



What Really Made MAO Change his Ideas on the Principal Social Contradiction in 1957?

EN QUOI QUI A VRAIMENT FAIT CHANGER LES IDEES DE MAO CHANGE SUR LA CONTRADICTION PRINCIPAL DU SOCIAL EN 1957 ?

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Received 10 October 2011; accepted 11 February 2012.

Abstract

Evidences indicate that, in the period from the 8th Party Congress to its third plenary session, MAO gave his approvals to the basic conclusion on China's principal social contradiction, but not to the redundant words in it. We could not take MAO's criticism to the redundant words as his denial to the basic conclusion, and the more, we should not take it as a proof that MAO changed his viewpoint on the principal social contradiction of China afterwards. In 1956, the twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the USSR aroused much unexpected turmoil both inside and outside China. Especially when CCP began to rectify its working style in the spring of 1957, some intellectuals advanced their advices and political propositions among which there were some inclination and insinuation to challenge the reigning of CCP. All these made MAO Zedong pay much more attention to the class struggle, and unfortunately MAO made an incorrect judgment. The assaults from the rightists and the magnification of anti-rightists are the key causes for MAO to change his idea on the principal social contradiction.

Key words: Mao; Denial; Principal Contradiction; Causes

Résumé

Les évidences indiquent que, dans la période allant de la 8e Partie du congrès à sa troisième séance plénière, MAO a donné ses approbations à la conclusion sur la base de la Chine contradiction sociale principale, mais ne pas les mots redondants en elle. Nous ne pouvions pas prendre la critique de MAO aux mots redondants que son refus à la conclusion de base, et plus, nous ne devrions pas

le prendre comme une preuve que MAO a changé son point de vue sur la contradiction principale social de la Chine par la suite. En 1956, le vingtième congrès du Parti communiste de l'URSS a suscité beaucoup d'agitation inattendue tant à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de la Chine. Surtout quand PCC a commencé à remédier à son style de travail au printemps de 1957, certains intellectuels avancé leurs conseils et leurs propositions politiques parmi lesquels il y avait une certaine inclinaison et l'insinuation de contester le champion de la CCP. Tous ces faits MAO Zedong payer beaucoup plus d'attention à la lutte des classes, et, malheureusement, MAO a pris une décision erronée. Les attaques des droitiers et l'agrandissement de l'anti-droitiers sont les principales causes de MAO pour changer son idée sur la contradiction principale sociale.

Mots clés: Mao; Le refus; Contradiction principale; Causes

GUO Genshan (2012). What Really Made MAO Change his Ideas on the Principal Social Contradiction in 1957?. *Canadian Social Science*, 8(1), 77-84. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/j.css.1923669720120801.640> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720120801.640>.

When studying the political affairs of contemporary China, many scholars alleged that it was from the very beginning that MAO Zedong disagreed with the conclusion on China's principal social contradiction in the Resolution on the Political Report (*Guanyu Zhengzhi Baogao de Juelyi*) at 8th Party Congress, and thus this was the basic causes of the mistakes made afterwards such as the magnification of anti-rightists and the Cultural Revolution. Maybe they are right, but I just want to argue that, MAO Zedong disagreed not with the basic conclusion, but only a few words in it, and, not from the very beginning, but from the third plenary session in 1957. Why MAO changed his idea? It deserves a reasonable analysis.

Plenitudinous evidences indicate that, in the period from the 8th Party Congress to its third plenary session,

MAO gave his approvals to the basic conclusion on China's principal social contradiction, but not to the redundant words in it. We could not take Mao's criticism to the redundant words as his denial to the basic conclusion, and the more, we should not take it as a proof that MAO changed his viewpoint on the principal social contradiction of China afterwards.

Truly, the political life in China witnessed its turning point in the summer of 1957, and afterwards, class struggle gradually substituted for the economic development as the focus of the Party and the government. This is a fact which arouses no argument. Nevertheless, in inquiring the reason which caused this sharp turn, scholars associated naturally to the Third Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee, and took it for granted that before the third session MAO continuously opposed the basic conclusion on principal social contradiction. I argue that, in the period of time from around 8th Party Congress until the third session, MAO gave his approvals to the basic conclusion, but not to the redundant words.

Firstly, in the early seven years of the newly founded China, CCP had been "shifting the working center gradually to the economic construction in all fields", and it was the actual needs and the inevitable result of this shifting to relax gradually the contradictions between proletariat and bourgeoisie. The more, the conclusion on principal social contradiction was made precisely on the basis of social conditions in the first seven years. MAO was one of the earliest advocates of the above, and a firm propellant to the policy.

The shifting of the working center of the Party put the show on its road not after but before the accomplishment of the socialist transformation of the private ownership. As early as the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee, MAO warned all the Party members that, along with the nationwide of the military victory, party's working center would shift from countryside to city, "from the first day we take over control on city, our eyes will stare at the restoration and the development of city's industry", "all other affairs in cities ... are focusing on and serving for the center of economic construction. (MAO, 1991, p.1428)" In June of 1950, the Third Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee decided to strive for a better financial and economic condition, and MAO cautioned the Party "against striking out in all directions" and "antagonizing too much." In February of 1951, at the enlarged meeting of Political Bureau, MAO proposed a plan of "3-year preparing and 10-year economic construction", then in December of the same year, MAO pointed out in a document of the Central Committee that, "the year of 1952 is the last of our 3-year preparing, and from 1953, we must inaugurate the large-scale economic construction, therefore to complete the industrialization in China in 20 years. (MAO, 1988, p.534)" Despite of the Korean War, the movements of *Sanfan Wufan*, Land Reform and Suppressing the Counter-Revolutionaries and so on, which

disarranged China to do her best to carry on the economic construction, MAO and the Central Committee never changed their efforts to shift the working center to the economic construction. In 1953, the party and MAO proposed the General Line for the transition period, regarding "three transformations" as the safeguard to the realization of the socialist industrialization, and started the planned socialist economic constructions. The main idea of the Political Report of 8th Party Congress was also on the economic construction, "on this point, not only MAO Zedong, but also LIU Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, DENG Xiaoping and other leaders in the Central Committee, have a clear and unanimous understanding. At the first conference of 7th Plenary Sessions of the Seventh Central Committee held afterwards, when talking about the Political Report at 8th Party Congress, MAO Zedong said, 'This time we focus on constructions, the report will involve domestic and foreign situations, socialist transformation, economic construction, people's democratic dictatorship, Communist Party, etc.. We will discuss several great topics mentioned above in the report, all of them could be discussed. But, the key points are the followings, one is the socialist transformation, the other is the economic construction. In these two key problems, economic construction is the focus. There are more than 30,000 words in the main part of the report, 1/3 of which will talk about construction.' (JIN, et al, 2003, p.511)" Late on March 19, 1957, MAO still addressed the Party member cadres from Nanjing and Shanghai that, "now we are in a transformation times, transform from the class struggle to the nature struggle, from revolution to construction, from the past revolution to the technological revolution and cultural revolution. (MAO, 1999, p.289)"

During the seven years from the founding of new China to the completion of the socialist transformation, the Party and MAO persisted continuously on the overall guideline that Party's every job must concentrate on the economic construction, serve for the economic construction, persisted steadfastly that the Party's working center should shift promptly to the economic construction. They carried out every social movement (especially the Three Transformations) not to intensify the contradictions between proletariat and bourgeoisie classes, but to relax it and make it become the secondary contradiction progressively, to make the economic construction become the Party's and national working center gradually. The 8th Party Congress announced that China's principal social contradiction was already no more the contradictions between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, but the contradictions between the economic and cultural backwardness and peoples' increasing demands. This conclusion was a desirable result conforms to Mao's expectation and to the great efforts in the past seven years. Therefore, MAO should have no reason to object to it.

Secondly, MAO knew well about the circumstances of China after the accomplishment of Socialist Transforma-

tions, he continuously gave his approvals to the conclusion that the principal social contradictions were no longer that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or that between the capitalist and socialist roads.

Before the 8th Party Congress, MAO made a large number of investigations and picked every word carefully to the drafts of the Political Report, which was a painstaking work. In the spring of 1955, the national representative conference of CCP determined to hold the 8th Party Congress in the second half of 1956, and the Report was also entered its preparatory stage (from preparing to holding of the Congress, all work was under the guidance of Mao). In order to get an accurate grasp of the economic and political circumstances of the country, from the end of 1955 to the spring of 1956, MAO made much consideration, carried on a large number of investigations, listened successively to the reports of 34 ministries and committees, and finally formed the celebrated "On the Ten Great Relationships" (*Lun Shi Da Guanxi*), which became the guideline of drafting the Political Report. To the Political Report and each special reports of the 8th Party Congress, MAO gave a careful checking and modification. As for the Political Report, MAO chooses every word carefully to it. For example, from the early part of August to September 14, 1956, MAO concentrated himself on drafting the Report, checking deliberately on the words, writing down a large number of remarks and revisions. Among the more than 80 pieces of revised manuscripts of the Political Report reserved in the documents, 21 pieces were revised by Mao. Although there was no expatiation about the principal social contradiction in the Political Report, we can not think therefrom that the Party and MAO had not realized the change of the principal social contradiction. In fact, "On the Ten Great Relationships" mentioned 10 pairs of contradictions among which there were 5 directly about economic construction, other 5 were serving for the economic construction. The main purpose of dealing with the contradictions was "to mobilize all the direct and indirect power to struggle for a strong socialist state in China. (MAO, 1999, p.24)" Among these 10 major contradictions, MAO mentioned nothing about the contradictions of two roads and two classes, then, what reasons do we have to think MAO could object to the conclusion in the Political Resolution at 8th Party Congress?

At the time during and after the 8th Party Congress, MAO had been approving of the conclusion on the principal social contradiction. At that time, talking about Stalin's mistakes in his late years, MAO said, when entering a society of no class or class struggle, of less counter-revolutionaries, we should protect productivity with peaceful methods, but not liberate the productivity through the class struggle, unfortunately Stalin was not conscious of this, still carried on the class struggle, this was a rootstock that he made mistakes. On December 4, 1956, MAO said in a letter to Huang Yanpei that "a society is always full of contradictions", but "the contradic-

tions between classes inside our country has already been solved on the whole" (MAO, 1983, p.514). In February of 1957, MAO still emphasized in "On Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" (*Guanyu Zhengque Chuli Renmin Neibu Maodun de Wenti*) that, "the present situation is, the massive and turbulent class struggle of the revolutionary times has finished basically", "now it is of great necessity to discriminate two kinds of contradictions within enemy and us, among the people ourselves, to put forward the idea dealing with contradictions among the people, so that we can unite the people of all ethnic groups in the country to carry on a new war, i.e. to tame the nature, can develop the economy and the culture of our country, can lead all people to pass by the present transition period more smoothly, can consolidate our new system, can build our new country. (MAO, 1999, p.216)" Therefore, we have no evidence to testify that MAO denied the conclusion on the principal social contradiction after the 8th Party Congress, and even so-called statement that MAO "holds a suspicious attitude to the conclusions on the principal social contradiction of our country" is lack of evidences.

Thirdly, MAO really put forward the objection to the conclusion on the principal social contradiction after 8th Party Congress; however, he was discontented not to the basic conclusion, but to the "inserted" words (the redundant words).

The statement about the principal social contradiction of China was first appeared during the process of drafting the Resolution on the Political Report (*Guanyu Zhengzhi Baogao de Jueyi*). Chen Boda and Hu Qiaomu were responsible for drafting out the Resolution under the leadership of Mao. MAO paid much attention to the drafting, and convened Chen and Hu several times to talk about perfecting the draft. MAO wrote an instruction at 5 o'clock in the morning on September 24, 1956, requesting Yang Shangkun to inform the group leaders of provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions and the leaders of delegations that they should read the draft of the Resolution immediately, hold group meetings before 2 o'clock in the afternoon to discuss, put forward suggestions, and then deliver back in the afternoon to Hu Qiaomu for further revising (MAO, 1992, p.211). At the night of September 26, MAO Zedong held a meeting of standing committee of the presidium of the 8th Party Congress to discuss the draft of the Resolution on the Political Report and the list of candidates of the new member of Political Bureau. The meeting lasted from half past 10 in the evening till 5 to 2 o'clock am next day. When the meeting concluded, MAO wrote a note in the front cover of the draft which presidium meeting had just discussed and approved, noting that, "please deliver to Comrade Qiaomu, send to press and translate with not any change. I have added several words of 'all the people's democratic states' on page five." It was 2 o'clock in the morning on September 27 (Jin et al, p.535-536). In the afternoon of Sep. 27, the Congress

closed, and passed the Resolution on the Political Report unanimously. The Resolution pointed out that, “the domestic principal contradictions, are already the contradictions between the requirements of the people for an advanced industrialized country and reality of a backward country of agriculture, between the needs of the people for a rapid development of economy and culture and the present state that economy and culture can not meet people’s needs. The essences of the contradictions, in a situation that socialist system has already been set up in our country, are the contradiction between the advanced socialist constitution and backwardness of the social productivity. (MAO, 1994, p.341)” In this statement, there was a redundant sentence (the underlined one, underlined by quoter). “There was no such a sentence in any of all previous drafts, and even in the draft passed by the presidium in the early morning of Sept.27. It was added in the draft temporarily before the closing ceremony of the Congress. Hastily sent to MAO Zedong to have a glance, the draft was printed and distributed to delegates.” At that time, there was only one hour before the closing ceremony (Jin et al, p.537).

How was this sentence added in? According to Hu Qiaomu, “this argument was put forward by Chen Boda, Chen called on Kang Sheng the moment the Congress would be closed soon after. They discussed and put forward an advice to revise the draft, and then they called me to go over there. Chen quoted the sentence in an article *the Backward Europe and the Advanced Asia* by Lenin as the grounds of the argument, to verify the statement of the contradiction between the advanced social system and backward productivity. Then, Chen and I went to see Chairman Mao, showed him revised draft, after pondering over for quite a while, he agreed. He said, well, hurry up to print. (Jin et al, p.537)”

But, it was exactly these unnecessary words that caused MAO Zedong’s antipathy. According to Deng Liqun’s recollections, “probably it was about two weeks after (the 8th Party Congress concluded), Chairman MAO delivered himself of the suspicion to the redundant sentence. He said, Lenin compared Asia with Europe, you compared with us own. (Jin et al, p.537)” In April of 1957, at a conversazione of the Party secretaries from four provinces and one municipal city on ideological work held in Hangzhou, MAO Zedong interposed that, “there was a mistake in the Resolution of the 8th Party Congress about the contradiction between the advanced productive relationship and the laggard productive forces, theoretically it was incorrect. Some comrades said that, the so-called backwardness of productive forces means the comparison with foreign countries, with our future. ... This kind of comparison was theoretically unreasonable. How to correct the mistakes, please try to find a solution. (Jin et al, p.658-659)” On Oct. 7, at the meeting of group leaders during the third plenary session of the 8th Central Committee, MAO Zedong said, “the documents of the 8th

Party Congress mentioned only the relationship among ownership, productive force and relations of production, not mentioned the relationship among people, this kind of conclusion reflected the situation of that time. The resolution on the 8th Congress says, the principal contradiction at present time is the contradiction between the advanced social constitution and backwardness of the social productivity. This kind of contradiction will also be in existence in the future, thus, this conclusion is in the long run while it seems inappropriate now.” At the same time, he said, “the sentence in the resolution of the 8th Congress is inappropriate, but not harmful, it does not hinder production, does not hamper the anti-rightists, and it reflects the request for strengthening the material base (comparing with foreign countries, we are very backward) at the same time. Since it is not harmful, we needn’t change it now, otherwise it may cause trouble and dispute.(Jin et al, p.719)” On October 9, MAO Zedong said, “there was a few words in the resolution of the 8th Congress mentioned the principal contradiction as that between the advanced socialist constitution and the laggard productive forces. This kind of expression is incorrect. (Jin et al, p.475)”

In summary, before and during the third plenary session, MAO Zedong had not put forward any suggestion of denying to the basic conclusion about the principal social contradiction drew on the 8th Party Congress, just showed his disapprovals to “the redundant sentence”. However, it was exactly on the closing ceremony of the third plenary session, MAO changed the basic conclusion about the principal social contradiction, proposed that the contradictions between proletariat and bourgeoisie, between the socialist and capitalist road are the principal contradictions of the transition period from capitalist to socialist society.

It seems reasonable and logical that Mao’s critical comments on the inaccurate statement in the resolution to the Political Report led to his total negation to the basic conclusion finally. Quite to the contrary, there lies not any relation between the criticism and negation. There is good reason for MAO to change his idea.

In 1956, the twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union aroused much unexpected and unusual turmoil both inside and outside China. Especially when CCP began to rectify the working style in the spring of 1957, some intellectuals advanced their advices and political propositions among which there were some inclination and insinuation to challenge the reigning of CCP. All these made MAO Zedong pay much more attention to the class struggle, and what more important and unfortunately is that MAO made an incorrect judgment. The assaults from the rightists and the magnification of anti-rightists are the key causes for MAO to change his idea on the principal social contradiction.

There emerged a transformation in MAO Zedong’s cognition to the principal social contradiction of China during the third plenary session of the 8th Central

Committee held from Sep. 20 to Oct.9 1957. On Sep.19, MAO convened an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau to discuss the issues of the third plenary session, he pointed out, "during the entire transition period, the general social contradiction is between socialism and capitalism, namely the contradiction between working class and bourgeoisie. In the past, we mainly paid attention on the contradictions among the people, not on the contradictions between us and enemy. ... Last year, the constitution of ownership was changed undoubtedly, nevertheless, men had not yet transformed. The contradictions between working class and bourgeoisie, between socialism and capitalism are the principal contradiction in the entire transition period. (Jin et al, p.717)" On Oct.9, MAO drew a conclusion on the principal contradiction in the plenary session that "the contradictions between proletariat and bourgeoisie, between socialist road and capitalist road, without a doubt, are the principal contradictions of the current society in our country. (Mao, 1977, p.475)"

MAO Zedong formally and remarkably changed the conclusion on principal social contradiction at the meeting, not only "many comrades at the meeting felt perplexed" (Bo, 1993, p.624), but also most of the researchers nowadays are accustomed to uses the words such as "suddenly", "indiscreetly" and so on to describe this matter. Whether feeling of "perplexed", "suddenly" or "indiscreetly", it is just because of not clearing about the cause and effect of the matter. We may have learnt from the dialectics that, everything develops gradually to a break, changes from quantity to quality. Over the principal social contradiction, MAO experienced a year and a half of pondering. The twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the political events in Poland and Hungary, and the unusual affairs inside China all made MAO think over how to construct a socialist country, in which certainly included the political affairs of China.

Khrushchev's confidential report on the twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union caused an enormous confusion in the world. As to this, MAO thought that Khrushchev had uncovered a forbidden area, indicating that Stalin and Soviet Union also had errors and the Communist Parties in other countries might act according to the situations of their own countries, they need no more to be superstitious to USSR. Nevertheless, Khrushchev made a great trouble because his method of uncovering was not correct, giving an entire negation of Stalin by a method of throwing out the baby with the bath water, and the more, he made a surprise assault without informing the Parties of other countries, even there was much little knowledge about it inside the Party of Soviet Union itself previously. The direct consequence of the confidential report were a worldwide chaos of anti-communism and anti-Soviet, a burst of political events in Poland and Hungary, a great fission in the Communist

Parties in some advanced countries, thus an enormous confusion for the international Communist movement.

Under the influence of international unrest, and mainly because of the faults in the policies of CCP, there appeared a cluster of labilization in some areas from the second half of 1956 in China. According to an incomplete statistics, in the half year from September 1956 to March 1957, there were a number of strikes and petitions each of which involves several to dozens or even thousand people, with students on strike in dozens of cities and peasants quitting from the cooperation societies in the countryside.

All these occurrences caused the vigilance of MAO and other highest rank of CCP leaders, although they continuously kept calm at the very beginning and did not associate these with the class struggle together immediately. The Party and MAO were in the light of positive and realistic policy to deal with the events occurred in China. On November 13, 1956, at a group leaders' meeting during the Second Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee, MAO pointed out in his speech that, "the domestic class contradictions has already basically solved, but we should pay attention to the activities of a portion of counter-revolutionaries which still existed. As to the out-of-date thoughts and custom within bourgeois and intelligentsia, we should rectify it under the course of consolidating the close relation with them, and continue to carry out a long-term moralization. (MAO, 1999, p.160)" In January of 1957, MAO said at a conference of Party Secretaries from all provinces, municipalities and autonomous Regions, "there are a small portion of people on strike, partly because of the bureaucratism and subjectivism in our work and the mistakes in political or economical policy, while partly not because of the incorrect policy, but because of the incorrect working methods, because of the bad services we provided. Another factor is the activities of counter-revolutionaries and malefactors", "as to the trouble, we must differentiate to deal with. When they are right, we must acknowledge the mistake, and correct; when they are wrong, we must rebut", "to people who involved in the troubles, we should persuade and differ majority from minority. To the majority, we should guide and moralize to transform them gradually, not discourage them.(MAO, 1977, p.353, 354)" In February of 1957, MAO emphasized deliberately in "On Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" that, "in 1956, there were workers and students on strike and petition in some places. The immediate cause was their dissatisfactory to the material requests, some of which are should and can fulfil, some of which are unsuitable and beyond fulfilling for the time being. But the most important factor to the trouble was the bureaucratism in our work. ...The other cause is the lacks of guidance and moralization to the workers and students. In 1956, there were peasants quitting from the cooperation societies, the main reason also was the bureaucratism and the lacks of moralization. (MAO, 1999, p.236)"

However, after a minority of rightists initiated their assault to CCP and the socialist system while CCP launched an open-door movement of rectifying its working style in the spring of 1957, MAO changed his attitudes to the domestic occurrences which had been taken as the contradictions among the people. Taking all the events occurred inside and outside of China into account, he started to consider these events as the international and domestic symbols of class struggle. The article “Matters Are Changing”(shiqing zhengzai qi bianhua) on May 15 was a signal. Up to July, there was a great change in the basic judgment on the affairs: “In the period of socialist revolution in our country, the contradictions between the anti-Communism, anti-people and anti-socialism bourgeois rightists and people are the contradictions between friends and foes, are oppositional, implacable and absolutely irreconcilable contradictions. (MAO, 1977, p.456)” This speech changed the tone about the contradictions, and the most important is that, MAO began to consider the time after the socialist transformation had already finished as “the period of socialist revolution”.

Modifications in “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People” reflect the process of Mao’s changes in understanding the problem on contradictions. From the original manuscripts to its appearance in “People’s Daily” on June 19, 1957, MAO Zedong made many modifications in the article according to the changes of the political situations in that period. Among the modifications, there is one paragraph mainly on class struggle during the socialist time. “In our country, although socialist transformation has been completed with respect to the system of ownership, and although the large-scale, turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of times of revolution have in the main come to an end, there are still remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes, there is still a bourgeoisie, and the remoulding of the petty bourgeoisie has only just started. The class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the different political forces, and the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will continue to be long and tortuous and at times even become very acute. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled.”¹ Generally speaking, the main purpose and contents of these words are mainly about the class struggle within the fields of politics and ideology, have not taken them as the contradictions among classes, especially not as the principal contradiction, however, they truly reflected Mao’s changes in understanding the contradictions among classes when facing the rightists’ assault.

Just as it was said in A Biography of MAO Zedong

(1949-1976), “MAO Zedong’s judgment to the current principal social contradiction in our country had obviously changed around the campaign against the rightists. ... After 3 months of anti-rightists in July, August and September, especially after the campaign of anti-rightists was seriously magnificated. Making a much serious wrong judgment to the situation of class struggle, he had a tremendous change in this significant theoretical problem, redetermined the contradictions between proletariat and bourgeoisie was the principal contradiction. During the Third Plenary Session, he successively discussed this issue three times, each of which more affirmed, each of which more outstretched. As to the Resolution to the 8th Party Congress, he only said ‘it is inappropriate, but not harmful’, we needn’t change it. However, he said by an extremely affirmation tone at the Party’s plenary session of central committee that, the current principal social contradiction in our country are the contradictions between proletariat and bourgeoisie, between the socialist and capitalist road are the principal contradictions of the transition period from capitalist to socialist society, this in fact had changed the correct conclusion of the 8th Party Congress. This symbolized a ‘left’ turn of MAO Zedong in the guiding ideology, brought a profound influence to the development of Chinese political situations. (Jin et al, p.721-722)”

CCP officially changed the statement on the principal social contradiction was at the Second Conference of the 8th Party Congress held in 1958. The work report of the conference confirmed MAO Zedong’s statement on the principal social contradiction in China proposed in 1957 at the Third Plenary Session of the 8th Party Congress. It stated that “in the entire transition period, in other words, before socialism is constructed completely, the struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, between socialist and capitalist road, will all the time be the principal contradiction inside our country.(Jin et al, p.815)” Thereupon, through a national congress, the Party officially changed the correct conclusion on the domestic principal social contradiction drew at the First Conference of the 8th Party Congress. This was a significant turn in the Party’s guiding ideology, a turn which had provided the theory basis for the mistakes of serious magnification in class struggle afterwards.

CONCLUSION

Now probing into the historical events of China in the spring of 1957, we would possibly think that MAO Zedong was so supersensitive to the political situation as to make a serious mistake on the magnification of anti-rightists; however, when facing the complicated situations inside and outside China, it was not easy for MAO to make a clear and accurate judgment. Although it was a process developing gradually for MAO to estimate the

domestic class struggle, yet it was without any doubt that the rightists' assaults and the magnification of anti-rightists caused MAO to make a wrong estimation to the situation of class struggle and have a deviation from the correct judgment on the principal social contradiction in China. Therefore, the assaults from the rightists and the magnification of anti-rightists are the key causes for MAO to change his idea on the principal social contradiction.

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