 tons. In 1949, the national steel output was a little over 100,000 tons. Yet now, a mere seven years after the liberation of our country, steel output already exceeds 4,000,000 tons. In the old China, there was hardly any machine-

building industry, to say nothing of the automobile and aircraft industries; now we have all three. When the people overthrew the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, many were not clear as to which way China should head -- towards capitalism or towards socialism. Facts have now provided the answer: Only socialism can save China. The socialist system has promoted the rapid development of the productive forces of our country, a fact even our enemies abroad have had to acknowledge.

But our socialist system has only just been set up; it is not yet fully established or fully consolidated. In joint state-private industrial and commercial enterprises, capitalists still get a fixed rate of interest on their capital, that is to say, exploitation still exists. So far as ownership is concerned, these enterprises are not yet completely socialist in nature. A number of our agricultural and handicraft producers' co-operatives are still semi-socialist, while even in the fully socialist co-operatives certain specific problems of ownership remain to be solved. Relations between production and exchange in accordance with socialist principles are being gradually established within and between all branches of our economy, and more and more appropriate forms are being sought. The problem of the proper relation of accumulation to consumption within each of the two sectors of the socialist economy -- the one where the means of production are owned by the whole people and the other where the means of production are owned by the collective -- and the problem of the proper relation of accumulation to consumption between the two sectors themselves are complicated problems for which it is not easy to work out a perfectly rational solution all at once. To sum up, socialist relations of production have been established and are in correspondence with the growth of the productive forces, but these relations are still far from perfect, and this imperfection stands in contradiction to the growth of the productive forces. Apart from correspondence as well as contradiction between the relations of production and

the growth: of the productive forces, there is correspondence as well as contradiction between the superstructure and the economic base. The superstructure, comprising the state system and laws of the people's democratic dictatorship and the socialist ideology guided by Marxism-Leninism, plays a positive role in facilitating the victory of socialist transformation and the socialist way of organizing labour; it is in correspondence with the socialist economic base, that is, with socialist relations of production. But the existence of bourgeois ideology, a certain bureaucratic style of work in our state organs and defects in some of the links in our state institutions are in contradiction with the socialist economic base. We must continue to resolve all such contradictions in the light of our specific conditions. Of course, new problems will emerge as these contradictions are resolved. And further efforts will be required to resolve the new contradictions. For instance, a constant process of readjustment through state planning is needed to deal with the contradiction between production and the needs of society, which will long remain an objective reality. Every year our country draws up an economic plan in order to establish a proper ratio between accumulation and consumption and achieve an equilibrium between production and needs. Equilibrium is nothing but a temporary, relative, unity of opposites. By the end of each year, this equilibrium, taken as a whole, is upset by the struggle of opposites; the unity undergoes a change, equilibrium becomes disequilibrium, unity becomes disunity, and once again it is necessary to work out an equilibrium and unity for the next year. Herein lies the superiority of our planned economy. As a matter of fact, this equilibrium, this unity, is partially upset every month or every quarter, and partial readjustments are called for. Sometimes, contradictions arise and the equilibrium is upset because our subjective arrangements do not conform to objective reality; this is what we call making a mistake. The ceaseless emergence and ceaseless resolution of contradictions constitute the dialectical law of the development of things.

Today, matters stand as follows. The large-scale, turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of times of revolution have in the main come to an end, but class struggle is by no means entirely over. While welcoming the new system, the masses are not yet quite accustomed to it. Government personnel are not sufficiently experienced and have to undertake further study and investigation of specific policies. In other words, time is needed for our socialist system to become established and consolidated, for the masses to become accustomed to the new system, and for government personnel to learn and acquire experience. It is therefore imperative for us at this juncture to raise the question of distinguishing contradictions among the people from those between ourselves and the enemy, as well as the question of the correct handling of contradictions among the people, in order to unite the people of all nationalities in our country for the new battle, the battle against nature, develop our economy and culture, help the whole nation to traverse this period of transition relatively smoothly, consolidate our new system and build up our new state.

## 2. The Question of Eliminating Counter-Revolutionaries

The elimination of counter-revolutionaries is a struggle of opposites as between ourselves and the enemy. Among the people, there are some who see this question in a somewhat different light. Two kinds of people hold views differing from ours. Those with a Right deviation in their thinking make no distinction between ourselves and the enemy and take the enemy for our own people. They regard as friends the very persons whom the masses regard as enemies. Those with a "Left" deviation in their thinking magnify contradictions between ourselves and the enemy to such an extent that they take certain contradictions among the people for contradictions with the enemy and regard as counter-revolutionaries persons who are actually not. Both these views are wrong. Neither makes possible the correctly handling of the problem of

eliminating counter-revolutionaries or a correct assessment of this work.

To form a correct evaluation of our work in eliminating counter-revolutionaries, let us see what repercussions the Hungarian incident has had in China. After its occurrence there was some unrest among a section of our intellectuals, but there were no squalls. Why? One reason, it must be said, was our success in eliminating counter-revolutionaries fairly thoroughly.

Of course, the consolidation of our state is not due primarily to the elimination of counter-revolutionaries. It is due primarily to the fact that we have a Communist Party and a Liberation Army both tempered in decades of revolutionary struggle, and a working people likewise so tempered. Our Party and our armed forces are rooted in the masses, have been tempered in the flames of a protracted revolution and have the capacity to fight. Our People's Republic was not built overnight, but developed step by step out of the revolutionary base areas. A number of democratic personages have also been tempered in the struggle in varying degrees, and they have gone through troubled times together with us. Some intellectuals were tempered in the struggles against imperialism and reaction; since liberation many have gone through a process of ideological remoulding aimed at enabling them to distinguish clearly between ourselves and the enemy. In addition, the consolidation of our state is due to the fact that our economic measures are basically sound, that the people's life is secure and steadily improving, that our policies towards the national bourgeoisie and other classes are correct, and so on. Nevertheless, our success in eliminating counter-revolutionaries is undoubtedly an important reason for the consolidation of our state. For all these reasons, with few exceptions our college students are patriotic and support socialism and did not give way to unrest during the Hungarian incident, even though many of them come from families of non-

working people. The same was true of the national bourgeoisie, to say nothing of the basic masses -- the workers and peasants.

After liberation, we rooted out a number of counter-revolutionaries. Some were sentenced to death for major crimes. This was absolutely necessary, it was the demand of the masses, and it was done to free them from long years of oppression by the counter-revolutionaries and all kinds of local tyrants, in other words, to liberate the productive forces. If we had not done so, the masses would not have been able to lift their heads. Since 1956, however, there has been a radical change in the situation. In the country as a whole, the bulk of the counter-revolutionaries have been cleared out. Our basic task has changed from unfettering the productive forces to protecting and expanding them in the context of the new relations of production. Because of failure to understand that our present policy fits the present situation and our past policy fitted the past situation, some people want to make use of the present policy to reverse past decisions and to negate the tremendous success we achieved in eliminating counter-revolutionaries. This is completely wrong, and the masses will not permit it.

In our work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries successes were the main thing, but there were also mistakes. In some cases there were excesses and in others counter-revolutionaries slipped through our net. Our policy is: "Counter-revolutionaries must be eliminated wherever found, mistakes must be corrected whenever discovered." Our line in the work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries is the mass line. Of course, even with the mass line mistakes may still occur, but they will be fewer and easier to correct. The masses gain experience through struggle. From the things done correctly they gain the experience of how things are done correctly. From the mistakes made they gain the experience of how mistakes are made.



Wherever mistakes have been discovered in the work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries, steps have been or are being taken to correct them. Those not yet discovered will be corrected as soon as they come to light. Exoneration or rehabilitation should be made known as widely as were the original wrong decisions. I propose that a comprehensive review of the work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries be made this year or next to sum up experience, promote justice and counter unjust attacks. Nationally, this review should be in the charge of the Standing Committees of the National People's Congress and of the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference and, locally, in the charge of the people's councils and the committees of the Political Consultative Conference in the provinces and municipalities. In this review, we must help the large numbers of cadres and activists involved in the work, and not pour cold water on them. It would not be right to dampen their spirits. Nonetheless, wrongs must be righted when discovered. This must be the attitude of all the public security organs, the procurators' offices and the judicial departments, prisons and agencies charged with the reform of criminals through labour. We hope that wherever possible members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, members of the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference and people's deputies will take part in this review. This will be of help in perfecting our legal system and in dealing correctly with counter-revolutionaries and other criminals.

The present situation with regard to counter-revolutionaries can be described in these words: There still are counter-revolutionaries, but not many. In the first place, there still are counter-revolutionaries. Some people say that there aren't any more left and all is well and that we can therefore lay our heads on our pillows and just drop off to sleep. But this is not the way things are. The fact is, there still are counter-revolutionaries (of course, that is not to say you'll find them everywhere and in every organization), and we must continue to fight them. It must

be understood that the hidden counter-revolutionaries still at large will not take things lying down, but will certainly seize every opportunity to make trouble. The U.S. imperialists and the Chiang Kai-shek clique are constantly sending in secret agents to carry on disruptive activities. Even after all the existing counter-revolutionaries have been combed out, new ones are likely to emerge. If we drop our guard, we shall be badly fooled and shall suffer severely. Counter-revolutionaries must be rooted out with a firm hand wherever they are found making trouble. But, taking the country as a whole, there are certainly not many counter-revolutionaries. It would be wrong to say that there are still large numbers of counter-revolutionaries in China. Acceptance of that view would likewise result in a mess.

### 3. The Question of The Co-operative Transformation of Agriculture

We have a rural population of over 500 million, so how our peasants fare has a most important bearing on the development of our economy and the consolidation of our state power. In my view, the situation is basically sound. The co-operative transformation of agriculture has been successfully accomplished, and this has resolved the great contradiction in our country between socialist industrialization and the individual peasant economy. As the co-operative transformation of agriculture was completed so rapidly, some people were worried and wondered whether something untoward might occur. There are indeed some faults, but fortunately they are not serious and on the whole the movement is healthy. The peasants are working with a will, and last year there was an increase in the country's grain output despite the worst floods, droughts and gales in years. Now there are people who are stirring up a miniature typhoon, they are saying that co-operation is no good, that there is nothing superior about it. Is co-operation superior or not? Among the documents distributed at today's meeting

there is one about the Wang Kuo-fan Co-operative in Tsunhua County, Hopei Province, which I suggest you read. This co-operative is situated in a hilly region which was very poor in the past and which for a number of years depended on relief grain from the People's Government. When the co-operative was first set up in 1953, people called it the "paupers' co-op". But it has become better off year by year, and now, after four years of hard struggle, most of its households have reserves of grain. What was possible for this co-operative should also be possible for others to achieve under normal conditions in the same length of time or a little longer. Clearly there are no grounds for saying that something has gone wrong with agricultural co-operation.

It is also clear that it takes hard struggle to build co-operatives. New things always have to experience difficulties and setbacks as they grow. It is sheer fantasy to imagine that the cause of socialism is all plain sailing and easy success, with no difficulties and setbacks, or without the exertion of tremendous efforts.

Who are the active supporters of the co-operatives? The overwhelming majority of the poor and lower-middle peasants who constitute more than 70 per cent of the rural population. Most of the other peasants are also placing their hopes on the co-operatives. Only a very small minority are really dissatisfied. Quite a number of persons have failed to analyse this situation and to make an over-all examination of the achievements and shortcomings of the co-operatives and the causes of these shortcomings; instead they have taken part of the picture or one side of the matter for the whole, and consequently a miniature typhoon has been stirred up among some people, who are saying that the co-operatives are not superior.

How long will it take to consolidate the co-operatives and for this talk about their not being superior to wind up? Judging from

the experience of the growth of many co-operatives, it will probably take five years or a little longer. As most of our co-operatives are only a little over a year old, it would be unreasonable to ask too much of them. In my view, we will be doing well enough if the co-operatives can be consolidated during the Second Five-Year Plan after being established in the First.

The co-operatives are now in the process of gradual consolidation. There are certain contradictions that remain to be resolved, such as those between the state and the co-operatives and those in and between the co-operatives themselves.

To resolve these contradictions we must pay constant attention to the problems of production and distribution. On the question of production, the co-operative economy must be subject to the unified economic planning of the state, while retaining a certain flexibility and independence that do not run counter to the state's unified plan or its policies, laws and regulations. At the same time, every household in a co-operative must comply with the over-all plan of the co-operative or production team to which it belongs, though it may make its own appropriate plans in regard to land allotted for personal needs and to other individually operated economic undertakings. On the question of distribution, we must take the interests of the state, the collective and the individual into account. We must properly handle the three-way relationship between the state agricultural tax, the co-operative's accumulation fund and the peasants' personal income, and take constant care to make readjustments so as to resolve contradictions between them. Accumulation is essential for both the state and the co-operative, but in neither case should it be excessive. We should do everything possible to enable the peasants in normal years to raise their personal incomes annually through increased production.

Many people say that the peasants lead a hard life. Is this true? In one sense it is. That is to say, because the imperialists and their agents oppressed and exploited us for over a century, ours is an impoverished country and the standard of living not only of our peasants but of our workers and intellectuals is still low. We will need several decades of strenuous effort gradually to raise the standard of living of our people as a whole. In this context, it is right to say that the peasants lead a "hard life". But in another sense it is not true. We refer to the allegation that in the seven years since liberation it is only the life of the workers that has been improved and not that of the peasants. As a matter of fact, with very few exceptions, there has been some improvement in the life of both the peasants and the workers. Since liberation, the peasants have been free from landlord exploitation and their production has increased annually. Take grain crops. In 1949, the country's output was only something over 210,000 million catties. By 1956, it had risen to more than 360,000 million catties, an increase of nearly 150,000 million catties. The state agricultural tax is not heavy, only amounting to something over 30,000 million catties a year. State purchases of grain from the peasants at standard prices only amount to a little over 50,000 million catties a year. These two items together total over 80,000 million catties. Furthermore, more than half this grain is sold back to the villages and nearby towns. Obviously, no one can say that there has been no improvement in the life of the peasants. In order to help agriculture to develop and the co-operatives to become consolidated, we are planning to stabilize the total annual amount of the grain tax plus the grain purchased by the state at somewhat more than 80,000 million catties within a few years. In this way, the small number of grain-deficient households still found in the countryside will stop being short, all peasant households, except some raising industrial crops, will either have grain reserves or at least become self-sufficient, there will no longer be poor peasants in the countryside, and the standard of living of the entire peasantry will reach or surpass the middle peasants' level. It is

not right simply to compare a peasant's average annual income with a worker's and jump to the conclusion that one is too low and the other too high. Since the labour productivity of the workers is much higher than that of the peasants and the latter's cost of living is much lower than that of workers in the cities, the workers cannot be said to have received special favours from the state. The wages of a small number of workers and some state personnel are in fact a little too high, the peasants have reason to be dissatisfied with this, and it is necessary to make certain appropriate adjustments according to specific circumstances.

#### 4. The Question of The Industrialists and Businessmen

With regard to the transformation of our social system, the year 1956 saw the conversion of privately owned industrial and commercial enterprises into joint state-private enterprises as well as the co-operative transformation of agriculture and handicrafts. The speed and smoothness of this conversion were closely bound up with our treating the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie as a contradiction among the people. Has this class contradiction been completely resolved? No, not yet. That will take a considerable period of time. However, some people say the capitalists have been so remoulded that they are now not very different from the workers and that further remoulding is unnecessary. Others go so far as to say that the capitalists are even better than the workers. Still others ask, if remoulding is necessary, why isn't it necessary for the working class? Are these opinions correct? Of course not.

In the building of a socialist society, everybody needs remoulding -- the exploiters and also the working people. Who says it isn't necessary for the working class? Of course, the remoulding of the exploiters is essentially different from that of the working people, and the two must not be confused. The

working class remoulds the whole of society in class struggle and in the struggle against nature, and in the process it remoulds itself. It must ceaselessly learn in the course of work, gradually overcome its shortcomings and never stop doing so. Take for example those of us present here. Many of us make some progress each year, that is to say, we are remoulding ourselves each year. For myself, I used to have all sorts of non-Marxist ideas, and it was only later that I embraced Marxism. I learned a little Marxism from books and took the first steps in remoulding my ideology, but it was mainly through taking part in class struggle over the years that I came to be remoulded. And if I am to make further progress, I must continue to learn, otherwise I shall lag behind. Can the capitalists be so good that they need no more remoulding?

Some people contend that the Chinese bourgeoisie no longer has two sides to its character, but only one side. Is this true? No. While members of the bourgeoisie have become administrative personnel in joint state-private enterprises and are being transformed from exploiters into working people living by their own labour, they still get a fixed rate of interest on their capital in the joint enterprises, that is, they have not yet cut themselves loose from the roots of exploitation. Between them and the working class there is still a considerable gap in ideology, sentiments and habits of life. How can it be said that they no longer have two sides to their character? Even when they stop receiving their fixed interest payments and the "bourgeois" label is removed, they will still need ideological remoulding for quite some time. If, as is alleged, the bourgeoisie no longer has a dual character, then the capitalists will no longer have the task of studying and of remoulding themselves.

It must be said that this view does not tally either with the actual situation of our industrialists and businessmen or with what

most of them want. During the past few years, most of them have been willing to study and have made marked progress. As their thorough remoulding can be achieved only in the course of work, they should engage in labour together with the staff and workers in the enterprises and regard these enterprises as the chief places in which to remould themselves. But it is also important for them to change some of their old views through study. Such study should be on a voluntary basis. When they return to the enterprises after being in study groups for some weeks, many industrialists and businessmen find that they have more of a common language with the workers and the representatives of state ownership, and so there are better possibilities for working together. They know from personal experience that it is good for them to keep on studying and remoulding themselves. The idea mentioned above that study and remoulding are not necessary reflects the views not of the majority of industrialists and businessmen but of only a small number.

### 5. The Question of The Intellectuals

The contradictions within the ranks of the people in our country also find expression among the intellectuals. The several million intellectuals who worked for the old society have come to serve the new society, and the question that now arises is how they can fit in with the needs of the new society and how we can help them to do so. This, too, is a contradiction among the people.

Most of our intellectuals have made marked progress during the last seven years. They have shown they are in favour of the socialist system. Many are diligently studying Marxism, and some have become communists. The latter, though at present small in number, are steadily increasing. Of course, there are still some intellectuals who are sceptical about socialism or do not approve of it, but they are a minority.



China needs the services of as many intellectuals as possible for the colossal task of building socialism. We should trust those who are really willing to serve the cause of socialism and should radically improve our relations with them and help them solve the problems requiring solution, so that they can give full play to their talents. Many of our comrades are not good at uniting with intellectuals. They are stiff in their attitude towards them, lack respect for their work and interfere in certain scientific and cultural matters where interference is unwarranted. We must do away with all such shortcomings.

Although large numbers of intellectuals have made progress, they should not be complacent. They must continue to remould themselves, gradually shed their bourgeois world outlook and acquire the proletarian, communist world outlook so that they can fully fit in with the needs of the new society and unite with the workers and peasants. The change in world outlook is fundamental, and up to now most of our intellectuals cannot be said to have accomplished it. We hope that they will continue to make progress and that in the course of work and study they will gradually acquire the communist world outlook, grasp Marxism-Leninism and become integrated with the workers and peasants. We hope they will not stop halfway, or, what is worse, slide back, for there will be no future for them in going backwards. Since our country's social system has changed and the economic base of bourgeois ideology has in the main been destroyed, not only is it imperative for large numbers of our intellectuals to change their world outlook, but it is also possible for them to do so. But a thorough change in world outlook takes a very long time, and we should spare no pains in helping them and must not be impatient. Actually, there are bound to be some who ideologically will always be reluctant to accept Marxism-Leninism and communism. We should not be too exacting in what we demand of them; as long as they comply with the requirements laid down by the state and engage in legitimate

pursuits, we should let them have opportunities for suitable work.

Among students and intellectuals there has recently been a falling off in ideological and political work, and some unhealthy tendencies have appeared. Some people seem to think that there is no longer any need to concern themselves with politics or with the future of the motherland and the ideals of mankind. It seems as if Marxism, once all the rage, is currently not so much in fashion. To counter these tendencies, we must strengthen our ideological and political work. Both students and intellectuals should study hard. In addition to the study of their specialized subjects, they must make progress ideologically and politically, which means they should study Marxism, current events and politics. Not to have a correct political orientation is like not having a soul. The ideological remoulding in the past was necessary and has yielded positive results. But it was carried on in a somewhat rough-and-ready fashion and the feelings of some people were hurt -- this was not good. We must avoid such shortcomings in future. All departments and organizations should shoulder their responsibilities for ideological and political work. This applies to the Communist Party, the Youth League, government departments in charge of this work, and especially to heads of educational institutions and teachers. Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture. We must spread the idea of building our country through diligence and thrift. We must help all our young people to understand that ours is still a very poor country, that we cannot change this situation radically in a short time, and that only through decades of united effort by our younger generation and all our people, working with their own hands, can China be made prosperous and strong. The establishment of our socialist system has opened the road leading to the ideal society of the future, but to translate this ideal into reality needs hard work.

Some of our young people think that everything ought to be perfect once a socialist society is established and that they should be able to enjoy a happy life ready-made, without working for it. This is unrealistic.

## 6. The Question of The Minority Nationals

The minority nationalities in our country number more than thirty million. Although they constitute only 6 per cent of the total population, they inhabit extensive regions which comprise 50 to 60 per cent of China's total area. It is thus imperative to foster good relation between the Han people and the minority nationalities. The key to this question lies in overcoming Han chauvinism. At the same time, efforts should also be made to overcome local-nationality chauvinism, wherever it exists among the minority nationalities. Both Hanchauvinism and local-nationality chauvinism are harmful to the unity of the nationalities; they represent one kind of contradiction among the people which should be resolved. We have already done some work to this end. In most of the areas inhabited by minority nationalities there has been considerable improvement in the relations between the nationalities, but a number of problems remain to be solved. In some areas, both Han chauvinism and local-nationality chauvinism still exist to a serious degree, and this demands full attention. As a result of the efforts of the people of all nationalities over the last few years democratic reforms and socialist transformation have in the main been completed in most of the minority nationality areas. Democrat reforms have not yet been carried out in Tibet because conditions are not ripe. According to the seventeen-article agreement reached between the Central People's Government and the local government of Tibet the reform of the social system must be carried out, but the timing can only be decided when the great majority of the people of Tibet and the local leading public figures consider it opportune, and one should not be impatient. It has now been decided not to

proceed with democratic reforms in Tibet during the period of the Second Five-Year Plan. Whether to proceed with them in the period of the Third Five-Year Plan can only be decided in the light of the situation at the time.

### 7. Over-all Consideration and Proper Arrangement

By over-all consideration we mean consideration that embraces the 600 million people of our country. In drawing up plans, handling affairs or thinking over problems, we must proceed from the fact that China has a population of 600 million, and we must never forget this fact. Why do we make a point of this? Is it possible that there are people who are still unaware that we have a population of 600 million? Of course, everyone knows this, but when it comes to actual practice, some people forget all about it and act as though the fewer the people, the smaller the circle, the better. Those who have this "small circle" mentality abhor the idea of bringing every positive factor into play, of uniting with everyone who can be united with, and of doing everything possible to turn negative factors into positive ones so as to serve the great cause of building a socialist society. I hope these people will take a wider view and fully recognize that we have a population of 600 million, that this is an objective fact, and that it is an asset for us. Our large population is a good thing, but of course it also involves certain difficulties. Construction is going ahead vigorously on all fronts and very successfully too, but in the present transition period of tremendous social change there are still many difficult problems. Progress and at the same time difficulties -- this is a contradiction. However, not only should all such contradictions be resolved, but they definitely can be. Our guiding principle is over-all consideration and proper arrangement. Whatever the problem -- whether it concerns food, natural calamities, employment, education, the intellectuals, the united front of all patriotic forces, the minority nationalities, or anything else -- we must always proceed from the standpoint of over-all

consideration, which embraces the whole people, and must make the proper arrangement, after consultation with all the circles concerned, in the light of what is feasible at a particular time and place. On no account should we complain that there are too many people, that others are backward, that things are troublesome and hard to handle, and close the door on them. Do I mean to say that the government alone must take care of everyone and everything? Of course not. In many cases, they can be left to the direct care of the public organizations or the masses -- both are quite capable of devising many good ways of handling them. This also comes within the scope of the principle of over-all consideration and pro' arrangement. We should give guidance on this to the public organizations and the people everywhere.

8. On "Let A Hundred Flowers Blossom Let A Hundred School of Thought Contend" and "Long-Term Coexistence and Mutual Supervision

"Let a hundred flowers blossom, let a hundred schools of thought contend" and "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision"--how did these slogans come to be put forward? They were put forward in the light of China's specific conditions, in recognition of the continued existence of various kinds of contradictions in socialist society and in response to the country's urgent need to speed up its economic and cultural development. Letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is the policy for promoting progress in the arts and sciences and a flourishing socialist culture in our land. Different forms and styles in art should develop freely and different schools in science should contend freely. We think that it is harmful to the growth of art and science if administrative measures are used to impose one particular style of art or school of thought and to ban another. Questions of right and wrong in the arts and science should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and through practical work in these

fields. They should not be settled in an over-simple manner. A period of trial is often needed to determine whether something is right or wrong. Throughout history at the outset new and correct things often failed to win recognition from the majority of people and had to develop by twists and turns through struggle. Often, correct and good things were first regarded not as fragrant flowers but as poisonous weeds. Copernicus' theory of the solar system and Darwin's theory of evolution were once dismissed as erroneous and had to win out over bitter opposition. Chinese history offers many similar examples. In a socialist society, the conditions for the growth of the new are radically different from and far superior to those in the old society. Nevertheless, it often happens that new, rising forces are held back and sound ideas stifled. Besides even in the absence of their deliberate suppression, the growth of new things may be hindered simply through lack of discernment. It is therefore necessary to be careful about questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences, to encourage free discussion and avoid hasty conclusions. We believe that such an attitude will help ensure a relatively smooth development of the arts and sciences.

Marxism, too, has developed through struggle. At the beginning, Marxism was subjected to all kinds of attack and regarded as a poisonous weed. This is still the case in many parts of the world. In the socialist countries, it enjoys a different position. But non-Marxist and, what is more, anti-Marxist ideologies exist even in these countries. In China, although socialist transformation has in the main been completed as regards the system of ownership, and although the large-scale, turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of times of revolution have in the main come to an end, there are still remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes, there is still a bourgeoisie, and the remoulding of the petty bourgeoisie has only just started. Class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between

the various political forces, and the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the ideological field will still be protracted and tortuous and at times even very sharp. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet. Marxists remain a minority among the entire population as well as among the intellectuals. Therefore, Marxism must continue to develop through struggle. Marxism can develop only through struggle, and this is not only true of the past and the present, it is necessarily true of the future as well. What is correct invariably develops in the course of struggle with what is wrong. The true, the good and the beautiful always exist by contrast with the false, the evil and the ugly, and grow in struggle with them. As soon as something erroneous is rejected and a particular truth accepted by mankind, new truths begin to struggle with new errors. Such struggles will never end. This is the law of development of truth and, naturally, of Marxism.

It will take a fairly long period of time to decide the issue in the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country. The reason is that the influence of the bourgeoisie and of the intellectuals who come from the old society, the very influence which constitutes their class ideology, will persist in our country for a long time. If this is not understood at all or is insufficiently understood, the gravest of mistakes will be made and the necessity of waging struggle in the ideological field will be ignored. Ideological struggle differs from other forms of struggle, since the only method used is painstaking reasoning, and not crude coercion. Today, socialism is in an advantageous position in the ideological struggle. The basic power of the state is in the hands of the working people led by the proletariat. The Communist Party is strong and its prestige high. Although there are defects and mistakes in our work, every fair-minded person can see that we are loyal to the people, that we are both

determined and able to build up our motherland together with them, and that we have already achieved great successes and will achieve still greater ones. The vast majority of the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals who come from the old society are patriotic and are willing to serve their flourishing socialist motherland; they know they will have nothing to fall back on and their future cannot possibly be bright if they turn away from the socialist cause and from the working people led by the Communist Party.

People may ask, since Marxism is accepted as the guiding ideology by the majority of the people in our country, can it be criticized? Certainly it can. Marxism is scientific truth and fears no criticism. If it did, and if it could be overthrown by criticism, it would be worthless. In fact, aren't the idealists criticizing Marxism every day and in every way? And those who harbour bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas and do not wish to change - - aren't they also criticizing Marxism in every way? Marxists should not be afraid of criticism from any quarter. Quite the contrary, they need to temper and develop themselves and win new positions in the teeth of criticism and in the storm and stress of struggle. Fighting against wrong ideas is like being vaccinated -- a man develops greater immunity from disease as a result of vaccination. Plants raised in hothouses are unlikely to be hardy. Carrying out the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend will not weaken, but strengthen, the leading position of Marxism in the ideological field.

What should our policy be towards non-Marxist ideas? As far as unmistakable counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs of the socialist cause are concerned, the matter is easy, we simply deprive them of their freedom of speech. But incorrect ideas among the people are quite a different matter. Will it do to ban such ideas and deny them any opportunity for expression? Certainly not. It is not only futile but very harmful to use crude



methods in dealing with ideological questions among the people, with questions about man's mental world. You may ban the expression of wrong ideas, but the ideas will still be there. On the other hand, if correct ideas are pampered in hothouses and never exposed to the elements and immunized against disease, they will not win out against erroneous ones. Therefore, it is only by employing the method of discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas and overcome wrong ones, and that we can really settle issues.

It is inevitable that the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will give expression to their own ideologies. It is inevitable that they will stubbornly assert themselves on political and ideological questions by every possible means. You cannot expect them to do otherwise. We should not use the method of suppression and prevent them from expressing themselves, but should allow them to do so and at the same time argue with them and direct appropriate criticism at them. Undoubtedly, we must criticize wrong ideas of every description. It certainly would not be right to refrain from criticism, look on while wrong ideas spread unchecked and allow them to dominate the field. Mistakes must be criticized and poisonous weeds fought wherever they crop up. However, such criticism should not be dogmatic, and the metaphysical method should not be used, but instead the effort should be made to apply the dialectical method. What is needed is scientific analysis and convincing argument. Dogmatic criticism settles nothing. We are against poisonous weeds of whatever kind, but we must carefully distinguish between what is really a poisonous weed and what is really a fragrant flower. Together with the masses of the people, we must learn to differentiate carefully between the two and use correct methods to fight the poisonous weeds.

At the same time as we criticize dogmatism, we must direct our attention to criticizing revisionism. Revisionism, or Right opportunism, is a bourgeois trend of thought that is even more

dangerous than dogmatism. The revisionists, the Right opportunists, pay lip-service to Marxism; they too attack "dogmatism". But what they are really attacking is the quintessence of Marxism. They oppose or distort materialism and dialectics, oppose or try to weaken the people's democratic dictatorship and the leading role of the Communist Party, and oppose or try to weaken socialist transformation and socialist construction. Even after the basic victory of our socialist revolution, there will still be a number of people in our society who vainly hope to restore the capitalist system and are sure to fight the working class on every front, including the ideological one. And their right-hand men in this struggle are the revisionists.

Literally the two slogans -- let a hundred flowers blossom and let a hundred schools of thought contend -- have no class character; the proletariat can turn them to account, and so can the bourgeoisie or others. Different classes, strata and social groups each have their own views on what are fragrant flowers and what are poisonous weeds. Then, from the point of view of the masses, what should be the criteria today for distinguishing fragrant flowers from poisonous weeds? In their political activities, how should our people judge whether a person's words and deeds are right or wrong? On the basis of the principles of our Constitution, the will of the overwhelming majority of our people and the common political positions which have been proclaimed on various occasions by our political parties, we consider that, broadly speaking, the criteria should be as follows:

(1) Words and deeds should help to unite, and not divide, the people of all our nationalities.

(2) They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to socialist transformation and socialist construction.

(3) They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, the people's democratic dictatorship.

(4) They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, democratic centralism.

(5) They should help to strengthen, and not shake off or weaken, the leadership of the Communist Party.

(6) They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to international socialist unity and the unity of the peace-loving people of the world.

Of these six criteria, the most important are the two about the socialist path and the leadership of the Party. These criteria are put forward not to hinder but to foster the free discussion of questions among the people. Those who disapprove these criteria can still state their own views and argue their case. However, so long as the majority of the people have clear-cut criteria to go by, criticism and self-criticism can be conducted along proper lines, and these criteria can be applied to people's words and deeds to determine whether they are right or wrong, whether they are fragrant flowers or poisonous weeds. These are political criteria. Naturally, to judge the validity of scientific theories or assess the aesthetic value of works of art, other relevant criteria are needed. But these six political criteria are applicable to all activities in the arts and sciences. In a socialist country like ours, can there possibly be any useful scientific or artistic activity which runs counter to these political criteria?

The views set out above are based on China's specific historical conditions. Conditions vary in different socialist countries and with different Communist Parties. Therefore, we do not maintain that they should or must adopt the Chinese way.

The slogan "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision" is also a product of China's specific historical conditions. It was not put forward all of a sudden, but had been in the making for several years. The idea of long-term coexistence had been there for a long time. When the socialist system was in the main established last year, the slogan was formulated in explicit terms. Why should the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democratic parties be allowed to exist side by side with the party of the working class over a long period of time? Because we have no reason for not adopting the policy of long-term coexistence with all those political parties which are truly devoted to the task of uniting the people for the cause of socialism and which enjoy the trust of the people. As early as June 1950, at the Second Session of the First National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference, I put the matter in this way:

The people and their government have no reason to reject anyone or deny him the opportunity of making a living and rendering service to the country, provided he is really willing to serve the people and provided he really helped and did a good turn when the people were faced with difficulties and keeps on doing good without giving up halfway.

What I was discussing here was the political basis for the long-term coexistence of the various parties. It is the desire as well as the policy of the Communist Party to exist side by side with the democratic parties for a long time to come. But whether the democratic parties can long remain in existence depends not merely on the desire of the Communist Party but on how well they acquit themselves and on whether they enjoy the trust of the people. Mutual supervision among the various parties is also a long-established fact, in the sense that they have long been advising and criticizing each other. Mutual supervision is obviously not a one-sided matter; it means that the Communist Party can exercise supervision over the democratic parties, and

vice versa. Why should the democratic parties be allowed to exercise supervision over the Communist Party? Because a party as much as an individual has great need to hear opinions different from its own. We all know that supervision over the Communist Party is mainly exercised by the working people and the Party membership. But it augments the benefit to us to have supervision by the democratic parties too. Of course, the advice and criticism exchanged by the Communist Party and the democratic parties will play a positive supervisory role only when they conform to the six political criteria given above. Thus, we hope that in order to fit in with the needs of the new society, all the democratic parties will pay attention to ideological remoulding and strive for long-term coexistence with the Communist Party and mutual supervision.

#### 9. On The Question of Disturbances Created by Small Numbers of People

In 1956, small numbers of workers or students in certain places went on strike. The immediate cause of these disturbances was the failure to satisfy some of their demands for material benefits, of which some should and could have been met, while others were out of place or excessive and therefore could not be met for the time being. But a more important cause was bureaucracy on the part of the leadership. In some cases, the responsibility for such bureaucratic mistakes fell on the higher authorities, and those at the lower levels were not to blame. Another cause of these disturbances was lack of ideological and political education among the workers and students. The same year, in some agricultural co-operatives there were also disturbances created by a few of their members, and here too the main causes were bureaucracy on the part of the leadership and lack of educational work among the masses.

It should be admitted that among the masses some are prone to pay attention to immediate, partial and personal interests and

do not understand, or do not sufficiently understand, long-range, national and collective interests. Because of lack of political and social experience, quite a number of young people cannot readily see the contrast between the old China and the new, and it is not easy for them thoroughly to comprehend the hardships our people went through in the struggle to free themselves from the oppression of the imperialists and Kuomintang reactionaries, or the long years of hard work needed before a fine socialist society can be established. That is why we must constantly carry on lively and effective political education among the masses and should always tell them the truth about the difficulties that crop up and discuss with them how to surmount these difficulties.

We do not approve of disturbances, because contradictions among the people can be resolved through the method of "unity -- criticism -- unity", while disturbances are bound to cause some losses and are not conducive to the advance of socialism. We believe that the masses of the people support socialism, conscientiously observe discipline and are reasonable, and will certainly not take part in disturbances without cause. But this does not mean that the possibility of disturbances by the masses no longer exists in our country. On this question, we should pay attention to the following. (1) In order to root out the causes of disturbances, we must resolutely overcome bureaucracy, greatly improve ideological and political education, and deal with all contradictions properly. If this is done, generally speaking there will be no disturbances. (2) When disturbances do occur as a result of poor work on our part, then we should guide those involved onto the correct path, use the disturbances as a special means for improving our work and educating the cadres and the masses, and find solutions to those problems which were previously left unsolved. In handling any disturbance, we should take pains and not use over-simple methods, or hastily declare the matter closed. The ringleaders in disturbances should not be summarily expelled, except for those who have committed

criminal offences or are active counter-revolutionaries and have to be punished by law. In a large country like ours, there is nothing to get alarmed about if small numbers of people create disturbances; on the contrary, such disturbances will help us get rid of bureaucracy.

There are also a small number of individuals in our society who, flouting the public interest, wilfully break the law and commit crimes. They are apt to take advantage of our policies and distort them, and deliberately put forward unreasonable demands in order to incite the masses, or deliberately spread rumours to create trouble and disrupt public order. We do not propose to let these individuals have their way. On the contrary, proper legal action must be taken against them. Punishing them is the demand of the masses, and it would run counter to the popular will if they were not punished.

#### 10. Can Bad Things Be Turned Into Good Things?

In our society, as I have said, disturbances by the masses are bad, and we do not approve of them. But when disturbances do occur, they enable us to learn lessons, to overcome bureaucracy and to educate the cadres and the masses. In this sense, bad things can be turned into good things. Disturbances thus have a dual character. Every disturbance can be regarded in this way.

Everybody knows that the Hungarian incident was not a good thing. But it too had a dual character. Because our Hungarian comrades took proper action in the course of the incident, what was a bad thing has eventually turned into a good one. Hungary is now more consolidated than ever, and all other countries in the socialist camp have also learned a lesson.

Similarly, the world-wide campaign against communism and the people which took place in the latter half of 1956 was of course a bad thing. But it served to educate and temper the Communist Parties and the working class in all countries, and thus it has

turned into a good thing. In the storm and stress of this period, a number of people in many countries withdrew from the Communist Party. Withdrawal from the Party reduces its membership and is, of course, a bad thing, But there is a good side to it, too. Vacillating elements who are unwilling to carry on have withdrawn, and the vast majority who are staunch Party members can be the better united for struggle. Why isn't this a good thing?

To sum up, we must learn to look at problems from all sides, seeing the reverse as well as the obverse side of things. In given conditions, a bad thing can lead to good results and a good thing to bad results. More than two thousand years ago Lao Tzu said: "Good fortune lieth within bad, bad fortune lurketh within good."<sup>xxx</sup> When the Japanese shot their way into China, they called this a victory. Huge parts of China's territory were seized, and the Chinese called this a defeat. But victory was conceived in China's defeat, while defeat was conceived in Japan's victory. Hasn't history proved this true?

People all over the world are now discussing whether or not a third world war will break out. On this question, too, we must be mentally prepared and do some analysis. We stand firmly for peace and against war. But if the imperialists insist on unleashing another war, we should not be afraid of it. Our attitude on this question is the same as our attitude towards any disturbance: first, we are against it; second, we are not afraid of it. The First World War was followed by the birth of the Soviet Union with a population of 200 million. The Second World War was followed by the emergence of the socialist camp with a combined population of 900 million. If the imperialists insist on launching a third world war, it is certain that several hundred million more will turn to socialism, and then there will not be much room left on earth for the imperialists; it is also likely that the whole structure of imperialism will completely collapse.



In given conditions, each of the two opposing aspects of a contradiction invariably transforms itself into its opposite as a result of the struggle between them. Here, it is the conditions which are essential. Without the given conditions, neither of the two contradictory aspects can transform itself into its opposite. Of all the classes in the world the proletariat is the one which is most eager to change its position, and next comes the semi-proletariat, for the former possesses nothing at all while the latter is hardly any better off. The United States now controls a majority in the United Nations and dominates many parts of the world -- this state of affairs is temporary and will be changed one of these days. China's position as a poor country denied its rights in international affairs will also be changed -- the poor country will change into a rich one, the country denied its rights into one enjoying them -- a transformation of things into their opposites. Here, the decisive conditions are the socialist system and the concerted efforts of a united people.

### 11. On Practising Economy

Here I wish to speak briefly on practicing economy. We want to carry on large-scale construction, but our country is still very poor -- herein lies a contradiction. One way of resolving it is to make a sustained effort to practice strict economy in every field.

During the movement against the "three evils" in 1952, we fought against corruption, waste and bureaucracy, with the emphasis on combating corruption. In 1955 we advocated the practice of economy with great success, our emphasis then being on combating the unduly high standards for non-productive projects in capital construction and economizing on raw materials in industrial production. But at that time economy was not yet applied in earnest as a guiding principle in all branches of the national economy, or in government offices, army units, schools and people's organizations in general. This year we are calling for economy and the elimination of waste in

every sphere throughout the country. We still lack experience in the work of construction. During the last few years, great successes have been achieved, but there has also been waste. We must build up a number of large-scale modern enterprises step by step to form the mainstay of our industry, without which we shall not be able to turn China into a powerful modern industrial country within the coming decades. But the majority of our enterprises should not be built on such a scale; we should set up more small and medium enterprises and make full use of the industrial base inherited from the old society, so as to effect the greatest economy and do more with less money. Good results have begun to appear in the few months since the principle of practicing strict economy and combating waste was put forward, in more emphatic terms than before, by the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in November 1956. The present campaign for economy must be conducted in a thorough and sustained way. Like the criticism of any other fault or mistake, the fight against waste may be compared to washing one's face. Don't people wash their faces every day? The Chinese Communist Party, the democratic parties, the democrats with no party affiliation, the intellectuals, industrialists and businessmen, workers, peasants and handicraftsmen -- in short, all our 600 million people -- must strive for increased production and economy, and against extravagance and waste. This is of prime importance not only economically, but politically as well. A dangerous tendency has shown itself of late among many of our personnel -- an unwillingness to share weal and woe with the masses, a concern for personal fame and gain. This is very bad. One way of overcoming it is to streamline our organizations in the course of our campaign to increase production and practice economy, and to transfer cadres to lower levels so that a considerable number will return to productive work. We must see to it that all our cadres and all our people constantly bear in mind that ours is a large socialist country but an economically backward and poor one, and that this is a very big contradiction.

To make China prosperous and strong needs several decades of hard struggle, which means, among other things, pursuing the policy of building up our country through diligence and thrift, that is, practicing strict economy and fighting waste.

## 12. China's Path To Industrialization

In discussing our path to industrialization, we are here concerned principally with the relationship between the growth of heavy industry, light industry and agriculture. It must be affirmed that heavy industry is the core of China's economic construction. At the same time, full attention must be paid to the development of agriculture and light industry.

As China is a large agricultural country, with over 80 per cent of its population in the rural areas, agriculture must develop along with industry, for only thus can industry secure raw materials and a market, and only thus is it possible to accumulate more funds for building a powerful heavy industry. Everyone knows that light industry is closely tied up with agriculture. Without agriculture there can be no light industry. But it is not yet so clearly understood that agriculture provides heavy industry with an important market. This fact, however, will be more readily appreciated as gradual progress in the technical transformation and modernization of agriculture calls for more and more machinery, fertilizer, water conservancy and electric power projects and transport facilities for the farms, as well as fuel and building materials for the rural consumers. During the period of the Second and Third Five-Year Plans, the entire national economy will benefit if we can achieve an even greater growth in our agriculture and thus induce a correspondingly greater development of light industry. As agriculture and light industry develop, heavy industry, assured of its market and funds, will grow faster. Hence what may seem to be a slower pace of industrialization will actually not be so slow, and indeed may even be faster. In three five-year plans or perhaps a little longer,

China's annual steel output can be raised to 20,000,000 tons or more, as compared with the peak pre-liberation output of something over 900,000 tons in 1943. This will gladden the people in both town and country.

I do not propose to dwell on economic questions today. With barely seven years of economic construction behind us, we still lack experience and need to accumulate it. Neither had we any experience in revolution when we first started, and it was only after we had taken a number of tumbles and acquired experience that we won nation-wide victory. What we must now demand of ourselves is to gain experience in economic construction in a shorter period of time than it took us to gain experience in revolution, and not to pay as high a price for it. Some price we will have to pay, but we hope it will not be as high as that paid during the period of revolution. We must realize that there is a contradiction here -- the contradiction between the objective laws of economic development of a socialist society and our subjective cognition of them -- which needs to be resolved in the course of practice. This contradiction also manifests itself as a contradiction between different people, that is, a contradiction between those in whom the reflection of these objective laws is relatively accurate and those in whom the reflection is relatively inaccurate; this, too, is a contradiction among the people. Every contradiction is an objective reality, and it is our task to reflect it and resolve it in as nearly correct a fashion as we can.

In order to turn China into an industrial country, we must learn conscientiously from the advanced experience of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has been building socialism for forty years, and its experience is very valuable to us. Let us ask: Who designed and equipped so many important factories for us? Was it the United States? Or Britain? No, neither the one nor the other. Only the Soviet Union was willing to do so, because it is a socialist country and our ally. In addition to the Soviet Union, the

fraternal countries in East Europe have also given us some assistance. It is perfectly true that we should learn from the good experience of all countries, socialist or capitalist, about this there is no argument. But the main thing is still to learn from the Soviet Union. Now there are two different attitudes towards learning from others. One is the dogmatic attitude of transplanting everything, whether or not it is suited to our conditions. This is no good. The other attitude is to use our heads and learn those things which suit our conditions, that is, to absorb whatever experience is useful to us. That is the attitude we should adopt.

To strengthen our solidarity with the Soviet Union, to strengthen our solidarity with all the socialist countries--this is our fundamental policy, this is where our basic interests lie. Then there are the Asian and African countries and all the peace-loving countries and peoples --we must strengthen and develop our solidarity with them. United with these two forces, we shall not stand alone. As for the imperialist countries, we should unite with their people and strive to coexist peacefully with those countries, do business with them and prevent a possible war, but under no circumstances should we harbour any unrealistic notions about them.

# Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?

May 1963

Where do correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the skies? No. Are they innate in the mind? No. They come from social practice, and from it alone; they come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment. It is man's social being that determines his thinking. Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world. In their social practice, men engage in various kinds of struggle and gain rich experience, both from their successes and from their failures. Countless phenomena of the objective external world are reflected in a man's brain through his five sense organs — the organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. At first, knowledge is perceptual. The leap to conceptual knowledge, i.e., to ideas, occurs when sufficient perceptual knowledge is accumulated. This is one process in cognition. It is the first stage in the whole process of cognition, the stage leading from objective matter to subjective consciousness from existence to ideas. Whether or not one's consciousness or ideas (including theories, policies, plans or measures) do correctly reflect the laws of the objective external world is not yet proved at this stage, in which it is not yet possible to ascertain whether they are correct or not. Then comes the second stage in the process of cognition, the stage leading from consciousness back to matter, from ideas back to existence, in which the knowledge gained in the first stage is applied in social practice to ascertain whether the theories, policies, plans or measures meet with the anticipated success. Generally speaking, those that succeed are correct and those that fail are incorrect, and this is especially true of man's struggle with nature. In social struggle, the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat not because their ideas are incorrect ! but because, in the balance of forces engaged in struggle, they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction; they are therefore temporarily defeated, but they are bound to triumph sooner or later. Man's knowledge makes another leap through the test of practice. This

leap is more important than the previous one. For it is this leap alone that can prove the correctness or incorrectness of the first leap in cognition, i.e., of the ideas, theories, policies, plans or measures formulated in the course of reflecting the objective external world. There is no other way of testing truth. Furthermore, the one and only purpose of the proletariat in knowing the world is to change it. Often, correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge, the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge. Among our comrades there are many who do not yet understand this theory of knowledge. When asked the sources of their ideas, opinions, policies, methods, plans and conclusions, eloquent speeches and long articles they consider the questions strange and cannot answer it. Nor do they comprehend that matter, can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter, although such leaps are phenomena of everyday life. It is therefore necessary to educate our comrades in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, so that they can orientate their thinking correctly, become good at investigation and study and at summing up experience, overcome difficulties, commit fewer mistakes, do their work better, and struggle hard so as to build China into a great and powerful socialist country and help the broad masses of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world in fulfillment of our great internationalist duty.



Notes On  
"A Dialectical Approach To Inner-Party Unity"

One of the great things about Mao was his ability to look at disagreements and contradictions between people and find a way to solve them with dialectics. Mao understood that disagreements among the people are contradictions, not conflicts as with the enemy. In bourgeois democracy there are competing powers that are trying to fulfill their individual interests. One section of the capitalist class has interests that run in contradiction with another. This is an inevitability of capitalism, a system that is entirely built upon an aggregate millions of people fighting for their own interests at the expense of everyone else. Capitalism, more than another other system that has ever existed, is riddled with contradiction. Thus bourgeois politics can never solve contradictions, it can never solve problems. Everything they do is in contradiction with each other and with the people.

Capitalist politics can never reach a resolution to a problem because they are a system of competing interests who clash with each other for supremacy and profits. They will eternally be against one another so long as they are both in existence. There can never be an end to the conflict because they are always against one another. The people on the other hand have one goal, they have one common interest. At times the people are unaware of what that interest is. Other times they are presented with two and struggle must occur to determine which is and which is not correct. The people can figure out which one is correct by understanding their united goal, whichever one brings about unity and will transform our society to communism. All contradictions in this manner can come to an end. Capitalism can never end contradiction, because it *is* contradiction. There can never be peace in capitalism because it thrives only on conflict.

What Mao lays out in his work is how to resolve those contradictions within the party that arise out of the struggle against capitalism and the struggle to reach the goal of

communism. Inner Party unity is one of, if not the most, important aspect of the survival of the Party. Without it the people cannot reach liberation. Given the importance of this, we are handed this guide to achieving that by Mao.

The Party is by no means perfect, no Party is ever, nor can they ever be. This is so because the people in the Party are not perfect. We all make mistakes and we are all capable of great errors that could destroy everything everyone has worked to build. No one is immune from mistakes and it can be common among older and more experienced comrades in the Party to think that they have collected enough experience that they know enough to prevent them from happening. Of course we all know this to be true, but it can slip slowly into people's minds that they let down their guard, get little lax in their analysis. This is a serious danger that must be avoided in Party work.

It is easy to see how such mistakes can cause rifts between comrades, both sides not seeing what the other is saying because they both assume that they are correct without having fully seen the entire situation because of their subconscious overconfidence which has made them blind. Or at least it has made them sloppy in work. These occurrences can lead to factionalism if not properly checked. Often one person will seem to have all the answers and some will believe everything that person says, assuming they are right because they have always been so (seemingly) in the past. Revolutionary credibility is always important but it can be a hindrance to proper investigation if it is mistaken for a proper investigation. We must not be lax in our own investigation, but must also resist being lax in others and not assume that just because a comrade has experience that he is *always* capable of finding the right answer, nor assuming that he is always right.

When people make errors we must determine what kind of comrade he is. Is he a genuine one who is trying to work for the

Party and make it stronger? Or is he another type, one that is completely reactionary in nature that is bound to disrupt and destroy the party?

*"So what attitude should we adopt towards a comrade who has made mistakes? We should be analytical and adopt a dialectical, rather than a metaphysical, approach. Our Party once got bogged down in metaphysics, in dogmatism, which totally destroyed anyone not to its liking. Later, we repudiated dogmatism and came to learn a little more dialectics. The unity of opposites is the fundamental concept of dialectics. In accordance with this concept, what should we do with a comrade who has made mistakes?"*

A good comrade will be open to a challenge of what he has done and will accept criticism. If he has already accepted that he has made a mistake then all he must do is see how his error came into existence and how to avoid it in the future. He should not be beat up upon; he acknowledges that he has made a mistake and endeavours to avoid making it again. He is most certainly a good comrade who can positively contribute to the Party. Once he has been shown the mistake he has made and accepted it, he must be helped in continuing to work with the Party. Any assistance he requires should be given to him. He is honestly one of us and he should not be cast aside.

The other kind is a bad comrade, or even a saboteur intent on destroying the party. These "comrades" will make mistakes, clearly have gone wrong and refuse to acknowledge it. If he is certain that he has not made a mistake then he should be capable of proving so when criticized. He should accept that other Party members are going to challenge him on it. Perhaps he does not understand that his choice or action did not lead to the resolution of contradiction. He saw what he believed to be the way to work well for the Party and just made a mistake. He

must acknowledge this if he cannot demonstrate that his actions were correct and that he was not in error.

If he is a saboteur then the solution is simple, he is to be purged from the Party and cast out from Party work.

We must always remember that contradictions are going to exist in socialism. They can and do appear everywhere, but we must differentiate between ones that are done honestly by "good" comrades and ones that were made by "bad" comrades. The "good" comrade can be saved and can continue to be productive in the revolution and help build the resolution to all contradictions in society. The "bad" comrade must be removed from the Party before he can exert a serious negative influence on matters and possibly lead to the destruction of it.

*"There is no place where contradictions do not exist, nor is there any person who cannot be analyzed. To think that he cannot is being metaphysical. You see, an atom is a complex of unities of opposites. There is a unity of the two opposites, the nucleus and the electrons. In a nucleus there is again a unity of opposites, the protons and the neutrons. Speaking of the proton, there are protons and anti-protons, and as for the neutron, there are neutrons and anti-neutrons. In short, the unity of opposites is present everywhere."*

There is always unity of two opposites in everything. This contradiction prevents the transformation of socialism into communism the best of all possibly worlds discovered thus far. The resolution of all contradictions is the key to building communism. Through the transformation of society and its people, as contradictions are resolved, new contradictions appear. We must always be on guard for those contradictions among the people. They threaten to tear the Party apart and if left unchecked and end up turning antagonistic.

There is more than this discussed in the actual work by Mao, but I have left it out of the introduction to it because they were not central to the main point of the work. They were descriptions of collaboration with The Nationalist Party in the war against the Japanese and an understanding of compromise. Please read the work by Mao to understand those particular situations correctly.

# A Dialectical Approach To Inner-Party Unity

November 18, 1957

With regard to the question of unity I'd like to say something about the approach. I think our attitude should be one of unity towards every comrade, no matter who, provided he is not a hostile element or a saboteur. We should adopt a dialectical, not a metaphysical, approach towards him. What is meant by a dialectical approach? It means being analytical about everything, acknowledging that human beings all make mistakes and not negating a person completely just because he has made mistakes. Lenin once said that there is not a single person in the world who does not make mistakes. Everyone needs support. An able fellow needs the help of three other people, a fence needs the support of three stakes. With all its beauty the lotus needs the green of its leaves to set it off. These are Chinese proverbs. Still another Chinese proverb says three cobblers with their wits combined equal Chukeh Liang the master mind. Chukeh Liang by himself can never be perfect, he has his limitations. Look at this declaration of our twelve countries. We have gone through a first, second, third and fourth draft and have not yet finished polishing it. I think it would be presumptuous for anyone to claim God-like omniscience and omnipotence. So what attitude should we adopt towards a comrade who has made mistakes? We should be analytical and adopt a dialectical, rather than a metaphysical, approach. Our Party once got bogged down in metaphysics, in dogmatism, which totally destroyed anyone not to its liking. Later, we repudiated dogmatism and came to learn a little more dialectics. The unity of opposites is the fundamental concept of dialectics. In accordance with this concept, what should we do with a comrade who has made mistakes? We should first wage a struggle to rid him of his wrong ideas. Second, we should also help him. Point one, struggle, and point two, help. We should proceed from good intentions to help him correct his mistakes so that he will have a way out.

However, dealing with persons of another type is different. Towards persons like Trotsky and like Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao and Kao Kang in China, it was impossible to adopt a helpful



attitude, for they were incorrigible. And there were individuals like Hitler, Chiang Kai-shek and the tsar, who were likewise incorrigible and had to be overthrown because we and they were absolutely exclusive of each other. In this sense, there is only one aspect to their nature, not two. In the final analysis, this is also true of the imperialist and capitalist systems, which are bound to be replaced in the end by the socialist system. The same applies to ideology, idealism will be replaced by materialism and theism by atheism. Here we are speaking of the strategic objective. But the case is different with tactical stages, where compromises may be made. Didn't we compromise with the Americans on the 38th Parallel in Korea? Wasn't there a compromise with the French in Viet Nam?

At each tactical stage, it is necessary to be good at making compromises as well as at waging struggles. Now let us return to the relations between comrades. I would suggest that talks be held by comrades where there has been some misunderstanding between them. Some seem to think that, once in the Communist Party, people all become saints with no differences or misunderstandings, and that the Party is not subject to analysis, that is to say, it is monolithic and uniform, hence there is no need for talks. It seems as if people have to be 100 per cent Marxists once they are in the Party. Actually there are Marxists of all degrees, those who are 100 per cent, 90, 80, 70, 60 or 50 per cent Marxist, and some who are only 10 or 20 per cent Marxist. Can't two or more of us have talks together in a small room? Can't we proceed from the desire for unity and hold talks in the spirit of helping each other? Of course I'm referring to talks within the Communist ranks, and not to talks with the imperialists (though we do hold talks with them as well). Let me give an example. Aren't our twelve countries holding talks on the present occasion? Aren't the more than sixty Parties holding talks too? As a matter of fact they are. In other words, provided that no damage is done to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, we accept from others certain views that are acceptable and

give up certain of our own views that can be given up. Thus we have two hands to deal with a comrade who has made mistakes, one hand to struggle with him and the other to unite with him. The aim of struggle is to uphold the principles of Marxism, which means being principled; that is one hand. The other hand is to unite with him. The aim of unity is to provide him with a way out, to compromise with him, which means being flexible. The integration of principle with flexibility is a Marxist-Leninist principle, and it is a unity of opposites.

Any kind of world, and of course class society in particular, teems with contradictions. Some say that there are contradictions to be "found" in socialist society, but I think this is a wrong way of putting it. The point is not that there are contradictions to be found, but that it teems with contradictions. There is no place where contradictions do not exist, nor is there any person who cannot be analysed. To think that he cannot is being metaphysical. You see, an atom is a complex of unities of opposites. There is a unity of the two opposites, the nucleus and the electrons. In a nucleus there is again a unity of opposites, the protons and the neutrons. Speaking of the proton, there are protons and anti-protons, and as for the neutron, there are neutrons and anti-neutrons. In short, the unity of opposites is present everywhere. The concept of the unity of opposites, dialectics, must be widely propagated. I say dialectics should move from the small circle of philosophers to the broad masses of the people. I suggest that this question be discussed at meetings of the political bureaus and at the plenary sessions of the central committees of the various Parties and also at meetings of their Party committees at all levels. As a matter of fact, the secretaries of our Party branches understand dialectics, for when they prepare reports to branch meetings, they usually write down two items in their notebooks, first, the achievements and, second, the shortcomings. One divides into two -- this is a universal phenomenon, and this is dialectics.

Notes On  
"Talk on Questions of Philosophy"

In socialism you cannot have philosophy without the existence of class struggle. Socialism is in its very essence about struggling against the ruling class, thus all philosophy of socialism must stem from class struggle. This is not to say philosophical ideas cannot come from or be about anything else. I am merely saying that all philosophy of socialism, or born of socialism, must be of class struggle. Isn't this why we snicker at the bourgeois philosophers who speak of fairness and equality as they pound the ideology of capitalism; an ideology of inequality and the rejection of the concept of fairness?

Philosophy in this context stems from class struggle, thus it is the experience of class struggle. Everyone who actively engages in this type of philosophy must understand that struggle. It is not enough to simply come from the universities and colleges and claim to fully understand the meaning and the "heart" of such philosophy. A person must also have experience in the struggle, to understand truly what is meant by words that speak of emancipation.

We are often reminded of how much more fully we understand someone when we "walk a mile in their shoes". Philosophy in socialism is no different; it is truly understood from the perspective of those who have struggled with emancipation to achieve freedom. Philosophy in socialism is a philosophy to obtain that freedom people desire. It cannot be developed or worked on unless it is bound up with that struggle.

Mao's suggestion in this work is just this. Philosophy in socialism, that is to say the philosophy of socialism, cannot be detached from struggle. Mao pointed out that this is a problem among those dealing with philosophy at the time (1964). They were often intellectuals who have never lived the peasants' lives. So how could they be expected to understand the trials, heart breaks and desires of the peasants? They probably never could. It was imperative to him that they gain this experience of the

peasants if they were to be able to develop (or even understand) the philosophy of their emancipation.

His suggestion was one that was often used in situations like this: They must go down into the countryside and live as the peasants do to understand that life. Many rejected this idea and felt that they were already knowledgeable because they had some education from the top schools and had concern for their health if they had to go down to the fields. Mao brushed off their petty exaggerated concerns for their health with the line, *"One should go even though one's health is poor. People won't die by going down to the countryside. There may be some flu, but it will be all right when they put on more clothes."*

Mao correctly criticized the way liberal arts were being taught in the colleges. They were devoid of the context of the society in which they existed. They only read book after book and had no experience in the society. Without experience in struggle they cannot develop a philosophy of struggle. In this work he laid it out plain for everyone to hear:

*"The three components of Marxism are scientific socialism, philosophy, and political economics. They are based on sociology and class struggle: the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie."*

Common sense shows us that this is correct. Unlike many so-called radical ideologies, Marxists know that the bourgeoisie cannot be persuaded into changing their system to socialism to benefit the people. They will not under any circumstance peacefully give up their power and privilege to the people. It is only through this truth that Marxism was able to evolve. The recognition that the capitalist class does not simply abandon their position and power because they are convinced of the necessity to do so is what separates us Marxists from some other anti-capitalist ideologies. We are not utopians nor are we social democrats who merely ask for change from our exploiters.

We do not ask them to go easier on us; we force them to stand aside while we reorganize society on our own terms. Our philosophy evolves from class struggle, not class collaboration. It is class struggle that is the basis for why and how we study philosophy.

Everything in socialism must stem from class struggle. Proletarian philosophy is Marxist philosophy. This was a mistake that many were making at the time in the schools. They felt that when studying philosophy that philosophy must come first. In a socialist society this is wrong, everything stems from class struggle. This alone defines the society itself and defines the context in which everything exists. It is the very purpose of the socialist society. It cannot be ignored and must be placed to the fore and made the basis of every subject.

Mao speaks about how he came to learn and understand philosophy. He studied on his own in the beginning and educated himself. He studied "*the whole bag of bourgeois natural sciences and social sciences.*" Then when he went to school and learned more and more complicated philosophies. Eventually in his life he ended up joining the Communist Party. While there he said he only knew that he wanted to make revolution. What he did not know was how or what he needed to specially rebel against.

As a member of the Communist Party he learned what imperialism is and how to fight it, he became aware of how his country was being subjected to exploitation by foreign powers. He learned how capitalist exploitation robbed workers of their living and how landlords do the same to peasants. In all the 13 years of study Mao undertook it was all useless for achieving the goal of revolution. He said the only tool he could use was language, because writing articles is important.

The reason why this was such a problem was because what he was learning was bourgeois philosophy and other bourgeois

dominated thought. This is no good for class struggle because at its very essence it is against class struggle. They were written to defend the status quo. Being in the Communist Party he learned to put class struggle first and this revealed how ineffective all these ideas he learned were. If society is to make class warfare, to conduct class struggle then class struggle must be the guiding principal behind every thought. Could we achieve a socialist (let alone a communist) society by using bourgeois economic thought?

Could you even imagine a free market delivering equality? The idea is simply absurd. Unfortunately despite the absurdity of this idea it does not prevent particular schools of thought from thinking freedom stems from such a belief. Ask the billion people a year that goes hungry as a result of the free market if the market brings equality or freedom<sup>2</sup>. They'd probably not even express such a sentiment; they'd be too busy asking if you have any food.

Mao criticized the intellectuals who knew nothing of struggling to survive. They sat in offices and looked at numbers on a sheet that represented hundreds of millions of people in poverty understanding nothing of what they struggled for in the revolution. Mao said send them down to the country side to participate in class struggle so that they may understand who it is they serve.

*"You intellectuals live every day in your offices; you eat well dress well, you never walk, and so you get sick. Clothing, food, housing and transportation are the four great essentials of life. By changing your living conditions from good to bad, by going down to take part in class struggle, by steeling yourselves through the*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wfp.org/hunger>

*"four cleans" and "five antis," you intellectuals will change your appearance."*

The intellectuals have never had to struggle as the people have. Yes they sit at their desks and discuss ideas and struggle out which ones they think can lead to emancipation, but they do not understand what it means to struggle to *survive*. Mao said send them down in batches to take part in that same struggle to learn how the people live, experience the lives of the people they are trying to serve. Serve the People, understand the people and know what it means to make revolution. These bourgeois ideas will do nothing to help the people.

Do we see this in our Western bourgeois democratic societies? Do our politicians understand even the slightest aspects to our lives? How many of those suits in the echelons of power know what it means to earn less money than it takes to survive? They know nothing of us or how we live. More specifically they know nothing of how we die. Theoretically these people are supposed to represent us; they are supposed to carry out our will. Do we ever see such actions out of them? Can we ever be given anything more than simply being thrown a bone? When they cut health care or they cut social assistance are they helping us, the people? No, they serve only their masters in the capitalist class.

There could be nothing more obvious than the true class nature of Western capitalist society. These politicians are supposed to represent us yet they do nothing to serve us. They call them public servants, yet they do the will of the ruling class. They criminalize us for being poor; they actually have the audacity to treat us as criminals for being victims of *their* economic policies that were handed to them by the capitalists. Michael Bloomberg is a prime example of such terrible ruling class induced fascism. The mayor of New York called for people who live in public



housing to be finger printed.<sup>3</sup> The process you go through when charged with a criminal offense is what should be forced on people for simply being too poor to afford the outrageous housing costs *forced* on us by the market? This is an outrage that should raise the ire of every person struggling to survive!

I take great pride in knowing that if someone suggested such an idea in Revolutionary China they would be publicly criticized and fired.

Mao even said they should learn to suffer as the peasants do in order to truly understand their struggle. This experience will enrich them with the eagerness to make the philosophy to produce the new society. "*Go down and give it a try! You can come back if you become really sick, since it wouldn't do for you to die. If you become so sick as to approach death, then come back. Once you go down, you will be enthusiastic.*" Tell me who in our modern capitalist society would be so forceful in demanding that the intellectuals, academics and bureaucrats be made to serve the public!

\* \* \*

[Here Mao moves onto the subject of elements of capitalism continuing to exist in the revolutionary society. In this writing he explains why it continues and why it is not a problem, but part of the process.]

Mao says let them engage in capitalism. This alone makes many opponents of Mao scream, "Ah ha! A revisionist he was, here is the proof!" Of course such simplistic quoting without context is worthy of Enver Hoxha. Mao sees it as a part of developing the productive forces which is necessary because China did not go

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<sup>3</sup>NY mayor proposes fingerprinting at public housing  
<http://online.wsj.com/article/APac76482b76244e6596d16ceaad8f5fe4.html>

through a full phase of capitalism. It is not considered revisionist to do this, much could be said of the Soviet Union under the NEP. I do not consider either of these to be revisionist.

*"Let them go in for capitalism. Society is very complex. If one only goes in for socialism and not for capitalism, isn't that too simple? Wouldn't we then lack the unity of opposites, and be merely one-sided? Let them do it. Let them attack us madly, demonstrate in the streets, take up arms to rebel — I approve all of these things. Society is very complex, there is not a single commune, a single hsien, a single department of the Central Committee, in which one cannot divide into two. Just look, hasn't the Department of Rural Work been disbanded?<sup>4</sup> It devoted itself exclusively to accounting on the basis of the individual household, and to propagating the 'four great freedoms' — freedom to lend money, to engage in commerce, to hire labour, and to buy and sell land."*

This "capitalism" was a part of New Democracy, which was an idea created by Mao to serve as a bridge for the gap between feudalism and socialism. This bourgeois democratic revolution was carried out under the leadership of the proletariat. It was the vanguard who picked up the *tools* of capitalism in order to advance the productive and democratic forces to pull the countryside out of feudalism. This was not a bourgeois rule. The bourgeois were not in command. It was not carried out in the interests and benefit of the bourgeois.

Despite the assertions by some, Mao never advocated that New Democracy should become entrenched and permanent in Chinese society. It was only a bridge to cover a gap in the

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<sup>4</sup> In the summer of 1955, just before Mao's speech of 31 July gave a new impetus to the formation of agricultural producers' cooperatives, the Party's Rural Work Department (at the instigation, of Liu Shao-ch'i) had disbanded a number of cooperatives which were said to have been hastily and prematurely formed.

development of society. The point of it was to break up the landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie. The goal was to divide up the lands of the feudal landlords and place them in the hands of the peasants as individual property. He rightfully acknowledged that *"this still remains within the limits of the bourgeois revolution."* This was only one step in the transformation of society. What many Marxist and non-Marxist opponents of Mao don't understand is that revolution is a *process* not an event. Change does not happen all at once, it would be foolish to think it could be.

Mao says very specifically: *"To divide up the land is nothing remarkable — MacArthur did it in Japan. Napoleon divided up the land too. Land reform cannot abolish capitalism, nor can it lead to socialism."*

It is not intended to lead to socialism; it is a part of the *process towards socialism*. Through 15 years of struggle one third of the state still remains in the hands of the enemy or enemy sympathizers. Corruption was still an issue, *"you can buy a [Party] branch secretary for a few packs of cigarettes"*, as Mao said. He made it a priority to make this public and known so that it can be struggled against.

Mao answers many philosophical questions in this work. They contain subjects such as synthesis to the reading of the natural sciences. Much of that work is self-explanatory and does not require anyone to explain it. Enjoy.

# Talk on Questions of Philosophy

August 1964

It is only when there is class struggle that there can be philosophy. It is a waste of time to discuss epistemology apart from practice. The comrades who study philosophy should go down to the countryside. They should go down this winter or next spring to participate in the class struggle. Those whose health is not good should go too. Going down won't kill people. All they'll do is catch a cold, and if they just put on a few extra suits of clothes it'll be all right.

The way they go about it in the universities at present is no good, going from book to book, from concept to concept. How can philosophy come from books? The three basic constituents of Marxism are scientific socialism, philosophy, and political economy.<sup>xxxi</sup> The foundation is social science, class struggle. There is a struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Marx and the others saw this. Utopian socialists are always trying to persuade the bourgeoisie to be charitable. This won't work, it is necessary to rely on the class struggle of the proletariat. At that time, there had already been many strikes. The English parliamentary inquiry recognized that the twelve-hour day was less favourable than the eight-hour day to the interests of the capitalists. It is only starting from this viewpoint that Marxism appeared. The foundation is class struggle. The study of philosophy can only come afterwards. Whose philosophy? Bourgeois philosophy, or proletarian philosophy? Proletarian philosophy is Marxist philosophy. There is also proletarian economics, which has transformed classical economics. Those who engage in philosophy believe that philosophy comes first. The oppressors oppress the oppressed, while the oppressed need to fight back and seek a way out before they start looking for philosophy. It is only when people took this as their starting-point that there was Marxism-Leninism, and that they discovered philosophy. We have all been through this. Others wanted to kill me; Chiang Kai-shek wanted to kill me. Thus we came to engage in class struggle, to engage in philosophizing.

University students should start going down this winter — I am referring to the humanities. Students of natural science should not be moved now, though we can move them for a spell or two. All those studying the humanities — history, political economy, literature, law — must every one of them go. Professors, assistant professors, administrative workers, and student should all of them go down, for a limited period of five months. If they go to the countryside for five months, or to the factories for five months, they will acquire some perceptual knowledge. Horses, cows, sheep, chickens, dogs, pigs, rice, sorghum, beans, wheat, varieties of millet they can have a look at all these things. If they go in the winter, they will not see the harvest, but at least they can still see the land and the people. To get some experience of class struggle — that's what I call a university. They argue about which university is better, Peking University or People's University.<sup>xxxii</sup> For my part I am a graduate of the university of the greenwoods, I learned a bit there. In the past I studied Confucius, and spent six years on the Four Books and the Five Classics.<sup>xxxiii</sup> I learned to recite them from memory, but I did not understand them. At that time, I believed deeply in Confucius, and even wrote essays [expounding his ideas]. Later I went to a bourgeois school for seven years. Seven plus six makes thirteen years. I studied all the usual bourgeois stuff — natural science and social science. They also taught some pedagogy. This includes five years of normal school, two years of middle school, and also the time I spent in the library.<sup>xxxiv</sup> At that time I believed in Kant's dualism, especially in his idealism. Originally I was a feudalist and an advocate of bourgeois democracy. Society impelled me to participate in the revolution. I spent a few years as a primary-school teacher and principal of a four-year school. I also taught history and Chinese language in a six-year school. I also taught for a short period in a middle school, but I did not understand a thing. When I joined the Communist Party I knew that we must make revolution, but against what? And how would we go about it? Of course we had to make revolution against imperialism and the old society. I did not quite

understand what sort of a thing imperialism was, still less did I understand how we could make revolution against it. None of the stuff I had learned in thirteen years was any good for making revolution. I used only the instrument — language. Writing essays is an instrument. As for the content of my studies, I didn't use it at all. Confucius said: 'Benevolence is the characteristic element of humanity.' 'The benevolent man loves others.'<sup>xxxv</sup> Whom did he love? All men? Nothing of the kind. Did he love the exploiters? It wasn't exactly that, either. He loved only a part of the exploiters. Otherwise, why wasn't Confucius able to be a high official? People didn't want him. He loved them, and wanted them to unite. But when it came to starving, and to [the precept] 'The superior man can endure poverty,' he almost lost his life, the people of K'uang wanted to kill him.<sup>xxxvi</sup> There were those who criticized him for not visiting Ch'in in his journey to the West. In reality, the poem 'In the Seventh Month the Fire Star Passes the Meridian' in the Book of Odes refers to events in Shensi. There is also 'The Yellow Bird', which talks about the affair in which three high officials of Duke Mu of Ch'in were killed and buried with him on his death.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Ssu-ma Ch'ien<sup>xxxviii</sup> had a very high opinion of the Book of Odes. He said the 300 poems it contains were all written by sages and worthies of ancient times when they were aroused. A large part of the poems in the Book of Odes are in the manner of the various states, they are the folk songs of the common people, the sages and worthies are none other than the common people. 'Written when they were aroused' means that when a man's heart was filled with anger, he wrote a poem!

You sow not nor reap;  
How do you get the paddy for your three hundred round bins?  
You do not follow the chase;  
How do we see the quails hanging in your courtyards?  
O that superior man!  
He would not eat the bread of idleness<sup>xxxix</sup>

The expression ‘to neglect the duties of an office while taking the pay’ comes from here. This is a poem which accuses heaven and opposes the rulers. Confucius, too, was rather democratic, he included [in the Book of Odes] poems about the love between man and woman. In his commentaries, Chu Hsi characterized them as poems about clandestine love affairs.<sup>xi</sup> In reality, some of them are and some of them aren’t; the latter borrow the imagery of man and woman to write about the relations between prince and subject. In Shu [present-day Szechwan] at the time of the Five Dynasties and Ten Countries, there was a poem entitled ‘The Wife of Ch’in Laments the Winter’, by Wei Chuang.<sup>xii</sup> He wrote it in his youth, and it is about his longing for his prince.

To return to this matter of going down, people should go beginning this winter and spring, in groups and in rotation, to participate in the class struggle. Only in this way can they learn something, learn about revolution. You intellectuals sit every day in your government offices, eating well, dressing well, and not even doing any walking. That’s why you fall ill. Clothing, food, housing and exercise are the four great factors causing disease. If, from enjoying good living conditions, you change to somewhat worse conditions, if you go down to participate in the class struggle, if you go into the midst of the ‘four clean-ups’ and the ‘five antis’,<sup>xiii</sup> and undergo a spell of toughening, then you intellectuals will have a new look about you.

If you don’t engage in class struggle, then what is this philosophy you’re engaged in?

Why not go down and try it? If your illness gets too severe you should come back — you have to draw the line at dying. When you are so ill that you are on the verge of dying, then you should come back. As soon as you go down, you will have some spirit. (K’ang Sheng interjects: ‘The research institutes in the Departments of Philosophy and Social Science of the Academy of



Science should all go down too. At present, they are on the verge of turning into institutes for the study of antiquities, of turning into a fairyland nourishing itself by inhaling offerings of incense. None of the people in the Institute of Philosophy read the Kuang-ming jih-pao.) I read only the Kuang-ming jihpao and the Wen-hui pao,<sup>xliii</sup> I don't read *People's Daily*, because the *People's Daily* doesn't publish theoretical articles; after we adopt a resolution, then they publish it. The *Liberation Army Daily* is lively, it's readable. (Comrade K'ang Sheng: 'The Institute of Literature pays no attention to Chou Kuch'eng,<sup>xliiv</sup> and the Economics Institute pays no attention to Sun Yeh-fang<sup>xlv</sup> and to his going in for Libermanism, going in for capitalism.')

Let them go in for capitalism. Society is very complex. If one only goes in for socialism and not for capitalism, isn't that too simple? Wouldn't we then lack the unity of opposites, and be merely one-sided? Let them do it. Let them attack us madly, demonstrate in the streets, take up arms to rebel — I approve all of these things. Society is very complex, there is not a single commune, a single hsien, a single department of the Central Committee, in which one cannot divide into two. Just look, hasn't the Department of Rural Work been disbanded?<sup>xlvi</sup> It devoted itself exclusively to accounting on the basis of the individual household, and to propagating the 'four great freedoms' — freedom to lend money, to engage in commerce, to hire labour, and to buy and sell land. In the past, they put out a proclamation [to this effect]. Teng Tzu-hui had a dispute with me. At a meeting of the Central Committee, he put forward the idea of implementing the four great freedoms.<sup>xlvii</sup>

To consolidate New Democracy, and to go on consolidating it for ever, is to engage in capitalism.<sup>xlviii</sup> New Democracy is a bourgeois-democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat. It touches only the landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie, it does not touch the national bourgeoisie at all. To divide up the land and give it to the peasants is to transform the

property of the feudal landlords into the individual property of the peasants, and this still remains within the limits of the bourgeois revolution. To divide up the land is nothing remarkable — MacArthur did it in Japan. Napoleon divided up the land too. Land reform cannot abolish capitalism, nor can it lead to socialism.

In our state at present approximately one third of the power is in the hands of the enemy or of the enemy's sympathizers. We have been going for fifteen years and we now control two thirds of the realm. At present, you can buy a [Party] branch secretary for a few packs of cigarettes, not to mention marrying a daughter to him. There are some localities where land reform was carried out peacefully, and the land reform teams were very weak; now you can see that there are a lot of problems there.

I have received the materials on philosophy. [This refers to the materials on the problem of contradictions — note by stenographer.] I have had a look at the outline, [This refers to the outline of an article criticizing 'two combine into one'<sup>xlix</sup> — note by stenographer.] I have not been able to read the rest. I have also looked at the materials on analysis and synthesis.

It is a good thing to collect materials like this on the law of the unity of opposites, what the bourgeoisie says about it, what Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin say about it, what the revisionists say about it. As for the bourgeoisie, Yang Hsien-chen talks about it, and Hegel of old talked about it. Such people existed in the olden days. Now they are even worse. There were also Bogdanov and Lunacharsky, who used to talk about deism. I have read Bogdanov's economics. Lenin read it, and it seems he approved of the part on primitive accumulation. (K'ang Sheng: 'Bogdanov's economic doctrines were perhaps somewhat more enlightened than those of modern revisionism. Kautsky's economic doctrines were somewhat more enlightened than those of Khrushchev, and Yugoslavia is also somewhat more

enlightened than the Soviet Union. After all, Djilas said a few good things about Stalin, he said that on Chinese problems Stalin made a self-criticism.’)

Stalin felt that he had made mistakes in dealing with Chinese problems, and they were no small mistakes. We are a great country of several hundred millions, and he opposed our revolution, and our seizure of power. We prepared for many years in order to seize power in the whole country, the whole of the Anti-Japanese War constituted a preparation. This is quite clear if you look at the documents of the Central Committee for that period, including On New Democracy. That is to say that you cannot set up a bourgeois dictatorship, you can only establish New Democracy under the leadership of the proletariat, you can only set up a people’s democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat. In our country, for eighty years, all the democratic revolutions led by the bourgeoisie failed. The democratic revolution led by us will certainly be victorious. There is only this way out, there is no other way out. This is the first step. The second step will be to build socialism. Thus, On New Democracy was a complete programme. It discussed politics, economics, and culture as well; it failed to discuss only military affairs. (K’ang Sheng: ‘On New Democracy is of great significance for the world communist movement. I asked Spanish comrades, and they said the problem for them was to establish bourgeois democracy, not to establish New Democracy. In their country, they did not concern themselves with the three points: army, countryside, political power. They wholly subordinated themselves to the exigencies of Soviet foreign policy, and achieved nothing at all.’) These are the policies of Ch’en Tu-hsiu! (Comrade K’ang Sheng: ‘They say the Communist Party organized an army, and then turned it over to others.’) This is useless.

(Comrade K’ang Sheng: ‘They also did not want political power, nor did they mobilize the peasantry. At that time, the Soviet

Union said to them that if they imposed proletarian leadership, England and France might oppose it, and this would not be in the interests of the Soviet Union.’)

How about Cuba? In Cuba they concerned themselves precisely to set up political power and an army, and also mobilized the peasants, as [we did] in the past; therefore they succeeded.

(Comrade K’ang Sheng: ‘Also, when they [the Spanish] fought, they waged regular war, in the manner of the bourgeoisie, they defended Madrid to the last.<sup>i</sup> In all things, they subordinated themselves to Soviet foreign policy.’)

Even before the dissolution of the Third International, we did not obey the orders of the Third International. At the Tsunyi Conference we didn’t obey, and afterwards, for a period of ten years, including the Rectification Campaign and down to the Seventh Congress, when we finally adopted a resolution (‘Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party’),<sup>ii</sup> and corrected [the errors of] ‘leftism’, we didn’t obey them at all. Those dogmatists utterly failed to study China’s peculiarities; ten-odd years after they had betaken themselves to the countryside, they utterly failed to study the land, property, and class relationships in the countryside. You can’t understand the countryside just by going there, you must study the relations between all the classes and strata in the countryside. I devoted more than ten years to these problems before I finally clarified them for myself. You must make contact with all kinds of people, in tea houses and gambling dens, and investigate them. In 1925 I was active at the Peasant Movement Training Institute,<sup>iii</sup> and carried out rural surveys. In my native village, I sought out poor peasants to investigate them. Their life was pitiable, they had nothing to eat. There was one peasant whom I sought out to play dominoes (the kind with heaven, earth, man, harmony, Mei Ch’ien, Ch’ang Sang, and the bench), afterwards inviting him to have a meal. Before, after, and during the meal, I talked to him,

and came to understand why the class struggle in the countryside was so acute. The reasons he was willing to talk to me were: first, that I looked on him as a human being; second, that I invited him to have a meal; and third, that he could make a bit of money. I kept losing; I lost one or two silver dollars, and as a result he was very well satisfied. There is a friend who still came to see me twice! , after Liberation. Once, in those days, he was really in a bad way, and he came looking for me to borrow a dollar. I gave him three, as non-refundable assistance. In those days, such nonrefundable assistance was hard to come by. My father took the view that if a man did not look after himself, heaven and earth would punish him. My mother opposed him. When my father died, very few people followed the funeral procession. When my mother died, a great many followed the procession. One time the Ko Lao Hui robbed our family. I said they were right to do so, for people had nothing. Even my mother could not accept this at all.

Once there broke out in Changsha rice riots in which the provincial governor was beaten up. There were some hawkers from Hsiang Hsiang who had sold their broad beans and were straggling back home. I stopped them and asked them about the situation. The Red and Green Gangs in the countryside also held meetings, and ate up big families. This was reported in the Shanghai newspapers, and the troubles were only stamped out when troops were sent from Changsha. They did not maintain good discipline, they took the rice of the middle peasants, and so isolated themselves. One of their leaders fled hither and thither, finally taking refuge in the mountains, but he was caught there and executed. Afterwards, the village gentry held a meeting, and killed a few more poor peasants. At that time, there was as yet no Communist Party; these were spontaneous class struggles.

Society pushed us on to the political stage. Who ever thought of indulging in Marxism previously? I hadn't even heard of it. What

I had heard of, and also read of, was Confucius, Napoleon, Washington, Peter the Great, the Meiji Restoration, the three distinguished Italian [patriots] — in other words, all those [heroes] of capitalism. I had also read a biography of Franklin. He came from a poor family; afterwards, he became a writer, and also conducted experiments on electricity. (Ch'en Po-ta: 'Franklin was the first to put forward the proposition that man is a tool-making animal.')

He talked about man being a tool-making animal. Formerly, they used to say that man was a thinking animal, 'the organ of the heart can think'<sup>liii</sup> ; they said that man was the soul of all creation. Who called a meeting and elected him [to that position]? He conferred this dignity on himself. This proposition existed in the feudal era. Afterwards, Marx put forward the view that man is a tool-maker, and that man is a social animal. In reality it is only after undergoing a million years [of evolution] that man developed a large brain and a pair of hands. In the future, animals will continue to develop. I don't believe that men alone are capable of having two hands. Can't horses, cows, sheep evolve? Can only monkeys evolve? And can it be, moreover, that of all the monkeys only one species can evolve, and all the others are incapable of evolving? In a million years, ten million years, will horses, cows and sheep still be the same as those today? I think they will continue to change. Horses, cows, sheep, and insects will all change. Animals have evolved from plants, they have evolved from seaweed. Chang T'ai-yen knew all this. In the book in which he argued about revolution with K'ang Yu-wei, he expounded these principles.<sup>liv</sup> The earth was originally dead, there were no plants, no water, no air. Only after I don't know how many tens of millions of years was water formed; hydrogen and oxygen aren't just transformed immediately in any old way into water. Water has its history too. Earlier still, even hydrogen and oxygen did not exist. Only after hydrogen and oxygen were produced was there the possibility that these two elements could combine to give water.

We must study the history of the natural sciences, it won't do to neglect this subject. We must read a few books. There is a great difference between reading because of the necessities of our present struggles, and reading aimlessly. Fu Ying<sup>lv</sup> says that hydrogen and oxygen form water only after coming together hundreds and thousands of times; it is not at all a simple case of two combining into one. He was right about this, too; I want to look him up and have a talk. (Speaking to Lu P'ing:<sup>lvi</sup>) You people should not oppose absolutely everything by Fu Ying.

Hitherto, analysis and synthesis have not been clearly defined. Analysis is clearer, but there hasn't been much said about synthesis. I had a talk with Ai Ssu-ch'i.<sup>lvii</sup> He said that nowadays they only talk about conceptual synthesis and analysis, and do not talk about objective practical synthesis and analysis. How do we analyse and synthesize the Communist Party and the Kuomintang, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the landlords and the peasants, the Chinese and the imperialists? How do we do this, for example, in the case of the Communist Party and the Kuomintang? The analysis is simply a question of how strong we are, how much territory we have, how many members we have, how many troops, how many bases such as Yen-an, what are our weaknesses? We do not hold any big cities, our army numbers only 1,200,000, we have no foreign aid, whereas the Kuomintang has a great amount of foreign aid. If you compare Yen-an to Shanghai, Yen-an has a population of only 7,000; adding to this the persons from the [Party and government] organs and from the troops [stationed in Yen-an], the total comes to 20,000. There is only handicrafts and agriculture. How can this be compared with a big city? Our strong points are that we have the support of the people whereas the Kuomintang is divorced from the people. You have more territory, more troops, and more arms, but your soldiers have been obtained by impressment, and there is opposition between officers and soldiers. Naturally there is also a fairly large portion of their armies which has considerable fighting capacity, it is not at all

the case that they will all just collapse at one blow. Their weak point lies here, the key is their divorce from the people. We unite with the popular masses; they are divorced from the popular masses.

They say in their propaganda that the Communist Party establishes community of property and community of wives, and they propagate these ideas right down to the primary schools. They composed a song: 'When Chu Te and Mao Tse-tung appear, killing and burning and doing all kinds of things, what will you do?' They taught the primary-school pupils to sing it, and as soon as they had sung it, the pupils went and asked their fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, thus producing the opposite effect of propaganda for us. There was a little child who heard [the song] and asked his daddy. His daddy replied: 'You mustn't ask; after you have grown up, you will see for yourself and then you'll understand.' He was a middle-of-the-roader. Then the child also asked his uncle. The uncle scolded him, and replied: 'What is this about killing and burning? If you ask me again, I'll beat you.' Formerly, his uncle was a member of the Communist Youth League. All the newspapers and radio stations attacked us. There were a lot of newspapers, several dozen in each city, every faction ran one, and all of them without exception were anti-communist. Did the common people all listen to them? Nothing of the kind! We have some experience of Chinese affairs, China is a 'sparrow'.<sup>lviii</sup> In foreign countries, too, it's nothing else but the rich and the poor, counter revolution and revolution, Marxism-Leninism and revisionism. You mustn't believe at all that everybody will take in anticommunist propaganda, and join in opposing communism. Didn't we read newspapers at the time? Yet we were not influenced by them.

I have read the Dream of the Red Chamber five times, and have not been influenced by it. I read it as history. First I read it as a story, and then as history. When people read the Dream of the Red Chamber, they don't read the fourth chapter carefully, but



in fact this chapter contains the gist of the book. There is also Leng Tzu-hsing who describes the Jung-kuo mansion, and composes songs and notes. The fourth chapter 'The Bottle-Gourd Monk decides the affair of the bottle gourd, talks about the 'Talisman for Officials', it introduces the four big families:

Shout hip hurrah  
For the Nanking Chia!  
They weigh their gold out  
By the jar.  
The Ah-pang Palace  
Scrapes the sky,  
But it could not house  
The Nanking Shih.  
The King of the Ocean  
Goes along,  
When he's short of gold beds,  
To the Nanking Wang.  
The Nanking Hsueh  
So rich are they,  
To count their money  
Would take all day. . .<sup>lix</sup>

The Dream of the Red Chamber describes each of the four big families. It concerns a fierce class struggle, involving the fate of many dozens of people, though only twenty or thirty of these people are in the ruling class. (It has been calculated that there are thirty-three [in this category].) The others are all slaves, over three hundred of them, such as Yueh Yang, Ssu-ch'i, Second Sister Yu, Third Sister Yu, etc. In studying history, unless you take a class-struggle view as the starting-point, you will get confused. Things can only be analysed clearly by the use of class analysis. More than 200 years have elapsed since the Dream of the Red Chamber was written, and research on the book has not clarified the issues, even down to the present day; from this we can see the difficulty of the problem. There are Yu P'ing-po and Wang

K'un-lun, who are both of them specialists.<sup>lx</sup> Ho Ch'i-fang<sup>lxi</sup> also wrote a preface. A fellow called Wu Shih-ch'ang<sup>lxii</sup> has also appeared on the scene. All this refers to recent research on the Dream of the Red Chamber, I won't even enumerate the older studies. Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei's view of the Dream of the Red Chamber was incorrect; Hu Shih's was somewhat more correct.<sup>lxiii</sup>

What is synthesis? You have all witnessed how the two opposites, the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, were synthesized on the mainland. The synthesis took place like this: their armies came, and we devoured them, we ate them bite by bite. It was not a case of two combining into one as expounded by Yang Hsien-chen, it was not the synthesis of two peacefully coexisting opposites. They didn't want to coexist peacefully, they wanted to devour you. Otherwise, why would they have attacked Yen-an? Their army penetrated everywhere in North Shensi, except in three hsien on the three borders. You have your freedom, and we have our freedom. There are 250,000 of you, and 25,000 of us.<sup>lxiv</sup> A few brigades, something over 20,000 men. Having analysed, how do we synthesize? If you want to go somewhere, you go right ahead; we still swallow your army mouthful by mouthful. If we could fight victoriously, we fought; if we could not win, we retreated. From March 1947 to March 1948, one whole army [of the enemy] disappeared into the landscape, for we annihilated several tens of thousands of their troops. When we surrounded I-ch'uan, and Liu K'an came to relieve the city, the commander-in-chief Liu K'an was killed, two of his three divisional commanders were killed and the other taken prisoner, and the whole army ceased to exist. This was synthesis. All of their guns and artillery were synthesized over to our side, and the soldiers were synthesized too. Those who wanted to stay with us could stay, and to those who didn't want to stay we gave money for their travelling expenses. After we had annihilated Liu K'an, the brigade stationed in I-ch'uan surrendered without fighting. In the three great campaigns Liao-Shen, Huai-Hai, and Peking-Tientsin — what was our method of

synthesis? Fu Tso-i was synthesized over to our side with his army of 400,000 men, without fighting, and they handed over all their rifles!<sup>lxv</sup> One thing eating another, big fish eating little fish, this is synthesis. It has never been put like this in books. I have never put it this way in my books either. For his part, Yang Hsien-chen believes that two combine into one, and that synthesis is the indissoluble tie between two opposites. What indissoluble ties are there in this world? Things may be tied, but in the end they must be severed. There is nothing which cannot be severed. In the twenty-odd years of our struggle, many of us have also been devoured by the enemy. When the 300,000-strong Red Army reached the Shen-Kan-Ning area, there were only 25,000 left. Of the others, some had been devoured, some scattered, some killed or wounded.

We must take life as our starting-point in discussing the unity of opposites. (Comrade K'ang Sheng: 'It won't do merely to talk about concepts.')

While analysis is going on, there is also synthesis, and while synthesis is going on, there is also analysis.

When people eat animals and plants, they also begin with analysis. Why don't we eat sand? When there's sand in rice, it's not good to eat. Why don't we eat grass, as do horses, cows and sheep, but only things like cabbage? We must analyse everything. Shen Nung tasted the hundred herbs,<sup>lxvi</sup> and originated their use for medicine. After many tens of thousands of years, analysis finally revealed clearly what could be eaten, and what could not. Grasshoppers, snakes, and turtles can be eaten. Crabs, dogs, and aquatic creatures can be eaten. There are some foreigners who don't eat them. In North Shensi they don't eat aquatic creatures, they don't eat fish. They don't eat cat there either. One year there was a big flood of the Yellow River, which cast up on shore several tens of thousands of pounds of fish, and they used it all for fertilizer.

I am a native philosopher, you are foreign philosophers.

(Comrade Sheng: 'Could the Chairman say something about the problem of the three categories?')

Engels talked about the three categories, but as for me I don't believe in two of those categories. (The unity of opposites is the most basic law, the transformation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity of the opposites quality and quantity, and the negation of the negation does not exist at all.) The juxtaposition, on the same level, of the transformation of quality and quantity into one another, the negation of the negation, and the law of the unity of opposites is 'triplism', not monism. The most basic thing is the unity of opposites. The transformation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity of the opposites quality and quantity. There is no such thing as the negation of the negation. Affirmation, negation, affirmation, negation . . . in the development of things, every link in the chain of events is both affirmation and negation. Slave-holding society negated primitive society, but with reference to feudal society it constituted, in turn, the affirmation. Feudal society constituted the negation in relation to slave-holding society but it was in turn the affirmation with reference to capitalist society. Capitalist society was the negation in relation to feudal society, but it is, in turn, the affirmation in relation to socialist society.

What is the method of synthesis? Is it possible that primitive society can exist side-by-side with slave-holding society? They do exist side-by-side, but this is only a small part of the whole. The overall picture is that primitive society is going to be eliminated. The development of society, moreover, takes place by stages; primitive society, too, is divided into a great many stages. At that time, there was not yet the practice of burying women with their dead husbands, but they were obliged to subject themselves to men. First men were subject to women, and then things moved towards their opposite, and women were subject to men. This

stage in history has not yet been clarified, although it has been going on for a million years and more. Class society has not yet lasted 5,000 years, cultures such as that of Lung Shan and Yang Shao<sup>lxvii</sup> at the end of the primitive era had coloured pottery. In a word, one devours another, one overthrows another, one class is eliminated, another class rises, one society is eliminated, another society rises. Naturally, in the process of development, everything is not all that pure. When it gets to feudal society, there still remains something of the slaveholding system, though the greater part of the social edifice is characterized by the feudal system. There are still some serfs, and also some bondworkers, such as handicraftsmen. Capitalist society isn't all that pure either, and even in more advanced capitalist societies there is also a backward part. For example, there was the slave system in the Southern United States. Lincoln abolished the slave system, but there are still black slaves today, their struggle is very fierce. More than 20 million people are participating in it, and that's quite a few.

One thing destroys another, things emerge, develop, and are destroyed, everywhere is like this. If things are not destroyed by others, then they destroy themselves. Why should people die? Does the aristocracy die too? This is a natural law. Forests live longer than human beings, yet even they last only a few thousand years. If there were no such thing as death, that would be unbearable. If we could still see Confucius alive today, the earth wouldn't be able to hold so many people. I approve of Chuang-tzu's approach.<sup>lxviii</sup> When his wife died, he banged on a basin and sang. When people die there should be parties to celebrate the victory of dialectics, to celebrate the destruction of the old. Socialism, too, will be eliminated, it wouldn't do if it were not eliminated, for then there would be no communism. Communism will last for thousands and thousands of years. I don't believe that there will be no qualitative changes under communism, that it will not be divided into stages by qualitative changes! I don't believe it! Quantity changes into quality, and

quality changes into quantity. I don't believe that it can remain qualitatively exactly the same, unchanging for millions of years! This is unthinkable in the light of dialectics. Then there is the principle, 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'. Do you believe they can carry on for a million years with the same economics? Have you thought about it? If that were so, we wouldn't need economists, or in any case we could get along with just one textbook, and dialectics would be dead.

The life of dialectics is the continuous movement toward opposites. Mankind will also finally meet its doom. When the theologians talk about doomsday, they are pessimistic and terrify people. We say the end of mankind is something which will produce something more advanced than mankind. Mankind is still in its infancy. Engels spoke of moving from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, and said that freedom is the understanding of necessity. This sentence is not complete, it only says one half and leaves the rest unsaid. Does merely understanding it make you free? Freedom is the understanding of necessity and the transformation of necessity — one has some work to do too. If you merely eat without having any work to do, if you merely understand, is that sufficient? When you discover a law, you must be able to apply it, you must create the world anew, you must break the ground and edify buildings, you must dig mines, industrialize. In the future there will be more people, and there won't be enough grain, so men will have to get food from minerals. Thus it is that only by transformation can freedom be obtained. Will it be possible in the future to be all that free? Lenin said that in the future, aeroplanes would be as numerous in the skies as flies, rushing hither and thither. Everywhere they will collide, and what will we do about it? How will we manoeuvre them? And if we do, will things be all that free? In Peking at present there are 10,000 buses; in Tokyo there are 100,000 [vehicles] (or is it 800,000?), so there are more automobile accidents. We have fewer cars, and we also educate

the drivers and the people, so there are few accidents. What will they do in Peking 10,000 years hence? Will there still be 10,000 buses? They may invent something new, so that they can dispense with these means of transport, so that men can fly, using some simple mechanical device, and fly right to any place, and land wherever they like. It won't do just to understand necessity, we must also transform things.

I don't believe that communism will not be divided into stages, and that there will be no qualitative changes. Lenin said that all things can be divided. He gave the atom as an example, and said that not only can the atom be divided, but the electron, too, can be divided. Formerly, however, it was held that it could not be divided; the branch of science devoted to splitting the atomic nucleus is still very young, only twenty or thirty years old. In recent decades, the scientists have resolved the atomic nucleus into its constituents, such as protons, anti-protons, neutrons, anti-neutrons, mesons and anti-mesons. These are the heavy ones; there are also the light ones. For the most part, these discoveries only got under way during and after the Second World War. As for the fact that one could separate the electrons from the atomic nucleus, that was discovered some time ago. An electric wire makes use of dissociated electrons from the outside of copper or aluminium. In the 300 li of the earth's atmosphere, it has also been discovered that there are layers of dissociated electrons. There, too, the electrons and the atomic nucleus are separated. As yet, the electron has not been split, but some day they will certainly be able to split it. Chuang-tzu said, 'A length of one foot, which is divided in half each day, will never be reduced to zero.' (Chuang-tzu, Chapter [33 G] 'On the various schools', quoting Kung-sun Lung.) This is the truth. If you don't believe it, just consider. If it could be reduced to zero, then there would be no such thing as science. The myriad things develop continuously and limitlessly, and they are infinite. Time and space are infinite. As regards space, looking at it both macroscopically and microscopically, it is infinite, it can be

divided endlessly. So even after a million years scientists will still have work to do. I very much appreciate the article on basic particles in the Bulletin of Natural Science by Sakata.<sup>lxi</sup> I have never seen this kind of article before. This is dialectical materialism. He quotes Lenin.

The weakness of philosophy is that it hasn't produced practical philosophy, but only bookish philosophy.

We should always be bringing forward new things. Otherwise what are we here for? What do we want descendants for? New things are to be found in reality, we must grasp reality. In the last analysis, is Jen Chi-yu<sup>lxx</sup> Marxist or not? I greatly appreciate those articles of his on Buddhism. There is some research [behind them], he is a student of T'ang Yung-t'ung.<sup>lxxi</sup> He discusses only the Buddhism of the T'ang dynasty, and does not touch directly on the Buddhism of later times. Sung and Ming metaphysics developed from the Ch'an School of the T'ang dynasty, and it was a movement from subjective idealism to objective idealism.<sup>lxxii</sup> There is both Buddhism and Taoism, and it is wrong not to distinguish between them. How can it be proper not to pay attention to them? Han Yu didn't talk sense. His slogan was, 'Learn from their ideas, but not from their mode of expression.' His ideas were entirely copied from others, he changed the form, the mode of composition of the essays. He didn't talk sense, and the little bit he did talk was basically taken from the ancients. There is a little something new in writings like the Discourse on Teachers. Liu Tzu-hou was different, he knew the ins and outs of Buddhist and Taoist materialism.<sup>lxxiii</sup> And yet, his Heaven Answers is too short, just that little bit. His Heaven Answers is a product of Ch'u Yuan's Heaven Asks.<sup>lxxiv</sup> For several thousand years, only this one man has written a piece such as Heaven Answers. What are Heaven Asks and Heaven Answers all about? If there are no annotations, to explain it clearly, you can't understand it if you read it, you'll only get the general idea. Heaven Asks is really fantastic, thousands of years ago it raised



all kinds of questions, relating to the universe, to nature, and to history.

(Regarding the discussion on the problem of two combining into one:) Let Hung Ch'i reprint a few good items, and write a report.

## **Appendix A**

### **Mao Tse-tung's Late Views on Resolution of Contradictions**

(from the website <http://marxistphilosophy.org>,  
<http://marxistphilosophy.org/LateMao.pdf>)

Mao Tse-tung on "synthesis," that is, the result of resolving a contradiction:

(A) In a meeting with Ai Siqi in the summer of 1964, Mao said:

"Synthesis is just the completed development of one side, the elimination of one side, and the resolution of the contradiction."

(B) In his talk on philosophy on August 18, 1964, Mao said:

"How can synthesis happen? The Guomindang and the Communist Party are two opposites. On the mainland synthesis was precisely this way--you all saw it. Their armed forces arrived and we ate them up, piece by piece. There was no synthesis of two peacefully coexisting sides... . One eats up another, big fish eat little fish, this is what synthesis is. No previous writings have described such errors [about synthesis], and my writing also has not described them."

(C) In a speech at Hangzhou on December 21, 1965, Mao said:

"To synthesize is just to eat the enemy up. How did we synthesize the Guomindang? We captured rank-and-file soldiers but did not kill them. Some were let go but the greater part replenished our army. We seized all weapons, provisions, and all kinds of equipment. What was not needed was "overcome," to use a philosophical term, such as people like [Guomindang General] Du Yuming. Eating up is also analysis and synthesis. For

example, if you eat crabs, you only eat the inside, not the shell. The stomach and intestines absorb nourishment and get rid of the waste. You are all foreign philosophers, but I am a native philosopher. Synthesizing the Guomindang was just eating it up, absorbing the larger part, and discarding a small part. This is learned from Marx. Marx removed the outer shell of Hegel's philosophy, absorbed the valuable inner core, and transformed it into materialistic dialectics. He absorbed Feuerbach's materialism and criticized his metaphysics-the inheritance must still be carried on. Marxism absorbed the good and discarded the bad from French utopian socialism and English political economy.

## Appendix B

### "Affirmation, Negation, Affirmation, Negation"?

Mao makes a particular statement in "Talk on Questions of Philosophy" where he asserts that Negation of the Negation doesn't exist. Instead he offers some vague idea of "affirmation and negation". This statement doesn't make any sense to me at all. It didn't make sense to anyone I asked about it either. Regardless I will still take a moment to try and go through what was in that passage.

*Engels talked about the three categories, but as for me I don't believe in two of those categories. (The unity of opposites is the most basic law, the transformation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity of the opposites quality and quantity, and the negation of the negation does not exist at all.) The juxtaposition, on the same level, of the transformation of quality and quantity into one another, the negation of the negation, and the law of the unity of opposites is 'triplism', not monism. The most basic thing is the unity of opposites. The transformation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity of the opposites quality and quantity. There is no such thing as the negation of the negation. Affirmation, negation, affirmation, negation . . . in the development of things, every link in the chain of events is both affirmation and negation. Slave-holding society negated primitive society, but with reference to feudal society it constituted, in turn, the affirmation. Feudal society constituted the negation in relation to slave-holding society but it was in turn the affirmation with reference to capitalist society. Capitalist society was the negation in relation to feudal society, but it is, in turn, the affirmation in relation to socialist society.*

Mao seems to be arguing semantics here. The language chosen appears to indicate something that already exists. There is no negation and then affirmation. The negation is an affirmation.

This doesn't make any sense to me at all. It's even worse when we consider that Mao wrote the opposite in other places.

## **Acknowledgements**

I'd like to give big huge thanks to marxistphilosophy.org which was the source for almost all of the material I gathered here.

I'd like to thank one particular fan who suggested creating this book in order to help him better understand the subject. It was a tremendous idea!

Finally I'd like to thank my friend Klaas for helping me understand the Negation of the Negation.

# End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Global Research, Freeze the 1.5 Quadrillion Derivatives Bubble as a First Step Towards World Economic Recovery <http://www.globalresearch.ca/freeze-the-1-5-quadrillion-derivatives-bubble-as-a-first-step-towards-world-economic-recovery/12947>

<sup>ii</sup> Mao Zedong *ji bujuan*, pp. 245-246

<sup>iii</sup> *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought*, Part I, p. 50.

<sup>iv</sup> Schram, *Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed*, pp. 189-90.

<sup>v</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy" *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 249.

<sup>vi</sup> In his essay "On the Question of Dialectics", Lenin said, "The splitting in two of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts (see the quotation from Philo on Heraclitus at the beginning of Section 3 'On Cognition' in Lassalle's book on Heraclitus) is the essence (one of the 'essentials', one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics." (*Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357.) In his "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic*", he said, "In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This grasps the kernel of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development." (*Ibid.*, p. 215.)

<sup>vii</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Coacted Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358.

<sup>viii</sup> A saying of Tung Chung-shu (179-104 B.C.), a well-known exponent of Confucianism in the Han Dynasty.

<sup>ix</sup> Frederick Engels, "Dialectics. Quantity and Quality", *Anti-Duhring*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1959, p. 166.

<sup>x</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 357-58.

<sup>xi</sup> Frederick Engels, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-67.

<sup>xii</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357.

<sup>xiii</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 358-59

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<sup>xiv</sup> See "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War", Note 10, p. 251 of this volume.

<sup>xv</sup> See *ibid.*, Note 1, p. 249 of this volume.

<sup>xvi</sup> Wei Cheng (A.D. 580-643) was a statesman and historian of the Tang Dynasty.

<sup>xvii</sup> *Shui Hu Chuan* (Heroes of the Marshes), a famous 14th century Chinese novel, describes a peasant war towards the end of the Northern Sung Dynasty. Chu Village was in the vicinity of Liangshanpo, where Sung Chiang, leader of the peasant uprising and hero of the novel, established his base. Chu Chao-feng, the head of this village, was a despotic landlord.

<sup>xviii</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin", *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., International Publishers, New York, 1943, Vol. IX, p. 66.

<sup>xix</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. V, p. 369.

<sup>xx</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic*", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 97-98.

<sup>xxi</sup> *Shan Hai Chug* (Book of Mountains and Seas) was written in the era of the Warring States (403-221 B.C.). In one of its fables Kua Fu, a superman, pursued and overtook the sun. But he died of thirst, whereupon his staff was transformed into the forest of Teng.

<sup>xxii</sup> Yi is one of the legendary heroes of ancient China, famous for his archery. According to a legend in *Huai Nan Tzu*, compiled in the 2nd century B.C., there were ten suns in the sky in the days of Emperor Yao. To put an end to the damage to vegetation caused by these scorching suns, Emperor Yao ordered Yi to shoot them down. In another legend recorded by Wang Yi (2nd century A.D.), the archer is said to have shot down nine of the ten suns.

<sup>xxiii</sup> *Hsi Yu Chi* (Pilgrimage to the West) is a 16th century novel, the hero of which is the monkey god Sun Wu-kung. He could miraculously change at will into seventy-two different shapes, such as a bird, a tree and a stone.

<sup>xxiv</sup> *The Strange Tales of Liao Chai*, written by Pu Sung-ling in the 17th century, is a well-known collection of 431 tales, mostly about ghosts and fox spirits.

<sup>xxv</sup> Karl Marx, "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy", *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Eng. ed., Chicago, 1904, pp. 310-11.

<sup>xxvi</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358.



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<sup>xxvii</sup> The saying "Things that oppose each other also complement each other" first appeared in the History of the Earlier Han Dynasty by Pan Ku, a celebrated historian in the 1st century A.D. It has long been a popular saying.

<sup>xxviii</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", Collected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358.

<sup>xxix</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Remarks on N. I. Bukharin's Economics of the Transitional Period" Selected Works, Russ. ed., Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, Vol. XI, p. 357.

<sup>xxx</sup> Lao Tzu, Chapter LVIII.

<sup>xxxi</sup> i.e. 1) Marxist philosophy, that is, dialectical materialism and historical materialism, which deals with the general law of development of the contradictions existing in nature, human society and man's thought; 2) Marxist political economy which elucidates the law governing the development of society's economy and exposes how the capitalist class exploits the working class (the theory of surplus value); and 3) scientific socialism which shows that the capitalist society is bound to develop to a higher stage of society and that the proletariat is the grave-digger of the capitalist system. (For details see Lenin's *The Three Sources and the Three Component Parts of Marxism*.)

<sup>xxxii</sup> Peking University, jointly descended from the old Peking University which launched the May Fourth Movement in 1919, and from the American-endowed Yenching University, has continued since 1949 to enjoy the highest prestige in China for general intellectual excellence. People's University (*Jen-min ta-hsiieh*), also located in Peking, was specially set up to provide courses more accessible to students from worker and peasant backgrounds.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Among the Confucian classics, the Four Books represent the core studied by beginners, the Five Classics a somewhat larger corpus.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Among his varied educational experiences, Mao Tse-tung has long singled out the six months he spent reading in the Hunan Provincial Library, in the winter of 1912-13, as one of the most valuable.

<sup>xxxv</sup> The first sentence is from the *Doctrine of the Mean*, the second is from *Mencius*, Book IV.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> The quotation is from the Confucian *Analects*. The incident in which the people of K'uang detained Confucius and wanted to kill him is referred to in the *Analects*.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Mao's reasoning is apparently that, whether or not he went there, Confucius had nothing against Ch'in (a state which existed in the first millennium B.C. in present-day Shensi, whose ruler ultimately conquered the whole of China and founded the Ch'in dynasty in 221 B.C.), since he included in the *Book of Odes*, which he is supposed to have edited, a number of poems from that area, including the two mentioned by Mao.

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xxxviii Ssu-ma Chien (145-90 B.C.) was China's first great historian, who compiled *shih-chi* (Historical Records) relating history of China from the origins to his own day.

xxxix The translation of the above poem, and of the titles of the two mentioned previously, are taken from Legge's version of the *Book of Odes*.

xl Love poems have traditionally been interpreted by Chinese critics as an allegory for the relations between an official and his prince; Chu Hsi (see below, note 42) held that they should be taken at face value. Mao puts the commonsense view that they should sometimes be taken literally, and sometimes not.

xli Wei Chuang (c. 858-910) was an eminent poet of the late T'ang and early Five Dynasties (began 907) period. Mao is arguing that the same principles of interpretation should be applied to the *Book of Odes* and to all classical poetry.

xlii For "Four Clean ups" and "Five antis" see note 5 on p. 9 of this volume.

xliii *Kuang-ming jib-pao* organ of the China Democratic League, took the lead in criticisms of the party in April 1957, when the 'blooming and contending' was in full flood. The *Wen-hui pao*, published in Shanghai, was a non-Party organ which had been criticized by Mao for its bourgeois tendencies in 1957. In November 1965, it was to serve as the channel for the opening shot in the Cultural Revolution.

xliv Chou Ku-ch'eng was the author of numerous works on Chinese and world history. Since 1950 he had been a professor at Fudan University in Shanghai. In 1962 he published an article on history and art, in which he expressed ideas on the '*Zeitgeist*' which were said to be an expression in the realm of esthetics of Yang Hsien-chen's philosophical theories (see below, note 19 to this text).

xlv Sun Yeh-fang was at this time Director of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Science; he was dismissed in 1966. As K'ang Sheng's remark indicates, he had adopted the ideas of some Soviet and Eastern European economists with whom he had been in professional contact about the role of the profit motive in a socialist economy.

xlvi In the summer of 1955, just before Mao's speech of 31 July gave a new impetus to the formation of agricultural producers' cooperatives, the Party's Rural Work Department (at the instigation, of Liu Shao-ch'i) had disbanded a number of cooperatives which were said to have been hastily and prematurely formed.

xlvii Teng Tzu-hui (1895-1972) had been head of the Rural Work Department since 1952, though his influence had declined since the late 1950s, because of his share of responsibility for the 'disbanding' or 'weeding out' of cooperatives in 1955. It would appear, however that he still possessed sufficient status to put his views energetically in opposition to those of Mao when, in the early 1960s, the policies enumerated here by Mao were a subject of dispute within the Party. Both the Rural Work Department and Teng zu-hui were severely criticised by comrade Mao during debate on cooperative transformation. [For more details refer pp. 224-225 of S.W. Vol. V.]

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As a symbol to cover this whole spectrum of policies, emphasizing the role of material stimulants, the private plot, etc., the expression 'four great freedoms' is less common, in documents published since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, than 'Sanzi yibao' ('three freedoms and one fix, or guarantee'). On this concept, which is supposed to sum up the reactionary line of Liu Shao-ch'i and his sympathizers in the countryside, see the article 'Struggle between Two Roads in China's Countryside', Peking Review, No. 49 (1967), pp. 11-19.

<sup>xlviii</sup> A right opportunist view advocated by Liu Shao-chi and others. In this connection see comrade Mao's speech at the PB meeting of the CC of the CPC "Refute the Right Deviationist Views that Depart from General Line", *S.W.* Vol. V pp. 93-94.

<sup>lix</sup> The view that 'two combine into one' was put forward in the early 1960s by Yang Hsien-chen (c. 1899- ), who had been, since 1955, President of the Higher Party School. Beginning in July 1964 this formulation was violently attacked in the press on the grounds that it minimized the importance of struggle and contradiction, and contrasted with Mao's view that 'one divides into two', i.e. that struggle, and in particular class struggle, constantly re-emerges, even when particular contradictions have been resolved. The 'outline of an article' referred to in the stenographer's note was presumably a summary of one of the forthcoming attacks on Yang, submitted to the Chairman in advance for his approval.

<sup>l</sup> The defense of Madrid, starting in October 1936, lasted for two years and five months. In 1936, fascist Germany and Italy made use of the Spanish fascist warlord Franco to launch a war of aggression against Spain. The Spanish people, led by the Popular Front Government, heroically defended democracy against aggression. The battle of Madrid, the Capital of Spain, was the bitterest in the whole war. Madrid fell in March 1939 because Britain, France and other imperialist countries assisted the aggressors by their hypocritical policy of "non-intervention" and because divisions arose within the Popular Front. The point of this criticism is obviously not that the Spanish republicans fought to the end, but that they failed to grasp the axiom that territorial strong points are not in themselves decisive.

<sup>li</sup> Please see "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party" adopted on April 20, 1945, *S.W.* Vol. III, pp 177-225 (1965 edition).

<sup>lii</sup> Mao began his activity at this institute in 1925, but it was in 1926 that he actually served as principal and made his main contribution.

<sup>liii</sup> The quotation is from *Mencius*, Book VI, Part A, Ch. 15.

<sup>liv</sup> This is presumably a reference to Chang Ping-lin's celebrated article, published in 1903, entitled 'A Refutation of K'ang Yu-wei's Letter on Revolution'. In this article, Chang sharply attacked K'ang not only on the issue of revolution versus gradual reform, but on the importance of racial differences between the Chinese and the Manchus, which K'ang tended to minimize. The Manchus, Chang argued, were an alien and decadent race, totally unfit to rule China. It was in this context that he discussed evolution, indicating that the existing racial differences were the product of history.

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<sup>lv</sup> Fu Ying is apparently a Chinese scientist who was alive in 1964, since Mao says he wants to look him up.

<sup>lvi</sup> Lu P'ing (c. 1910-) was President of Peking University at this time; he was removed and 'struggled against' in June 1966.

<sup>lvii</sup> Ai Ssu-chti (c. 1910-66) was, at the time of his death, Vice President of the Higher Party School. He was one of the Party's leading philosophical spokesmen, who had translated works on dialectical materialism from the Russian, and written many books and articles which aimed to make Marxism accessible to the masses. On 1 November 1964 he published an article in *People's Daily* attacking Yang Hsien-chen, the 'bourgeois' philosopher Mao refers to earlier in this talk in connection with the principle of 'two combining into one'.

<sup>lviii</sup> The metaphor of 'dissecting a sparrow' is an applied theory and a work method to acquire knowledge and sum up experiences. Instead of attempting to generalize about a vast number of repetitions of a phenomenon, this work method advocates the in-depth analysis, thorough study and investigation of a prototype, and a summing-up experience through such analysis. The slogan is derived from the common saying "while a sparrow is small, it contains all the vital organs" Here, Mao makes the point that, in the broader international context, China as a whole is a microcosm of the problems of revolution in the world today.

<sup>lix</sup> Leng Tzu-hsing discourses on the mansion of the Duke of Jung-kuo in Chapter 2 of the book (*The Story of the Stone*). The 'Talisman for Officials' was a list of the rich and influential families in the area which the former novice from the Bottle-Gourd Temple said every official should carry in order to avoid offending them and thereby wrecking his career (*The Story of the Stone*).

<sup>lx</sup> For comrade Mao's criticisms on this matter see "Letter Concerning the Dream of the Red Chamber" (S.W. Vol. V pp. 150-151), "On Criticising Longlouloumeng yuanjia" (S.W. Vol. V pp. 293-294.)

For Mao's criticism of Yü P'ing-po see above, Text 8, note 8. Wang K'un-lun was Vice-Mayor of Peking in the 1950s.

<sup>lxi</sup> o Ch'i-fang (1911-), a lyric poet and powerful figure in the literary world, had defended Yü P'ing-po up to a point at the time of the campaign against him in 1954, saying that Yü was wrong in his interpretation of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, but politically loyal. He himself came under attack at the time of the Great Leap Forward.

<sup>lxii</sup> Wu Shih-ch'ang's work on this subject has been translated into English: *On 'The Red Chamber Dream'* (Clarendon Press, 1961.)

<sup>lxiii</sup> Mao's statement here concurs with the views of Lu Hsün.

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lxiv The figures Mao gives here, as he shifts to the historical present and calls to mind the final showdown with the Kuomintang, are rather those at the beginning of the Anti-Japanese War than those at the beginning of the renewed civil war in 1946, when the People's Liberation Army had grown to at least half a million men.

lxv In January 1949, General Fu Tso-i, commanding the nationalist garrison in Peiping (as it was then called), surrendered the city without a fight to avoid useless destruction. He subsequently became Minister of Water Conservancy in the Peking government.

lxvi The legendary Emperor Shen Nung is said to have taught the art of agriculture in the third millennium B.C., and in particular to have discovered the medicinal properties of plants.

lxvii The Lung Shan and Yang Shao cultures, located respectively in north-eastern and north-western China, were the two most remarkable cultures of the neolithic period. As Mao indicates, they are particularly noted for their pottery.

lxviii The book called the *Chuang-tzu*, which was probably composed only in part by the man of the same name who lived in the second half of the fourth century B.C., is not only one of the classic texts of Taoism (with the *Lao-tzu* and the *Book of Changes*), but one of the greatest literary masterpieces in the history of China.

lxix Sakata Shiyouchi, a Japanese physicist from the University of Nagoya, holds that 'elementary particles are a single, material, differentiated, and limitless category which make up the natural order'. An article by him expounding these views was published in *Red Flag* in June 1965. (See also the succeeding articles in this volume.)

lxx Mao is apparently referring to a collection of essays published by Jen Chi-yü in 1963, and reprinted in 1973: *Han T'ang fo-chiao ssu-hsiang lun chi* (*Collected Essays on Buddhist Thought in the Han and T'ang Dynasties*) (Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 348 pp.) In these studies, he quotes from Lenin at considerable length regarding dialectics.

lxxi T'ang Yung-t'ung (1892-1964), whom Jen Chi-yü acknowledges as his teacher, was the leading historian of Buddhism, who had written on Chinese Buddhism under the Han, Wei, Chin, and Northern and Southern dynasties, on the history of Indian thought, etc. He was Dean of the Humanities at Peking University from 1948 until he fell ill in 1954.

lxxii Under the influence of Ch'an Buddhism (better known under its Japanese name of Zen), Chinese philosophers of the Sung and Ming dynasties, of whom Chu Hsi (1130-1200) is the most famous, developed a synthesis between Confucianism and Buddhism in which a central role is played by the concept li (principle or reason), commonly known as Neo-Confucianism. For a Chinese view of the relations between these schools basically similar to Mao's, see Hou Wai-lu, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1959), pp. 33-51. For an interpretation by a Western specialist, see H. G. Creel, *Chinese Thought from Confucius to Mao Tse-tung* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; and London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953), Ch. 10.

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<sup>lxxiii</sup> Han Yü and Liu Tsung-yüan. Han Yü sought to recreate the simplicity of the classical period, while avoiding excessive archaism. The slogan about 'learning from their ideas' quoted by Mao refers to this aim of seeking inspiration from the ancient Confucian sages, while avoiding outmoded forms of expression. He adopted a critical attitude towards Buddhism, but none the less borrowed some ideas from it. Liu Tsung-yüan, whom Mao calls here by his literary name of Liu Tzu-hou, was a close friend of Han Yü.

<sup>lxxiv</sup> Liu Tsung-yüan's essay *T'ien Tui* (*Heaven Answers*) undertook to answer the questions about the origin and nature of the universe raised by Ch'ü Yüan in his poem *T'ien Wen* (*Heaven Asks*). The latter is translated under the title 'The Riddles' in *Li Sao and Other Poems of Chu Yuan*, pp. 79-97. It is, as Mao says, suggestive but extremely obscure.