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MARXIST STUDIES IN CHINA

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Chief Compilers Cheng Enfu and Hou Huigin Marxist Studies Editorial Department Chinese Academy of Social Sciences



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Marxist Values

Believe in Marxism, and Be a Steadfast Marxist

Chen Kuiyuan



Abstract: This paper expounds the attitude toward Marxism mainly from three aspects: believing in Marxism, studying Marxism, and adhering to and developing Marxism. The theory of Marxism has not yet turned outdated and it is still the culmination of the contemporary philosophy and social sciences. Marxism provides a theoretical basis for the guiding ideology of our Party and our country. The socialism with Chinese characteristics is built on this basis rather than diverting from it to make a complete change. Only by understanding and studying Marxism well can we develop it. The current economic crisis that sweeps the world, the decline of the hegemonic and imperialist United States, and the change and adjustment of the world pattern confirm that Marxism is the scientific truth. Chinese Marxists should adhere to and develop Marxism on the basis of practice.

Keywords: Marxism, Guiding Ideology, Scientific Truth, Sense of Crisis

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Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, a political party of the working class with Marxism as its guiding ideology, and guided by the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, people of all nationalities in China are working hard to build a great socialist country. In the process of consolidating the Party and developing the country, importance has always been attached to raising the ideological and political level and arming the Party and Chinese people with the scientific theory. We advocate the emancipation of mind and repudiate dogmatism, but we should not quit the socialist ideology, nor should we negate the guiding position of Marxism and conduct the pluralism of guiding ideology in the name of learning from others. Rejection of pluralism is not our invention: the United States, preaching freedom of belief, is opposed to ideological and cultural pluralism, with its mainstream culture, the American spirit that they uphold, remaining indisputable. The bilingual education has been repeatedly discussed in the Congress, but the bill that Spanish is taken as the second national language has not yet passed. Recently, leaders of Germany, France, Britain, and the Netherlands have announced that "pluralism is over" and even "dead" in their countries. The German government requests that the immigrants to Germany speak German, and embrace the mainstream German culture and values. Britain, France, and the Netherlands have imposed almost the same requirements. This reflects the anti-pluralistic position and the corresponding policies of the developed Western countries.

While China insists on the guiding role of Marxism, especially the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, in the realm of ideology and culture, it also advocates respect for differences and tolerance for diversities. The nature and scope of such respect and tolerance must be clearly defined, i.e., what must be adhered to, what can be tolerated, and what must be repudiated. The tolerance for diversity is to promote and achieve the remarkable development and prosperity of socialist culture. "Tolerance" means both "inclusiveness" and "acceptance". The essence of tolerance is to promote democracy and draw on the strength of others, but the basic theory and the fundamental system of our Party and our country can never be challenged. "Tolerance" cannot be changed into "substitution"; if Marxism were substituted by the system of bourgeois ideology such as "democratic socialism" or "new

liberalism", the nature of our Party and our country would be changed. Therefore, "tolerance" can by no means become substitution, which is like losing our soul unconsciously. We often use the expression of "the Western world headed by the United States", which mainly refers to the international political and social system. In fact, the United States and other Western countries, especially the Continental European countries such as France and Germany, are not a unified entity, and the American culture is not the same as the Western culture. We are on guard against the encroachment of Westernization, with the focus not on the Western cultural tradition since the ancient Greece, but on the contemporary American political culture in an attempt to rebuild the world order. The Marxism-based ideological system is the fundamental guarantee against the conspiracy of Westernization, which is the key to the prospect and fate of our Party and country. How to treat Marxism has always been the primary question in the ideological and theoretical field.

§ I. Believe in Marxism

Since the publication of Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marxism has illuminated the human world for more than 160 years. Has the ideological theory of Marxism turned outdated since the world today has been quite different from that of Marx? Has our Party still believed in, adhered to and practiced the ideals, the creeds and the theoretical system of Marxism? I believe the answer is beyond the shadow of a doubt! We have our faith in Marxism because we believe that Marxism is the scientific truth. It is a science exploring the basic laws how the capitalist system comes into being, develops and perishes and how the working class in the capitalist system liberate themselves and then all mankind. As long as the capitalist system and the capital-and-labor relationship exist, the surplus-value theory of Marxism will not become outdated. The Marxist political economics is not only the ideological weapon and tool to identify the inherent contradictions of the contemporary capitalist world, but also the theoretical guideline and method to recognize the current economic and social contradictions in China. Therefore, the surplus-value theory, the historical materialism and other Marxist rationales are by no means outdated and Marxism is still the scientific truth for the working class and other progressives to understand and transform the world.

Marxism is also known as scientific socialism and communism: as long as the historic mission of socialism has not been accomplished and the truly fair and reasonable communist society has not been realized, the historic mission of Marxism will not come to an end. At present, the capitalist system and the socialist system coexist in the world, and Marxism is the theoretical guide to understand the essence of these two social systems. China adopts the socialist system, and the basic social contradiction is still between the socialist productive forces and the relations of production, between the economic base and the superstructure. Correct theoretical guidance as well as correct guidelines, principles and policies is needed to solve problems such as how to understand the fundamental contradiction in the socialist country, how to resolve the fundamental contradiction in which the opposites adapt to and conflict with each other, and how to continuously develop and improve China's socialist system. If we quit the guidance of historical materialism, we will be unable to clearly understand the current social contradictions of China, nor can we effectively deal with the various economic, social problems and interpersonal relationship, in which the fundamental contradiction is reflected. To understand and master the fundamental contradiction, we should pay attention to the movement and change of the contradiction, and prevent our thinking from staying standstill and one-sided. For example, the view that the development of productive forces is of paramount importance makes a great contribution in the new historical period. However, we should not regard the development of productive forces as the only one cause that needs our commitment. The development of productive forces cannot be separated from the establishment and improvement of relations of production. Both the development of productive forces and the concern for the interests of producers and laborers are interconnected and important affairs in which consistent efforts should be made. Another example is about the relation between superstructure and economic base. Some argue as long as the superstructure is managed well and the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the socialist political system are maintained in China, we can easily correct whatever changes and deviations that occur in the economic affairs and the only thing needed is determination. This is proven to be totally wrong. Administrative decrees can only solve a limited number of problems, rather than change some rules and relations inherent in the market economy as well as their

outcomes, because the economic base plays the decisive role in the final analysis. The economic base of China has undergone great changes in ownership, laborand-capital relation and the distribution relation in over thirty years. Dialectics holds that in the process of development, quantitative differences beyond a certain point pass into qualitative changes. Unaware of this change, one can hardly understand and adhere to the basic economic system of our country. Another argument is that the superstructure transforms naturally and passively with the change in the economic base. It is believed in the historical materialism that superstructure and economic base are the unity of the opposites with both compatibilities and incompatibilities. Generally speaking, the economic base determines the nature of the superstructure, while the superstructure reacts, in a relatively independent manner, upon the former in that it not only consolidates and protects the economic base when compatible with it, but also amends and improves the incompatible parts and situations in the economic base. This is the function of the state power and the government to establish and implement the appropriate economic system and policies to protect and expand the economic base. In the period of social revolution, the superstructure has the mission and function to remove the old economic base and establish the dominant position of the new economic base. We must objectively look upon what changes have happened to China's economic base, how to adapt the superstructure to the economic base and how to maintain the basic socialist economic system in face of the changes in the economic base; these are questions of vital importance. If importance is attached only to transformation with the change in the economic base while ignoring the superstructure's active role or even weakening it in a disguised manner, the cause of socialism will hardly succeed. Researchers in the fields of philosophy and social sciences should carefully explore these questions to safeguard the interest of our Party and our country.

The contemporary capitalist theories and the social system can neither overwhelm Marxism nor socialism. Why do some people waver over their belief in Marxism, socialism and communism? One of the important historical reasons is that after the end of the Cold War, some people thought that the time had arrived for a world of convergence and capitalism, especially the American-style capitalism, had become the "end of history", that is, the final social form

of mankind; such an idea is nothing but an regression to the old thinking of "historical end", "ultimate community" and "rational kingdom" advocated by Hegel, Duhring and the European Enlighteners, a product of historical idealism. The wheel of history did not stop in the 20th century, and just ten years after the end of the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union, the United States fell down from the peak of unilateral hegemony. Francis Fuknyama, an American scholar who had published the "end of history" theory, saw his errors and stated that history does not come to an end and the American system is not the best one in the world. In one of his recently published articles, Fukuyama points out that the United States has nothing to teach China. Chinese Marxists should be convinced that Marxism is a scientific truth and socialism has brilliant prospects since no bourgeois theory and school can still keep the remarkable vitality after more than 160 years as Marxism does. Thanks to its scientific nature, Marxism has been able to stand on the peak of the era in various fields such as philosophy, political economics, socialism and historical theory. Originally, the two founders of Marxism did not have any authority to compel others to believe in their ideas; it is with the power of truth that their voice has spread all over the world and greatly affected the historical course of the human world for more than a century.

To have faith in Marxism means, first and foremost, a belief in its scientific nature. Marxism stands on the commanding point of social sciences; that is to say, though not insurmountable, it has still been the culmination of social sciences. And it is on a vantage point in terms of morality. When the bourgeois scholars cannot scientifically invalidate Marxism, they shift their focus towards morality, wrongly arguing that Marxism pays attention only to struggle rather than humanitarianism and boasting that they indiscriminately love all people in the world. Marxism as a theory seeks liberation for working people, and the Marxist doctrine of class struggle is a just and honorable theory, an ideological weapon to enlighten the working class to understand their historical position and seek social equity; it is opposed to the use of empty "fraternity" and "humanitarianism" to cover up the exploitation and oppression of one class to another, its final goal being to realize the common liberation of mankind. It is perfectly clear which one is good, this theory or those whitewashing the system of exploitation and

weakening the awareness of the working people. Instead of striving for the abstract human rights, Marxism advocates a realistic basis enabling equal rights for all. Without this basis, the so-called "human rights" cannot be fair and equal. The revolutionary struggle of our Party decades ago was to fight for the human rights of Chinese working people who had been under the oppression of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, known as "three big mountains", and do it worldwide in the interest of the Chinese people. It is because the ideal and faith of our Party reach the greatest height of morality that tens of thousands of revolutionary martyrs had been willing to devote themselves, including their lives and families, to the revolutionary cause. Many of them were fully aware that they might not live till the day when communism is realized, but they believed that humanity would eventually realize communism, for which they would fight at the cost of their lives. Without their sacrifice and devotion, the Communist Party of China would not achieve the ruling position it has today. To accomplish their unfinished cause and strive for the interests of the people with heart and soul, communists today must have a firm faith in Marxism.

§ II. Study Marxism

Marxism is a systematic and scientific theory, an advanced world outlook and methodology; one must study hard to understand its essence and apply its principles to solve practical problems. The struggle of the European working class against the bourgeoisie in the 19th century provided both the class basis for the birth of Marxism and the practical basis for the birth of the Marxist theory. However, the working class could not spontaneously produce Marxism, nor could they spontaneously use the theory of Marxism to defeat the enemy; only after the progressive members of the working class mastered the theory of Marxism, could the theory of the scientific socialism be brought into action. China embraces Marxism as the guiding ideology, which does not mean that the broad ranks of Party members, intellectuals and the general public can spontaneously master Marxism. Only by studying Marxism works well and mastering the basic theory of Marxism, can we become conscious Marxists. Comrade Mao Zedong led a Party-wide study movement during the period of the Anti-Japanese War, believing that if our Party had one or two hundred comrades who could master Marxism-

Leninism systematically and effectively, rather than fragmentarily and superficially, the fighting effectiveness of our Party will be greatly improved. In the past decades when our Party has been in power, there have been hundreds of thousands of professionals specializing in Marxism. Marxism has been generally considered to have a lofty position and strong influence in China's ideological and theoretical fields, but in fact, we cannot be so optimistic. At the turn of the century when socialism is at a low point in the world, it is an undeniable fact that Marxism is sometimes downplayed and even marginalized in China. A prominent problem is that many Party members, cadres and theoretical researchers do not make efforts to read works of Marxism. A large number of members of our Party, a ruling party for more than sixty years, have neither experienced the revolutionary struggle nor read Marxist-Leninist works, and claims of firm faith in Marxism would thus be groundless. If you do not know the theory of Marxism, you are more likely to echo what others say against Marxism; when other people say Marxism is outdated, you do not know whether it is true or not; when someone proposes to develop Marxism with some of the contemporary Western theories and viewpoints, you are unable to tell whether it is a development or distortion of Marxism. How to solve these problems? Only by studying the basic theory of Marxism can we distinguish the true Marxism from what is false. Sometimes when some cadres and scholars addressed us on Marxism, we may feel the reports or speeches ambiguous and unconvincing, and the very reason is a lack of confidence on the part of the speakers. To be a Marxist, one must make an effort to study the basic theory of Marxism and lay a solid theoretical foundation. Only in this way can we draw a line between Marxism and non-Marxist ideas, drive back the attack from the anti-Marxist trend, and demonstrate the essence and charm of Marxism so that the truth can ultimately triumph over the falsehood.

Chinese people accepted Marxism more than half a century later than Europeans did. The October Revolution brought Marxism-Leninism to China. From the publication of *Manifesto of the Communist Party* to the establishment of the Communist Party of China, there is an interval of seventy three years. When the Communist Party of China was just established, only dozens of people in the whole country had mastered and been committed to the basic Marxist beliefs. Under the leadership of these foresighted revolutionaries, the Communist Party

of China mastered the advanced ideological weapon, armed the revolutionary ranks with the Marxist theory based on the reality of China, and led the Chinese people to the victory of the new democratic revolution in just a few decades. After the founding of the People's Republic, they were immediately engaged in the socialist revolution, and then in the building of socialism. The history of Chinese revolution and the development of the People's Republic of China show that there would be no socialist China, no reform and opening to the outside world or socialism with Chinese characteristics if we did not study Marxism and use it to guide China's revolution and construction.

Not long ago, Comrade Wu Bangguo emphasized in the work report of the Fourth Session of the Eleventh National People's Congress Standing Committee that "to adhere to the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the most important thing is to adhere to the correct political direction, not to waver over issues of the major principles such as the basic system of the country. Otherwise, not only the building of the socialist modernization will be out of the question, but the country will be deprived of the achievements it has already made, and may even fall into the abyss of civil strife." He also solemnly indicated that "China will not implement the multi-party system, nor the pluralism of guiding ideology, nor the systems of check-and-balance, bicameral assembly, federalism or privatization." He also expounded "six guarantees". The speech of Comrade Wu Bangguo reflects the essential requirement of the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the faithful commitment to the basic line of our Party, which we should conscientiously study and research.

The socialist China, often faced with the threat of Westernization and differentiation from Western hostile forces, must nourish the sense of crisis. The *National Defense Strategy*, published by the Department of Defense of the United States on July 31, 2008, points out that the United States will "continue to press China", and "develop a comprehensive strategy to shape China's choices". The United States has never given up its comprehensive strategy for China and it has played a role in many of China's frustrations and troubles in various fields of reform, development and security. To take the path of socialist development, the choice of several generations of Chinese people, China must adhere to the theory of Marxism, the basic line of our Party, and the fundamental system of