

The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People



Two types of social contradictions - those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people themselves confront us. The two are totally different in their nature.

On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (February 27, 1957), p. 2.

To understand these two different types of contradictions correctly, we must first be clear on what is meant by “the people” and what is meant by “the enemy” . . . At the present stage, the period of building socialism, the classes, strata and social groups which favour, support and work for the cause of socialist construction all come within the category of the people, while the social forces and groups which resist the socialist revolution and are hostile to or sabotage socialist construction are all enemies of the people.

Ibid. pp. 2-3.

The contradictions between the enemy and us are antagonistic contradictions. Within the ranks of the people, the contradictions among the working people are non-antagonistic, while those between the exploited and the exploiting classes have a non-antagonistic aspect in addition to an antagonistic aspect.

Ibid., p. 3.

In the political life of our people, how should right be distinguished from wrong in one’s words and actions? On the basis of the principles of our Constitution, the will of the overwhelming majority of our people and the common political positions which have been proclaimed on various occasions by our political parties and groups, we consider that, broadly speaking, the criteria should be as follows:

- (1) Words and actions should help to unite, and not divide, the people of our various nationalities.
- (2) They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to socialist transformation and socialist construction.
- (3) They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, the people’s democratic dictatorship.
- (4) They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, democratic centralism.
- (5) They should help to strengthen, and not discard or weaken, the leadership of the Communist Party.
- (6) They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to international social-

ist unity and the unity of the peace-loving people of the world. Of these six criteria, the most important are the socialist path and the leadership of the Party.

Ibid., pp. 57-58.

The question of suppressing counterrevolutionaries is one of a struggle between us and the enemy, a contradiction between us and the enemy. Among the people, some see this question in a somewhat different light. Two kinds of persons hold views different from ours. Those with a Rightist way of thinking make no distinction between the enemy and us and take the enemy for our own people. They regard as friends the very persons whom the broad masses regard as enemies. Those with a “Left” way of thinking magnify contradictions between ourselves and the enemy to such an extent that they take certain contradictions among the people for contradictions with the enemy and regard as counter-revolutionary persons who are actually not counter-revolutionaries. Both these views are wrong. Neither can lead to the correct handling of the question of suppressing counter-revolutionaries or to a correct assessment of this work.

Ibid., p. 25.

By Mao Zedong

