

Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions

Part 4: Philosophy



Mao in Yanan where he wrote *On Practice and On Contradiction*.

Introduction

The first three articles in this series have dealt with Mao's contributions in the areas of revolution in colonial countries, revolutionary warfare and military strategy, and political economy, economic policy and socialist construction (Revolution, April-May, June and July 1978 respectively). But would it have been possible for Mao to develop his revolutionary line in these, and other, spheres and make such great contributions in these areas without the consistent application of Marxist philosophy, materialist dialectics? Impossible.

In fact, as the previous articles have stressed, Mao's contributions in these fields are all based upon and characterized by the thoroughgoing application of materialist dialectics. At the same time Mao devoted great attention to and further developed and enriched Marxism-Leninism in the realm of philosophy in its own right. This itself was dialectically related to his contributions in other areas and most especially, as will be gone into later in this article, to what is overall his greatest contribution—the development of the theory and line of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Struggle and development on the philosophical front are closely linked with struggle and development in society as a whole. This has always been the case and becomes all the more so with the emergence of Marxism and the development of the proletariat into a class for itself, that is, with the development of the class conscious movement of the working class. Under socialism this truth takes on even greater importance, because the task of the proletariat as master of socialist society is to consciously transform nature, society and the people according to its world outlook and advance to communism.

So long as there are classes, any kind of philosophy has a class nature. And "Philosophy always serves politics." ("Momentous Struggle on the Question of the Identity Between Thinking and Being," Three Major Struggles On China's Philosophical Front, Peking Foreign Language Press, 1973, p. 47)

As Mao himself insisted, the foundation of philosophy—in class society—is class struggle, and this is especially true of Marxist philosophy. Mao explained it this way: "There is a struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. . . . The oppressors oppress the oppressed, while the oppressed need to fight back and seek a way out before they start looking for philosophy. It was 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." In this same talk Mao pointedly said to a group of intellectuals, "If you don't engage in class struggle, then what is this philosophy you're engaged in?" (See "Talk on Questions of Philosophy," Chairman Mao Talks To The People, edited by Stuart Schram, pp.

212, 213, 215)

But philosophy in turn exerts a tremendous reaction on the political struggle. This is the main reason why Mao not only devoted great attention to philosophy and to struggle in this realm himself but repeatedly insisted that philosophy must be liberated from the confines of the scholar's study and be taken up by the broad masses of people. For without consciously taking up Marxist philosophy and breaking the mental shackles of the philosophy of the exploiting classes it would be impossible for the proletariat and the broad masses to smash completely the fetters of capitalism and class society, emancipate mankind and bring about a qualitative leap in its mastery over nature.

Foundations of Marxist Philosophy

Mao systematized and enriched the understanding of the fundamental law of contradiction and armed masses of people, not only in China but worldwide, with this deepened understanding. This is the essence of Mao's tremendous contribution to Marxism-Leninism in the sphere of philosophy. To grasp this fully it is necessary first to summarize the basic principles of Marxist philosophy and their development beginning with Marx and Engels.

Marxist philosophy, like Marxism in general, did not, of course, spring full-blown from the head of Marx. As Mao was reported to have jokingly asked, when Marx was a very young man did he study any Marxism? Marxist philosophy was forged by Marx, in close collaboration with Engels, by concentrating, reconstructing and recasting what was correct in Hegel's dialectical method and the materialism of Feuerbach, both of whose schools of thought Marx successively passed through as a young man, before he became a Marxist.

In "Ludwig Feuerbach And The End Of Classical German Philosophy," Engels summarizes this process. There he shows how the development of Hegel's philosophy, as well as that of Feuerbach—and that of Marx and Engels themselves—were closely linked to the development of capitalism and the rapid advances in science and technology as well as the dramatic social changes and upheavals that were associated with it, especially in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Engels explained with regard to Hegel's philosophy that:

"Just as the bourgeoisie by large-scale industry, competition and the world market dissolves in practice all stable time-honoured institutions, so this dialectical philosophy dissolves all conception of final, absolute truth and of absolute states of humanity corresponding to it. For it nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and passing away, of

endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain." (Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach And The End Of Classical German Philosophy," Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 339, Progress Publishers, 1973.)

But at the time Hegel developed his philosophy (the first few decades of the 19th century) capitalism was only weakly developing in Germany. The German state was not united under capitalist rule, the bourgeois revolution in Germany had not been completed and the rising bourgeoisie was forced to compromise with the feudal aristocracy and the monarchy in the person of Frederick William III, King of Prussia. All this had a great influence on Hegel's thinking, both philosophical and political.

Hegel endeavored to develop a complete philosophical system, which had its material basis in the contradictory conditions in Germany at that time. Owing to this, while Hegel's method was dialectical, his philosophical system ended up in metaphysics, in the proclamation of a realized absolute truth represented precisely by Hegel's philosophical system itself. Hegel was after all an idealist, whose philosophical system invented an Absolute Idea, existing prior to and independent of nature; this Idea then "alienated" itself into nature, to be progressively comprehended by man in society, leading up to its final and complete realization in the philosophical system of Hegel.

As Engels expressed it:

"The whole dogmatic content of the Hegelian system is declared to be absolute truth, in contradiction to his dialectical method, which dissolves all dogmatism. Thus the revolutionary side is smothered beneath the overgrowth of the conservative side. And what applies to philosophical cognition applies also to historical practice. Mankind, which, in the person of Hegel, has reached the point of working out the absolute idea, must also in practice have gotten so far that it can carry out this absolute idea in reality. Hence the practical political demands of the absolute idea on contemporaries may not be stretched too far. And we find at the conclusion of [Hegel's] *Philosophy of Right* that the absolute idea is to be realized in the monarchy based on social estates which Frederick William III so persistently but vainly promised to his subjects [i.e., a constitutional monarchy]." (*Ibid.*, pp. 340-341)

Especially after Hegel's death in 1831, however, there were those, including Marx and Engels, who inherited the revolutionary side of Hegel's philosophy—its dialectical method. Engels stressed that while Hegel's system led to conservatism in both philosophy and politics, "whoever regarded the dialectical method as the main thing could belong to the most extreme opposition, both in politics and religion." (*Ibid.*, p. 342)

And, Engels recalled, after 1840, when in Prussia "orthodox pietism and absolute feudal reaction ascended the throne with Frederick William IV," Marx—and Engels himself—took the field of opposition as part of those "Young Hegelians" whose stand "revealed itself directly as the philosophy of the aspiring radical bourgeoisie and used the meagre cloak of philosophy only to deceive the censorship." (*Ibid.*, p. 343)

But Marx and Engels soon revealed themselves to be more radical than bourgeois. Here is Engels' description of what happened next in their development:

"Then came Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*... it placed materialism on the throne again. Nature exists independently of all philosophy. It is the foundation upon which we human beings, ourselves products of nature, have grown up. Nothing exists outside nature and man, and the higher beings our religious fantasies have created are only the fantastic reflection of our own essence. The spell was broken; the [Hegelian] system was exploded and cast aside... One must himself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it. Enthusiasm was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians. How enthusiastically Marx greeted the new conception and how much—in spite of critical reservations—he was influenced by it, one may read in *The Holy Family*." (*Ibid.*, p. 344)

But Feuerbach was not a thoroughgoing materialist. Driven into isolation by the reactionary authorities, Feuerbach retreated philosophically as well. He rejected consistent materialism because he conceived of materialism as that kind characteristic of the 18th century—mechanical materialism, metaphysics as opposed to dialectics—as represented especially by the French materialists of that period. This materialism recognized only quantitative motion and treated the divisions in nature as absolute, reflecting the level of scientific discovery at that time and the fact that capitalism had not yet gained conquest of society (a major exception being England, where it involved the continuation of the monarchy and a landed aristocracy). Such materialism failed to grasp the fact that everything is contradiction; that the "natural order" is change, marked by leaps (qualitative change); that there is interconnection of contradictory things; and that there is only relative, not absolute, division between different kinds of matter in motion.

Finally Feuerbach himself ended up in idealism. While he had showed that religion represented merely the fantastic expression in the human mind of human and natural existence, he attempted not to abolish religion but to give human relations a religious character. As Engels characterized it:

"According to Feuerbach, religion is the relation between human beings based on the affections, the relation based on the heart, which religion until now has sought its truth in a fantastic mirror image of reality—in the mediation of one or many gods, the fantastic mirror images of human qualities—but now finds it directly and without any mediation in the love between 'I' and 'Thou.' Thus, finally, with Feuerbach sex love becomes one of the highest forms, if not the highest form, of the practice of his new religion." (*Ibid.*, p. 354)

And things turn out even worse when Feuerbach's philosophical and moral system is carried into the field of economic, social and political relations. Engels, with both sarcasm and regret, pointed out that the stock exchange indeed served as the perfect model and "temple" for Feuerbach's moral credo, for there everyone involved equally pursues his right to happiness, and ethics can be equated with doing well. In short, Feuerbach went no farther than the bourgeoisie itself in the final analysis—no farther than enshrining equality before the law as the highest principle of society. As Engels said, "Feuerbach's morality is cut exactly to the pattern of modern capitalist society, little as Feuerbach himself might desire or imagine it." (*Ibid.*, p. 358)

Therefore towards the oppressed classes, and the proletariat in capitalist society in particular, Feuerbach's philosophy/morality could only preach capitulation in the guise of "love" and "equality." Engels summed up that "At this point the last relic of its revolutionary character disappears from his philosophy, leaving only the old cant: Love one another—fall into each other's arms regardless of distinctions of sex or estate [class]—a universal orgy of reconciliation." (*Ibid.*, p. 359)

Marx' Leap

Thus it was necessary to go beyond Feuerbach, who had evolved out of Hegelianism of an unorthodox sort, but had been incapable of making an actual qualitative leap beyond Hegel and idealism in general. It was Marx who, more than anyone else, led in making this leap. As Engels summarized it, "Out of the dissolution of the Hegelian school, however, there developed still another tendency, the only one which has borne real fruit. And this tendency is essentially connected with the name of Marx." (*Ibid.*, p. 361)

Marx did not completely cast aside Feuerbach, any more than he did Hegel. He criticized Feuerbach's failure to carry materialism forward and he critically assimilated the materialist side of Feuerbach. According to Engels, Marx' "Theses On Feuerbach," written in 1845, is "the first document in which is deposited the brilliant germ of the new world

outlook." (Engels, *op. cit.*, "Foreward To The 1888 Edition," p. 336)

In these "Theses" Marx showed that Feuerbach was a contemplative materialist. "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism—that of Feuerbach included," wrote Marx, "is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object* or of *contemplation*, but not as *human sensuous activity, practice*, not subjectively. Hence it happened that the *active* side, in contradistinction to materialism, was developed by idealism—but only abstractly, since, of course, idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such." (Marx, "Theses On Feuerbach," Marx and Engels *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 13) For this reason, Marx said, Feuerbach "regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude... Hence he does not grasp the significance of 'revolutionary,' of 'practical-critical' activity." (*Ibid.*)

Here, for the first time in history, Marx is insisting on the central and determining role of practice in the process of cognition, its decisive role in the movement of knowledge. Previously, including with Feuerbach, as Marx points out, materialism conceived of objective reality as things existing outside of and independently of human thought, but did not consider human activity itself as part of objective reality. Thus Marx says of Feuerbach that he "wants sensuous objects, really differentiated from the thought of objects, but he does not conceive human activity itself as objective reality." (*Ibid.*) According to this view the relation of man to nature in the process of cognition is simply that man must reflect external reality in his thoughts, or contemplate it.

But this by itself cannot solve the question of whether man's thoughts correctly reflect nature. As Marx goes on to stress:

"The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question." (*Ibid.*)

In "Ludwig Feuerbach" Engels said that "The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of more recent philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being." (Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 345) Already in 1845, in his "Theses on Feuerbach," Marx had provided the basis for answering this question by identifying practice as the criterion of truth. "Social life" Marx said, "is essentially *practical*. All mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice." (Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 15)

As for society, Marx explained, contemplative materialism dealt at most with the role of *individuals* in relation to each other. It could not reveal the *social relations* that are the essential human relations, or the actual material conditions that established the basis for these social relations. "Feuerbach," Marx noted, "consequently does not see that the 'religious sentiment' is itself a *social product*, and that the abstract individual whom he analyzes belongs in reality to a particular form of society." (*Ibid.*)

The problem with Feuerbach was that as far as he "is a materialist he does not deal with history, and as far as he considers history he is not a materialist. With him materialism and history diverge..." ("Feuerbach, Opposition Of The Materialistic And Idealistic Outlook" [Chapter I of *The German Ideology*], Marx and Engels *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 29-30)

Finally, then, in opposition to Feuerbach and all previous materialists, the new—dialectical and historical—materialism is based on the understanding that "it is men that change circumstances," and that "the coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionizing practice*." (Marx, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 16.) In other words, what Marx emphasizes here is that just as men relate to each other and through society and are generally shaped by the society in which they exist, so, too, on the other hand, men can and must change society—and through it nature. Hence Marx' famous statement: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it." (*Ibid.*, p. 15)

Of course, Marx repeatedly stressed, men cannot change things as they wish but only in accordance with their objective laws. And this is true with regard to society as with regard to nature. Society is ultimately determined by the level of development of the productive forces, which each successive generation inherits. But society does not simply go through a series of quantitative changes, characterized only by addition of productive forces. The material life of society, in particular the economic relations, forms the base upon which arise political institutions, customs, laws, ideology, culture, etc.; these (the superstructure) in turn exert a tremendous reaction on the economic base and at particular times become decisive. At certain points the development of the productive forces itself brings them into conflict with the economic relations which people have entered into in using the productive forces. At such times a social revolution—a change in the superstructure—is required to replace the old production relations with new ones which can liberate the productive forces.

As Marx put it in criticizing the French anarchist of his time, M. Proudhon, "In acquiring new productive

forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing their way of earning their living, they change all their social relations." (*The Poverty of Philosophy*, International Publishers, 1973 edition, p. 109) But, again, to change their social relations requires a social revolution. Society therefore develops, from a lower to a higher level, through a series of such revolutions (qualitative leaps). This occurs through the overthrow of one class by another after a certain point in the development of the struggle between them; thus the history of society, since classes first emerged, is the history of class struggle.

Marxist philosophy recognizes in society, as in nature, the dialectical law of development. And in fact, recognizing the importance of changing the world—or of acting in accordance with the world, especially society, in its changingness, in its motion and development, and helping to hasten the revolutionary leap from capitalism to communism—Marx and Engels emphasized dialectics. As Lenin put it:

"Marx and Engels, as they grew out of Feuerbach and matured in the fight against the scribblers, naturally paid most attention to crowning the structure of philosophical materialism, that is not to the materialist epistemology but to the materialist conception of history. That is why Marx and Engels laid the emphasis in their works rather on *dialectical* materialism than on *dialectical materialism*, and insisted on *historical* materialism rather than on *historical materialism*." (Lenin, "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism," *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 329)

Hence, in developing their revolutionary philosophy Marx and Engels did not simply discard Hegel. Instead they retained the revolutionary side of Hegel, his dialectical method, and as Engels said, "freed [it] from the idealist trimming which with Hegel had prevented its consistent execution." (Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 362) Now it was not a case of the dialectical movement of an absolute idea, of spirit as the creator and shaper of the material world, but the reverse. Now it was recognized that it is matter that is eternally moving and changing, and transforming itself into different particular forms which themselves come into being and go out of existence; and more that ideas, consciousness, spirit, are but the reflection in the human mind (itself matter) of this process and follow the same laws of development. This was dialectical materialism—or materialist dialectics—and, as applied to history, historical materialism, as it was developed and systematized by Marx and Engels.

But, as indicated before, this philosophy was not simply, or fundamentally, the product of the brains of Marx and Engels. It was the result of the development of capitalism, of natural science and of the class struggle. And it was the product of a dialectical process of development of philosophy itself reflecting these changes and upheavals in society and in man's comprehension and mastery of the natural world. Nor did dialectical and historical materialism represent Marx and Engels and a few others alone; it was, and is, the revolutionary philosophy of the proletariat, both objective and partisan, reflecting both the objective laws of natural and historical development and the interests and historic mission of the proletariat which are fully in accord with these laws. For unlike all other classes in human history which have previously risen to the ruling position and remolded society in their image, the proletariat aims not merely to seize power; its mission is not to establish an "eternal" unchanging system representing the "end point" of human development, but to abolish all class distinctions and enable mankind to continuously overcome barriers to the development of human society and its transformation of nature.

Lenin Defends, Develops Marxist Philosophy

Here it has been possible to give only the briefest and most general outline of the development of the philosophical thinking of Marx and Engels and their founding of dialectical materialism and historical materialism through this process. But it should be pointed out that, with the forging of this scientific view of nature and society, philosophy as it had been in the past—as a branch of thought which could only attempt to fashion in the imagination all-encompassing principles for nature, society and thought and bridge the gap between seemingly unconnected phenomena, unifying them into a complete system—such philosophy came to an end, except as the persistence of outmoded thinking representing the interests of reactionary forces in society.

As Engels forcefully put it, historical materialism "puts an end to philosophy in the realm of history, just as the dialectical conception of nature [i.e., dialectical materialism] makes all natural philosophy unnecessary and impossible. It is no longer a question anywhere of inventing interconnections, from out of our brains, but of discovering them in the facts." (*Ibid.*, p. 375) Or as he explained it in another famous work:

"... modern materialism is essentially dialectic, and no longer requires the assistance of that sort of philosophy which, queen-like, pretended to rule the remaining mob of sciences. As soon as each special science is bound to make clear its position in the great totality of things and of our knowledge of things, a special science dealing with this totality is superfluous or unnecessary. That which still survives of all earlier

philosophy is the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics. Everything else is subsumed in the positive science of Nature and history." (Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 131)

But it hardly needs saying that putting an end to such outmoded philosophy is not so easy. This is not only, or even mainly, because this greatly displeases the professional philosophers, but because, as suggested earlier, such outmoded philosophy serves the reactionary forces in society. Marxist philosophy has had to fight every step of the way against the decadent philosophies of the reactionary classes and has developed in opposition to them, to one form or another of idealism and metaphysics. This is not only a reflection of the practical struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (and other exploiting classes) but is also an important part of the overall struggle between these classes.

And such struggle in the philosophical realm, reflecting and going hand in hand with practical struggle, has taken place very intensely within the socialist movement, between Marxists and opportunists of various kinds. This remained true throughout the lives of Marx and Engels, and one of the results of it was a further systematizing and deepening of Marxist philosophy, as for example in Engels' outstanding work *Anti-Duhring*.

Such was also the case with Lenin, and in particular the sharp struggle he waged to expose and combat renegades within the Marxist movement. The most severe of these in the philosophical field, and the one which produced the most extensive work by Lenin in defending and developing Marxist philosophy, was Lenin's scathing criticism of the philosophical and political opportunists who rallied around the thinking of Ernst Mach, Austrian physicist and philosopher, in the early 1900s, especially in the period between the 1905 and the 1917 revolutions in Russia.

Essentially, Machism (the most popular variety of empirio-criticism at that time) was a form of idealism. It was linked with the general positivist trend in philosophy that developed then and was closely akin to pragmatism, which was the specifically American form of positivism that arose with the development of U.S. capitalism into imperialism. (For more on this see the article "Against Pragmatism," in *The Communist*, theoretical journal of the Central Committee of the RCP, Vol. 2, No. 2, Summer 1978.)

As Lenin showed, Machism basically attempted to resurrect the reactionary philosophical concoctions of Lord George Berkeley, an 18th century-British bishop. *The Machists ridiculed the materialists* because, as Lenin put it, the materialists "recognize something unthinkable and unknowable—'things-in-themselves'—matter 'outside of experience' and outside of our knowledge." (Lenin, *op. cit.*, p. 23) Instead, the Machists insisted, the real world consists only of "sensations," it consists of things which exist only as they are realized in our knowledge of them and which have no existence outside of our knowledge of them. According to the Machists, the materialists err because they "hold that beyond the appearance there is the thing-in-itself; beyond the immediate sense data there is something else, some fetish, an 'idol', an absolute, a source of 'metaphysics', a double of religion ('holy matter', as Bazarov says)." (*Ibid.*)

In thoroughly refuting this, Lenin demonstrated not only its fundamental unity with but its near exact copying of Berkeley's arguments two centuries earlier. Berkeley had to attempt to square his blatant idealism—his insistence that things apparently existing outside us are merely extensions of the mind—with the difficult-to-dismiss sensation that these things not only exist for different people (different minds) but are used by these different people according to laws which pertain to these things. To use a simple example, two different people in a room prove repeatedly capable not only of recognizing but of sitting on one and the same chair (though usually not at the same time).

Even Berkeley could not deny this. But how to explain it, consistent with his idealism? Berkeley's answer, surprising to few if any, was to attribute all this to God, a spiritual force which has created and unifies all existing things, including different people themselves, into one great whole—one extension of this spirit. This having been set right, Berkeley was quite content to allow for the existence of the reality commonly perceived by ordinary mortals and even of natural laws pertaining to this reality. As Lenin sarcastically summarized it:

"Berkeley does not deny the existence of real things! Berkeley does not go counter to the opinion of all humanity! Berkeley denies 'only' the teaching of the philosophers, viz., the theory of knowledge which seriously and resolutely takes as the foundation of all its reasoning the recognition of the external world and the reflection thereof in the minds of men." (*Ibid.*, p. 29)

And such, in essence, was the denial of the Machists, though they did not insist on the invention of God in the same way as Berkeley. Lenin noted that "Berkeley's train of thought... correctly expresses the essence of idealist philosophy and its social significance, and we shall encounter it later when we come to speak of the relation of Machism to natural science"; and further that "the 'recent' Machists have not adduced a single argument against the materialists that had not been adduced by Bishop Berkeley."

(*Ibid.*, pp. 30, 38)

But why did these "recent" opponents of materialism—many of whom had been Marxists and some of whom still claimed to be at least "critical supporters" of it—make such a retreat? In part this was due to some recent discoveries in natural science, among which was the discovery that the atom is not an indivisible whole but can be divided into different particles (the existence of electrons became known at this time). These discoveries brought about a "crisis in physics," exposing the limitations of theories previously held as basic premises. In fact such discoveries provided further proof of the dialectics of nature. But among many scientists, philosophers, etc., who did not adhere, at least consistently, to *dialectical* materialism, they presented "proof" of the incorrectness of materialism.

Experiments indicated that mass was capable of being transformed into energy. From this many concluded that "matter disappears." And it seemed a logical step philosophically to deduce from this that matter cannot be the substance of reality and the basis for consciousness.

In criticizing and refuting this, Lenin not only reaffirmed materialism—dialectical materialism—but developed the understanding of it by integrating these advances of science into this revolutionary philosophy, whose basic principles fully embraced the new discoveries and were in turn enriched by them. "Matter disappears," explained Lenin, means actually that "the limit within which we have hitherto known matter disappears and that our knowledge is penetrating deeper; properties of matter are likewise disappearing which formerly seemed absolute, immutable, and primary... and which are now revealed to be relative and characteristic only of certain states of matter." (*Ibid.*, p. 260) And Lenin explained the critical criterion regarding the role of matter in materialist philosophy: "the sole 'property' of matter with whose recognition philosophical materialism is bound up is the property of *being an objective reality*, of existing outside the mind." (*Ibid.*, pp. 260-261)

In other words, what is decisive in drawing the fundamental distinction between materialism and idealism in philosophy is not what state particular matter exists in but that, in whichever state, matter *exists* and exists independently of and as the foundation for human consciousness, ideas. In Lenin's words, "dialectical materialism insists on the approximate, relative character of every scientific theory of the structure of matter and its properties; it insists on the absence of absolute boundaries in nature, on the transformation of moving matter from one state into another... dialectical materialism insists on the temporary, relative, approximate character of all these *milestones* in the knowledge of nature gained by the progressing science of man. The electron is as *inexhaustible* as the atom, nature is infinite, but it infinitely *exists*." (*Ibid.*, pp. 261-262)

Mechanical materialism, metaphysics, is, of course, incapable of grasping this and so, sooner or later, is forced to concede to and degenerate into idealism. "It is mainly because the physicists did not know dialectics that the new physics strayed into idealism," (*Ibid.*, p. 262) Relating this specifically to the Machists, Lenin exposed that "The error of Machism in general, as of the Machist new physics, is that it ignores the basis of philosophical materialism and the distinction between metaphysical materialism and dialectical materialism. The recognition of immutable elements, 'of the immutable essence of things', and so forth, is not materialism, but *metaphysical*, i.e., anti-dialectical materialism." And so it ends up being not materialism at all, as with the Machists.

Such, generally, was the basis in scientific discovery for the desertion of many erstwhile materialists, including a number of Marxists, and their degeneration into idealists and opponents of Marxism. But more important was the advent of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, which internationally led many to abandon Marxism, proclaiming that the laws of development of society and of capitalism in particular don't apply. In Russia, this was sharply manifested with the defeat of the 1905 revolution and the subsequent Stolypin reaction. This was a time of vicious political repression and of temporary lull in the working class movement in Russia particularly, a period of regrouping and reconstituting the shattered forces of the revolutionary party of the Russian working class, the Bolsheviks. It proved to be a brief period indeed, but in the depth of it, between 1908 and 1912, desertions from the revolutionary ranks and outright degeneracy were marked phenomena, especially among formerly revolutionary intellectuals and others who had joined the revolutionary movement in its period of upsurge but abandoned and even attacked it in the period of reaction and regrouping.

Revisionism was strengthened. Denying materialism, objective truth and so on was part and parcel of denying that Marxism is a science, that its analysis of capitalism, capitalist crisis, the inevitability of proletarian revolution, etc. are valid, true. During this period especially it was of the greatest importance to defend the basic principles of Marxism against open attacks and to guard against their being adulterated with all manner of bourgeois junk. If this were not done then not only would the proletariat have suffered a severe setback in the short run but it would be robbed of a revolutionary vanguard. What a loss that would have been, especially with the upheaval that followed this temporary ebb!

It was Lenin who led the way in exposing and combating the revisionists. He criticized them in an all-around way, pointing out that since the beginning Marxism had to wage a most determined struggle against the enemies of the working class within the socialist movement and that this was an urgent requirement right then. He laid bare the fundamental features of revisionism:

"To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less 'new question,' every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it changes the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the briefest period, will always inevitably give rise to one variety of revisionism or another." (Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism," *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, pp. 37-38)

The battle against revisionism in the philosophical sphere was closely tied to the struggle against it politically. But at that time the fight against philosophical revisionism assumed tremendous significance itself. In fact, without upholding dialectical and historical materialism and answering in a thoroughgoing way the "revisions" of and outright attacks on it, particularly in the revival of idealism as represented by Machism, it would have been impossible to maintain a Marxist movement and preserve the proletarian vanguard. Such is the great importance of ideology, and philosophy as a crucial part of it, in general. And such was the great importance of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* in particular.

As noted before, the purpose and substance of that great work was the defense of materialism against "recent" idealist assaults and inventions. But as also noted, such a defense had to and did stress and apply dialectics in opposition to metaphysics, for only *dialectical* materialism could explain the recent developments in natural science and thoroughly refute idealist interpretations of them. And in doing this Lenin not only upheld but enriched modern, dialectical materialism, Marxist philosophy.

In general Lenin attached great importance to dialectics, to its study and application. His "Philosophical Notebooks," which span more than two decades, devote considerable attention to the question of dialectics. Included within them is a manuscript, "On The Question of Dialectics," written in 1915. Here Lenin said that "The splitting of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts... is the *essence* (one of the essentials, one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics." (Lenin, "On The Question Of Dialectics," *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 359)

Lenin went on to say that recognition of the identity, or unity, of opposites is the key to understanding the movement of all processes. This he sharply opposed to the metaphysical conception of movement as merely mechanical, mere quantitative increase and decrease, repetition. This latter conception he described as "lifeless, pale and dry," while the dialectical conception "alone furnishes the key to 'leaps,' to the 'break in continuity,' to the 'transformation into the opposite,' to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new." (*Ibid.*, p. 360)

And more, Lenin concisely summarized the relationship between the unity (or identity) and the struggle of opposites. The former, he said, "is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative," while the struggle of opposites "is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute." (*Ibid.*)

These were extremely important points which represented basic elements of the further development of Marxist philosophy. As Lenin said in this same manuscript, "Dialectics is the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism." (*Ibid.*, p. 362) Yet, he noted, this had not received sufficient attention in Marxist philosophy, not only in the profound early writings of Plekhanov (around 1900) but even in Engels. Lenin specifically pointed out that not only Plekhanov but Engels as well had given insufficient attention to the central, or essential, point of dialectics, the unity of opposites (see *ibid.*, p. 359). This fundamental question was to be later taken up and more fully developed by Mao Tsetung.

Stalin: Marxism and Metaphysics

But before turning to Mao's enrichment of Marxist philosophy, it is important to briefly summarize Stalin's role in this area. As Mao himself was to write, such works as *The Foundations of Leninism* demonstrated a grasp and application by Stalin of important principles of dialectics and of historical materialism. As Mao put it, Stalin, in *The Foundations of Leninism*:

"... 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." (Mao, "On Contradiction," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 330)

In 1924, at the time Stalin wrote *The Foundations of Leninism*, he was, as leader of the Soviet Communist Party, locked in a life and death struggle with Trotsky and other opportunists. *The Foundations of Leninism* played a crucial part in that struggle, in educating the broad ranks of party members and the masses and helping to expose and defeat Trotsky's counter-revolutionary line in particular. Compelled to wage struggle like this to win over the party rank and file and the masses broadly, Stalin was impelled to apply dialectics.

Later, however, when the Soviet Union had become more powerful and Stalin's leadership was generally acknowledged and his prestige great, Stalin, while remaining a great revolutionary leader of the working class, did not as consistently and thoroughly rely on the masses and was not as consistently or thoroughly dialectical in his approach to problems. As Mao commented later, "At that time [the 1920s] Stalin had nothing else to rely on except the masses, so he demanded all-out mobilization. Afterward, when they had realized some gains this way, they became less reliant on the masses." (Mao, "Reading Notes on the Soviet Text *Political Economy*," from *A Critique of Soviet Economics*, three articles by Mao Tsetung, Monthly Review Press, 1977, translation by Moss Roberts, p. 119)

In the previous article in this series (on political economy, etc., *Revolution*, July 1978) some of Stalin's main errors, particularly during the period of the 1930s, were discussed. It was indicated that the most central and serious of these errors was his mistaken assessment that there were no longer antagonistic classes in the Soviet Union after socialist transformation of ownership had been basically achieved. Obviously this is bound up with the philosophical question of contradiction, and specifically with an understanding of the particular forms and development of contradictions in socialist society. And Stalin's mistaken assessment on classes and class struggle in the Soviet Union beginning in the 1930s was closely linked with errors in philosophy, particularly on the question of dialectics.

This is evident in what is perhaps Stalin's major philosophical work, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, written in the late 1930s (as part of *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik)—HCPSU*). While this work presents in concentrated form a largely correct summation of Marxist philosophy, and while it specifically applies some principles of dialectics to development in nature and society, it is also marred by a certain amount of metaphysics. While Stalin introduces the subject of dialectics by speaking of contradiction, he does not focus on contradiction as the *basic law* of materialist dialectics. When he lists four points of dialectics as opposed to metaphysics, he mentions contradiction only as the fourth and doesn't say it is the main point. And further while he speaks of the struggle of opposites and of the interconnection of things he does not link these together; he makes them separate features of dialectics instead of showing how they are both part of contradiction. And when, in his fourth point on dialectics, Stalin does emphasize the struggle of opposites he does not speak at the same time of the identity between them. Stalin even quotes Lenin when he says that "Development is the 'struggle' of opposites." (Lenin, "On The Question Of Dialectics," *op. cit.*, p. 360; see also *HCPSU*, p. 109) But Stalin does not quote the sentence in Lenin that appears right before the one above—"The condition for knowledge of all processes of the world in their 'self-movement,' in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites." (*Ibid.*)

This is important because, as Lenin also says, "In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This embodies the essence of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development." (Lenin, "Conspectus Of Hegel's Book *The Science Of Logic*," *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 223) And Lenin further states that, "The identity of opposites... is the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive*, opposite tendencies in all phenomena and processes of nature (including mind and society)." (*Ibid.*, pp. 359-360.) In other words, contradiction is inconceivable without the *identity*, or *unity*, of *opposites*, and having such identity there is the basis for the contradictory aspects to transform themselves into each other.

At the same time there is not only identity but also struggle between the opposites of a contradiction. In this way identity and struggle themselves form a contradiction, in which struggle is principal and is absolute, while identity is secondary and relative. But forming a contradiction, identity and struggle are dependent on each other for their existence; and to leave out the identity of opposites means to eliminate in fact the possibility of struggle between them as well.

The tendencies in Stalin toward metaphysics, as evidenced in his treatment of dialectics in *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, also show themselves in how that work deals with the development of society. This is indicated not only in its rather wooden treatment of the different phases of society leading up to socialism, but also in the way that socialism is treated more or less as an absolute.

Stalin quite correctly emphasizes, in combatting apologists of capitalism and exploiting systems generally, that "there can be no 'immutable' social systems, no 'eternal principles' of private property and exploitation, no 'eternal ideas' of the subjugation of the peasant to the landlord, of the worker to the capitalist." (*HCPSU*, p. 110) And he draws the correct conclusion that "Hence the capitalist system can be replaced by the socialist system, just as at one time the feudal system was replaced by the capitalist system." (*Ibid.*) But there is no sense that the law that "there can be no 'immutable' social systems," is being applied, at least in a thoroughgoing way, to socialism itself.

Similarly, Stalin draws from the law that internal contradiction is the basis of development of things the conclusion that "Hence we must not cover up the contradictions of the capitalist system, but disclose and unravel them; we must not try to check the class struggle but carry it to conclusion." (*Ibid.*, p. 111) But, again, there is not the sense that the need to disclose rather than cover up the contradictions of society is being applied in any thoroughgoing way to socialism, and no sense of the necessity to carry the class struggle forward under socialism and carry it through—through socialism to the abolition of classes.

As noted, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* was written by Stalin during the period when he had concluded that antagonistic classes no longer existed in the Soviet Union. The previous article in this series pointed out that toward the end of his life Stalin's analysis of socialist society was somewhat more dialectical, as reflected especially in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*. In that important work Stalin dealt with a number of contradictions in socialist society which would have to be resolved in order to advance to communism. In particular he insisted that the contradiction between the forces and relations of production continued to exist in the USSR and that if not handled correctly this could turn into an antagonistic contradiction.

As the previous article also noted, however, Stalin still did not recognize the existence of antagonistic classes in the Soviet Union, he did not grasp that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was still the driving force in socialist society and that correctly handling this contradiction was the key to correctly handling the contradiction between the forces and relations of production under socialism.

In general, then, after socialist ownership was basically achieved in the Soviet Union, Stalin did not take contradiction as the motive force of development of socialist society. And he failed to recognize the existence of the antagonistic contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in particular and to grasp that this is the main motive force under socialism and in the advance to communism.

Dialectical Development Of Mao's Philosophical Contributions

Mao's development of Marxist-Leninist philosophy was itself a demonstration of the laws of materialist dialectics. It proceeded in dialectical relationship to the overall development of the Chinese revolution and through the analysis of the experience of the Soviet Union and the synthesis of its positive and negative lessons, including in the realm of philosophy.

This was a reflection of the law that Mao summarized in 1957:

"Truth stands in opposition to falsehood. In society as in nature, every entity invariably divides into different parts, only there are differences in content and form under different concrete conditions. There will always be wrong things and ugly phenomena. There will always be such opposites as the right and the wrong, the good and the evil, the beautiful and the ugly. The same is true of fragrant flowers and poisonous weeds. The relationship between them is one of unity and struggle of opposites. Only by comparing can one distinguish. Only by making distinctions and waging struggle can there be development. Truth develops through its struggle against falsehood. This is how Marxism develops. Marxism develops in the struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, and it is only through struggle that it can develop." (Mao, "Speech At The Chinese Communist Party's National Conference On Propaganda Work," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 433)

This was true of Mao's development of Marxism, including in philosophy, both before and after the seizure of nationwide political power, during both the new-democratic and the socialist revolutions. And in both periods, through the various stages and sub-stages of the Chinese revolution, the struggle on the philosophical front, in which Mao led the proletarian forces, was of tremendous importance in determining the direction and outcome of the overall revolutionary struggle.

In the first article in this series (on revolution in colonial countries, *Revolution* April-May 1978) it was pointed out that as a crucial part of developing, defending and applying the line of new-democratic revolution, and specifically the policies for the anti-Japanese struggle which constituted a sub-stage within the stage of new democracy, Mao took up the struggle in the philosophical realm. This struggle was particularly aimed against dogmatic (and secondarily empiricist) tendencies which reflected idealist and metaphysical thinking in opposition to materialist dialectics. Mao's criticism of this was embodied

especially in "On Practice" and "On Contradiction," both written in 1937 and constituting two (the first two) of Mao's major philosophical works. In the earlier article in this series (referred to just above), while it was pointed out that these works enriched Marxist philosophy, the political significance of these works and their role in the inner-party struggle and the overall revolutionary struggle at that time were stressed. Here attention will be focused on the principles of Marxist philosophy elaborated and enriched by Mao in these works, while also reviewing their relationship with the overall ideological and political struggle at that time.

"On Practice" was subtitled "On the Relation Between Knowledge and Practice, Between Knowing and Doing." It reaffirmed and concentrated the Marxist, dialectical materialist, theory of knowledge, with its emphasis on the centrality of practice, and in particular *social* practice. Continuing and developing what Marx had first set forth in his "Theses On Feuerbach," Mao pointed out that "Before Marx, materialism examined the problem of knowledge apart from the social nature of man and apart from his historical development, and was therefore incapable of understanding the dependence of knowledge on social practice, that is, the dependence of knowledge on production and the class struggle." (Mao, "On Practice," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 295; elsewhere, in this work and others, Mao includes scientific experiment as the third source of knowledge.) Here, as throughout this work, Mao upholds and applies the materialist view of the relation between thinking and being (which Engels said was the basic question of philosophy). Mao goes on to explain that "It was not until the modern proletariat emerged along with the immense forces of production (large-scale industry) that man was able to acquire a comprehensive, historical understanding of the development of society and turn this knowledge into a science, the science of Marxism." (*Ibid.*, p. 296)

But it is also clear that what is presented here is not merely a materialist but a dialectical approach. What applies to society, as well as nature, also applies to thought. Cognition itself is a dialectical process and follows the same laws of motion as matter in nature and man's actions and relations in society.

Specifically and most importantly, Mao analyzes the stages in the process of cognition and the leaps from one stage to another. Basing himself again on the decisive role of practice, and addressing the question of how knowledge both arises from and serves practice, Mao points out that "In the process of practice, man at first sees only the phenomenal side, the separate aspects, the external relations of things... This is called the perceptual stage of cognition, namely, the stage of sense perceptions and impressions." (*Ibid.*, p. 297) But "As social practice continues, things that give rise to man's sense perceptions and impressions in the course of his practice are repeated many times; then a sudden change (leap) takes place in the brain in the process of cognition, and concepts are formed." (*Ibid.*, p. 298)

These concepts, Mao stresses, "are no longer the phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things; they grasp the essence, the totality and the internal relations of things. Between concepts and sense perceptions there is not only a quantitative but also a qualitative difference." (*Ibid.*) Further, Mao says, "This stage of conception, judgment and inference is the more important stage in the entire process of knowing a thing; it is the stage of rational knowledge." (*Ibid.*)

Such rational knowledge is abstract in the scientific sense. And it is therefore not farther from the truth but in fact closer to it. Or, as Lenin said (in a statement Mao quotes in "On Practice"), "The abstraction of *matter*, of a *law* of nature, the abstraction of *value*, etc., in short, *all* scientific (correct, serious, not absurd) abstractions reflect nature more deeply, truly and *completely*." (Lenin, "Conspectus Of Hegel's Book *The Science Of Logic*," *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 171, quoted in Mao, *Ibid.*, p. 299)

Mao further explains this by noting that "Perception only solves the problem of phenomena; theory alone can solve the problem of essence." (Mao, *Ibid.*) Perception only represents the knowledge of the appearance of things as they are reflected by the senses and registered in the brain as impressions; conception, rational knowledge, theory, represents the synthesis of these perceptions, the concentration of the essential aspects of them and their internal relations. From this can be understood the tremendous importance and role of theory in general and in the revolutionary movement in particular.

But does this mean, then, that theory is, after all, more important than practice? No. Mao explains how practice is primary and overall more important than theory in several ways. "The perceptual and the rational," he notes, "are qualitatively different, but are not divorced from each other; they are unified on the basis of practice. Our practice proves that what is perceived cannot at once be comprehended and that only what is comprehended can be more deeply perceived." (*Ibid.*) Further, Mao explains that, while the leap from perceptual to rational knowledge is more important than the leap to perceptual knowledge, nevertheless the movement of knowledge does not stop there. There remains what is an even more important leap—to apply the rational knowledge, or theory, in practice. And this represents a further leap not only in doing but in *knowing* as well. It is only when these rational ideas are applied in practice that their validity can be verified; and only when such ideas (theories)

can be translated into fact can "the movement of knowledge... be considered complete with regard to this particular process." (*Ibid.*, p. 305) Here Mao gives further expression and development to the famous statement of Marx that the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways but the point is to change it. And, again, this is not a vulgar statement that doing is what counts, who cares about knowing, nor is it of course a metaphysical separation of doing and knowing; it is a dialectical materialist explanation of the relationship between doing and knowing, with practice as the key link.

Theory of Knowledge

Practice is the source of theory, theory is a concentration of practice; perception is the raw material of conception, conception is the product of the synthesis of perception. But conception, rational knowledge theory, must also be returned to practice, in which process not only is the rational knowledge tested, but new raw materials are gathered for deepening rational knowledge... and so on in an endless upward spiral. This is why Mao states that, on the one hand, when the anticipated results can be achieved in practice, then the particular process of cognition or a particular stage of the process (perception-conception-practice) can be considered complete, but on the other hand, "the movement of human knowledge is not completed." (*Ibid.*, p. 306)

Nor is the movement of human knowledge ever completed. As Mao explains, summing up the laws of the process:

"Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing." (*Ibid.*, p. 308)

But the fact that the movement of knowledge is unending should not be taken to mean that it is impossible at any point to distinguish the true from the false. A fundamental tenet of Marxism has always been that there is objective truth, and that it is possible to know it. Without this understanding it is impossible to be a materialist.

But there is not only objective truth, there is also such a thing as *absolute truth*. And in fact, as Lenin pointed out, to acknowledge the one is to acknowledge the other:

"To be a materialist is to acknowledge objective truth, which is revealed to us by our sense-organs. To acknowledge objective truth, i.e., truth not dependent upon man and mankind, is, in one way or another, to recognize absolute truth." (Lenin, "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism," *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 133)

But at the same time, most truths will turn out to be, not absolute, but *relative*. Marxism holds that there is both relative and absolute truth. Marxists believe in the relativity of most truths, but yet Marxists are not *relativists*. Relativists say that all truths are relative, and then argue that you can therefore pick and choose

what "truths" to believe. In other words, they deny that there is objective truth. This was a major argument that Lenin was combatting in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, and he there contrasts the relativism of these Machists with the Marxism of Engels:

"For Bogdanov (as for all the Machists) recognition of the relativity of our knowledge *excludes* even the least admission of absolute truth. For Engels absolute truth is compounded from relative truths. Bogdanov is a relativist. Engels is a dialectician." (*Ibid.*, p. 134)

So absolute truth is made up of relative truths. But what is the relation between them? Mao explains it as follows:

"Marxists recognize that in the absolute and general process of development of the universe, the development of each particular process is relative, and that hence, in the endless flow of absolute truth, man's knowledge of a particular process at any given stage of development is only relative truth. The sum total of innumerable relative truths constitutes absolute truth." (Mao, "On Practice," *op. cit.*, p. 307)

In other words, absolute truth in its fullest sense is the sum total of truth, the whole truth. But this whole is made up of innumerable parts. These are relative truths; they are only partial.

But what about ideas which were held to be true at one time and are later proven to be untrue or only partially true (for example, certain laws of physics)? This happens because man acquires and sums up more experience, discovers new processes and laws and develops and refines his understanding of things. But this obviously does not go against the fact that man's knowledge is proceeding from the lower to the higher level, that he is acquiring more and more knowledge of the objective world. Nor does it change the fact that man's knowledge *must* proceed from the lower to the higher level; that at any point he can only apply what knowledge of the truth then exists to the process of changing the world, in which process he tests those ideas and acquires the basis for making a further leap in his knowledge. He cannot apply today what he will only know tomorrow; he will only know more tomorrow if today he applies what he already knows and then sums up the results.

Mao also says that:

"In social practice, the process of coming into being, developing and passing away is infinite, and so is the process of coming into being, developing and passing away in human knowledge. As man's practice which changes objective reality in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans or programmes, advances further and further, his knowledge of objective reality likewise becomes deeper and deeper. The movement of change in the world of objective reality is never-ending and so is man's cognition of truth through practice." (*Ibid.*)

Some people try to use this to promote the idea that, since knowledge is continually deepened, it is not necessary to thoroughly uphold and systematically apply the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought. Their position in essence says: since tomorrow we may discover that some things held true by Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought are not true, or only partially true, there is no need to apply this science in a systematic way; instead we will take what is useful to us and put aside what is not. This is outright eclecticism, relativism, empirio-criticism and pragmatism; it is metaphysics and idealism.

Such people pose as big upholders of materialism and of practice as the criterion of truth. But who are they fooling? The fact is that such a line goes against the Marxist theory of knowledge with its correct emphasis on practice. To put it plainly, if a line is not carried out thoroughly, if Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought is not systematically applied, then there is no way to test in practice the correctness of the line, policies, etc., and also no way to acquire more knowledge in the process of changing the world "in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans or programmes."

Such an opportunist line as described above "forgets" that the movement of knowledge proceeds in cycles, each involving leaps from practice to theory and back to practice. Absolute truth is, as Mao says, an "endless flow," but man's cognition of the truth is not a straight line, but proceeds as a spiral. To say at any point, "Well, tomorrow we will know more than today so let's not (dogmatically) apply what is known as truth today," is to deny and disrupt the process by which more knowledge is actually acquired. This is metaphysical because it goes against the actual dialectical relationship between theory and practice; it is idealist because it actually denies objective truth. It is not in accordance with or a defense of "On Practice"; it is a violation of and attack on this great work of Mao's.

"On Practice," and particularly its emphasis on both the primacy of practice and the continuous development of human knowledge and practice through an endless series of stages or cycles, was of great importance in combatting erroneous tendencies in thinking and doing within the Chinese Communist Party at the time it was written, 1937, a time when the anti-Japanese united front had just been formed and the anti-Japanese struggle was only in its beginning stages. At that point there were many not only outside but inside the Communist Party who opposed the Party's policies and, knowingly or unknowingly, were sabotaging the united front and the war of resistance against Japan.

Most pronounced within the Party itself was the dogmatist deviation which failed to make a concrete analysis of the actual conditions in China and the objective stage of the struggle, and treated theory not in its correct dialectical relationship to practice, but as a set of eternal unchanging truths which must be imposed on the objective world rather than drawn from and returned to it as a guide to revolutionary practice. On the other hand, as a secondary problem at that time, there were those who denied the importance of theory and thus, proceeding from the opposite side from the dogmatists, broke the link between theory and practice and adopted a metaphysical view of the relation between thinking and doing.

Both of these erroneous tendencies were incapable of recognizing the dialectical unity between the present stage (or sub-stage) of the struggle and its future development. The dogmatists generally refused to recognize the necessity of proceeding through the anti-Japanese united front to the completion of the new-democratic revolution and the advance to socialism, or they posed "left" policies that would wreck the united front (though at certain points many of them dogmatically applied in China the policies of the Soviet Union toward Chiang Kai-shek and advocated reliance on and capitulation to the Kuomintang in the anti-Japanese struggle). The empiricists generally failed to recognize the aspects of the future that existed within the stage of the anti-Japanese struggle—the mobilization of the masses as the main force, the con-



Mao not only contributed greatly to the development of Marxist philosophy; he laid particular stress on the need for the masses of people to study and apply philosophy. Above, peasants meet to discuss Marxist philosophy during the Cultural Revolution.

tinuation, with adjustment, of agrarian reform and the primitive cooperatives of the peasants, the independence and initiative of the Communist Party in the united front and the necessary struggle on its part to win and maintain leadership of the united front, etc.

While the dogmatist tendency generally posed the greater danger, it was obviously necessary to combat both of these deviations in order both to carry the struggle through in the present stage (or sub-stage) and to move forward to the future stages, the completion of the new-democratic revolution and the advance to socialism.

Beyond its immediate great significance for the Chinese revolution, "On Practice" has more general and long-term importance as a contribution to Marxist-Leninist philosophy and a weapon in the ongoing revolutionary struggle. This is especially so with regard to its explanation of how Marxism-Leninism has not exhausted truth but "ceaselessly opens up roads to the knowledge of truth in the course of practice" (*ibid.*, p. 307)—in other words, in its opposition to metaphysics and the tendency to "absolutism" in particular. This point will be returned to later, in discussing struggle on the philosophical front in socialist China and its relation to the class struggle as a whole.

"On Contradiction"

A more lengthy work, dealing more specifically with dialectics, "On Contradiction," was written just after "On Practice," and with the same immediate purpose—to combat erroneous thinking in the Party, in particular dogmatism. At the very start of this essay Mao presents a concentration of the principles of Marxist philosophy: "The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the basic law of materialist dialectics." (Mao, "On Contradiction," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 311) At the end of the essay, in summarizing its main points, he makes it clear that this law "is the fundamental law of nature and of society and therefore also the fundamental law of thought." (*Ibid.*, p. 345)

Why is this so? And since the law of contradiction is a law of dialectics, does Mao, in identifying it as the fundamental law of nature, society, and thought, raise dialectics above materialism, does he in fact lapse into idealism? Of course the accusation that Mao is an idealist has been constantly hurled by the revisionists, both in China and in other countries, who have consistently charged him with exaggerating the role of consciousness and with distorting dialectics. Let's look deeper into these basic questions.

Why does Mao identify the law of contradiction as the basic law of nature, society and thought? Is it not an equally important question of philosophy that matter exists independently of and as the basis for consciousness, human thought? Is not the primacy of matter over ideas as important as the law of contradiction, and doesn't it open the door to idealism to single out the law of contradiction in this way?

The primacy of matter over ideas as described above is indeed a fundamental question and a fundamental dividing line in philosophy. But this cannot be said to be a basic law of the universe on the same level as the unity of opposites. It does not tell us anything about matter in and of itself, in the absence of consciousness. And as materialism teaches us, matter not only exists independently of consciousness but exists even where there is no consciousness—that is, where there is no matter that has developed to a state where it is capable of consciousness. The primacy of matter over ideas tells us the correct relationship between matter and consciousness and as such is a fundamental question of philosophy—remember Engels' statement that the basic question of philosophy is the relationship of thinking and being. But, again, the primacy of matter over consciousness does not reveal anything about matter itself.

On the other hand, the law of contradiction universally applies to unthinking matter and to conscious matter, and to the relationship between them. It is thus correct to say that it is the fundamental law of nature, of men's organized interaction with nature and with themselves in the process—society—and therefore of thought.

As Mao summarized it, "This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyze 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." (*Ibid.*, p. 315) Mao goes on to explain what the universality of contradiction means and what its importance is:

"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." (*Ibid.*, p. 316)

And:

"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." (*Ibid.*)

Here Mao is not only summarizing basic points of materialist dialectics, but countering various incorrect ideas that had their source in the Soviet Union and found their way into the Chinese Communist Party. The first was the opportunist theory of the Deborin school in the Soviet Union, which denied the universality of contradiction, particularly the fact that contradiction exists from beginning to end in the process of development of each thing. According to this theory, contradictions only appear when the process has reached a certain stage. This is, of course, metaphysical and also idealist, because it necessarily involves the conclusion that at the start of a process the motive force is external, not internal. This opens the door to the notion of some external force providing the "initial impulse" to the universe—that is, to the notion of God.

Further, in the political sphere it leads to class collaboration and conciliation, for if contradiction is not always present then struggle need not be the means for resolving differences. One example of this which Mao cites is that "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 agreeing with Bukharin." (*Ibid.*, p. 318—for more on Bukharin's reactionary theory of "the peaceful growing of the bourgeoisie into Socialism," particularly as it related to the countryside, see the previous article in this series, *REVOLUTION*, July 1978)

Stalin led in exposing and defeating the counter-revolutionary philosophical theory of the Deborin school as an important part of waging the overall class struggle in the Soviet Union, especially in the late 1920s. But, as noted earlier, Stalin himself failed to thoroughly apply materialist dialectics. This was expressed in *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* in particular in the failure to focus on the law of contradiction as the basic law of materialist dialectics and to link together the struggle and the identity of opposites. Thus, when Mao states in "On Contradiction" that both the interdependence and the struggle of the contradictory aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward, he is putting forward a different, and more correct, understanding than Stalin. (*Dialectical and Historical Materialism* itself was written about the same time as "On Contradiction," but the same views, including the erroneous ones, that characterize it were known and circulated in the Chinese Communist Party before Mao wrote "On Contradiction".)

Identity and Struggle of Opposites

A lengthy section of "On Contradiction" is devoted to this problem of the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction. Here Mao explains that there are two meanings to the identity of opposites. The first is their interdependence and their coexistence in a single entity. But, Mao says, the matter does not end there; "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." (*Ibid.*, p. 338)

The importance of this can be seen by taking the example of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. If it were not recognized that these two aspects are not only interdependent but can transform themselves into their opposite, then it would not be seen how the proletariat could undergo the change from the secondary to the principal aspect of the contradiction, from being the ruled to being the ruling class, while the bourgeoisie underwent the contrary change. In the concrete conditions of China at that time, in the midst of the anti-Japanese war of resistance, such an erroneous, metaphysical view on the part of communists would lead either to refusing to enter into a united front with the Kuomintang or, as the mirror opposite, to failing to struggle for the leading role of the proletariat in the united front. In either form—"left" or right—this would amount to seeing a united front with the Kuomintang as meaning the inevitable and continual subordination of the Communist Party to the Kuomintang, since the Kuomintang would start out in the stronger, dominant position, being the ruling party in the country.

In this same section of "On Contradiction" Mao also emphasized, however, that in the relation between the identity and struggle of opposites, identity is relative but struggle is absolute. He pointed out that "struggle between opposites permeates a process from beginning to end and makes one process transform itself into another... The combination of conditional, relative identity and unconditional, absolute struggle constitutes the movement of opposites in all things." (*Ibid.*, p. 343) The two things which form a contradiction and have identity do so only under certain conditions; but from the beginning to the end of that particular contradiction there will be struggle and this struggle will eventually lead to the resolution of that contradiction and the emergence of another.

If this were not grasped then it would not be recognized that struggle is the basis for resolving a particular contradiction and moving from one stage to the next. The importance of this can be readily grasped by applying it to the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or, as in the case of China during the new-democratic stage, the contradiction between the broad masses and imperialism and feudalism (and in the sub-stage of the anti-Japanese war of resistance,

the contradiction between the Chinese nation and Japanese imperialism).

In combatting erroneous tendencies, particularly dogmatism, within the Chinese Communist Party, Mao devoted more attention in "On Contradiction" to the particularity of contradiction than to the universality of contradiction. The dogmatists, Mao noted, did not recognize or at least give proper weight to the problem of the particularity of contradiction. In combatting this dogmatism Mao stressed that while there is nothing in the world except matter in motion, "this motion must assume certain forms... [and] 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." (*Ibid.*, pp. 319-320) This applies not only to nature, but to society (and thought) as well. Each particular form of matter in motion has its own particular essence which is "determined by its own particular contradiction." (*Ibid.*, p. 320)

The dogmatists, failing to base themselves on this, were incapable of recognizing the actual features of the Chinese revolution at that time, of determining the motive forces, target and tasks of the revolution at that stage and therefore of uniting all possible forces against the main enemy while maintaining the independence and initiative of the proletariat and its Party. Many wanted to blindly follow the model of the Russian revolution, which was not applicable in the concrete conditions of China, a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country, which at that time Japan was attempting to reduce to an outright colony.

Part of Mao's answer to this in "On Contradiction" was also contained in the section on antagonism and its role in contradiction. Mao noted that "antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites." (*Ibid.*, p. 343). And he insisted that:

"we must make a concrete study of the circumstances of each specific struggle of opposites and should not arbitrarily apply the formula discussed above [the need to violently overthrow the reactionary classes] 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." (*Ibid.*, p. 344)

This was of particular importance then because it had become necessary to change from warfare against the Kuomintang to a united front with it, because of the primacy of the struggle against the Japanese aggressors. Struggle against the Kuomintang must continue, over the question of leadership of this united front, but it must now assume a non-antagonistic form, political and ideological struggle within the context of maintaining the united front. And more generally in the conditions of China's new-democratic revolution the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (or parts of it) was not antagonistic (at least at times) and should not be incorrectly handled as such when conditions called for dealing with it non-antagonistically.

In fully criticizing and opposing erroneous lines within the Party at that time, especially dogmatist deviations, Mao not only upheld but concretely applied the principle of the particularity of contradiction. He explained the philosophical basis for the correctness of the strategy of new-democratic revolution as the necessary prelude to and preparation for the socialist revolution in China:

"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... 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." (*Ibid.*, pp. 321-22)

Universality and Particularity

Mao also took up the question of the relationship

between the particularity and universality of contradiction, which was of great importance in combating the dogmatists in particular. He noted that:

"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." (*Ibid.*, p. 320)

The dogmatists, who failed to seriously study the particularity of contradiction, did not grasp the correct, dialectical relationship between the universality and particularity of contradiction. They did not understand that the movement of man's cognition is from the particular to the universal (or general)—to the recognition of the common essence of things—and then back to the particular (on a higher basis) and so on in an endless upward spiral. They did not understand that man's knowledge of things in general must consist of his knowledge of many different things in particular, and that in this way the general (or universal) resides in the particular—not the whole universal residing in and reducible to one or a few particulars but the universal residing in an endless number of particulars, each with its specific essence, and therefore, in that sense, residing in every particular. Hence they treated theory as "general truth," neither drawn from particular things nor needing to be applied to them—in short, as dogma.

Moreover, the dogmatists failed to understand that, as universality and particularity of contradiction themselves form a contradiction, they have identity and can be transformed into each other. They did not grasp that:

"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." (*Ibid.*, p. 329)

Mao used the example of the contradiction between socialized production and private ownership. Under capitalism this constitutes the universality of contradiction, it is fundamental to and runs throughout capitalist society as a whole. But with regard to society in general it is only a particular form of the contradiction between the forces and relations of production. This was obviously important in exposing the erroneous thinking that China's revolution must be the same as that in capitalist countries; in China at that stage the fundamental contradiction and the particular form of the contradiction between the forces and relations of production was of a different nature than in the capitalist countries.

On the other hand, of course, being particular, this contradiction and the nature of the process determined by it—the new-democratic revolution—was only temporary. It would be necessary at a certain point, with the resolution of this contradiction, to move on to the next stage, the socialist revolution, characterized by the fundamental contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The basis for this was also explained and emphasized by Mao in analyzing the relationship between the universality and particularity of contradiction. Here is Mao's summation of this point and its extreme importance:

"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." (*Ibid.*, p. 330)

In this same section of "On Contradiction" Mao also made clear the philosophical basis for the fact that in the Chinese revolution there were sub-stages within the overall stage of new-democracy, and specifically the basis for the necessary policies and adjustments characteristic of the united front against Japan. This particular point was gone into at some length in the first article in this series, hence it will only be briefly summarized here. The fundamental contradiction in the process of development of anything runs throughout that entire process and determines the essence of the process from beginning to end. Only with the resolution of the fundamental contradiction characterizing and determining the essence of the par-

ticular process will that process transform itself into another and a new fundamental contradiction emerge. But within the process characterized by a particular fundamental contradiction there are stages because "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." (*Ibid.*, p. 325) These other contradictions react upon the fundamental contradiction and, while in the main they are determined by its development, they in turn play a role in affecting its development; hence the development of the fundamental contradiction proceeds in a spiral, through stages.

As applied to the Chinese revolution in that period this meant that the nature of the Chinese revolution would remain fundamentally unchanged until imperialism and feudalism (and bureaucrat-capitalism) were overthrown in China. This would mark the end of the new-democratic revolution and the beginning of the socialist revolution. But within the general stage of the new-democratic revolution there would be stages; during the anti-Japanese war in particular, the contradiction between the masses of Chinese people and the domestic reactionaries receded temporarily while the contradiction between the Chinese nation and Japan came to the forefront. This was part of and not separate from the process of the new-democratic revolution and its fundamental contradiction but marked a particular stage within it.

Principal Contradiction

Clearly this was closely linked with the question of principal contradiction, the next main question addressed by Mao in "On Contradiction." As Mao explained:

"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... at every stage in the development of a process, there is only one principal contradiction which plays the leading role... 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." (*Ibid.*, pp. 331-332)

What is the relationship between the principal contradiction and the fundamental contradiction which determines the essence of the process as a whole? The principal contradiction at any time is the main contradiction in the particular stage of development of the process defined by the fundamental contradiction; it cannot represent the switch from one whole (or fundamental) process to another, for only the resolution of the fundamental contradiction can bring that about. The principal contradiction may be exactly the same as the fundamental contradiction, but need not be; it may represent the fundamental contradiction at a certain stage in its development without representing the fundamental contradiction in its entirety, as it fully determines the essence of the process as a whole. But only when the principal contradiction represents the fundamental contradiction as a whole can the resolution of the principal contradiction bring about the transformation of the old process into a new one, the resolution of the old fundamental contradiction and the emergence of a new one.

Obviously this is a complicated question. And as applied to the new-democratic revolution in China it was particularly complicated. The principal contradiction during the anti-Japanese war was that between the Chinese nation as a whole and Japanese imperialism (together with those elements of Chinese society that sided with Japan). This represented a particular stage within the development of the whole process of the new-democratic revolution, which process was determined by the fundamental contradiction between the broad masses and imperialism and feudalism (and bureaucrat-capitalism).

During the stage of the anti-Japanese war certain contradictions were "temporarily or partially resolved or mitigated," including that between the broad masses and the feudal system, but this did not mean that the process of new-democratic revolution and its fundamental contradiction had been resolved and transformed into a new process. With the defeat of the Japanese imperialists, the fundamental contradiction developed to a new stage and was intensified. The principal contradiction once again fully represented the fundamental contradiction, only now on a higher level, and the resolution of this contradiction—between the broad masses and imperialism and feudalism (and bureaucrat-capitalism)—meant the transformation of the old process (the new-democratic revolution) into a new one, the socialist revolution.

From all this we can see why Mao had to write "On Contradiction," and can begin to get a better sense of the depth and importance of it. And after analyzing the question of principal contradiction, Mao went on to analyze the question of the principal aspect of a contradiction. What is the heart of this question? "In any contradiction," Mao wrote:

"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." (*Ibid.*, p. 333)

Mao went on to add immediately, however, that "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." (*Ibid.*) This, as noted earlier, is the most important part of the identity of opposites and occurs because of the struggle between them.

Mao attached tremendous importance to this point. He pointed both to the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and to the contradiction between China and the Chinese masses on the one side and imperialism and feudalism on the other. The position of the aspects in both these contradictions was bound to change, he affirmed; the proletariat was bound to transform itself into the dominant position over the bourgeoisie, and old China, dominated by imperialism and feudalism, was bound to be transformed into new China ruled by the masses of people, led by the proletariat and its Communist Party.

Mao emphasized this to struggle against defeatism with regard to the Chinese revolution and class capitulationism with regard to the relationship between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the united front. The proletariat was bound to gain the dominant, leading position in this united front through struggle and, dialectically related to this, the Chinese revolution was bound to advance through the war of resistance against Japan and beyond this to the complete defeat and overthrow of imperialism and feudalism (and bureaucrat-capitalism). But this would happen only through struggle.

Mao powerfully expressed this principle in the following passage:

"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 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." (*Ibid.*)

Such was the relationship between the masses of people and the reactionary forces, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and the new society and the old.

The Socialist Period

"On Contradiction," was, along with "On Practice," a tremendous weapon in the Chinese revolution at that time and played a great part in charting the course of the Chinese revolution through new democracy to socialism. And more than that it was a treasure house of Marxist theory, philosophy in particular, of great and enduring value in the overall and ongoing revolutionary struggle not only in China but worldwide.

But Mao's greatest development and application of Marxism-Leninism came after the seizure of nationwide political power, in the period of socialist revolution. And a crucial part of this was his development and application of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, materialist dialectics.

In the previous article in this series the relationship between the struggle on the philosophical front and the struggle on the economic and political fronts was touched on. Particular attention was focused on the struggle against the reactionary theory of the "synthesized economic base" cooked up by the revisionists in the Chinese Communist Party and in particular a leading philosopher of this camp, Yang Hsien-chen.

Yang's reactionary theory that the superstructure should serve capitalist relations as well as socialist ones in the economic base and should even "serve the bourgeoisie" was part and parcel of the "theory of productive forces." It argued that China's productive forces were too backward to allow for the advance to socialism and the elimination of capitalist relations and that instead capitalism must be allowed to develop without restriction and for a long period before the basis would exist to make the transition to socialism. Hence, according to this view, the task was to "consolidate new democracy," and it was even said that in these conditions "exploitation is a merit."

Mao formulated the general line for the transition from new democracy to socialism in opposition to the revisionist program of "consolidating new democracy." And he led the fight on the philosophical front to demolish the ideological basis for this counter-revolutionary line.

In fact, Mao had already anticipated this in "On Contradiction." In speaking of the transformation of

the aspects of a contradiction into their opposite, Mao gave special emphasis to the fact that this applied among other things to the contradiction between the forces and relations of production and the base and superstructure, thus striking a sharp blow against mechanical materialism. This was of extreme importance even then, in showing how China did not have to pass through the capitalist stage but could advance through the new-democratic revolution to socialism, despite the fact that its productive forces were not highly developed. Mao wrote then that:

"Some people think that this [the transformation of contradictory aspects into their opposite] 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 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... 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... 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... 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... This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism." (*Ibid.*, pp. 335-336)

Applying this principle to the situation in China right after the seizure of nationwide political power, Mao showed that unless socialist production relations were established, China's productive forces could not continue to develop. "Consolidating new democracy"—that is, capitalism—would hinder not help this development; "only socialism can save China." And unless a socialist superstructure was established and strengthened—unless the proletariat, together with its allies, held power and exercised dictatorship over the reactionary classes, and unless the ideology, politics, culture, etc., of the proletariat were in command—then the socialist economic base could not be developed and "eat up" the remaining capitalist relations through the period of transition. The superstructure could not serve both capitalism and socialism, it certainly could not "serve the bourgeoisie." This was an extremely sharp and decisive struggle, and only by waging it on the philosophical as well as the political and economic battlefronts was it possible for the proletariat to prevail and continue to advance along the socialist road.

But after the transition had been basically completed, after socialist ownership had been in the main achieved, in 1956, the class struggle did not die down nor certainly die out. And it was in leading the proletariat and broad masses in waging the class struggle under these conditions that Mao made his greatest contributions to Marxism-Leninism and the cause of communism.

Deepening Dialectics

As noted earlier, Mao's development and application of Marxist-Leninist philosophy was a decisive part of this. And as also stated at the start of this article and indicated throughout it, the heart of Mao's contributions to Marxist-Leninist philosophy was his concentration and development of the understanding and application of the law of contradiction. What Mao unceasingly stressed, and even more intensely so in the socialist period, was dialectics, motion, change, upheavals, leaps, the transformation of things into their opposites, the supersession of the old by the new—all in opposition to tendencies to stagnation, "absolutism," "settling down," permanent "great order," etc., in short, metaphysics. As Mao emphasized in 1966, with his characteristic and classic style of understatement, "... diligently study dialectics, its efficacy is very great." (see Schram, *op. cit.*, p. 252)

In early 1958, at the time when Mao was beginning to develop the basis for his great theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, he commented that:

"To talk all the time about monolithic unity, and not to talk about struggle, is not Marxist-Leninist. Unity passes through struggle, only thus can unity be achieved. It is the same within the party, as regards classes, and among the people. Unity is transformed into struggle, and then there is unity again. We cannot talk of monolithic unity alone, and not talk about struggle, about contradictions. The Soviet Union does not talk about the contradiction between the leaders and the led. If there were no contradictions and no struggle, there would be no world, no progress, no life, there would be nothing at all. To talk all the time about unity is 'a pool of stagnant water'; it can lead to coldness. We must destroy the old basis for unity, pass through a struggle, and unite on a new basis. Which is better—a stagnant pool, or 'the inexhaustible Yangtze comes roaring past'?" (*Ibid.*, pp. 107-108)

At several points in this article it has been noted that

Mao summed up that Stalin deviated in some significant ways from dialectics. In 1957, a year before he made the comments cited just above, Mao made a rather thorough analysis of this, and it is worth quoting at length here. "Stalin had a fair amount of metaphysics in him and he taught many people to follow metaphysics." Mao then says that in the *HCPSU*,

"Stalin says that Marxist dialectics has four principal features. As the first feature he talks of the interconnection of things, as if all things happened to be interconnected for no reason at all. What then are the things that are interconnected? It is the contradictory aspects of a thing that are interconnected. Everything has two contradictory aspects. As the fourth feature he talks of the internal contradiction in all things, but then he deals only with the struggle of opposites, without mentioning their unity. According to the basic law of dialectics, the unity of opposites, there is at once struggle and unity between the opposites, which are both mutually exclusive and interconnected and which under given conditions transform themselves into each other.

"Stalin's viewpoint is reflected in the entry on 'identity' in the *Shorter Dictionary of Philosophy*, fourth edition, compiled in the Soviet Union. It is said there: 'There can be no identity between war and peace, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between life and death and other such phenomena, because they are fundamentally opposed to each other and mutually exclusive.'... This interpretation is utterly wrong....

"War and peace are both mutually exclusive and interconnected and can be transformed into each other under given conditions. If war is not brewing in peacetime, how can it possibly break out all of a sudden? If peace is not brewing in wartime, how can it suddenly come about?

"If life and death cannot be transformed into each other, then please tell me where living things come from... All living matter undergoes a process of metabolism; it grows, reproduces and perishes. While life is in progress, life and death are engaged in a constant struggle and are transformed into each other all the time.

"If the bourgeoisie and the proletariat cannot transform themselves into each other, how come that through revolution the proletariat becomes the ruler and the bourgeoisie the ruled?..."

"Stalin failed to see the connection between the struggle of opposites and the unity of opposites." (Mao, "Talks At A Conference Of Secretaries Of Provincial, Municipal And Autonomous Region Party Committees," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 367-369)

This was of particular importance at that time because this was a period when in China as well as a number of other socialist countries there were a number of disturbances, arising from the resistance of reactionaries to socialism and from bureaucratic tendencies and other defects in the policies of the party and state in these countries. Thus it was very important to distinguish and correctly deal with two different types of contradictions, those among the people and those between the people and the reactionaries, which interpenetrated. Antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions are opposites, but as such they also have identity and can be transformed into each other.

In particular Mao was stressing at that time that non-antagonistic contradictions could be transformed into antagonistic ones if they were not handled properly. In the same "Talks" quoted at length above, Mao makes a point of stating that in the circumstances at that time the class struggle in China found expression on a great scale in contradictions among the people (see *Ibid.*, p. 377). What he was emphasizing was that the reactionaries, the enemies, were taking advantage of certain defects and difficult conditions to stir up broad-scale unrest and even rebellion on the part of sections of the people against the party and state.

Here he was not attempting to negate the fact that the principal contradiction was still that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, which is overall an antagonistic contradiction (though in China's conditions it was correct to attempt to handle the contradiction with the national bourgeoisie non-antagonistically so far as it was possible). In fact, later that year (1957) Mao explicitly criticized the formulation adopted at the 8th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (in 1956) that the principal contradiction was that between the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces, a revisionist formulation opposed to the correct line that the principal contradiction was between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and that the spearhead of the revolution was directed against the latter (see Mao, "Be Activists In Promoting the Revolution," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 492-493). What Mao was getting at in focusing on the fact that the class struggle found expression on a vast scale in contradictions among the people was that in order to carry the revolution forward and defeat the resistance of the enemy it was necessary to distinguish and correctly handle the two different types of contradictions in society. As he said in the above-mentioned "Talks," in January, 1957, "How to handle the contradictions between the people and the enemy and those among the people in socialist society is a branch of science worthy of careful study." (Mao, "Talks," *op. cit.*, p. 377)

And Mao made a major speech on this question the next month (February 1957), "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People." In that speech Mao reiterated that "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." (Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 392) He went on to re-emphasize that "Between the opposites in a contradiction there is at once unity and struggle, and it is this that impels things to move and change." (*Ibid.*) And he criticized "Many [who] 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." (*Ibid.*, p. 393)

Mao applied the law that in given conditions the aspects of a contradiction can be transformed into their opposite to the situation at that time. This meant that the disturbances occurring then must be viewed dialectically. They were a bad thing—that was their principal aspect, which determined the nature of them. But they could be turned into a good thing, because they contained a positive aspect within them. They revealed shortcomings and mistakes on the part of the party and state, making it possible to correct these. Through this process, if handled correctly, the unity among the people, including the relations between the leadership and the led, would be strengthened and the socialist state further consolidated. But, if it was handled incorrectly, disunity would grow among the people and the enemy would be strengthened while the socialist state would be weakened.

The law that opposites can be transformed into each other also means not only that the proletariat can become the dominant force in society while the bourgeoisie becomes the dominated, but the reverse as well. In other words, the proletariat could still lose power and the bourgeoisie could replace it as the ruling class. "Correct Handling" points to this danger and in fact, as noted in the previous article in this series, it was in this speech that for the first time in the history of the international communist movement it was explicitly pointed out that even after the basic achievement of socialist ownership the bourgeoisie continued to exist, the class struggle continued and the question of whether socialism or capitalism will win out is still not settled. (See Mao, *Ibid.*, especially pp. 409, 434)

Man's Conscious, Dynamic Role

Indeed the class struggle was very sharp at that time and was further intensified the next year, 1958. As pointed out in the previous article in this series, that was the year that the movement to establish peoples' communes erupted throughout the Chinese countryside as a decisive part of the great leap forward. In opposition to the revisionists within the Communist Party, Mao championed these mass movements and formulated the general line for building socialism, which both summed up early experience in these movements and gave further direction and impetus to them. The struggle within the Communist Party, focused on these questions, was extremely sharp. And this was true on the philosophical front, where the revisionists, again hurling the accusation of idealism at Mao, stepped up their attack on the principle of the identity between thinking and being.

Yang Hsien-chen, the leading revisionist philosophical "authority," stated straight out that "there is no identity between thinking and being." (See "Momentous Struggle," *op. cit.*, p. 31) He accused Mao and other revolutionaries of contending that "thinking and being are the same." (*Ibid.*, p. 45) And further, he:

"totally denied the necessity of a process for man's cognition of objective phenomena. In his eyes, it was 'idealism' when the subjective could not readily conform with the objective. Proceeding from this fallacy, he used the tactics of attacking one point to the total disregard of the rest and grossly exaggerated the temporary, isolated shortcomings which were difficult to avoid in our actual work, labelling them all 'idealism.' He wildly went for so-called 'mistakes' in the great leap forward and ascribed the cause to 'the identity between thinking and being,' to 'man's conscious dynamic role which makes a mess of things,' etc. He made a big show of upholding materialism, while actually using metaphysics and idealism to oppose the active and revolutionary theory of reflection." (*Ibid.*, p. 39)

We have seen that the identity of two aspects of a contradiction is one of the two features of a contradiction, the other being the struggle of opposites. And as we have also seen, identity between the aspects does not at all mean that they are the same; it means rather that they are interconnected, interdependent and interpenetrate with each other. And more than that it means that under given conditions they can be transformed into each other. In the relation between thinking and being this means that being can be transformed into thinking and vice versa. To deny this is obviously metaphysics, for it makes the two aspects absolutes and absolutely separated from each other. But it is also idealist, for if being cannot be transformed into thinking, matter into consciousness, then where does thinking (consciousness) come from, what is its source?

Mao directly addressed this question in a counter-attack on the philosophical front, concentrated in a

short essay (actually a passage in a Central Committee circular), "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?" written in 1963. Here Mao reviewed the stages in the process of cognition and pointedly stated that:

"Among our comrades there are many who do not yet understand this theory of knowledge. When asked the source of their ideas, opinions, policies, methods, plans and conclusions, eloquent speeches and long articles, they consider the question 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." (Mao, "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From," *Selected Readings*, single volume, p. 503)

Speaking to the question of the subjective conforming to the objective, of consciousness correctly reflecting the material world and being capable therefore of guiding the practice of changing the world, Mao not only notes that there must be the accumulation of perceptual knowledge before it can be synthesized into rational knowledge, but also that in translating this into action, in making the leap from consciousness back to matter, there is the resistance of reactionary forces, especially in changing society. "In social struggle," he says, "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." (*Ibid.*)

While there were shortcomings and mistakes in the great leap forward, the main reason for the difficulties during that period was the resistance of the reactionary forces in China, and in the Chinese Communist Party in particular, as well as in the Soviet Union (the Soviet revisionists actively attempted to sabotage the great leap forward by pulling out assistance and blueprints, leaving many projects unfinished, etc.). To attribute these difficulties to "man's conscious dynamic role" and to the "subjective idealism" of the revolutionaries, including Mao, was to turn things upside down and inside out, to attack the conscious activism of the masses and deny the decisive role of a revolutionary line in leading the masses in transforming society and nature. This, of course, was the aim of the revisionists—who also, of course, took credit for the real gains that actually resulted from the upsurge of the great leap forward.

Mao had actually addressed the basic philosophical principle involved here in "On Contradiction," where, in combatting mechanical materialism, he showed that the law of the transformation of opposites into each other applies not only to the forces and relations of production and the base and superstructure but also to practice and theory. He specifically pointed out that, although practice is principal over theory in general, there are certain times when the relationship is reversed. And "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." (Mao, "On Contradiction," *op. cit.*, p. 336) Here Mao stresses the tremendous importance of line, policy, etc., which belong to the category of consciousness, and which can be transformed into matter, into revolutionary practice. And in general the dialectical relationship between consciousness and matter, the identity between them and therefore the possibility of the one being transformed into the other—this is an extremely important principle of Marxism-Leninism and was a focus of fierce struggle in the Chinese Communist Party, especially from the time of the great leap forward.

In 1959, during the struggle against Peng Teh-huai over the great leap forward (see the previous article, *Revolution*, July 1978), Mao declared that empiricism had become the main danger. Actually for several years before that he had been stressing that revisionism, right opportunism, was a greater danger than dogmatism. This revisionism was reflected in the attacks on "man's conscious dynamic role," on "the identity of thinking and being" and in general on the importance of theory, line, consciousness. All this was an attempt to suffocate the mass movements that in fact represented the transformation of Mao's revolutionary line—drawn from the experience of struggle in China and internationally—into a tremendous material force changing the face of China, especially its vast countryside.

Struggle and Synthesis

During the several years period of intense struggle over the great leap forward, Mao made in 1962 the historic analysis that socialist society was a long transition period during the entire course of which there are classes and class struggle and the danger of capitalist restoration (as well as the threat of attack from external class enemies). This became the basic line of the Chinese Communist Party for the entire period of socialism. It represented a historic advance in Marxism-Leninism, and it was the result of the brilliant application of the fundamental law of contradiction to socialist society. Mao applied this law to the material and ideological conditions under socialism, showing how the bourgeoisie would constantly be regenerated out of these conditions, out of the contradictions that characterized socialism from beginning to end (for more on this see the previous ar-

ticle in this series, *Revolution*, July 1978) And, if the bourgeoisie and the proletariat both existed and formed a contradiction—in fact the principal contradiction—throughout the socialist period, then not only must there be struggle between them but the possibility must also exist that they could be transformed into their opposites—in other words, that the bourgeoisie could usurp power from the proletariat, that capitalist restoration could take place.

Again the revisionists viciously attacked this pathbreaking theory and line of Mao's. As early as 1958 Yang Hsien-chen, taking up a new tactic, had attacked Mao and the proletarian headquarters in the party for talking "only about the struggle between opposites, but not their unity." Here Yang became a champion of the unity of opposites and clamored for "using identity of contradiction." (See "The Theory Of 'Combine Two Into One' Is A Reactionary Philosophy For Restoring Capitalism," *Three Major Struggles on China's Philosophical Front*, p. 49)

Yang's babbling became especially intense during the early 1960s, particularly in 1961-1962, when Soviet sabotage, natural calamities and revisionist renegacy within the Chinese Communist Party were all at a high point and combined to pose great obstacles to the advance along the socialist road in China. At this time Yang insisted that unity of opposites meant "common points," and that the Chinese people and the Chinese revolution had "common points" with U.S. imperialism and "common points with some differences" with Soviet revisionism. This was the theory of "two combines into one" (or two into one) in direct opposition to Mao's concentrated expression of dialectics, one divides into two, which he had formulated some time earlier. In 1964 Yang, Liu Shao-chi and other top revisionists in the Chinese Communist Party leadership openly proclaimed their reactionary theory of two combines into one. This was aimed at providing a philosophical rationalization for their revisionist line of "the dying out of class struggle."

To counter Mao's line and in an attempt to confuse people, Yang Hsien-chen combined two into one on the question of one divides into two vs. two combines into one. That is, he claimed that "'combine two into one' and 'one divides into two' had 'the same meaning.'" (*Ibid.*, p. 51)

Here the question of synthesis and its role in contradiction is of particular importance. Yang Hsien-chen argued that "analysis means 'one divides into two' while synthesis means 'combine two into one.'" (*Ibid.*, p. 60) That is, in analyzing a contradiction it is correct to divide it into its contradictory aspects, but in seeking the resolution—or really, reconciliation—of the contradiction the two aspects should be combined into one, united into a "common point" so to speak. This is the opposite of the correct, dialectical materialist understanding which holds that:

"Analysis shows how an entity divides into two different parts and how they are locked in struggle; synthesis shows how, through the struggle between the two opposite aspects, one prevails, defeats and eliminates the other, how an old contradiction is resolved and a new one emerges, and how an old thing is eliminated and a new thing triumphs. In plain words, synthesis means one 'eats up' the other." (*Ibid.*)

The difference here, the heart of this struggle in the realm of philosophy, is no mere academic debate but the struggle between two fundamentally opposed lines, the revolutionary line of resolving contradiction through struggle versus the reactionary line of attempting to reconcile contradiction through the subordination of the progressive to the reactionary, the advanced to the backward, the new to the old, the correct to the incorrect, etc. And under socialism in particular this assumes its most concentrated political expression as the struggle between the Marxist-Leninist line of taking class struggle as the key link and the revisionist line of "the dying out of class struggle."

This law of synthesis applies in all contradictions, both antagonistic and non-antagonistic. In either case the new, rising aspect eventually "eats up" the old, decadent aspect. Only the means of "eating up" is different. The proletariat "eats up" the bourgeoisie by waging class struggle against it, wresting political power from it, exercising dictatorship over it and continuing the class struggle against it under the conditions of this proletarian dictatorship. This is an antagonistic contradiction and is resolved by antagonistic means. On the other hand, with regard to the contradiction between right and wrong among the people, this is resolved by non-antagonistic means, through ideological struggle. But in this process right still "eats up" wrong. And so it is as well with other non-antagonistic contradictions. Synthesis through struggle is a universal law, flowing from the fundamental law of unity of opposites.

Without this correct view of synthesis "one divides into two" turns into eclectics—into the recognition of the contradictory aspects but an attempt to reconcile them, to reconcile two mutually exclusive things. In other words it turns into "two into one." In popular terms in this country this is expressed as "there are two sides to every story"—meaning you can't tell right from wrong, good from bad, etc.

Mao spoke to this in his "Reading Notes" on the Soviet political economy text. He said that to talk of contradictions that are "not irreconcilable," even under socialism, "does not agree with the laws of

dialectics, which hold that all contradictions are irreconcilable. Where has there ever been a reconcilable contradiction? Some are antagonistic, some are non-antagonistic, but it must not be thought that there are irreconcilable and reconcilable contradictions." (Mao, "Reading Notes," *op. cit.*, p. 71)

Mao spoke to this question of synthesis and its political implications in a major talk on philosophy in 1964. "What is synthesis?" he asked. And he answered:

"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. . . . Having analysed, how do we synthesize? If you want to go somewhere, you go right ahead; we still swallow your army mouthful by mouthful. . . . This was synthesis. . . . 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." (Schram, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-225)

As applied to the class struggle, such is the case with regard to the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; if, through struggle, the proletariat does not synthesize the bourgeoisie, if the two are not severed through the resolution of the contradiction between them—resulting, through the victory of the proletariat, in the elimination of both as a class and the emergence of classless society—then how can there ever be any communism?

Unity of Opposites is Basic

In this same talk on philosophy, Mao expresses a further development of Marxist dialectics. He says that "Engels talked about three categories, but as for me I don't believe in two of these categories." Here Mao was referring to the transformation of quantity and quality into each other and the negation of the negation, which along with the unity of opposites, Engels speaks of as three basic laws of dialectics (see for example *Anti-Duhring*, "Part I. Philosophy"). As to quantity and quality, Mao says that "The transformation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity of the opposites quality and quantity." (*Ibid.*, p. 226) And, Mao argues, "the negation of the negation does not exist at all." In sum, he says:

"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 unity of opposites is 'triplism', not monism. The most basic thing is the unity of opposites." (*Ibid.*)

In other words, to say that these three things are all, equally, basic laws of dialectics is in essence a violation of the law that there must be a principal contradiction. One of these must be basic, and it is the unity of opposites. As Mao explains the transformation of quantity into quality, and of quality into quantity, is itself a result of the contradiction between quality and quantity and cannot be placed on a par with the law of contradiction.

But why does Mao insist that "There is no such thing as the negation of the negation"? (*Ibid.*) His explanation is as follows:

"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 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." (*Ibid.*)

Here it may seem that Mao is not so much denying the negation of the negation as making a dialectical application of it. But what he is applying is the law of one divides into two, and what he is getting at is that in the process he describes—the development of human society so far, through stages, from primitive communal society to socialism—the negation of the negation cannot be said to be a law. How, for example, does feudalism represent a negation of the negation with regard to primitive society? Or capitalism with regard to slavery? Or socialism with regard to feudalism?

It is true that in the development of society things can be found which could be described as the negation of the negation. An example is that which Marx uses in *Capital*, Volume 1, and Engels defends against Duhring: individual private property in the means of production is negated by capitalist ownership of the means of production, which is in turn negated by socialized ownership; this gives private property to the individual but in the means of consumption only and on the basis of socialized ownership of production, in conformity with socialized production. Or another example pointed to by Engels can be considered as the

negation of the negation: the negation of common ownership in primitive society by the emergence of class society and in turn the negation of class society by classless society, leading again to common ownership, but on the basis of a tremendous accumulation of productive forces during the period of class societies between primitive communal and communist society. Other examples may be found in nature and society and in thought.

But again, can these be said to demonstrate that the negation of the negation is a law of dialectics, applicable to all processes in nature, society and thought? No. In a certain process or a certain stage of a process, the resolution of a contradiction might be described as the negation of the negation, but even here this is not the law underlying and defining the process. The law operating is the unity of opposites, leading ceaselessly to the emergence and resolution of new contradictions. This is what Mao means when he says the negation of the negation does not exist.

Take the example of life and death. All particular things come into existence and go out of existence, all living things become living and later cease to live. But how is their going out of existence, or ceasing to live, a negation of the original negation that brought them into existence, or to life? The negation of the negation may describe what happens to certain things through their life cycle, as for example the barley grain Engels cites in *Anti-Duhring* (which becomes a plant, which in turn gives birth to many grains). But Engels acknowledges even in this case that the grain is transformed into a plant only under certain conditions, and that the first negation must be constructed so that the second is possible. All this is not a demonstration of the negation of the negation as a law of dialectics but in fact of the unity of opposites, the basic law of materialist dialectics.

Grain-plant-grain(s) is the unity of opposites of grain and plant. Engels says that of course if you grind the grain down it won't become a plant. But a ground-down grain also demonstrates the law of contradiction: there is the unity and struggle of opposites, the grain and the force grinding it down; and there is the resolution, the ground-down grain. Here there is no negation of negation, but there is the law of contradiction.

Beyond what has been cited before, Mao objects to the negation of the negation as a law of dialectics because it leads to, or is part of, an incorrect view of synthesis. In this view, synthesis is not the "eating up" of one aspect by another through struggle, leading to a new contradiction in which even the principal aspect of the old has been changed; instead synthesis becomes something which resurrects elements of the thing first negated (but on a different and qualitatively higher level) and tends to be viewed as an end product of development—or at most the starting point of the same process once again. And if the negation of the negation is made a law of development, for example the development of society from primitive communalism to communism, then what would be focused on as the motive force in advancing to communism would not be the basic internal contradiction of capitalism (and socialism) between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (nor the basic contradictions internal to previous systems) but the process: thesis—primitive communalism; antithesis—class society; synthesis—communism. Again, this is not a correct view of the process and motive force of development of society to communism, nor of synthesis.

Immediately after citing the development of society as an example of why the negation of the negation is not a law of dialectics, Mao returns to the question: "What is the method of synthesis?" (*Ibid.*) And he answers: "In a word, one devours another, one overthrows another, one class is eliminated, another class rises, one society is eliminated, another society rises." (*Ibid.*, pp. 226-227) This is the law of contradiction, the basic law of materialist dialectics, and this is the real nature and role of synthesis, in moving things constantly from one process to another, from the lower to the higher level in an endless spiral.

Finally on this matter of the negation of the negation, if this is made a law of dialectics, it will actually tend to promote metaphysics. Of course it should be clearly said that Engels promoted dialectics as opposed to metaphysics and certainly overall he promoted a dialectical, not a metaphysical, view of historical development; but Marxist dialectics have been further developed since Engels' time—especially by Mao. Specifically in regard to the development of society, the negation of the negation will tend to present a "closed system" of development leading to communism and promote a static, "absolutist" view of communism itself as the end product of the negation of the negation and the kingdom of "great harmony." As opposed to this, Mao declares in his 1964 talk on philosophy: "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! . . . This is unthinkable in the light of dialectics." (*Ibid.*, p. 227)

The importance of this, particularly at that time in China, was more directly in relation to socialism than communism; for some communists were making an absolute, static thing out of socialism, regarding it in effect as the end product of the development of society, the final negation of previous society. On this Mao comments: "Socialism, too, will be eliminated, it wouldn't do if it were not eliminated, for then there would be no communism." (*Ibid.*)

Cultural Revolution and the Continuing Struggle

The revisionists, too, wanted to eliminate socialism, but not through the advance to communism. They were actively promoting and working for capitalist restoration. And they had a powerful headquarters within the Communist Party, controlling a large part of the Party apparatus, as well as in the various institutions, economic units, etc. If this situation were allowed to continue for much longer these revisionists, led mainly by Liu Shao-chi at that time, would succeed in usurping power in the country as a whole and pulling off a counter-revolutionary restoration. Something had to be done. Something was done.

That something was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which in 1966 burst into a tremendous uprising of the Chinese masses, under the leadership of Mao and the proletarian headquarters in the Party, against the capitalist-roaders, headed then by Liu Shao-chi and others closely allied with him. This mass upsurge of the Cultural Revolution and its necessity was a dramatic demonstration of the dialectical materialist principle that Mao had expounded in "On Contradiction" in combatting mechanical materialism: "When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive." If the bourgeoisie's (the capitalist-roaders') domination of large parts of the superstructure—including culture, education and much of the Party and state apparatus—were not smashed, then the socialist economic base could not be defended and developed; instead the capitalist-roaders would make a thorough change in the superstructure—replace proletarian dictatorship with bourgeois dictatorship—and then proceed to transform the economic base into a capitalist one, replace socialist production relations with capitalist ones throughout society, and restore capitalism in an all-around way. This, Mao had summed up, was exactly the process that occurred in the Soviet Union with the rise to power of Khrushchev & Co. and the implementation of their revisionist line in society as a whole.

The Cultural Revolution also represented a revolutionary line on and application of the principle of synthesis as opposed to the reactionary philosophy of two into one. It was "taking class struggle as the key link" as opposed to "the dying out of class struggle." It represented the masses, led by the proletarian headquarters in the Party, synthesizing, "eating up," the bourgeois headquarters within the Party.

But this represented only one stage in the long process of transition between capitalism and communism and could not resolve the fundamental contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. One bourgeois headquarters was smashed, synthesized, but others were bound to emerge as the core and commander of the bourgeoisie in society so long as the bourgeoisie existed, in other words, throughout the transition period. This is why Mao said that not only would class struggle continue but that every few years there would be a major struggle, a showdown to determine who held power. In addition Mao said that one Cultural Revolution could not solve the problem of preventing capitalist restoration.

This was, again, a thoroughgoing application of materialist dialectics. And it was fully verified in practice, as first Lin Piao and then others rose to challenge the proletariat in a political struggle for power, seeking to reverse the gains of the Cultural Revolution in particular and reverse the socialist revolution in general in order to restore capitalism. Here the profound importance of Mao's great theory and basic line of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat shines brilliantly.

Some might argue that if a capitalist restoration is pulled off then this would show that Mao's theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat—as well as the Cultural Revolution which was the transformation of this theory into a tremendous material force on a mass scale—was basically flawed. This kind of thinking is nothing but empiricism and relativism. The correctness of this theory does not depend on the immediate results in any particular situation; it has been verified in practice, in the mass struggle of hundreds of millions of Chinese people, and will be further verified in the future in the revolutionary struggle not only in China but in every country. Here it is useful to recall Mao's statement that

"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." (Mao, "Where do Correct Ideas Come From?", *op. cit.*, p. 503)

This remains absolutely true.

Another absolute truth is that Mao led the Chinese masses in continuing revolutionary struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and continuing the Cultural Revolution through various forms of struggle, down to his last breath. And a crucial part of this was, once again, the struggle in the philosophical realm, particularly between dialectical materialism and metaphysics and mechanical materialism.

For example, one of the main questions focused on in the campaign to Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius during the last years of Mao's life was the exposure of

and struggle against the "doctrine of the mean" peddled by Confucius and his followers in China down through the ages. This doctrine was in essence the same as the reactionary theory of "combining two into one." It opposed "going to extremes" and called for reconciling opposites rather than resolving the contradiction between them through struggle. The ideological defeat of this doctrine was obviously crucial to upholding class struggle as the key link and opposing "the dying out of class struggle" at home and reconciliation with and capitulation to the international class enemies.

Ceaseless Struggle

In general throughout this period of his last years Mao repeatedly stressed the need for struggle. He called attention to the fact that "without struggle, there is no progress" and sharply posed the question to which his answer was obvious: "Can 800 million people manage without struggle?" Blasting at those who denied the importance and necessity of the Cultural Revolution and exposing the real aims of those who preached "the dying out of class struggle" in opposition to continuing the revolution, Mao declared:

"What is the Great Cultural Revolution for? To wage class struggle. Liu Shao-chi advocated the theory of the dying out of class struggle, but he himself never ceased to wage class struggle. He wanted to protect his bunch of renegades and sworn followers. Lin Piao wanted to overthrow the proletariat and attempted a coup. Did the class struggle die out?"

Giving this profound truth—the need to continue the revolution—an "extreme" expression, exactly in order to emphasize its great and long-term importance, Mao said:

"Will there be need for revolution a hundred years from now? Will there still be need for revolution a thousand years from now? There is always need for revolution. There are always sections of the people who feel themselves oppressed; junior officials, students, workers, peasants and soldiers don't like bigshots oppressing them. That's why they want revolution. Will contradictions no longer be seen ten thousand years from now? Why Not? They will still be seen."

Here again Mao was calling attention to the fact that even under communism there will still be contradiction and struggle to resolve contradiction—and in this sense revolution. As he had said in 1971:

"We have been singing *The Internationale* for fifty years, yet on ten occasions certain people inside our Party tried to split it. As I see it, this may happen ten, twenty or thirty times. You don't believe it? Anyhow I do. Will there be no struggle when we get to communism? I just don't believe it. There will be struggles even then, but only between the new and the old, between what is correct and what is incorrect. Tens of thousands of years from now, what is wrong still won't get by, it won't stand up."

Why was Mao giving such great emphasis then to the fact that even thousands of years from now there will still be contradiction and struggle? It was to strike at the line right then that contradiction, class struggle, revolution could and should come to an end. To the revisionists, the top Party persons in power taking the capitalist road in particular, the revolution had gone far enough; it had made them "bigshots" and nothing could be more important than this; development need not and must not proceed any farther.

This is closely linked with the question that Mao focused attention on two years before he died:

"Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie? It is essential to get this question clear. Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation."

The essence of what Mao was getting at here is that the purpose of the dictatorship of the proletariat is to achieve the transition to communism. It is the form through which the proletariat rules *and* wages class struggle against the bourgeoisie in the socialist transition period in order to advance to communism. Without continuing the revolution, continuing to wage the class struggle against the bourgeoisie under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletariat cannot continue to rule and cannot continue the advance to communism.

In opposition to this, if the dictatorship of the proletariat is viewed as an end in itself whose purpose is merely to ensure order and the development of production, then it will turn into its opposite, it will be transformed into a dictatorship of the (new) bourgeoisie. This is because of the transitional and contradictory nature of socialism and the persistence of remnants of exploiting class society throughout the socialist transition period, which continually give rise to the bourgeoisie and to a bourgeois headquarters in the Party as the concentration of this.

This is closely bound up with a correct understanding of what Marx wrote to J. Weydemeyer in 1852, in a famous statement where Marx gives a concise summation of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular historical phases in the development of production*, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*." (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 528, emphasis in original)

All three points Marx makes here are of great importance; but after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established and in the conditions where the necessity for maintaining it are generally acknowledged (in words even by the revisionists) the last point above takes on special importance and will become the focus of sharp struggle. The revisionists will try to deny this last point, or the substance and meaning of it, especially as this has been developed by Mao—namely, the need to continue the revolution to carry through the transition to communism.

The revisionists, of course, will talk about communism and the need to achieve it, but they will treat this metaphysically and according to mechanical materialism—that is, as a question of simply developing the productive forces. They will not deal with socialism itself as a contradiction which, as such, can be moved one way or the other in the short run—though its final resolution can only be in the advance to communism. They will not recognize that socialism represents a struggle between the new, rising aspects of communism within it and the old, declining aspects of capitalism retained in the socialist period. In short, they will wall off socialism from communism: "Communism, that's for later and the way to get there is to maintain strict order and do everything to boost production so that someday the economy is developed enough and we can then talk of introducing communism." Such is the revisionist view, and in particular its "theory of productive forces" and "dying out of class struggle," its metaphysics and mechanical materialism, in the form which all this takes where the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established and its necessity has become part of popular consciousness.

Socialism as an Absolute Means Capitalist Restoration

In the first part of this article it was shown how Engels analyzed the ways in which Hegel's dialectics turned into metaphysics. Hegel's philosophical system, in contradiction to his dialectical method, pronounced the end of the dialectic in the realization of the Absolute Idea in Hegel's philosophical system itself. Politically this was expressed in the idea that the constitutional monarchy promised by Frederick William III of Prussia was the highest and final form of society. Observing a similar phenomenon, Mao had summed up that there was the recurring tendency for communists to turn Marxism and the socialist system into absolutes and that this leads to revisionism. As Mao said as early as 1957, "If it is asserted that the socialist system and its relations of production and superstructure will not die out, what kind of Marxist would that be. Wouldn't it be the same as a religious creed or theology that preaches an everlasting God?" (Mao, "Talks at a Conference," Vol. 5, *op. cit.*, p. 377)

This was a theme Mao would hammer at again and again throughout the rest of his life. As he insisted in his "Reading Notes" on the Soviet political economy text, in criticizing the notion of "completely consolidating" socialism,

"This socialist economy has had its own birth and development. Who would believe that this process of change has come to an end, and that we will say, 'These two forms of ownership [state and collective] will continue to be fully consolidated for all time?' Who would believe that such formulas of a socialist society as 'distribution according to labor,' 'commodity production,' and 'the law of value' are going to live forever? Who would believe that there is only birth and development but no dying away and transformation and that these formulas unlike all others are ahistorical?"

"Socialism must make the transition to communism. At that time there will be things of the socialist stage that will have to die out." (A Critique of Soviet Economics, *op. cit.*, p. 57)

It was precisely the revisionists who made an absolute out of these socialist categories and of socialism itself. They opposed the dialectical materialist understanding that for these things to die out there must be struggle and that the capitalist elements within these things must be restricted at every point to the degree possible in accordance with the material and ideological conditions. They cannot be expanded and built up and then one day, out of nowhere, suddenly die out. To think this is in essence the same as the Deborin school of philosophy summarized earlier—that contradiction appears only at a certain stage and that struggle is not necessary to deal with differences.

These questions became the focus of intense struggle in the last years of Mao's life, when he called for restricting such things as distribution according to work, the difference between mental and manual labor, the sphere of operation of the law of value, and so on—things generally described by the term "bourgeois right." The revisionists wanted instead to expand these things and actively resisted the attempts to restrict them. Such people, Mao said, were not genuine communists but capitalist-roaders.

As pointed out earlier, the tendency to view socialism as a static absolute can be found in Stalin and goes hand in hand with tendencies to metaphysics in his treatment of Marxist philosophy. But this tendency becomes a principle and fundamental characteristic with the revisionists in China and the Soviet Union itself (and other countries). Such people therefore, regardless of good or bad intentions and regardless of pretensions of upholding socialism and even the eventual realization of communism, represent not the proletariat but the bourgeoisie in socialist society and stand not for the actual development of socialism as a transition to communism but for the restoration of capitalism. Such people become the bourgeoisie in the Party, the core and commanders of the reactionary forces in socialist society.

This process itself, of course, follows the laws of dialectics. There is a contradiction within all communists between proletarian and bourgeois ideology, and under certain conditions these aspects too can be transformed into their opposites. Communists can be turned into their opposite. People who are revolutionaries at a certain stage and under certain conditions can turn into counter-revolutionaries at another stage and under different conditions.

In the history of the Chinese revolution a particularly significant form of this was the phenomenon of people who were revolutionaries during the new-democratic stage but turned into counter-revolutionaries in the socialist stage, especially the deeper the socialist revolution went. When the program of the revolution was new democracy (that is, bourgeois-democratic revolution of a new type) there was an inevitable tendency to identify this with the ideology of the Communist Party—though this was fought by Mao and others. But as the revolution advanced to and in the socialist stage, the need to make a radical rupture with bourgeois ideology became all the more pronounced. Most members of the Communist Party did so, of course, but some did not. They went from being participants in, even leaders of, the revolution to becoming the targets of it; they were transformed from bourgeois-democrats into capitalist-roaders. And, especially for those in leading positions, this ideological contradiction was inter-related with the fact that they held positions of great authority in society after political power was seized.

In the midst of the continuing struggle, in the last year of his life, Mao called attention to this phenomenon and summarized it this way:

"After the democratic revolution the workers and the poor and lower-middle peasants did not stand still, they want revolution. On the other hand, a number of Party members do not want to go forward; some have moved backward and opposed the revolution. Why? Because they have become high officials and want to protect the interests of high officials."

Mao's point here is not that high officials will inevitably become revisionists—though some will do so at each stage in the revolution—but that if they do not continue to make revolution against the bourgeoisie, if they do not continue to take part in the struggle to advance to communism, they will become bourgeois themselves, in their thinking and being, and attempt to restore capitalism. As explained in the previous article in this series and touched on in this article, there is a material and ideological basis for this throughout the entire period of socialism.

The transformation of bourgeois-democrats into capitalist-roaders, while of particular importance in the Chinese revolution, is obviously only one form of the phenomenon of revolutionaries being transformed into counter-revolutionaries and Communist Party members, especially top leaders, being transformed into capitalist-roaders. More generally, the principle that seizing and exercising political power must not be viewed as an end in itself and that it is necessary to continue making the revolution has as its opposite the fact that people who adopt the outlook that socialism is an absolute and an end in itself will take up the stand that the purpose of socialism is to enable them to "have the good life." They will become conservative, will fear and even oppose the advance of the revolution. For top leaders in the Communist Party, this means that they will become part of the bourgeoisie in the Party, attempting to exercise their leadership position not to guide the masses in the struggle for communism, but to enforce the exploitation of the masses and bring about the restoration of capitalism with themselves as the ruling bourgeoisie.

Mao devoted great attention to this problem and this danger, especially in the last few years of his life. His analysis of it was thoroughly based on materialist dialectics. But some people have argued that if you say, as Mao did, that "the bourgeoisie is right in the Communist Party," then the masses will not follow the Party, because it will be the same as saying that the Party is not the vanguard of the proletariat but a bourgeois party. This, again, is metaphysics.

As Mao explained in "On Contradiction," the nature of a thing, of a contradiction, is determined by the principal aspect. The presence of the bourgeoisie—not the whole but the heart of it—within the Communist Party in socialist society does not in itself change the nature of the Party from proletarian to bourgeois nor of the society from socialist to capitalist. It is only if and when the bourgeoisie in the Party rises to the dominant position and a revisionist line is in command overall that the Party will be transformed from proletarian to bourgeois; and, if this is not reversed, it will lead to the transformation of the society from socialist to capitalist.

Mao's line here is, again, the dialectical materialist one. If there is no bourgeoisie in the Party even when the principal aspect—and therefore the nature—of the Party is proletarian, then how can the Party be transformed from proletarian to bourgeois? It is due to the identity as well as the struggle of opposites that in certain conditions they can be transformed into each other. The contradiction between representatives of the proletariat and of the bourgeoisie exists all along within the Communist Party, even when the proletariat and its Party are not in power. But with the seizure of power and the socialization of ownership, the nature of this contradiction changes accordingly; the basis develops for leaders in the Party to turn the contradiction between the leaders and the led into that between the exploiters and the exploited, and the bourgeois elements within the Party can become actual exploiters even when they do not have control of the Party and power in society as a whole. To deny all this and to act as if the bourgeoisie suddenly appears in the Party only if and at the time it usurps supreme power, is this not the same as the reactionary Deborin school, is it not metaphysics and idealism in opposition to the dialectical materialist line of Mao?

Because the bourgeoisie is constantly regenerated under socialism, and because bourgeois exploiting elements constantly emerge within the Party as the core of the bourgeoisie and commanders of the reactionary social forces, Mao summed up, the class struggle against the bourgeoisie is the key link and must be carried out throughout the entire period of socialism, with its main target those in authority taking the capitalist road, the bourgeoisie in the Party. And because every few years a bourgeois headquarters will make an all-out attempt at usurping power, there must be a major struggle every few years. As Mao said in 1966, at the start of the Cultural Revolution,

"Great disorder across the land leads to great order. And so once again every seven or eight years. Monsters and demons will jump out themselves. Determined by their own class nature, they are bound to jump out."

Contradiction, Struggle, Revolution

Here what is reflected again and what is of the most profound importance is not simply the analysis that there will be recurrent major struggles every few years but the dialectical materialist stand, viewpoint and method that permeate this statement. Order, even "great order," cannot be absolute, it can only be temporary, conditional, and relative. Contradiction, struggle, revolution—this is universal, unconditional and absolute.

Far from being idealist, Mao's dialectical view is thoroughly materialist. And as he himself said, "thoroughgoing materialists are fearless." Communism is inevitable, Mao affirmed. But to advance to communism—and to continue advancing even then—struggle is always necessary. The ceaseless emergence and resolution of contradictions through struggle, this is the order, the process and the ever upward motion of all things. In the course of any process, including certainly one so earth-shaking as the advance to communism, there can be reversals and setbacks; but these, too, can only be temporary. The new will supersede the old, the progressive the reactionary, this is an irresistible law.

As Mao put it, applying this law to class struggle, on the eve of the complete victory of the new-democratic revolution and the liberation of China:

"How different is the logic of the imperialists from that of the people! Make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again... till their doom; that is the logic of the imperialists and all reactionaries the world over in dealing with the people's cause, and they will never go against this logic. This is a Marxist law. When we say 'imperialism is ferocious', we mean that its nature will never change, that the imperialists will never lay down their butcher knives, that they will never become Buddhists, till their doom."

"Fight, fail, fight again, fail again, fight again... till their victory; that is the logic of the people, and they too will never go against this logic. This is another Marxist law. The Russian people's revolution followed this law, and so has the Chinese people's revolution."

"Classes struggle, some classes triumph, others are eliminated. Such is history, such is the history of civilization for thousands of years. To interpret history from this viewpoint is historical materialism; standing in opposition to this viewpoint is historical idealism." (Mao, "Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle," *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 428)

Such is the truly immortal contribution of Mao Tsetung to Marxist philosophy and in general, to the revolutionary struggle on this front and overall, to the liberating science and historic mission of the proletariat.

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