

II. The Universality of Contradiction

- A. Contradiction is universal and absolute, it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end
 - 1. There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist
 - 2. In the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites (contradiction) exists from beginning to end
 - a) Labor and capital have been in contradiction ever since the two classes came into being, only not as intensely at first
- B. Emerging of a new process
 - 1. The old unity with its constituent opposites yields to a new unity with its constituent opposites, whereupon a new process emerges to replace the old. The old ends and new begins. The new contains new contradictions and begins its own history of development of contradictions

Questions

1. Can you think of an example of a thing that does not have contradictions?

2. Define “emerging of a new process” in your own words.

a. What are examples of an “emerging of a new process”?

III. The Particularity of Contradiction

- A. Every form of motion contains within itself its own particular contradiction
 - 1. The particularity of contradiction helps us distinguish between things
 - 2. After man knows the particular essence of many things he can proceed to generalize and know the common essence of things
 - a) Common essence can be used as a guide to study various concrete things that are new, and use it to enrich the knowledge of their common essence
- B. Cognition (the process of acquiring knowledge)
 - 1. Particular → general
 - 2. General → particular
 - 3. Cognition always moves in cycles, each cycle advances human knowledge and makes it more profound

Each process of development is qualitatively different, and qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods

To reveal the particularity of the contradictions in a development process it is necessary to reveal the particularity of the two aspects of each of the contradictions in the process

Questions

1. How would you explain Particularity of Contradiction in your own words?

2. What are contradictions that may seem similar, but we can tell apart due to the particularity of contradiction?
 - a. Try applying the solutions of one contradiction to another.

3. How does cognition tie into the idea of understanding common essence(s)?

IV. The Principal Contradiction and the Principal Aspect of a Contradiction

- A. In every thing there exists contradiction(s)
 - 1. The principal contradiction influences all other contradictions
 - a) Under capitalism, the two aspects in contradiction, proletariat and bourgeoisie, form the principal contradiction. Monopoly vs non-monopoly, petit bourgeois vs bourgeoisie, etc. are influenced by this principal contradiction
- B. Within Contradiction there exists aspects (opposing forces)
 - 1. There is always a principal aspect, but the situation is not static. Principal and non-principal aspects can transform into the other

Questions

- 1. Duck is going to work. List many aspects of this contradiction. Which aspects make up the principal contradiction? What are some non-principal contradictions?
 - a. Is there a transformation of the principal contradiction during this time?

- 2. Do the same exercise, but come up with your own contradictions to use.

V. The Identity and Struggle of the Aspects of a Contradiction

A. Identity

1. Within any thing are pairs of contradictory aspects (opposing forces)
2. These contradictory aspects are interconnected and one cannot exist without the other
 - a) Would darkness exist if light didn't exist; Would cold exist if warmth didn't exist
 - b) Understanding what something isn't, helps understand what something is
3. Under the correct conditions, these contradictory aspects can change into the other
 - a) In revolution, the ruled become the ruler and the ruler becomes the ruled

B. Struggle

1. The method in which contradictory aspects interact
2. Two States of Motion (caused by struggle)
 - a) Quantitative Change
 - (1) Relative rest - seemingly unchanging and insignificant
 - (2) Gradual change in quantity
 - b) Qualitative Change
 - (1) Conspicuous change - noticeable and significant change
 - (2) A change in quality

"Things that oppose (*struggle**) each other also complement (*identity**) each other"

- *History of the Earlier Han Dynasty* by Pan Ku, 1st century AD

*MLReadingHub added

Questions

1. In any of the examples we have gone over so far in this study guide, break down the identities and struggles with contradictions.

2. *Consider the growth of the start of capitalism: there were bourgeoisie, proletariat, serfs, lords, and others.* What's wrong with viewing the contradiction as: Bourgeoisie vs proletariat vs serfs vs lords vs others?
 - a. Explain if it is more correct to view the contradiction as Bourgeoisie vs proletariat; Proletariat vs serfs; Proletariat vs lords; etc...

VI. The Place of Antagonism in Contradiction

- A. Antagonism is one form of the struggle of opposites
 - 1. The struggle of classes is an example of antagonistic struggle
 - a) Though it may not always be *openly* antagonistic
- B. Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, antagonism is not
 - 1. Methods for resolving contradictions differ based on the nature of the contradiction
 - 2. Revolutions and wars are inevitable in class society and it is impossible to develop socially without them
- C. Contradictions are not static
 - 1. Contradictions that were once non-antagonistic can become antagonistic, and those that are antagonistic can become non-antagonistic

To avoid antagonistic contradiction within the Party, the Party must wage a serious struggle against erroneous thinking, but also give comrades time to wake up if they have committed errors.

Questions

1. Is antagonism within a contradiction avoidable?
 - a. As communists, should we seek to push a contradiction to antagonism? Why?

2. Think of any of the previous examples used in this study guide, has there been a point in time where that example has been antagonistic or might become antagonistic?

3. What is an example where non-antagonistic contradictions become antagonistic?
 - a. What is an example where antagonistic contradictions become non-antagonistic?

VII. Conclusion

“If, through study, we achieve a real understanding of the essentials explained above, we shall be able to demolish dogmatist ideas which are contrary to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and detrimental to our revolutionary cause, and our comrades with practical experience will be able to organize their experience into principles and avoid repeating empiricist errors. These are a few simple conclusions from our study of the law of contradiction.”

- Mao