

COMMENT ON “MAO ZEDONG THOUGHT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY”

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The term “ideology” has been coined over two centuries since the 19th century. However, there is still no consistent statement about its basic meaning, and different theoretical schools worldwide have different views based on their theories. Even in its founder Tracy's view, “ideology” also has the significance of philosophical epistemology and political practice (ZHANG; ZONG, 1988, p. 255).

Ideological construction is an extremely important work related to the future and destiny of the Party, the long-term stability of the country and the centripetal force of national cohesion. Contemporary China is in the era of globalization of the external environment, informatization of production and life, and marketization of economic operations. The way of life, communication and the people's thinking are undergoing profound changes. Various cross-era, cross-space and cross-cultural ideologies are deeply converging and fighting.

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The noise will be confused if the truth does not occupy the ideological position. If the sun does not spread in the spiritual space, the darkness will be swallowed up. Our Party has always attached great importance to the construction of socialist ideology. Mao Zedong, the first generation of the leading core of the Party, united and led the whole Party and the people of the country to seek truth from facts. Historically, he chose Marxism as his guiding ideology, combined with the specific national conditions and practice of China to create Mao Zedong Thought, led the Chinese revolution to success and, then, established the socialist system, which laid the fundamental premise for the socialist ideology construction of China.

With the conclusion of the cold war and the disintegration of the bipolar order, the globe has entered a period of peace and progress. The antagonism between capitalism and the two systems of socialism, two routes and two value systems, has not been eradicated. In contrast, it has become more challenging, intricate and concealed. The rapid growth of economic globalization and scientific and technical informatics has strengthened and facilitated commercial and cultural links and international cooperation. Concurrently, it has heightened the harsh competition in the global economy and accelerated the North-South divide. Developed countries are increasingly strengthening their efforts to export ideology to backward developing countries with the help of economic and technological forces. The cultural exchanges and the ones between different countries are increasingly frequent. Economic development and cultural exchanges are constantly attached to clear political intentions.

In the final analysis, the nature and role of a social ideology should be reflected in its basic attitude to the social system, expected design and maintenance functions. Therefore, analyzing the social system is the most convenient way to grasp ideology. Because of this, many scholars in the research of other countries on contemporary Chinese socialist ideology are also reflected in discussing the basic concepts and major reforms of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics. As for the basic idea of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, other countries prevail in three representative judgments: new authoritarianism, Chinese federalism and new conservatism.

As a positive reflection of the economic foundation at the conceptual level, the internal structure of the ideology is bound to be closely related to the economic structure. On the one hand, the economic structure determines the ideological structure. The internal elements of the economic structure and their

order directly determine the relationship and form of the internal elements of the ideological structure (MAO, 1996, p. 194). When the socialist public economic structure is adjusted, the socialist ideology can only be adjusted adaptively to promote the coordinated development of the two ones. On the other hand, the ideological structure will react to the economic system. When the elements of the internal structure of ideology change in order or evolve in relation, it often metaphorically indicates that some social needs need attention and some social problems need to be solved. It points to the need to adjust some interest relations, thus forcing the innovation of unreasonable elements in the economic structure and even breaking the barriers of old interest relations.

The academic circles of other countries have two different views on the change and development of contemporary Chinese social ideology. One view is that the reform and opening up have led to the intergenerational change and transformation of the social ideology of China, which is manifested in two aspects. First, the ideological structure was divided, and the conflict was widespread. It believed that the reform and opening up had redistributed social resources and profoundly adjusted the relationship of interests. This can promote the classes and groups' differentiation and reorganization and make the original "integrated" ideological structure split. After the split, there are often conflicts between the ideologies in one way or another. These conflicts focus on the emerging mass incidents in recent years. The second is the activation of the ideological field, which believes that reform and opening up have broken the authoritarian structure of ideology, making the ideological field increasingly loose and active.

Many fruitful types of research have been carried out around the dominance of contemporary Chinese socialist ideology and related issues. A series of important breakthroughs have been made, providing a rich multi-directional research perspective and theoretical reference. However, we should also see that there are still many important problems to be solved in studying the dominance of socialist ideology, and there is still much room for deepening and expanding.

First, the basic problems need to be clarified. The clarification of concepts is the basis and difficulty of any theoretical research. Particularly in the realm of ideology study, people's understanding of the concept of ideology is so complex that perspectives vary. First, scholars with different academic backgrounds have provided different interpretations of ideology. Politics

stresses the social mobilization function of ideology, whereas psychology emphasizes the psychological integration function. Anthropology emphasizes the cultural significance of ideology, whereas philosophy investigates the truth-seeking tendency of the ideology. The complexity of understanding perspective and emphasis makes it difficult to achieve effective theoretical convergence and knowledge increment due to different understandings, although numerous ideological research achievements exist.

Second, the core problems need to be solved urgently. The orientation of practical problems is the key to distinguishing Marxist ideological theory from Western ideological theories. Second, focusing on the historical node of globalization, modernization and national rejuvenation in contemporary China, the research on the dominance of socialist ideology still faces many practical problems that need to be solved urgently. For example, since the reform and opening up, the economic and social development of China has made remarkable achievements. What are the inherent and inevitable links between these achievements and the leading ideology of China, and what are the historical laws of the occurrence and development of these links? How to transform the great achievements of reform and development into the new socialist ideology dominance? These are the core issues of “ideology-dominated” research and the starting point and foothold of our in depth research.

Third, the research paradigm needs innovation. The current research paradigm regarding the dominance of socialist ideology has roughly three characteristics: first, a holistic analysis, in which the dominance of socialist ideology is viewed as an integral concept and its internal elements, structural patterns, types of realization and other issues are discussed less frequently. The second is the background perspective, which places the dominance of socialist ideology in the context of globalization, informatization, marketization and modernization, focusing on the impact and challenges of the background of the times on the dominance and less on the internal relationship of mutual isomorphism and organic connection between the two ones.

Third, the defensive orientation, from the perspective of simple strategic defense, discusses how to strengthen the dominance of socialist ideology but less discusses the era construction of socialist ideology dominance. This research paradigm should be of great significance for us to understand and grasp the dominant issues of socialist ideology at a macro level and enhance the sense of crisis and urgency of ideological construction (National “Seventh

Five-Year Plan” study book series of constitutional study reading this book, 2016). However, suppose we cannot go deep into the interior of the socialist ideology dominance, perspective the elements and functional patterns of the dominance. In that case, we can not grasp the internal mechanism of realizing the socialist ideology dominance. In particular, if it cannot analyze the game rules between socialist ideology and other ideologies under the new situation, it is difficult to promote the continuous deepening of relevant research and even more difficult to realistically enhance the dominance of socialist ideology.

The cause of socialist construction of China has just started. The experience of the socialist ideology construction of China is still accumulating and is in ascending order. The laws of its construction have not yet been fully revealed. The process from conception to implementation is complex. Its standardization and effectiveness are directly related to the policy level, implementation level and the people’s awareness level at all levels. Suppose later researchers can try to return to the historical truth and put themselves in the people’s shoes. In that case, they may be able to reveal more of the complexity and difficulty of exploring socialist ideology construction in the Mao era, and its basic contributions, and better understand the laws and lessons of ideology construction. This is our comments about Zhang, Zong and Zeen’s (2023) article.

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