

# COMMENT ON “MARXIST FOUNDATION AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT: INTERPRETATION AND PRACTICE IN CHINA’S NEW ERA”

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## COMMENT ON “MARXIST FOUNDATION AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT: INTERPRETATION AND PRACTICE IN CHINA’S NEW ERA”

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Professor Chen Xianda’s required course on Marxist Philosophy, in the new era provides a theoretical interpretation of the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The course aims to help individuals gain a simplified understanding of the Marxist philosophical basis, underlying the theory of socialism, with Chinese characteristics in the new era. The objective is to enable participants to comprehensively and deeply comprehend this theory by engaging with the original texts, studying their content and understanding their core principles. This knowledge will better equip individuals to guide practical endeavors effectively.

In this course, the concept of “learning to understand” emphasizes the importance of leading cadres gaining a precise understanding of the logical framework and theoretical origins of socialist theory in the new era. It encourages them to internalize this knowledge and translate it into action. The concept of “getting through” requires leading cadres to accurately grasp the logical connections among theory, history and practice in the new era. It encourages them to adopt a holistic perspective and examine the challenges encountered during socialist construction from a comprehensive and developmental viewpoint. The principle of “being realistic” emphasizes the need for leading cadres to integrate theory with practice (Chen, 2019,

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p. 23). It calls for the implementation of the socialist thought with Chinese characteristics in the new era within specific regions and departments, ensuring that the theory is effectively applied to concrete tasks and responsibilities. Through this course, participants will develop a deeper understanding of the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. By aligning theory with practice, they will be better equipped to guide and contribute to the ongoing socialist construction in their respective regions and departments.

## 1 MARXIST PHILOSOPHY ENTERS A NEW ERA

Marxist philosophy has evolved over the past 170 years to address contemporary challenges and provide a philosophical perspective for the world and China. It emphasizes practical concerns, bridging economic theory with real-life issues and providing a theoretical framework for understanding society. Marxist philosophy is rooted in practice, worldviews, and the unity of science and values (Li, 2012, p. 25). It is concerned with social reality, the liberation and development of humanity, and it is associated with the proletariat's historical mission. Marxism is a complete system that has evolved through mutual promotion, argumentation and integration, reflecting its interpretive abilities and contemporary relevance. The theoretical system of socialism, with Chinese characteristics, injects vitality into Marxist philosophy and represents the significance of the epochal and comprehensive nature of Marxism. The formation and development of the theory of socialism, with Chinese characteristics, require a comprehensive understanding and combination of philosophy, political economy and scientific society, in alignment with China's reality. While Marxist philosophy plays a central role, it is important to recognize the value of different philosophical theories and promote exchanges and development through an open and inclusive attitude.

This paper highlights the differences between a capitalist market economy and a social market one. It argues that China's efforts, to restore economic growth and welfare, are based on a new social development model that combines Marxist theory with China's reality. However, the paper points out that Marxist social theory offers guidance on how to organize the economy for the benefit of the majority, but it does not explicitly explain how to transform a capitalist market economy into a social one that serves the people instead of the capitalist class.

To address this issue, the paper suggests the need for a clear explanation of the transformation process. This involves identifying specific policies and measures to redistribute wealth and ensure equitable sharing of economic benefits across society. Additionally, the paper must address potential challenges and trade-offs that may arise during this transition to a social market economy.

Learning Marxist philosophy is not an easy task, and it involves profound conceptual research. However, despite the diverse philosophical systems worldwide, the paper emphasizes the universality and common nature of philosophy. Marxist philosophy stands apart as a scientific worldview and methodology, specifically focusing on the nature’s and society’s universal laws, as well as on the ones of the human thinking. It takes the issue of human liberation as its philosophical mission and task, which fundamentally changes the structure of philosophy and prevents it from becoming mere debate or subjective opinion. The historical mission of the Marxist philosophy equips it with the tools to understand and transform the world, establishing an irreplaceable position.

## **2 SOCIAL THOUGHT WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS IN THE NEW ERA**

Marxist theory plays a significant role in different historical periods, emphasizing social struggle during times of revolution, the high development of the productive forces during the establishment period and moral values in the period of the people’s indoctrination. As development needs change, Marxist philosophy remains vibrant with its “time-oriented” meaning, embodying the essence of the times’ spirit. Professor Chen Xianda believes that analyzing historical problems and understanding the laws of history require the lens of philosophy. While historical facts have unique characteristics, historical phenomena exhibit strong similarities and historical laws demonstrate repeatability, making them superior to mere empirical experience.

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, Marxist thought has been combined with China’s reality to guide the country’s development. From eradicating exploitation and oppression to empowering the Chinese people and concentrating on economic development, China has taken the path of a socialist market economy with its own characteristics. Different stages demand different tasks and changes, and the socialist era, characterized by new characteristics, necessitates addressing evolving social contradictions and the people’s demand for a better life. Marxism has enabled the majority of people to become masters of their own country, guiding self-reliance and united efforts to build and consolidate the achievements of people’s ownership.

With the focus on economic construction, reforms in the socialist market economy have transformed the relationships between ownership and distribution, planning and market, fairness and efficiency, thereby scientifically developing Marxist political and economic theory. The theory of socialism, with Chinese characteristics, has been shaped by common social ideals, including the development of productive forces, the liberation of productive forces, the elimination of class, the elimination of exploitation and oppression, and the establishment of harmony between man and nature and man and man.

Marxist philosophy cannot be detached from actual economic life, as it is inextricably linked to the self-improvement of the socialist system under Marxist guidance. By placing Marxist philosophy, political economy and socialist theory together, the theoretical roots of “four consciousnesses”, “four self-confidences” and “two maintenances”, in socialism with Chinese characteristics, become evident. This deepens understanding, instills self-confidence in practical behavior and consciously guides the people forward on their chosen path. Marxist philosophy has played a significant role in different historical periods, addressing the social struggles, the development of productive forces and the moral values. It emphasizes practical concerns and provides a philosophical perspective for understanding and transforming the world. The theory of socialism, with Chinese characteristics, combines Marxist philosophy with China’s reality, focusing on the eradication of exploitation, the establishment of people’s ownership and the concentration on economic development. Marxist philosophy evolves and adapts to the times, showing its vitality and reflecting the times’ spirit. The development of productive forces in China and the achievements of reform and opening-up are testament to the practical and theoretical value of Marxist philosophy. While different paradigms and interpretations exist in philosophy, the principle of learning the original interpretation and understanding the real characteristics of socialist thought is emphasized. The relationship between Marx’s materialistic view of history and socialism has evolved, with practical application serving as the theoretical basis for socialist policies. China combines historical materialism with socialist practice, developing its own path and plan based on the proletariat’s liberation and the improvement of people’s lives (Yang, 2018, p. 6). It is important to maintain a firm Marxist position, viewpoint and method while consciously applying them in practice. China’s wisdom and its impact on the world reflect the principles of communication, cooperation and development, contributing to global peace and prosperity. Philosophy provides a place for the human soul, meeting the body’s needs and the ones of the spirit.

### **3 THE GUIDANCE OF MARXIST PHILOSOPHY**

Marxism stands as a theory based on truth and morality, providing scientific answers to the path of capitalism and the human society’s direction. It allows people to find confidence in their principles, institutions and theories, serving as the source of confidence for China’s culture. Marxism consists of three interconnected parts: Marxist philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism. These components form an inseparable scientific whole, with Marxist philosophy as the master switch for understanding Marxism.

Marxist philosophy is rooted in the proletariat and centered on human liberation. It is not an abstract theory, but closely integrated with life, shaping one’s personality, fostering moral cultivation and nurturing humanistic qualities. To illuminate the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, a thorough understanding of the basic principles of dialectical

materialism and historical materialism is essential. A scientific, practical and open materialist view allows for observing and analyzing the world’s current issues.

Political economy, combined with knowledge of scientific socialism, enables the appreciation of the Chinese path, Chinese wisdom and Chinese spirit. It firmly establishes the concept of communism and the “four consciousnesses,” consciously resisting the influence of Western universal values and social norms. By grasping the essence of Marxism and its philosophical underpinnings, China can confidently navigate its unique journey towards socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The provided text emphasizes the importance of Marxism as a theory that provides truth, morality and confidence in understanding capitalism and the human society’s direction. It states that Marxism consists of Marxist philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism, which are interconnected and form a scientific whole. Marxist philosophy is highlighted as the guiding principle that integrates with life, shapes one’s personality and cultivates humanistic qualities. It also discusses the need to grasp the principles of dialectical materialism and historical one to illuminate the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The text mentions that the development of socialism, with Chinese characteristics, requires innovative philosophical theoretical support. It refers to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which emphasizes the importance of learning and understanding the logical system and theoretical origin of socialist theory in the new era. It underscores the combination of Marxism with Chinese reality and the scientific, popular, practical and open nature of Marxist philosophy. The text also mentions the role of Marxism in exposing the exploitative nature of capitalism and striving for the exploited class’s complete elimination. It recognizes the development of Marxism through historical practice, including Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the theory of socialism, with Chinese characteristics, in the new era. Furthermore, the text emphasizes the need for Marxist learning style, strategic analysis and the use of Marxism to analyze and solve contradictions. It highlights the ideological battlefield and the importance of standing firm in the people’s position to counter deceptive tactics and external influences. Lastly, the text emphasizes the preservation of Chinese culture and the integration of Marxist culture, traditional Chinese culture and Western one. It acknowledges the historical trends of negation, westernization and cultural conservatism. but it advocates for the inherent openness and inclusiveness of Chinese culture.

## CONCLUSIONS

The article highlights the relationship among sociological diagnosis, the reformulation of Marxism and criticism of the Chinese Communist Party. It stresses the

significance of studying Marxist philosophy, in the new era, to comprehend and apply the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This understanding is believed to aid in determining the developmental path and addressing the challenges faced by China, while also advocating for the promotion of Chinese wisdom and programs. The article emphasizes the need for Chinese Communists to cultivate a positive spirit, fortify their thoughts and elevate their perspectives. It underscores the importance of aligning with the people's aspirations, respecting public opinion, addressing the concerns of the citizens, and striving for democratic principles to drive progress and realize the grand Chinese vision. Additionally, the article mentions the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee, which focuses on enhancing the national governance system and modernizing governance capabilities. The aim is to ensure the effectiveness, robustness and integrity of the Chinese Communist Party as a Marxist political entity. Overall, the article suggests that a study of Marxist philosophy and the implementation of socialism with Chinese characteristics can contribute to China's advancement and governance, ultimately achieving the objectives of the Chinese Communist Party. This is our comment to Chen (2024).

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