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ФЕНОМЕН НЕОМАРКСИЗМА В КИТАЕ: ЭТАПЫ СТАНОВЛЕНИЯ И КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНО-СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ

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Аннотация. Рассмотрен феномен неомарксизма в философской и общественно-политической мысли современного Китая. Выделены три основных этапа развития данного феномена в указанном государстве. Установлено, что китайская версия неомарксизма интерпретируется преимущественно как социально-философская доктрина, интегрирующая положения классического марксизма и идеи традиционной китайской культуры и философии (конфуцианства, даосизма, легизма и др.). Выявлено, что существенное отличие неомарксизма в Китае от концепций неомарксистской философии в странах Запада состоит в его конструктивной социально-практической направленности, которая получила обоснование в теории практического материализма. Определено, что большинство китайских неомарксистских публикаций сохраняют преемственность с произведениями классической китайской философии в отношении языковых и стилистических особенностей.

Ключевые слова: ортодоксальный марксизм; неомарксизм; китайская версия неомарксизма; практический материализм; социализм с китайской спецификой.

PHENOMENON OF NEO-MARXISM IN CHINA: STAGES OF FORMATION AND CONCEPTUAL AND STYLISTIC FEATURES

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Abstract. The phenomenon of neo-Marxism in the philosophical and socio-political thought of modern China is considered. Three main stages of development of this phenomenon in China are highlighted. It is established that the Chinese version of neo-Marxism is interpreted primarily as a socio-philosophical doctrine that integrates the provisions of classical Marxism and the ideas of traditional Chinese culture and philosophy (Confucianism, Taoism, legalism, etc.). A significant difference between neo-Marxism in China and the concepts of neo-Marxist philosophy in Western countries consists in its constructive socio-practical orientation, which is justified in the theory of practical materialism. It is determined that the most of Chinese neo-Marxist publications retain continuity with the works of classical Chinese philosophy in terms of linguistic and stylistic features.

Keywords: orthodox Marxism; neo-Marxism; Chinese version of neo-Marxism; practical materialism; socialism with Chinese characteristics.

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Introduction

On 17 May 2016, President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping, speaking at a meeting to discuss current issues in the development of philosophy and social sciences, emphasised that Marxism was and will remain the guiding theory. He noted: «In the history of human thought, no theory has exerted such a profound and extensive influence on the progress of human civilisation as Marxism has»¹ [1, p. 10]. It is the philosophy of Marxism, in his opinion, that corresponds to the global trends of the 21st century and modern China.

Such an obvious emphasis on the role and significance of Marxism in the philosophical and ideological support of the course towards frontal modernisation of

China makes the problem of justifying its priority status in the development of socio-political and philosophical thought one of the most popular and relevant. In this case we are talking not so much about the popularisation and use of the classical heritage of Marxism, but about its creative development taking into account Chinese specifics, which is confirmed by the following words: «The vital force of Marxism is not in the writings of Marx and Engels themselves, but in its attitude to practice» [2, p. 3]. In the spiritual and ideological life of modern China the phenomenon of neo-Marxism is quite definitely constituted and occupies a special significant place.

Main stages of formation of neo-Marxism

In order to consider the substantive accents of neo-Marxism, it is important to record the main stages of its formation in Chinese philosophical and social thought, the features of its conceptual status and stylistic characteristics. With a certain degree of convention, three relatively independent periods can be distinguished in the development of neo-Marxism in China.

The first stage is associated with the activities of Mao Zedong, who in the 1930–40s in various works and oral speeches emphasised the need to «concretise Marxism in China, to endow it with the necessary Chinese features» [3, p. 191]. Even before this, in 1920s, such representatives of the revolutionary democratic movement of China as Sun Yat-sen, Li Dazhao, and Ai Siqi repeatedly spoke out in favor of a systematic study of the Marxist theory and its necessary adaptation to the development of the revolutionary movement in China.

Li Dazhao was the first Chinese Communist Party (CCP) member to disseminate Marxist theory in China. As early as 1919, he had an understanding of the sinicisation of Marxism. He noted: «A socialist, in order to make his doctrine have some influence in the world, must study how he can apply his ideal as much as possible to the reality surrounding him» [4, p. 415]. He further pointed out the relationship between the commonality and specificity of socialism: «Socialism, due to varying circumstances across different regions and times, strives for implementation that suits these conditions, hence giving rise to a new system that combines commonality with specificity (where commonality implies universality, and specificity refers to the variations according to time and place). Therefore, when socialism emerges in China in the future, it will necessarily differ from that in Britain, Germany, Russia, and others» [4, p. 528]. These words show that Li Dazhao had a full understanding of the importance of the combination of Marxism and Chinese reality.

Li Da conducted an objective analysis of the relationship between Marxist philosophy and other philosophies, systematically expounding dialectical materia-

lism in book «Outline of sociology». He pointed out that Marxist philosophy «inherits and develops all the positive outcomes from the history of human knowledge, especially the history of philosophy», and that it represents «the sum, synthesis, and conclusion of the entire history of human knowledge» [5, p. 52]. Mao Zedong referred to Li Da's book as «the first Marxist philosophy textbook written by a Chinese» (cit. [6, p. 364]).

Ai Siqi emphasised the integration of Marxist philosophy with the actual conditions of the Chinese revolution: «Under the entirely new conditions in China, we should not merely adhere to established general principles and arguments, but should instead discover new principles, new laws, and new characteristics in the new realities of China, thereby enriching Marxism» [7, p. 288]. He believed that the focus should be on disseminating Marxist philosophy among the masses: «Why must we adopt a mass perspective and take the stance that serves the greatest interests of the majority of people when studying social revolution issues? Because only the issues concerning the greatest interests of the majority can fundamentally govern the direction of social revolution» [8, p. 744].

The May Fourth Movement played a crucial role in popularising Marxist thought among Chinese intellectuals and students. Many intellectuals and revolutionaries began to learn Marxism, trying to use it to analyse the problems of Chinese society.

The CCP was established in July 1921 as a product of the combination of Marxism and the Chinese workers' movement. The founding of the CCP was the first great achievement of sinicisation of Marxism and the political guarantee for the continuous development of this process.

However, the programme of sinicisation of Marxism acquires a systematic and accentuated character precisely in the theoretical and practical activities of Mao Zedong. He headed the new leadership of the CCP, which was formed in 1935. From that time, in the works «On practice», «On contradiction» and other publications, he laid

¹Hereinafter translated by us. – Yo. T.

out the basic principles of the Marxist philosophy in detail, combined them with the ideas of traditional Chinese philosophy and the actual practice of revolutionary struggle. From 1941 to 1945, Mao Zedong made important reports, such as «Reform our study», «Rectify the Party's style», and «Study and the current situation». In April 1945, the seventh plenary session of the CCP's Sixth Central Committee discussed and adopted the Resolution on Several Historical Questions, marking the successful conclusion of the Yan'an Rectification Movement. Through this movement, the whole CCP established the ideological line of dialectical materialism and realism.

At the Seventh National Congress of the CCP held in 1945, Mao Zedong's philosophical thought was explicitly established as the guiding ideology and was incorporated into the CCP Constitution's marking the first historical leap in the sinicisation of Marxism. One of the central statements of Mao Zedong's theory of the sinicisation of Marxism becomes the thesis that the leading social forces of the socialist revolution in China should be the peasantry but not the proletariat, as was argued in the orthodox version of classical Marxism. In the late 1930s, he puts forward the theory of new democracy, in which the conclusion about the necessity of common democratic union between peasantry, working class, intelligentsia, and national bourgeoisie, is substantiated. In many ways this conclusion turned out to be a productive ideological innovation and helped the CCP to come to power as a result of the victory in the civil war. Mao Zedong's philosophical thought is considered «a philosophical summary that combines the universal principles of Marxism with the specific practices of the Chinese revolution», «the inheritance and development of Marxist philosophy in China», and also represents «the sinicisation of Marxist philosophy» [9, p. 106].

From 1949 to 1978, Mao Zedong's philosophical thought was systematically studied, disseminated, and implemented as an ideology, albeit without rigorous scientific inquiry, and, from 1979 to the present, it has gradually become the subject of cultural and scientific research.

Thus, the years 1949 to 1960 were marked by significant transformations in Chinese social consciousness and culture, with Marxism prevailing in the public consciousness and Marxist philosophy becoming the dominant philosophical paradigm. The primary objectives during this era were to learn and promote Marxist philosophy, including Mao Zedong's thought, and to use these ideas to eliminate the influence of traditional Chinese philosophy and philosophies of Western countries. Subsequently, in Chinese society, particularly among the intelligentsia, there was a surge of interest in actively studying Marxist philosophy, with a focus on Mao Zedong's works «On practice» and «On contradiction», written during the period of the democratic revolution. This spurred the intelligentsia to initiate an ideological re-education movement, utilising the Marxist worldview

and methodology to guide practical work and scientific research, thereby establishing the dominant position of Marxist philosophy in Chinese society.

In the early 1960s, Mao Zedong proposed the political line of taking class struggle as the key link. The guiding ideology of the CCP became increasingly left-leaning. The study and promotion of Mao Zedong's philosophical thought remained the primary focus, but attention shifted towards his theories on class struggle, proletarian dictatorship, and his «philosophy of struggle». In this context, instances of erroneous and excessive criticism of certain literary and artistic works, scientific viewpoints, and individual scientists, artists, and writers emerged in the realm of ideology. It is noteworthy that during this period, despite the evident simplification and vulgarisation factors in the mass movements for the lively study and application of Mao Zedong's philosophical thought, the dissemination and promotion of his ideas achieved significant results. Basic concepts of Marxist philosophy were propagated throughout society.

From 1966 to 1972, the promotion of Mao Zedong's thought, including his philosophical ideas, took on irrational forms. Everything he said became a slogan, subject to absolutisation and sanctification. The work «On practice» was interpreted through the lens of voluntarism, while the work «On contradiction» was expounded in the spirit of «philosophy of struggle». At the time, these interpretations served to bolster Mao Zedong's theories of «revolution under the proletarian dictatorship» and the practical implementation of the «cultural revolution». In 1976, Mao Zedong passed away, and the «cultural revolution» was declared to have ended.

In early 1978, the journal «Chinese Social Sciences» published an article «An overview of Renaissance to 19th century Western bourgeois writers and art critics' views on humanism and human nature» by professor Zhu Guangqian. In August of the same year, the same journal published an article «The young Hegel's thoughts on labour and alienation: an exploration of the problem of alienation» by researcher Zhu Xing. These articles touched upon the themes of humanism and human nature, which were taboo subjects at the time. Their publication immediately sparked intense debate among cultural figures and theorists. In 1979, a new Chinese translation of Karl Marx's «Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844» was published. This work, imbued with a humanistic spirit, provided greater depth for discussions on humanism [10, p. 256].

Practical materialism, through its critique of dialectical materialism and historical materialism, sought to locate the human element within Marxist philosophy. Its emergence is closely related to the humanistic trend that appeared after 1978. In December 1978, the third plenary session of the CCP's Eleventh Central Committee initiated a new phase of re-evaluation and appraisal of Mao Zedong's philosophical thought, ushering in a era of reform and opening up in China, which conti-

nues to this day. The primary characteristic of this time is the gradual shift from the ideological dissemination of Mao Zedong's philosophical thought to cultural and scientific research and the transformation from isolation within Marxist philosophy to open, multifaceted, and multilayered exploration.

The second stage in the development of neo-Marxism in China is associated with the activities of Deng Xiaoping and his theory of the three representations. In this theory, he proposes a unique criterion for reforming socialist society in China, according to which it is necessary to achieve «three blessings»: 1) further development of productive forces and economic renewal; 2) strengthening the comprehensive national power of the socialist state; 3) raising the living standards of the people. Deng Xiaoping notes: «It is necessary to begin to integrate the universal principles of Marxism with the specific situation in the country. Go your own way, build socialism with Chinese characteristics» [11, p. 189].

The programme of reforms and the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics set out at the Twelfth National Congress of the CCP in 1982, which was initiated and grounded by Deng Xiaoping, largely diverged from the statements of orthodox Marxism and broke with the previous strategy of administrative command management of social processes. However, it retained the negotiable position of the decisive role of the state and the CCP in the political and economic development of the country. This allowed Deng Xiaoping repeatedly to emphasise, that his concept of social and economic reform of China is in line with traditional Marxist theory.

At the same time after death of Deng Xiaoping in 1997, it became increasingly clear that the impressive successes of socio-economic reforms are inevitably leading China into a «modernisation trap». In other words, they urgently put on the agenda the problem of synchronising political power with the new economic reality. Various versions of the answer to this fundamental question of the sociodynamics of modern China have

been proposed over the past 25 years and have been associated with the further development of the policy of reform and opening up. As a rule, they all remained committed to the doctrine of sinicisation of Marxism and considered it as an integral component of the ideology of systemic modernisation of China. This trend is clearly visible in the speeches of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. But it is especially pronounced with the coming to power of a new generation of nationally oriented politicians led by Xi Jinping. His programmatic article «On socialism with Chinese characteristics of the new era» is assessed by many Chinese political scientists and philosophers as the latest achievement of the sinicisation of Marxism.

In connection with the above-mentioned reasons, the third stage of the development of neo-Marxism in China is quite rightly associated with the approval of a new political course and its philosophical and ideological justification after the Eighteenth National Congress of the CCP in 2012, at which Xi Jinping was elected its general secretary. For this period, the characteristic trends in the development of philosophical and socio-political thought of modern China are the following priorities: development and justification of a new concept of social justice, social harmony and unity of all layers and regions of modern China; research into the dialectics of interaction between scientific, technical and technological progress and the ideological and moral development of Chinese society; developing a concept for China's global participation in creating a system of fair international relations on the principles of combining national interests and prospects for the safe development of all countries and regions of the world community; systemic analysis and study of environmental problems of our time, justification of the strategy for a sustainable future of human civilisation; an accentuated appeal to the achievements and values of traditional Chinese philosophy and culture with the aim of their creative adaptation to the modern level of development of social communications and spiritual culture of Chinese society.

Chinese philosophical tradition and conceptual and stylistic features of neo-Marxism

Speaking about the conceptual features of the neo-Marxism in China, we should first of all emphasise its significant difference from the concepts of neo-Marxist philosophy in Western countries. Neo-Marxism in the West is a complex spiritual phenomenon that significantly contributed to the constitution of a social-critical strategy for the development of philosophy in the late 19th – first half of the 20th centuries. The origins of Western neo-Marxism go back to the works of the so-called young Marx, in which he formulated the principles of the humanistic programme of philosophical anthropology, based on a critical analysis of Hegel's concept of alienation. Starting from this programme, D. Lukács,

A. Gramsci, W. Benjamin, L. Althusser and others researchers developed the first versions of the philosophy of neo-Marxism. Subsequently within the framework of social-critical theory of Frankfurt school through the efforts of M. Horkheimer, T. Adorno, H. Marcuse and J. Habermas this work was continued. The representatives of the existentialist Marxism (J.-P. Sartre), «philosophy of hope» (E. Bloch), post-Marxism (C. Castoriadis, E. Laclau, Ch. Mouffe) and many other movements and schools in Western philosophy of the first half of the 20th century made a significant contribution to the development of neo-Marxist philosophy and sociology. But no matter how the author's configurations of the philosophy of

neo-Marxism and its substantive features are varied, all its schools and directions are characterised by one dominant intention – a totally articulated critical orientation of thoughts and actions. Western neo-Marxism subjects to a radical critical analysis not only the culture and social practices of later capitalist society, but also the entire project of European modernity. Such its values, as economic growth, scientific rationality, technological innovations are declared the cause of global problems and dysfunctions in modern societies, the loss of their representatives of genuine life orientations, the meaning and goals of authentic existence.

Chinese neo-Marxism, on the contrary, focuses its attention primarily on constructive and creative activity in order to adapt the basic tenets of the philosophy of Marxism to the practical tasks of social transformation and solving pressing economic, political, and environmental problems. That is why, as a defining conceptual feature of the Chinese version of neo-Marxism, its focus on solving pressing problems of development and modernisation of modern Chinese society is proclaimed. Accordingly, the philosophy of Chinese neo-Marxism is based on the theory of practical materialism. The adoption of this concept as a theoretical programme for the frontal modernisation of the Chinese economy and social sphere was preceded by a long and complex discussion about practical materialism. It continued in the Chinese philosophical community for more than 20 years and was associated with a rethinking of the dogmatic heritage of Soviet philosophy of the 1930–40s.

The article «The philosophical banner of our time: practical materialism» epitomises the fundamental views of practical materialism. It contends that Marxist philosophy is practical materialism: «Today, we reaffirm our commitment to practical materialism, partly because Marx's practical materialism has been historically distorted, and more importantly, because practical materialism embodies the spirit of our age, asserting human practice and elevating human subjectivity» [12, p. 85].

The establishment of practical materialism constitutes a revolutionary shift in philosophy, characterised by the following fundamental traits. Firstly, the understanding of the world transitions from the principle of the object to the principle of the subject, reflecting a fundamental transformation in philosophical thinking methodology. Karl Marx's practice principle is precisely the principle of the subject. Although the natural world is objectively undeniable, the sensory world surrounding humanity is one altered through practice. Consequently, to comprehend phenomena, one must use human subjectivity as the standard, understanding the world as an object based on practical activity.

Secondly, the structure of philosophy itself has undergone a change: on the foundation of the two initial starting points «thought» and «existence», has been added a third starting point, resulting in a tripartite structure thought – practice – existence. It exemplifies the

fundamental transformation of philosophical structure. The historical struggle between old materialism and idealism has become obsolete, and the simplistic answers to the issue of thought and existence no longer correspond to the requirements of contemporary practical activity. In the tripartite structure of philosophy, the question of the relationship between thought and existence persists, albeit in a more intricate form.

Thirdly, the construction of the philosophical system depends not on the principle of matter but rather the principle of practice, signifying a fundamental philosophical transformation and a shift from a closed system to an open one. Practice determines our degree of mastery over matter, consciousness, world, and laws. There is no longer a need to explain practice starting from matter; instead, one must begin to understand things from practice. The world is a «blueprint», an «engineering project» drawn by people during the course of practice and changing as it evolves.

Lastly, concerning the understanding of the central point in philosophy, there has been a shift from interpreting the world to transforming it, signifying a fundamental change in the purpose and objectives of philosophy. This transformation emphasises the active role of human beings in shaping their reality and the world around them, moving away from a passive observation and interpretation of the world towards a more engaged, practical approach to effecting change. That development in philosophical thought underscores the importance of human agency, creativity, and the potential for progress in the pursuit of a more just and equitable society.

It should be noted that the theory of practical materialism reveals its organic connection with many ideas and values of traditional Chinese philosophy [13, p. 381]. This idea was repeatedly emphasised by Xi Jinping in his articles and speeches [14, p. 126]. He argued that the Chinese version of neo-Marxism should preserve in its content and its ethical principles the results of the development of «all beautiful Chinese civilisation» [15, p. 36]. Therefore, not only the Confucianism but also the philosophy of Taoism, legalism and other classical philosophical schools of ancient China should become the most important sources of the theoretical, moral and political imperatives of the philosophy of neo-Marxism in its modern Chinese interpretation [16, p. 423]. This means that such traditional Chinese values as observance of laws, sincerity in relations between people, diligence, service to duty, moderation in consumption, tolerance and others should become integral norms of behaviour and activity of people in the society of modernising China [17, p. 9–10].

This organic connection of the Chinese version of neo-Marxism with the traditional philosophy and culture of China allows us to understand and explain another important feature of the neo-Marxist trend in modern Chinese philosophy. It lies in the fact that the language and style of many modern Chinese publications of a neo-Marxist orientation preserve and borrow meta-

phorical and figurative structures of the classical philosophical canon. Often it is difficult to recognise them as strictly philosophical since in them the moral edifications, imperative instructions and demands formulated in a simple language, understandable to most readers are dominated. Such a requirement for the linguistic design of philosophical works that should be addressed to the broad working masses was expressed still by Mao Zedong. He wrote that in the sinicised Marxist philosophy «foreign dogmatism must be abolished, empty and abstract slogans must be sung less, dogmatism must rest, and be replaced by a fresh and lively Chinese style and spirit that the Chinese people enjoy» [3, p. 174].

One of the primary characteristics of Chinese neo-Marxism is its emphasis on finding practical and feasible solutions to the problems faced by Chinese society [18, p. 6]. This involves devising new strategies and methods for economic development, social policies, and political reforms that are suited to China's specific

historical and cultural context [19, p. 313]. By emphasising the importance of practical action and human agency, the Chinese version of neo-Marxism helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice, fostering an understanding of social change.

Another critical aspect of the constructive and creative orientation of Chinese neo-Marxism is its focus on adapting Marxist principles to China's particular historical and cultural context. This involves integrating Marxist materialism with the practical wisdom of Chinese philosophical traditions, such as Confucianism and Taoism, as well as insights gleaned from China's own experiences of social transformation and development. By contextualising Marxist principles within the Chinese milieu, Chinese neo-Marxism not only helps to overcome some of the limitations and white spots of Western neo-Marxism but also contributes to the broader development and enrichment of Marxist theory.

Conclusions

The philosophy of Marxism in modern China retains its relevance and ideological relevance in many areas of spiritual culture, education, and social communications. But it differs significantly both from classical orthodox Marxism and from various versions of the philosophy of Western neo-Marxism [20]. Neo-Marxism in China uses the theory of practical materialism as its conceptual basis. This theory, borrowing

many ideas and provisions, and stylistic features of traditional philosophical and ethical teachings of China, quite rightly claims today to be the status of a modern philosophical methodology for analysing and adequately assessing the results and achievements of Chinese modernisation, as well as the successful continuation of the course of socio-economic reforms and national progress.

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