

Mao Zedong's Theory of Social Contradiction and the Socialist Construction of China in the New Era

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Abstract—In the period of socialist construction, Mao Zedong first explicitly put forward the theory of basic contradictions of society, and creatively put forward the theory of basic contradictions of socialism, providing theoretical support for our exploration of social issues in the new era, creating a theoretical source for a more accurate understanding of Xi Jinping's socialism with Chinese characteristics of the new era; it is the “key” for us to understand Xi Jinping's view of principal contradiction of socialist society, and an important theoretical basis for the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, embodying the inheritance of Mao Zedong Thought and socialism with Chinese characteristics. In the new historical position, to better build the party, it is necessary to firmly use Mao Zedong's theory of social contradictions, exert the living soul of Mao Zedong Thought, and continue to advance the great cause of the motherland.

Keywords—Mao Zedong; basic social contradictions; socialism with Chinese characteristics of the new era

I. INTRODUCTION

Mao Zedong's theory of social contradiction is an important part of Mao Zedong Thought. It is highly generalized on the basis of profoundly summarizing the lessons of the international communist movements and the experience of China's socialist revolution and construction, and is a theoretical response to the issues such as whether there are contradictions in the socialist society and how to resolve the contradictions. It is of great value to us to study Xi Jinping's socialism with Chinese characteristics of the new era in depth today, and promote the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

II. MAIN CONTENTS OF MAO ZEDONG'S THEORY OF SOCIAL CONTRADICTIONS

In his analysis and judgment of the issues of Chinese society, Mao Zedong creatively put forward the “theory of social contradiction”. Mao Zedong's theory of social contradictions is rich in content, and answers questions such as whether there is contradiction in socialism, the particularity of socialist contradictions, and the contradictions with different natures in socialism,

A. There Are Still Contradictions in the Socialist Society

The view that contradictions are universal is the basic view of Marxism. To adhere to the universality of contradictions, it requires seeing that there are always contradictions in the development of specific things. Although Marx and Engels proposed a series of basic principles of the socialist system, they could not specifically describe socialism, but only made principled provisions for socialist society and communist society. Lenin insisted on the view of universality of contradictions; after leading the Russian Communist Party to establish a socialist system, he believed that “under socialism, confrontation will disappear and contradictions will still exist.”[1]²⁸¹ This view was negated the Soviet theoretical cycle represented by Stalin, who believed that the social form of socialism was already impeccable without any problems; the productivity and productive relation, the economic base and the superstructure adapt to each other in terms of the interaction, and there was no contradiction between the two. Mao Zedong criticized this view: “The law of the universality of contradiction is negated by them, and dialectics is interrupted then.”[2]⁸⁰⁰ Mao Zedong pointed out that contradictions are universal, and the world is composed of contradictions; there are also contradictions in the socialist society, and the view that there is no contradiction in socialism is “innocent thought that does not conform to objective reality.”[3]²⁰⁴ Recognizing the contradictions in socialist society is an important prerequisite for correctly understanding social contradictions, and also a prerequisite for us to resolve social contradictions. In this regard, Mao Zedong pointed out that “many people do not recognize that there are still contradictions in socialist society, so they are overcautious in the face of social contradictions, and are put in a passive position, failing to know that in the process of handling and resolving contradictions constantly, the socialist society will be united and become increasingly consolidated.”[3]²¹³ This requires us to recognize that there are contradictions in socialist society, and recognizes the objectivity for the existence of contradictions in socialist society. Only in this way can we boldly “understand the contradictions in socialist society and know how to handle such contradictions correctly.”[3]²¹³ That is, to understand the specific contradictions of the socialist society is to analyze specific problems specifically, resolve contradictions, and promote the harmonious development of the socialist society.

B. The Basic Contradiction of the Socialist Society Is Special

The contradiction of any thing is universal but also special, which is a dialectical unity of universality and particularity. The universality of basic social contradictions is that it exists throughout the human society and exists in different social historical forms. Its particularity is that it has different forms of expression in different social historical forms. For example, in capitalist society, one of the main expressions of the basic social contradiction is the contradiction between the socialization of production and private possession. There are still contradictions in socialist society. However, “the contradictions in socialist society and the contradiction between the production relation and productivity, the superstructure and the economic base in old society are fundamentally different in natures and conditions.” [3]²¹⁴ That is, the contradiction in socialist society has its particularity. This particularity includes the following meanings: One is the particularity of the nature of contradiction. In old society, the basic contradictions of society often appeared in the form of fierce confrontation and class struggles, and their nature was confrontational; in socialist society, the conflicts of interests between people are fundamentally resolved, so the manifestation of basic contradictions of the society is non-confrontational. The second is the particularity of the two sides' adaptation. Whether the two sides of the basic social contradictions adapt and how they adapt determine the extent to which the social basic contradictions promote the social development. Mao Zedong pointed out: “The so-called socialist production relations can better adapt to the nature of the development of productivity than the production relations in old times, which means that it can allow the productivity to develop at a speed that is not available in old society, therefore, the production continues to expand, thus gradually satisfying the growing needs of the people.” [3]²¹⁴ In capitalist society, the two sides in the basic contradictions of society are generally incompatible with each other; therefore, their promotion of social development is slow and will ultimately hinder it. In socialist society, since the production relations and the superstructure are fundamentally changed, it solves the constraints of the development of productivity by production relations, and solves the constraints of the development of the economic base by superstructures; therefore, the two sides in the basic contradictions of society are generally adapted, but there is some inadaptation. Therefore, compared with capitalist society, the basic social contradictions of socialist society can better promote the rapid development of society. The third is the particularity of the contradiction solution. The particularity of the contradictory nature and the particularity of the adaptation of the two sides of contradiction determine that the contradiction solution is also special. Under the conditions of private ownership, the two sides of contradiction are confrontational, which cannot be solved through the social system itself in private society; therefore, it is ultimately inseparable from violent revolution to resolve the contradictions and realize the transformation and development of the contradictory unity. In the public ownership system, namely the social institutional conditions of socialist communist society, since the factors that cause the fierce confrontation and conflict between the two sides of contradiction are fundamentally eliminated, the struggle

between the two sides of contradiction is manifested as non-confrontational. Therefore, the contradictory struggle can be completely resolved through the improvement and development of the social system itself.

C. Basic Social Contradictions Are the Fundamental Driving Force for the Development of Socialist Society

Marxism believes that contradiction is the driving force for the development of things. In the field of social history, social contradiction is the driving force for social development. Social contradictions are divided into basic contradiction and non-basic contradiction. The basic social contradiction and its laws of motion are not only the basic laws of social development, but also the fundamental driving force for social development. However, the fundamental view of Marxism was not insisted on by Stalin. When Stalin led the Soviet Union in socialist construction, he denied that there was a contradiction between production relations and productivity, between economic foundation and superstructure, and he believed that the two sides of contradiction were completely consistent and compatible, thus he proposed that political and moral agreement was the fundamental driving force for the development of socialist society. In response to this, Mao Zedong first pointed out that we must recognize that there are contradictions in socialist society. However, Stalin “did not recognize social contradictions as the driving force for the development of socialist society, and did not recognize that there were still class struggles and the struggle between socialism and capitalism in their country” [2]²⁷³. After pointing out the mistakes made by Stalin, Mao Zedong further pointed out that the basic contradiction of society is still the contradiction between production relations and productivity, and the contradiction between the superstructure and the economic base. Mao Zedong emphasized that this “basic contradiction” is the fundamental driving force for all social development and also the fundamental driving force for the development of socialist society.

D. There Are Two Kinds of Contradictions of Different Natures in Socialist Society

The view of two kinds of contradictions with different natures is the core content of Mao Zedong's view of contradictions in socialist society and his greatest contribution to Marxist theory of social contradictions. Mao Zedong pointed out that there are two kinds of contradictions of different natures in socialist society, namely the contradiction between self and the enemy and the contradiction among the people. The relationship between the two is: Firstly, the two are in the unity of the early stage of socialist construction. From the perspective of the objectivity and universality of contradiction, Mao Zedong criticized the view that there is no contradiction in socialism based on a lot of analysis, and proposed that although China had established the socialist system, there were still contradictions. Secondly, the solutions to different contradictions are different. The contradiction between self and the enemy is a conflict of interests between the enemy classes, its struggle is confrontational and irreconcilable, and requires dictatorship. The contradiction among the people is based on the fundamental unanimity of the interests of people, which is non-confrontational and

requires democratic methods. Thirdly, under certain circumstances, the two will be transformed. “Normally, the contradiction among the people is non-confrontational. However, if it is not handled appropriately, or if we lose our vigilance, there will also be confrontation.” [3]²¹⁴ Fourthly, during the period of socialist construction, correctly resolving the contradiction among the people is the theme; it is necessary to focus on the contradiction among the people and correctly handle such contradiction. Mao Zedong pointed out that during the period of socialist construction, it is no longer suitable for a stormy, large-scale revolutionary approach, and our main task has been transformed into the development of productivity under new production relations, “to unite the people of all nationalities in the country for a new war - fighting with nature, developing our economy, developing our culture, enabling all people to go through the current period smoothly, consolidating our new system, and building our new country.” [3]²¹⁶ Therefore, our main task It is to use democratic methods among the people to solve the contradictions among the people.

III. THE VALUE OF MAO ZEDONG'S THEORY OF SOCIAL CONTRADICTIONS TO THE SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION OF CHINA IN THE NEW ERA

A. *Mao Zedong's Theory of Social Contradiction Is the Theoretical Basis of Xi Jinping's Thought of Social Contradiction in the New Era*

Xi Jinping's thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics in new era is the Marxism of the 21st century, the latest theoretical achievement of Marxism in China, and an important content of the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which is in line with Mao Zedong Thought. Mao Zedong's theory of social contradiction is an important theoretical source of Xi Jinping's thought of social contradiction in the new era. Xi Jinping consciously applies Mao Zedong's theory of social contradiction, analyzes Chinese society, and creatively proposes many new insights, mainly manifested in: Firstly, he proposes to hold high the banner of Mao Zedong Thought while advancing. Xi Jinping points out that Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought must not be lost, if they are lost, the roots are lost. In his speech at the symposium to commemorate Comrade Mao Zedong's 120th birthday, Xi Jinping pointed out that Mao Zedong is a “great pioneer of Marxism in China”, in the new era, we must adhere to and apply the living soul of Mao Zedong Thought, and “hold high the banner of Mao Zedong Thought while advancing.”

Secondly, he attaches importance to the status and role of dialectical thinking in practice, and creatively proposes that the ability of dialectical thinking is our “special skill.” “The ability of dialectical thinking is the ability to recognize contradictions, analyze contradictions, resolve contradictions, do well in grasping key points, find key points, and gain insight into the development rule of things.” [4] It is our “special skill” for socialist construction in the new era. Thirdly, he adheres to the principle of universality of contradiction, and creatively proposes the view that problems are the manifestation of contradictions. “Problems are the manifestation of contradictions in things, we emphasize strengthening the

awareness of problem and insisting on the orientation of problems, so as to recognize the universality and objectivity of contradictions, and take the understanding and resolution of contradictions as a breakthrough to start work.” [5] This is the concrete manifestation of the universality of contradictions in the new era, and an innovation of Mao Zedong's concept of “contradiction”. The view that “problems are the manifestation of contradictions of things” concretizes Mao Zedong's concept of “contradiction” in the view that basic contradictions of society are “mutually compatible and contradictory”. Fourthly, he creatively puts forward the idea of considering the basic contradictions of society as a whole. Xi Jinping believes that the basic contradictions of society should be considered in the whole process of social development, and considers the basic contradictions of society as a whole concept.

B. *Recognizing Contradictions Is the Prerequisite for Correctly Understanding and Handling Various Problems of Socialist Society in the New Era*

Contradictions have objective universality. Recognizing the objective universality of contradictions is the prerequisite for us to correctly resolve contradictions. There are also contradictions in socialist society. In this regard, “In the future, we must continue to resolve the above-mentioned contradictions in accordance with specific circumstances. Of course, after solving these contradictions, new problems will arise, and new contradictions will require people to solve them.” [3]²¹⁵ Only when we recognize that socialism has contradictions can we correctly understand and handle various problems in socialist society, and handle the active position in social activities. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, China's socialist society has undergone major changes and entered a new era. There are still contradictions in the Chinese society in the new era. First of all, we must recognize that there are basic social contradictions in our society, which is the basis and prerequisite for us to correctly understand and grasp the basic conditions of Chinese society in the new era. On this basis, we can “solve the contradictions in reform and opening up in the way of reform and opening up.” Xi Jinping makes it very clear that recognizing the contradictions is the premise and foundation for us to recognize and handle various problems in socialist society in the new era.

C. *Adhering to Studying the Development of Socialist Economy in the New Era with the Basic Socialist Contradictions As a Guide*

The development of social economy takes the basic contradictions of society as the fundamental driving force. Mao Zedong pointed out that the socialist economic issues still rely on the interaction of the two contradictions. The dynamic development of balance or imbalance between the two contradictions is an important driving force for economic development. Today, in the new era of our society, the principal contradiction of society has undergone major transformation. The principal contradiction is mainly reflected as the inadequate and unbalanced development, namely the supply side. Therefore, to solve the development of social and economic issues of the socialism Chinese characteristics in the

new era, it is necessary to solve the problems of productive development and economic construction. At present, to adhere to studying the development of socialist economy of China in the new era with the basic socialist contradictions as a guide, it is necessary to pay attention to the supply of economy, especially the quality of economic supply. The growing needs of the people for a better life are demand, but the supply development is unbalanced and inadequate. This is the supply side problem that Xi Jinping puts forward, and it is the main aspect of the contradiction. On the one hand, the supply is unbalanced and inadequate, not only reflected at the fact the amount of supply is difficult to meet the people's needs for a better life. More importantly, on the other hand, supply imbalance is more reflected in quality, that is, higher-quality economic development cannot be provided, which makes it difficult to meet people's needs for a better life. Therefore, adhering to the path of high-quality economic development has become the primary choice for solving the current economic development problems. The second is the efficiency problem of economic development. The new era requires the economic development to pay more attention to the qualitative growth, rather than the simple growth of economic volume in the past. The qualitative growth of economic development refers to economic structure, quality of social life, and input-output benefits, particularly the input-output benefit. Therefore, economic reforms should focus on removing and improving those factors and links that have a great impact on inputs and outputs. The third is the issue of fairness in the process of economic development. The essence of fairness in economic development should be the social benefit of economic development.

IV. CONCLUSION

When China just entered the period of socialist construction, Mao Zedong put forward the thought of contradictions in socialist society based on China's economic and political relations, which not only had great practical significance and theoretical value at that time, but also has important value when we are carrying out socialist construction with Chinese characteristics in the new era today. At present, to promote "four comprehensive constructions" and solve various problems and contradictions in people's lives, it is necessary to get close to the people, correctly resolve contradictions among the people, and satisfy the people's demand for a better life.

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