

Characteristic Features of the Chinese Marxism's Formation: Key Philosophical and Socio-Political Foundations of Research

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In this article, the authors analysed the history of the origin and formation of Marxism in China. An analysis of the main provisions of the philosophical and socio-political foundations of research is proposed. The authors conducted a study of the development process and the main contradictions in the formation of Chineseized Marxism and also tracked the impact it can have on the humanitarian-development of modern Ukrainian society. For more detailed coverage of the formation of Chineseized Marxism, the authors conducted a historiographical study of current sources, as well as analysed the literature of the Soviet period, in which the primary attention was paid to the study of the figure of Mao Zedong as the «theoretician of the national revival of China» and the founder of Chineseized Marxism. The main narratives of Soviet studies regarding the «philosophical ideas of Mao Zedong», the «concept of movement and development», the «great leap» and the «cultural revolution» are analysed. In the course of the research, it was established that the vast majority of works of the Soviet period were aimed at criticizing Maoism for anti-communism and nationalism. It was also proved that «Chineseized Marxism» during the entire historical period of its formation did not have much in common with Marxist theory, but was based on the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, Western philosophy, using the teachings of traditional Chinese philosophy as a basis.

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Introduction

Events that took place in China for many decades are increasingly becoming the object of research by scientists. Such studies are quite diverse. They concern both the Communist Party of China (CPC), founded in 1921, and the formation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, as well as a detailed analysis of the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics and its basis – Chineseized Marxism. Thus, most scientists believe that Marxism took different forms in different countries that reflect a particular country's specifics. As for the formation of the ideology of Marxism in China, it is believed that it is inextricably linked with the country's many years of revolutionary history, as well as with the figure of Mao Zedong and the «cultural revolution» conceived and implemented by him, this «political artificial typhoon», «which must be thought about and understand different countries and continents, in Ukraine in particular. Because there is a lot of disaster and tragedy here» (Syundyukov, 2019). Also, at present, the scientific research experience of modern domestic researchers A. Konverskyi, S. Rudenko, Ya. Sobolievskyi, V. Krykun, who carried out a «theoretical reconstruction of the philosophical and socio-political foundations of the Initiative», is becoming useful for the scientific and heuristic study of «Chineseized Marxism» «Belt and Road Initiative», determined their commensurability with modern philosophical, political and cultural practices of European countries, in particular, Poland and Ukraine. This made it possible to generalize and systematize key approaches in the reception and evaluation of Chineseized Marxism in Western philosophy, as well as in the philosophical traditions of Eastern European countries» (Konverskyi et al., 2022: 37).

To increase the effectiveness of the analysis of general trends and to clarify the specifics of the development of Marxism in China, one should first of all consider and analyse the philosophical and socio-political foundations of the formation of Chineseized Marxism, make an adequate assessment of the possibilities and prospects of its renewal in the conditions of the modern world. The theoretical basis of this study was the works of domestic and Western Chinese scholars. Special attention was focused on both the advantages and disadvantages of the existing theoretical-methodological and historical-philosophical approaches to studying Marxism in the history of China. The historical-logical, comparative approach, as well as systemic, discursive, and structural-functional research methods, were the methodological basis of the research. The authors of this article have the experience of conducting research in the paradigm of comparative philosophy on the materials of Ukrainian, Western, and Chinese philosophical cultures, confirmed by publications in highly-rated journals and showed several studies devoted to the socio-political and socio-cultural prerequisites of the process of the Chineseization of Marxism, as well as surveyed the reception of attributive features of Chinese philosophy in modern Western and Soviet studies (Yarmolitska & Gan, 2022).

The main stages of the Marxism's formation in China

It should be noted that the active spread of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism in China took place precisely after the formation of the Communist Party, which became the ideological weapon of the further struggle of the Chinese people and led to the victory of the Communists in the civil war. Chinese Communists understood that Marxism, which originated in the West, must be adapted to Chinese realities. But the use of Marxist-Leninist postulates and the term «socialism» were not applied immediately. However, the CPC has preserved the main principle of party building with a communist orientation – creating a worker-peasant party and constructing a new society with «Chinese characteristics». More thoroughly, these ideas were embodied in various socio-political and economic experiments during the reign of Mao Zedong. The apogee of his experiments was the so-called «cultural revolution». As modern researcher O. Starynets notes, if we talk about the nature of building socialism, it involves laying down the principle of social justice. In this case, the combination of material and moral incentives to work should be proportional. However, in China, from the very beginning, they tried to replace material incentives only with moral ones. Such an experiment ended in the mid-1970s with a decline in the standard of living in China. This became evident when implementing the idea of social justice, all market elements were rejected, and society stopped developing and gradually began to degrade (Starynets, 2009).

If we turn to the first adopted constitutional acts, then in them, the People's Republic of China has declared a state of a new democracy, which was still interpreted as a people's democracy. As stated in the General Program, the democratic dictatorship of the people implemented by the state «wages a struggle against imperialism, feudalism, bureaucratic capital, for independence, democracy, peace, unity and the creation of a flourishing and strong China». Socialism as a goal was not discussed in the General Program yet, but the leading role of the state economy, which was socialist, was pointed out in the country's economy. The general program became the basis of the rule-making activity of state bodies of the PRC in the first years of its existence, in the pre-constitutional period (until 1954), and the highest authority in this period became the Central People's Government Council, under whose leadership, in turn, some higher state bodies: the People's Revolutionary Military Council, the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Prosecutor's Office. Together they formed the Central People's Government, whose representative was Mao Zedong (State Structure, 1988:15-18).

Some Soviet researchers of the history of the People's Republic of China distinguish three significant periods of social and economic development of China: 1949-1957; 1958-1977; 1978 to the present time. If we analyze these periods in more detail, it turns out that in the first eight years after the formation of the People's Republic of China, agrarian reform was carried out, nationalization of own and foreign capital was carried out, and private industry and trade were transformed. These measures indicated the country's transition to socialism, which was confirmed by the 1954 Constitution of the People's Republic of China. In general, if we talk about the broad line of the CCP, it was built as a long-term strategy for China's socio-economic development. Its purpose was to create a material and technical base, develop productive forces, and create spiritual prerequisites for building a new society in the conditions of development and improvement of the political system of «new democracy» – a revolutionary union of the working class, the peasantry, and the intelligentsia with the comprehensive development of friendly ties with the world of socialism» (40 years, 1989: 5).

It should be remembered that from the very beginning of the People's Republic of China, the country maintained a multi-system economy – from a patriarchal and clan system to a state-capitalist and non-capitalist state system created in several liberated regions of China. To build the economic basis of socialism in China – public ownership of the means of production – a long period of necessary socio-economic transformations was required. In this aspect, the mid-50s of the 20th century became necessary, marked by significant successes in economic construction, normalization, and improvement of social and economic life in China, but social pressure on the disadvantaged masses remained. Also, the traditional leveling of the masses, their intolerance of the wealthy, uncertainty about the future, and contempt for the individual continued to prevail in Chinese society. All this created objective and subjective conditions for the «great leap». «The adoption of the course of the «three red flags», the beginning of the «transition to communism» meant an excessive expansion of the front of capital construction without taking into account the real capabilities of the state, led to the breaking of the economic bow between the city and the countryside and the transfer of resources from agriculture to the sphere of industry, which led to famine, pointless waste of large resources, to sharp disproportions in the economy. The failures of the «Great Leap Forward» brought to life the theory of the strengthening of the class struggle as the country moves towards communism» (40 years, 1989: 4-6). These events continued in the early 1960s in the ideological and theoretical justification and preparation of future repressions during the period of the «cultural revolution» initiated by Mao Zedong and the instillation of the atmosphere of the cult of his personality. This brought the country into chaos and to the brink of socio-economic and political disaster. Only after the death of Mao Zedong did China's gradual exit from the crisis began. It is believed that this period became one of the final stages of the development of socialism in China (40 years, 1989). A new stage in the development of socialism in China was supposed to be the second five-year plan, in which the plan for the development of the national economy for 1958-1962 was determined. However, its implementation was thwarted after the general line of the ill-advised broad movement for the «great leap» and the widespread creation of people's communes in the village.

Many sources note that «communization» in China began in the late 50s of the 20th century with large-scale social experiments of the «Great Leap Forward» that lasted until the end of the 70s of the 20th century. Only in the late 1970s did the stage of new institutionalization of the state system of the People's Republic of China begin, which received a new impetus with the adoption of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China in 1982 (State Structure, 1988: 217).

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The «Great Leap» and its consequences. It was conventionally determined that the «Great Leap Forward» began in the summer of 1958 when Mao Zedong and his followers rejected the Second Five-Year Plan, outlined by the 8th Congress of the CPC, and engaged in silly experiments. They rejected the law of planned, proportional development of the country and contrasted their «law» with the leap-like rise of the economy. It was announced that China would develop under the «three red flags» in the future. The first banner is a general line

that demanded building socialism according to the principle: more, faster, better, more economically. The second is the «great leap», and the third is the people's communes. The primary method of economic development was announced as the «Great Leap». Emphasis was placed on the revolutionary spirit of the masses and the physical strength of the workers, which was supposed to replace new technology and scientific progress. Any norms were ignored at the enterprises. Technical control departments were liquidated, and the typical working day was cancelled. However, these tasks did not have an economic justification. People's communes began to be created in the villages, and later in the cities, everything was generalized. In the communes, they switched to equal distribution. Villages turned into barracks. This «barracks communism» differed from the Marxist doctrine of communism. However, Chinese leaders believed that precisely such measures served as a transition to communism. A slogan was even put forward: «A few years of hard work – ten thousand years of happiness» (Kapitsa, 1969: 161-162).

As a result, the «great leap» disrupted the work of many enterprises and disorganized production. A disproportion was formed: many plants and factories were stopped, and communes in the village led to a drop in labour enthusiasm and a sharp reduction in production. Chinese leaders were forced to take measures to remedy the situation. They followed the path of the other extreme: they called on the people to be guided by the «spirit of a beggar's club», satisfied with having at least a stick. They announced the need to «regulate the pace of development». Thus, the development of the People's Republic of China was delayed for years and, in many respects, pushed back. This «Great Leap Forward» policy and economic difficulties intensified the struggle in the CCP. At the VIII Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPC (1959), a group of leaders openly criticized Mao Zedong's course (Kapitsa, 1969: 163). However, he managed to suppress and discredit his opponents, and from 1966 began a new period called the «cultural revolution».

«Cultural revolution» and a new crisis in politics. Party cadres and intelligentsia were looking for a way out of the permanent crisis in which the CCP and the country as a whole found themselves, with growing discontent and criticism of Mao Zedong's ideas and practices. Mao Zedong faced a dilemma: either admit his mistakes and return to the path of Marxism-Leninism or crush the opposition and impose his course by force. However, he did not admit his mistakes. In 1966, at the 11th plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, a resolution on the «great proletarian cultural revolution» was adopted. This is how the «cultural revolution» was characterized in the works of researchers of the Soviet period. The «Cultural Revolution» had three main goals: «to crush the opposition and terrorize those who doubt the fidelity of Mao's ideas, to expel Marxist-Leninists from the party and introduce Maoists; to prepare the ground for a repetition of the «great leap» in a new version, to turn the People's Republic of China into a military-bureaucratic state, to force the people to deny themselves everything; to fan anti-Soviet psychosis, to eradicate the feeling of friendship and sympathy for the USSR, to isolate the Chinese people from countries that are successfully building socialism and communism» (Kapitsa, 1969: 300). It should be noted that the period of recognition of the «cultural revolution» as a military psychosis and rampant anti-Sovietism ended with the death of Mao Zedong. They began to treat his inheritance differently. Interpretations of the role of the «great helmsman» in the Chinese revolutionary movement began to appear in scientific publications, emphasizing his significant contribution to the political and ideological struggle in China.

The first years after the end of the «cultural revolution», which ended in 1976, did not bring significant changes. The existing government in the country continued to be called the «dictatorship of the proletariat». Only after the third plenum of the Central Committee of the CPC (1978) was the period of the «cultural revolution» excluded from the history of this dictatorship. In 1980, the definition of state power in the People's Republic of China as a democratic dictatorship of the people was restored. In 1982, the draft of the new «corrected» Constitution of the People's Republic of China was approved. China was declared a «socialist state of the people's democratic dictatorship». This restored the wording of the founding documents of the People's Republic of China and its Constitution of 1954 with the only change – the state was called socialist (State Structure, 1988: 23-85).

In general, as the analysis shows, in the paradigmatic post-Soviet historical and philosophical narratives, it was noted that the history of the PRC and the communist movement in China took place in a continuous struggle between two main directions: Marxist-Leninist, internationalist and nationalist. In addition, it was determined that the second direction was disguised as Marxism for a long time, which later acquired the colour of «Chinese Marxism», began to prevail in China, and was associated with the name of Mao Zedong (Kapitsa, 1969).

The Chineseization of Marxism and the philosophical ideas of Mao Zedong

If, at the beginning of the 20th century, the dissemination and assimilation of Marxist and philosophical thought were only one of the directions of Chinese social science, then after the formation of the People's Republic of China, its promotion and understanding became an undeniably dominant trend of ideological life in China. The Communist Party of China's ideological work in promoting Marxism-Leninism is actively carried out, and the works of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, foreign Marxists, and Soviet researchers are published, which caused the expansion of Marxist methodology and strengthened the influence of Marxist ideas in Chinese society. The scientific and creative forces of the intelligentsia were involved in the creation of their research on Marxist-Leninist philosophy in the People's Republic of China. However, in the 50s of the XX century, such events were mainly popularizing, and primary attention was paid to promoting Mao Zedong's works. An active campaign to study his works on philosophical issues was launched in the country. Articles were published commenting on the theoretical significance of Mao Zedong's works, the Chinese Academy of Sciences was restructured, within which the Institute of Philosophy was created, and in 1956 the All-China Philosophical Association was formed (40 years, 1989: 154-156).

The vast majority of Chinese scholars admit that Mao Zedong first spoke about the Chineseization of Marxism. He tried to create his own Chinese refraction of Marxism. He substantiates his thesis about the «interconnection and indivisible unity of the common and the separate», which became the basis of the concept according to which the general principles of Marxism exist in specific national forms. For the first time, the question of the Chineseization of Marx's teachings was raised by Mao Zedong in 1938 at the Sixth Plenum of the Sixth Convocation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. In his speech, Mao Zedong stated that «there is no such thing as abstract Marxism, there is only concrete Marxism» (Holubnychy, 1957: 2). According to V. Holubnychy, Mao Zedong is a classic representative and theoretician of national communism. National communism is «a conscious determination of the fact and a frank emphasis on the need for a distinctive and original path of development

of the revolution depending on the specific national environment, that is, the socio-economic structure, historical traditions, culture, civilization, and psychology of the given society in which the revolution is taking place. On the other hand, – notes V. Holubnychy, – by national communism, we understand nationalism, which puts the good of its nation above everything, but sees the realization of that good of the nation in communism in the victory of the revolution in the whole world» (Holubnychy, 1964: 2). This is how the scientist defined the theoretical work of Mao Zedong, believing that it corresponds only to this definition.

The pinnacle of Mao Zedong's philosophy is his article «On the Right Resolution of Conflicts Between People» (1957), which contributed significantly to Marxism. In it, the central philosophical postulate of Mao Zedong became the recognition that in Marxist philosophy, the unity of opposites is recognized as the fundamental law of the universe. With this postulate, Mao Zedong did not say anything new. He only repeated what Engels and Lenin said in their philosophical works. However, Mao Zedong managed to creatively apply this philosophy in practice. It follows from Mao Zedong's central postulate about the unity of opposites that it is necessary to learn to have a general view of things, to see not only their positive side but also their negative side, and vice versa. Such a philosophy, notes V. Holubnychy, «marks the end of dogmatism, voluntarism, and subjectivism. It means a transition to the position of science, reason, objectivity, honesty, openness» (Holubnychy, 1957: 3-4).

V. Holubnychy also draws attention to the fact that another problem that Mao Zedong was interested in was the materialist dialectic, a separate topic in the realm of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. However, the scientist notes that one should not forget that the materialistic dialectic of Mao Zedong is related to the dialectic of the classics of Marxism-Leninism and other communist philosophers. However, its difference lies in the fact that it contains features of the dialectic of classical Chinese philosophy. An example of this was his published philosophical works, in which it was possible to trace the connection between Mao's philosophy and classical Chinese philosophy in most of his postulates. Mao Zedong called for the assimilation and use of ancient Chinese philosophical literature and culture, which, in his opinion, would significantly expand the development of the Chinese national variety of Marxism (Holubnychy, 1964: 3-16).

In general, as claimed by V. Holubnychy, it is uncertain precisely what Mao Zedong's contribution to the development of Marxist-Leninist philosophy consists of because, in his writings, nothing new was introduced into materialistic ontology, only into materialistic epistemology (or epistemology) and into the dialectical interpretation of ontology, which follows from his materialist epistemology. Also, Mao Zedong lacks a detailed understanding of the concept of «matter». From his explanations, one can only understand that matter means everything that does not belong to human consciousness, thoughts, ideas, concepts, and theories. «The realization that matter exists independently and separately from consciousness in the external world is the basis of materialism» (Holubnychy, 1964: 19). Chinese philosophical thought perceives objective reality and nature as self-evident. Similarly, Mao Zedong perceived matter as something exogenous and independent of human will and knowledge. However, it should be recognized that Mao Zedong's views on these issues were new and different from traditional Chinese philosophy, which did not pay attention to the nature of knowledge and its methods. This was evidence that Marxism-Leninism influenced Mao Zedong's worldview (Holubnychy, 1964: 20).

Therefore, Marxism as a theory for Mao Zedong had only applied value and was not a priori a good thing in itself. Marxism is one of the tools of knowledge and transformation of

reality. Therefore, it can become valuable only if it is applied in practice. Mao Zedong did not consider Marxism a kind of «road guide», a ready-made action method. For him, Marxism teaches how to choose methods for one's actions. As V. Holubnychy noted, Mao Zedong easily mastered the Marxist-Leninist dialectic, which confirmed his natural way of thinking, and his typically Chinese common sense was correct. He «developed» the dialectic and «introduced new elements into it» (Holubnychy, 1964: 31).

However, such a positive assessment of Mao Zedong's philosophical views has not always occurred in scientific works. Thus, the dominant majority of the scientific works of Soviet scientists were ideologically engaged, so instead of trying to create a scientifically adequate reconstruction of the formation of Chinese Marxism, they criticized the ideas of Mao Zedong and his followers. So far, the Maoists have been criticized and accused of turning to the materialist dialectic and twisting it in the spirit of «Mao's philosophical ideas» and formulating an anti-scientific «concept of movement and development» – the so-called «dialectic of the splitting of the one». The creation of this concept became an integral part of the general attack of Maoism on the position of Marxism in the People's Republic of China. Also, the Maoists were accused of replacing the materialist dialectic with their «concept of development». It was noted that by replacing the unity and struggle of opposites with «confrontation», the Maoists replaced the Marxist-Leninist methodology with the «theory of duality», the principle of considering each phenomenon as the absolute opposite of another phenomenon.

Regarding the «discussion» about the splitting of the one, here the Maoists attempted to spread their anti-scientific «concept of movement and development» to the problem of the relationship between matter and spirit, social existence, and social consciousness. They stated that «the law of unity and struggle of opposites can also be applied to the connection of thinking and being – this is also a connection of the unity of opposites». According to Marxism-Leninism, the law of unity and struggle of opposites, along with other laws of dialectics, a general law of nature, society, and thinking, does not apply to the connection of thinking and being direct. Thus, according to Lenin's definition, the unity of opposites is in thinking itself and not in the relations between thinking and being. The Maoists extend the law of unity and struggle of opposites directly to the connection of thought and being, interpreting this problem as the Maoist «principle of opposing opposites». They deny the Marxist categories of the identity of thinking and being, of the correspondence of the subjective to the objective, as incompatible with their understanding of the contradictions of thinking. In general, Soviet Chinese scholars believed that the Maoist philosophical «concept of movement and development» was a parasite on the dialectical-materialist concept of development, borrowing only categories from it (Yashchenko, 1977: 79-98).

What can be said about how Mao Zedong's ideology is treated today? First of all, it should be remembered that for a certain time, there was a departure from the ideas of Mao Zedong. With the arrival of Deng Xiaoping, the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party became his idea of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. However, Mao Zedong's ideas regarding Marxism-Leninism remained in the CPC statute. Only such concepts as «class struggle» and «workers' and peasants' power» left the party's genealogy; in general, the party began to position itself as a party of the whole people. At the moment, Mao Zedong's personality is respected in China, but «his legacy and his ideas evoke a wide variety of reactions: from complete approval to denial. In big cities, they are advocating the further rejection of Mao's ideas and weakening their influence on modern Chinese ideology (...) The image of the «Great Helmsman» still lives on in China. However, in economic practice, nothing is left of his ideas»

(Samokysh, 2012). Currently, the active struggle against Maoism is no longer carried out. At the end of the 70s of the 20th century, the CCP leadership made an extraordinary decision in which it was recognized that Mao Zedong's actions were 70 percent right and 30 percent wrong. Thus, this issue was closed. However, the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, Wen Jiabao, speaking at a press conference, noted that if the authorities do not carry out reforms, the country will be threatened by a new «cultural revolution», the repetition of which is most feared in China, because the majority recognizes it as a national disaster (Samokysh, 2012).

Conclusions

Summing up, it should be noted that during the research it was determined that Chinese Marxism was interpreted in the People's Republic of China as formed in special socio-political and spiritual-cultural conditions of the national variety of Marxist teaching. In general, the history of the formation of Marxism in China shows that it was based on the model of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, theoretically-methodologically and worldview-based on historical and dialectical materialism, which became the basis of the initial stage of the construction of socialism, and later in the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Gradually, this paradigm became dominant in the system of philosophical and socio-political knowledge in China, and Chinese Marxism began to be interpreted as something formed in the country's special socio-political and spiritual-cultural conditions, as a national variety of Marxist teaching. The results of the research presented in the article will provide an opportunity to significantly expand knowledge about the reception of the formation and development of Chineseized Marxism. They will also help further research the features of modern Chineseized Marxism.

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