

The Law of Contradiction Should Be a Dialectical
Unity of "Dividing One into Two" and
"Uniting Two into One"

by

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(Hsin Chien-she [New Construction], No. 7, July 20, 1964)

Recently, the question of whether dialectics is "uniting two into one" or "dividing one into two" was discussed in the Kuang-ming Jih-pao. Three kinds of views have already been expressed. First, Comrades Ai Huan-wu and Lin Ch'ing-shan are of the opinion that "'uniting two into one' exactly expresses that most basic law of dialectics - the law of unity of opposites," while "the method of knowing things is 'dividing one into two.'" (See the Kuang-ming Jih-pao, May 29, 1964). Secondly, Comrades Hsiang Ch'ing, Sha Jen, and Yü Jen are of the opinion that "dividing one into two" already expresses the total contents of the law of unity of opposites; so it is superfluous and wrong to propose "uniting two into one." (See the Kuang-ming Jih-pao, June 5, June 16). Thirdly, Comrade P'an Ch'ing-pin is of the opinion that "'dividing one into two' and 'uniting two into one' are two indivisible aspects of the law of contradiction." (See the Kuang-ming Jih-pao, June 19). I agree with the third kind of view. But I feel that Comrade P'an Ch'ing-pin's discourse contains some mistakes as well, and there are some questions which he did not succeed in making clear. So I will also express some views.

I

Comrades Ai and Lin are of the opinion that "uniting two into one" is the law of unity of opposites, while "dividing one into two" is only a method of cognition. The mistake of this view is quite obvious. Lenin clearly stated, "The division of unity into two parts and knowledge of its two contradicting parts .. constitute the substance of dialectics." (Complete Works of Lenin, Vol. 38, p. 407). Here, the thought of "dividing one into two" is quite evident. Besides, while pointing out "dividing one into two" about an objective matter, Lenin also pointed out "knowledge of its two contradicting parts." In other words, Lenin was talking here about dialectics which refers to both objective dialectics and subjective dialectics. Comrades Ai and Lin also quoted these words, but from them they drew the conclusion that "dividing one into two" is only a method of cognition. This is a rash conclusion. Chairman Mao said, "The motions of all things assume two forms, a relatively still form and a conspicuously changing form. The motions of both forms are occasioned by the mutual struggle between the two contradictory factors contained in the things. When the motion of a thing assumes the first form, it undergoes only quantitative changes. There is no qualitative change. So it presents a still appearance. When it assumes the second form, the quantitative change which it has been undergoing while assuming the first form attains a certain highest point, leading to a disintegration of the entity and giving rise to qualitative changes. So it presents a conspicuously changing appearance." (On Contradiction) This obviously means that the entity in a relatively still form provides a case of "dividing one into two" and contains two contradicting factors internally, and that, when the thing assumes a conspicuously changing form, the struggle of the internal contradiction leads to the disintegration of the entity. This is even more obviously a process of "dividing one into two." How can it be said that "dividing one into two" is not the law of development of things, but only a method of cognition?

Besides, the method of cognition is not simply "dividing one into two." Chairman Mao said, "We who work for the Chinese revolution should not only understand the particularity of each of the contradictions in the light of their totality, that is, from the interconnection of these contradictions, but can only understand the totality of contradictions by studying their aspects." He added, "In order to reveal the

particularity of contradictions in their totality as well as their interconnections in the process of development of things, that is, to reveal the quality of the process of development of things, we must reveal the particularity of each aspect of the contradiction in the process." (On Contradiction) This means that man's process of cognition should be a dialectical combination of analysis and synthesis, of "dividing one into two" and "uniting two into one." The formula for this should be: "one-two-one" meaning proceeding from entity, "dividing one into two," analyzing the contradiction; then "uniting two into one," and proceeding with synthesis; thus attaining integral and essential knowledge of the totality of whole thing. This means that both the law of objective things and the law of knowledge should be a dialectical unity of "dividing one into two" and "uniting two into one."

Comrades Ai and Lin say that the law of contradiction is only "uniting two into one." This cannot but make one wonder what difference there is between such "uniting two into one" without "dividing one into two" and Hegel's "thesis-anti-thesis-synthesis" and the viewpoint of contradiction and struggle heading ultimately for reconciliation, and what difference there is between it and the assertion of the modern revisionists that "the world now is tending toward unity" and that, in their society, contradiction and struggle are heading no longer for disintegration but for unity. It is quite correct to say that such a viewpoint will necessarily lead to the reconciliation of contradiction.

II

Directed against the mistakes of Comrades Ai and Lin, Comrade Hsiang Ch'ing points out that "all things present cases of dividing one into two," and that "the 'dividing one into two' in dialectics has two meanings: one is that all things contain two opposite parts, aspects, and tendencies, or, in other words, contain internal contradictions; the other is that the movement in opposites in a thing will always head for its own opposite, and the entity will resolve and break apart." This is to the point. But Comrade Hsiang Ch'ing and others think that the law of unity of opposites is only "dividing one into two." They think that the proposition of "uniting two into one," apart from causing confusion, will serve no useful purpose. This viewpoint is also one-sided.

Theoretically, since there is the proposition of "dividing one into two," there will necessarily be produced the proposition of "uniting two into one." Only thus can the dialectical relations between "one" and "two" be explained fully and clearly. Comrade Hsiang Ch'ing is of the opinion that, while one may say that united social production is divided into two aspects, namely, productive forces and production relations, one may not say that, by "uniting two into one," productive forces and production relations constitute social production. He advances the following reason. "Of 'dividing one into one,' . . . the premise is one. Two is present in one. Conversely, of 'uniting two into one,' the premise is two. Two is not present in one, but one is formed or constituted by two... Lenin regarded entity, i.e. one, as the premise. He then pointed out that this entity has two parts. It is not like what Comrades Ai and Lin say, namely, that two is regarded as the premise, the presence of two parts is determined first, and then they form or constitute one thing. According to Comrades Ai and Lin, it is not that an objective thing consists of two aspects, but that there are two aspects first and these combine together to constitute a thing. The fact is just the opposite. An objective thing always exists as an entity, containing two contradicting aspects." These arguments do not hold water. "One" and "two" are essentially two contradictory forms in which things exist. If it is necessary to determine which of them is the premise, it should be said that each is the premise of the other. Chairman Mao said, "Each of the two aspects of a contradiction in the process of development of things regards its opposite aspects as the condition for its existence." (On Contradiction) In the classical works, both discourses with "one" as their premise and discourses with "two" as their premise can be found. Lenin said, "The splitting of an entity into two parts and knowledge of its contradicting parts... constitute the substance of dialectics." But he also said, "Dialectics is such a theory: it studies how the

opposites can be identical and how they become identical. ..." Dwelling on the nature of struggle of contradictions, Chairman Mao said, "The contradictory aspects in every process exclude each other, struggle against each other, and are opposed to each other. . . The processes of all things in the world and the human thoughts contain, without exception, such aspects of a contradictory nature." This is a discourse on "two" with "one" as the premise. Dwelling on identity, Chairman Mao then said, "The contradictory aspects cannot exist in isolation. . . All opposite elements are like this: Because of certain conditions, they are on the one hand opposed to each other while on the other hand they are interconnected. . ." This is a discourse on "one" with "two" as the premise. In Comrade Hsiang Ch'ing's discourse, the viewpoint of "one" first and "two" next is quite pronounced. It must be realized that the taking of precedence by "one" over "two" in "dividing one into two" and the taking of precedence by "two" over "one" in "uniting two into one" have a meaning with regard to time only in the process of man's cognition. In our knowing a matter or discoursing on a question, there is a problem of which takes precedence over which between "one" and "two." If this conception of time is applied to the objective thing itself, it would be a mistake either to let "one" take precedence over "two" or the other way around. Objective things themselves are always an entity on the one hand while, on the other, at the same time two opposites are necessarily present inside them. Here Comrade Hsiang Ch'ing, too, clearly evinces a tendency of substituting the objective process of knowledge for the process of contradiction of objective things. Since Comrade Hsiang Ch'ing criticizes "uniting two into one" for meaning "letting two be the premise" and for meaning that "there are two aspects first and these combine together to constitute a thing," then why cannot others criticize "dividing one into two" for meaning that there is an entity free from contradictions before it is divided into opposites?

Judging from the process of development of objective things, too, the case of "uniting two into one" is extensively present. When a contradictory thing is in a relatively still form, the two contradictory aspects unite together to form an entity. Such is essentially common knowledge in dialectics. For instance, in the capitalist society, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie unite together to form integral social relations, and social production and private ownership unite together to form an integral process of capitalist production. . . . Even when things are in a conspicuously changing form and when the relations of unity between the two contradictory aspects break apart and are resolved, is this merely a process of "dividing one into two" and does it not contain the factor of "uniting two into one"? The answer is again in the negative. This is because dialectical negation definitely does not mean total discarding, and because the new thing and the old thing are closely connected with each other. For instance, in socialist revolution, the proletariat, while overcoming the bourgeoisie and eliminating capitalism, must at the same time absorb by revolutionary means the productive forces of the capitalist society and the useful fruits of science and culture. By "uniting two into one," these then are combined with the communist factors to form the communist society. By studying the transition from capitalism to socialism from the angle of "uniting two into one" alone, one will commit the mistake of rightist reconciliation. On the other hand, by studying the process from the angle of "dividing one into two" alone, one will commit the mistake of leftist rash action.

II

In order to overcome the respective one-sidedness of the above comrades, Comrade P'an Ch'ing-pin proposes: "Things present the case of 'dividing one into two', "things always also present the case of 'uniting two into one'." "Dividing one into two' and 'uniting two into one' are two inseparable aspects of the law of contradiction." "The 'dividing one into two' with regard to an entity is where the substance of a contradiction lies, is the premise of opposites, and is still more the basis of unity and 'uniting two into one.' But one cannot deny either that, without 'uniting two into one,' 'dividing one into two' will be out of the question. Under these circumstances, I am of the opinion that 'dividing one into two' is the basic and the most important thing, while 'uniting two into one' is secondary and is the necessary result of the former. Reflected in the law of contradiction, they constitute the question of

struggle and unity. The nature of struggle of a contradiction is absolute and unconditional, while the unity of a contradiction is relative and conditional." These discourses are quite correct and make quite clear the dialectical relations between "dividing one into two" and "uniting two into one."

Next, Comrade P'an Ch'ing-pin proposes the following formula for the movement things in opposites: "struggle - unity; more struggle - more unity. 'Dividing one into two' - 'uniting two into one'; further 'dividing one into two' - further 'uniting two into one' ... and so forth indefinitely. This constitutes the movement of the dialectical development of things (contradictions)." This formula is faulty. Since the identity of contradiction is relative and conditional, it is necessary, after dividing the process of movement of contradiction of things into the stages "struggle - unity; more struggle - more unity," to follow with an explanation. Otherwise, one will fall into the trap of mechanic character and metaphysics. In the article On Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People, Chairman Mao dealt with the relations between balance and imbalance in our national economic construction, when he said, "So-called balance is the temporary and relative unity of contradiction. After a year, on the whole, such balance will have been upset by the struggle of the contradiction. Such unity will have changed. Balance will have become imbalance. Unity will have become disunity. It will be necessary to effect balance and unity for the second year. Such is the superiority of our planned economy. In fact, such balance and unity are being partially upset every month and every quarter." (Italics are quoter's). In other words, even at the stage of balance and unity, the balance and unity are in fact not absolute. In the process of development of contradiction, there is not any stage of absolute unity or absolute "uniting two into one." In establishing his formula as mentioned above, Comrade P'an Ch'ing-pin evidently failed to take note of this point. This is clearly revealed when he applies the above-mentioned formula to the analysis of the process of development of objective things.

Comrade P'an Ch'ing-pin says that, in the capitalist society, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie present both the case of "dividing one into two" and that of "uniting two into one," and that "when the proletariat leaps to become the principal aspect of the contradiction, it will overthrow the capitalists at one stroke and cause this 'dividing' - 'uniting' struggle and unity to attain a new turning point, at which the capitalists will have been thoroughly eliminated and there will be 'uniting two into one' with regard to the two aspects of the contradiction." The first half of this passage is correct, but the second half is grossly mistaken. How can the thorough elimination of the bourgeoisie be described as a case of "uniting two into one?" Is it not a process of "dividing one into two" first? It should be made clear that the substance of the process of change of contradiction when things are in a conspicuously changing form is first a case of "dividing one into two." Only if one understands this point can one be considered as understanding the substance of dialectics.

It appears that Comrade P'an Ch'ing-pin understands only the dialectical relations between "dividing one into two" and "uniting two into one" when the existence and contradiction of things are in a relatively still form. As yet, he does not correctly understand that the process of qualitative change of things and change of contradiction is also a process of "dividing one into two" and "uniting two into one."

IV

Why are the mistakes mentioned above liable to occur in our discussions on the question? The reason is partly that as yet we do not thoroughly understand the basic principles of Marxist dialectics, and partly that objective things themselves are quite complex and it is not easy to apply Marxist dialectics to the analysis of these things. I feel that in the discussions mention has been made of two types of typical contradictions. First, the development of things and the resolving of contradictions are to be realized through a resolving of the original contradictions and clearly through the overcoming of one aspect by the other aspect. Our purpose and method of

resolving the contradictions are also to overcome one aspect with the other. Secondly, the development of things and the resolving of contradictions are realized not through a resolving of the contradictions or through the final elimination of one aspect by the other aspect, but through the continuous change of both aspects of the contradictions. Our purpose and method of resolving the contradictions are to make the two aspects condition and promote each other in accordance with the requirements of the things, thus advancing the development of things.

The first type of contradictions comprise the contradictions between the exploiting class and the exploited class, between advanced productive forces and backward productive forces, between revisionism and Marxism-Leninism, between the advanced and the backward, and between the right and the wrong. The solution of this type of contradictions is, in all cases, to be realized through the resolution and rupture of the contradictions and the overcoming and elimination of one aspect with the other aspect. In this, the process of "dividing one into two" is quite obvious. To be sure, the factor of "uniting two into one" is also present in it. Take for instance the contradictions between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism and between the right and the wrong. When Marxism-Leninism and the right are overcoming revisionism and the wrong, they, in their own process of development, apply, in a certain sense, revisionism and the wrong as negative lessons and objects of criticism for the purpose of enriching themselves by including in themselves such negative lessons and objects of criticism. In the natural world, the action and reaction in mechanical motions, the attraction and repulsion in physical motions, the composition and decomposition in chemical motions are also contradictions within this type. If only we concretely study the internal processes of these motions, we will discover that certain mechanical motions take place precisely because the force of action has struggled against and overcome continuously the force of reaction. Physical motions and chemical motions, too, take place because of conflicts between the force of attraction and the force of repulsion of material particles and the overcoming or continuous overcoming of one aspect by the other.

With regard to this type of contradictions, the articles of Comrade Hsiang Ch'ing and Sha Jen have successfully refuted the viewpoint of Comrades Ai and Lin that objective things present only the case of "uniting two into one." With regard to the second type of contradictions, I feel that the articles so far published have not yet succeeded in refuting the viewpoint of Comrades Ai and Lin.

As examples of the second type of contradictions, we may cite the requirements for quantity and speed on the one hand and quality and economy on the other in the general line for socialist construction, and the two legs in a series of "walking on two legs" policies. According to Comrades Ai and Lin, matters present the case of "uniting two into one," and, when we formulate methods for transforming the world and in our practice of transforming the world, we must "unite two into one." First of all, we must find the conditions under which the opposing sides can be connected and united together, and unite and combine together the opposing aspects in work. To use a metaphor, we must 'walk on two legs.' For instance, the general line of building socialism by exerting the utmost effort and pressing ahead consistently to achieve great, faster, better, and more economical results, represents the law of unity of opposites. Quantity and speed on the one hand and quality and economy on the other are opposed to each other, and yet they are mutually connected and restrict each other.... For instance, ... the relations between the two major divisions of the national economy: industry and agriculture, ... the people's democratic dictatorship which combines democracy among the people with dictatorship over the reactionaries. In the handling of contradictions among the people, democratic centralism is practiced." Comrade Hsiang Ch'ing did not answer these questions. Dealing with the problem, Comrade Sha Jen says, "The general line of building socialism by exerting the utmost effort and pressing ahead consistently to achieve greater, faster, better, and more economical results is a line for the declaration of war on the natural world and also a line for class struggle. It does not present the case of 'uniting two into one.'

As for the requirements for quantity, speed, quality, and economy in the general line, it should be realized first that they are opposed to smaller, slower, worse, and less economical results. The basic spirit of the general line is to build socialism with greater, faster, better, and more economical results and overcome the other aspect of the contradictions, which is smaller, slower, worse, and less economical results." This is correct. But it also evades the question of relations of contradiction between quantity and speed on the one hand and quality and economy on the other.

Do the objective things reflected by the Party's general line, the "walking on two legs" policies, and the principle of democratic centralism, present only the case of "uniting two into one?" Are we merely to "unite two into one" in implementing the line, policies, and principle? Obviously not.

Concerning the relations between quantity and speed on the one hand and quality and economy on the other, in the general process, it is possible, and required by us, to attain relatively both quantity and speed on the one hand and quality and economy on the other. In the actual process, however, when a worker is manufacturing a certain product, or when we are doing a certain piece of work, it is often not possible to pay attention to all. Absolute quantity, speed, quality, and economy, with all advancing at the same time, do not exist and are not possible. In correctly complying with the requirements for greater, faster, better, and more economical results, we often pay attention to one of them first. On May 30 this year, the Jen-min Jih-pao published an editorial entitled "From Small Quantity and Good Quality to Great Quantity and Good Quality," which said, "From small quantity and good quality to great quantity and good quality is the road along which we must travel in smoothly carrying out revolutionary struggles and constructions. This is because, while there is no limit to the transformation of the objective world, our subjective forces at any time are limited. How is this contradiction between limit and no limit to be handled? How can our work be made more fruitful? In other words, how can the requirements for quantity, speed, quality, and economy be complied with? According to Marxist principles, and according to our experiences of revolution and construction, the way is to proceed from small quantity and good quality to great quantity and good quality." In other words, in our practice, we must break apart quantity, speed, quality, and economy by "dividing one into two," and realize one part of them first. In other words, we must seek quality first and then seek both quantity and quality. Is this not precisely a case of achieving "uniting two into one" through "dividing one into two?"

The same applies to the contradictions between the "two legs" and between industry and agriculture. Not only is the "dividing one into two" struggle of opposites present between the two aspects in real life, but, in our implementation of the policies and directives, it is definitely not a case of "both legs jumping" or a case of absolutely balanced development between industry and agriculture. What happens is that, during different periods under different conditions, and in accordance with the relations between "dividing one into two" and "uniting two into one" of the matters, one aspect is strengthened for the purpose of advancing the other aspect. Agriculture, as the foundation, is strengthened for the purpose of advancing the development of industry, or the leading role of industry is brought out for the purpose of advancing the raising of the standard of the agricultural productive forces. This is first of all a process of "dividing one into two" with regard to our work and resources. Next, on this basis, "uniting two into one" is carried out, thus achieving the objective of raising the entire national economy. Concerning the contradiction between democracy and dictatorship, because contradictions among the people and those with the enemy are intermingled and can easily be confused each with the other, we must distinguish clearly between them so as to prevent the enemy from exploiting the situation when we are talking about democracy, and to avoid giving false impressions to some people when we are talking about dictatorship. Also, dictatorship will eventually have to be eliminated, leaving only Communist all-people unity. Of the two aspects, democracy and centralism, either often takes precedence over the other in real life. In the entire process of political life, democracy often has to be stressed because democracy is inadequate, while at other times centralism has to be stressed because centralism is not enough. In short, "uniting two into one" is achieved through a continuous process of "dividing one into two."

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