

[Three Forms of Resolution of Contradictions]

Excerpt translated from Li Xiulin, editor, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, 5th edition, Beijing: Chinese People's University Publishing House, 2005, pp. 183-184. [《辩证唯物主义和历史唯物主 原理》, (第五版), 主编: 李秀林、中国人民大学出版社, 2005].

The particularity of the forms of resolution of contradictions.

The quality of a contradiction and the complexity of its status determine the particularity and diversity of the forms of resolution of contradictions. Contradictions of different qualities have different forms of resolution. In general it can be said that the basic forms of the resolution of contradictions can be summed up in three basic types:

In the first form, one side of the contradiction overcomes the other side. For example, when organisms undergo natural selection, those species that can adapt to environmental change will live on, but species that do not adapt to environmental change are eliminated. This is precisely the form of resolution of a contradiction in which the better side wins [184] and the inferior is discarded, bringing about a qualitative change of an old species into a new species. New forces of production overcome old forces of production, revolutionary classes defeats reactionary classes, an advanced power defeats a backward power, etc. In all these forms of resolution of contradictions, one side overcomes the other side.

In the second form of resolution, both sides of the contradiction "perish together," and are replaced by two new opposite sides. For example, in slave society, in the final resolution of the contradiction between the slave class and the slave-owning class, "both sides perish together," and the contradiction is immediately replaced by two new opposites, the peasant class and the landlord class. Human history has undergone several big class antagonisms, such the antagonisms of peasant and landlord, proletarian and capitalist, etc. In their final stage, all these contradictions are to be explained by this kind of resolution.

In the third form, both sides of a contradiction undergo a series of developments, finally achieve "merging" [ronghe], by merging, turn into a new thing and make the contradiction obtain resolution. For example, in socialist society, along with the continuous development of social production and the constant reform of the economic base and superstructure, the disparities between town and village, and between mental work and physical labor, which have a kind of non-antagonistic contradiction between them, can be constantly reduced and finally merge, forming a wholly new type of living place and a completely new kind of labor. Marxism even considers that the coexistence of two mutually contradictory aspects, and their struggle as well as their merging, establishes the essence of a new category of dialectical movement.