

# The History of Socialism in China–Efficacy and Limit

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## ABSTRACT

Through the exploration of the history of Chinese socialism, this paper answers the role and changes of socialism in solving these problems from five aspects: thought, movement, system, economic growth strategy, economic and social stability. It is believed that the development of socialism in China is a process from national socialism to state socialism, and then to socialism with Chinese characteristics. Finally, it is proposed that China's development is always in the demarcation line between socialism and capitalism. How to use capitalism to develop socialism, to ensure that the current socialism with Chinese characteristics remains unchanged, it is a new problem in China development.

**KEYWORD:** Chinese socialism; Socialist history; National socialism; State socialism; Socialism with Chinese characteristics; Capitalism; Chinese Marxism

## INTRODUCTION

In Mao Zedong's works, there was a paragraph: "The salvos of the October Revolution brought us Marxism-Leninism. The October Revolution helped progressives in China, as throughout the world, to adopt the proletarian world outlook as the instrument for studying a nation's destiny and considering anew their problems. Follow the path of the Russians -- that was their conclusion." [1] this is what he said before the founding of new China in 1949. 40 years later, in 1991, Russian capitalists seized the power of the Communist Party overnight, and the federal state collapsed in an instant. The 70-year history of socialism has a tendency to be negated. However, in China, the rulers hold high the banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics and adhere to the socialist road. Why the socialist system can be maintained and what socialism with Chinese characteristics is, they are questioned once again. In this paper, compared with the theory of socialism itself, more questions are asked about socialism, in reality, the internal situation of socialism being considered in China and the historical inquiry about its efficacy and limit. Two variants of socialism can be identified in the Chinese texts: "Datong socialism," the moral vision of a society of freedom and equality, and Soviet socialism, the vision of an industrialized society with features and institutions as in the Soviet Union. [2] Obviously Datong contains traditional Chinese culture, which is Chinese socialism with characteristics different from the Soviet Union. When a country, a nation, and a group accept the socialist ideology and bring about significant political consequences, the problems of socialist acceptance are ideology, movement, system (it also can be said to be power), economic growth strategy, economic and social stability.

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Since the 1910s, when Chinese thinkers put socialism in their field of vision, China was faced with at least three problems: the old problem of emancipating from external oppression, getting rid of poverty, and realizing the unification of the country and the nation. Since the second half of the 1950s, new problems of economic growth (catching up with developed countries) had been added. Entering the 21st century, the problem of maintaining socialism in China. To solve these problems, Chinese intellectuals adopted socialist ideology. In this case, what role has socialism played in these problems? Has socialism changed in the process of solving these problems? What is the result of these changes and what kind of socialism has emerged in China? I would like to examine these three issues from the first five aspects of the historical narrative.

## CHINESE SOCIALISM AS THOUGHT AND MOVEMENT

In China, socialist thought is Marxism-Leninism which came with the October Revolution. Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, the founders of the Communist Party of China, were the earliest and most profound recipients of the socialist thought spread by the October Revolution. However, their acceptance of Marxism-Leninism has the following Chinese characteristics, which they did not realize. Firstly, in particular, the international response to Marxism-Leninism tends to the side of national liberation. This tendency is due to the message sent to China by the Russian Communist government in 1919 (a promise to unconditionally return the rights Russia seized in China), which was generally agreed by Chinese intellectuals. Secondly, among the various ideas and theories of Marxism, especially the theory of class struggle, has a keen appeal to the Chinese people (especially the bottom people, including farmers, ordinary laborers,

etc.). Thirdly, when Chinese advanced intellectuals, especially Chen Duxiu, accepted the theory of class struggle, state, and proletarian dictatorship, they found that the theory had feasible reform plans and specific revolutionary strategies and tactics. In the early 1920s, Marxism occupied the mainstream of the Chinese ideological circle, but it was not so much the theory and thought based on profound ideological management and discussion, but rather the procedure of concrete action. On the contrary, the situation and conditions that Marxism was rooted in China did not exist at that time.

In 1921, under the leadership of Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao, and Mao Zedong, the Communist Party of China was born, which emphasized class struggle, national liberation, and human willpower. The new democratic revolution in the following 30 years was a process in which socialism as a movement penetrated China. First of all, the Chinese Communist Party successfully learned the advanced party-building theory of the Russian Revolution. This party is a commanding and rock-solid fighting political group for the sake of revolution. Since the Chinese revolution centered on the military struggle, this theory played a stronger role. Secondly, it is about the theory of Lenin and the Communist International about oppressed countries like China, seizing power in backward agricultural countries, and transiting to socialism. At the second congress of the Communist International in 1920, Lenin pointed out that the national liberation movement in the colonies and semi-colonies was the first possible and an important link in the world revolution. It was more systematic in the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922.[3] "Theses on the Eastern Question" pointed out that the struggle against imperialism should be led by the proletariat in the final analysis, the objective tasks of the colonial revolution are extending beyond the framework of bourgeois democracy, simply because a decisive victory of this revolution is incompatible with the rule of world imperialism. [4] Only the assertion that the national movement itself emphasized the significance of socialism, stipulated the subsequent Chinese revolution and guided China to become a new country with socialism as its goal.

Mao Zedong "New Democracy Theory" in 1940, the "theses on the Eastern Question" was successfully sinicized. According to Mao Zedong, the historical direction of the world has changed after the Russian Revolution. Since capitalism cannot survive without colonial plunder, the struggle for national liberation will inevitably become a revolution against the international bourgeoisie, which is bourgeois, but it will become a new type of democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat and open up to the socialist road.

During the Yan'an period in the 1940s, Mao Zedong consciously promoted the "Sinicization of Marxism" and finally achieved "Mao Zedong Thought". The essence of Mao Zedong's thought lies in the reconstruction of dialectics, the improvement of the mass line and the style of cadres, the armed struggle in the base areas, and the new revolutionary strategy, which is also to regenerate the traditional peasant war in China.

The revolution of the whole nation lasted for 28 years. As a movement, socialism has played a full role in China,

especially in the aspect of national liberation. The victory of the Anti-Japanese War and the founding of new China mean that the difficult problem of national unity has been solved. In this regard, socialism China has accepted is extremely effective. This Sinicized Marxism can be named "National Socialism".

### CHINESE SOCIALISM AS A SYSTEM

China established the socialist system in 1953-1956. In politics, the guidance of the administration of the party has built a unitary system of horizontal and vertical centralization. This party which grew up in the environment of war has a strong relationship with the party unified leadership and command system from top to bottom. This has not changed since the founding of the people; the Republic of China but has been strengthened. The party has continuously strengthened its leadership over state organs. This has not changed since the founding of the people's Republic of China but has been strengthened. The party has continuously strengthened its leadership over state organs. A party organization was set up in state organs, and all affairs were decided and implemented by the party organization. In 1953, the central committee of the party was responsible for reporting and instructing the application procedures or making them compulsory. Then in 1955, the party at all levels set up leading organs to each administrative department. The recruitment of senior cadres is also managed by the Party Central Committee or party organizations. In this way, the party network covers all political life. The Eighth National Congress in 1956 legitimized the party agency doctrine of all functions of the party agency. "Such state power (people's democratic dictatorship), in its essence, can only be the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only when the proletariat, through its vanguard, the Chinese Communist Party, has employed this weapon of state power without the slightest hindrance and closely rallied around itself all the working people and all other forces that are ready to accept socialism, jointly to implement the line of the policy of the proletariat and, on the one hand, build the economic and cultural life along the road to socialism and, on the other, suppress the resistance of reactionary classes and cliques and guard against the intervention of foreign imperialism, will it be able to fulfill this serious and complex task." [5]

According to Lenin Soviet theory, China has established a system of people congresses, which exercise the people; power under the framework of the party leadership, the people power exerts its power and further strengthens the party rule. In this way, after 1956, the realization in China is to strengthen the party agency, strengthen the relationship between the party and the state, and centralize power. Due to the close relationship between the party and the state, this system can be called "State Socialism".

In the economic field, the socialist transformation was also completed in 1956. From 1953 to 1956, the socialist transformation scheduled for fifteen years was completed in three years. It is appropriate for China, which is at a low level of productivity, to be eager to transition to socialism. The decision-making process of socialist transformation is extremely ambiguous. It can be said that Mao Zedong has the overwhelming right to start. It is worth noting that during 1952 from 1953, Mao Zedong held close consultations with Stalin and other Soviet leaders on the issue of socialist

transition, and made this decision when determining whether the Korean War was victorious based on the guarantee of Soviet aid. In any case, China institutionalized socialism in the mid-1950s, regardless of politics and economy, introduced the Soviet experience and Stalin model. It was a system in which the state (in fact, the party) completely controlled the economy and society. It is undeniable that this "State Socialism" was very useful in China, which was chaotic and economically low in the early days of the new China. the Republic of China and its economic level was very low. Because it can quickly realize the unification of the country, the concentration of resources, and the unification of the economy. However, a lot of things have been lost. The spontaneous economy is dead, the society of self-discipline has declined, and democracy has been blocked. Especially when China, an agricultural country, takes economic growth as its goal, its limit is revealed.

### CHINESE SOCIALISM AS AN ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY

According to the "National Socialism" and "State Socialism", China's various problems mentioned before the mid-1950s have been resolved, finally achieving independence, getting rid of hunger, and achieving unity of the nation and the country. Socialist China began to appear strangely based on Mao Zedong's goal of rapid economic development and "catching up with advanced countries". The former Stalin model was based on the war situation and became a shackle in the non-war period, which also proved that Khrushchev was pushing forward the Soviet-style "great leap forward" (catching up with the United States). The first is the great leap forward movement and the second is the cultural revolution. In a sense, the modernization policy carried out by Deng Xiaoping since the 1980s can be said to be a timely correction of Chinese socialism.

The great leap forward policy (the general line of socialism) has two intentions. On the one hand, the rapid growth of industry (steel) and agriculture (grain), on the other hand, the realization of communism as soon as possible. These are from the "one big two public" (one is big-scale, the other is public ownership) point of view, the pursuit of compulsory upgrading of ownership by the whole people. The people commune is considered the most ideal organization for this purpose. However, China has no conditions to achieve this goal. Therefore, Mao Zedong emphasized the "subjective initiative" of the people. However, the ability of human beings to understand and transform nature is limited.

Although the great leap forward movement failed miserably, Mao Zedong tried to make a breakthrough by further strengthening the unique theory and doctrine of class struggle in the socialist stage. In the 10 years since 1966, this ideology dominated China, which resulted in the complete implementation of the unified rule of the party, the political rule of the army, the economic system of the military supply system, and the development of Mao Zedong personal worship. If we use the Marx Weber model, Mao Zedong's rule will regress from the revolutionary leader rule to the (Confucian) traditional rule in daily life. This situation lasted until the death of Mao Zedong in 1976.

In 1978, Deng Xiaoping began to control the highest power in China, and then economic growth (modernization)

became the first problem. The modernization line of reform and opening up led by Deng Xiaoping began to bid farewell to the past, from political first to economic first, from egalitarianism to competitiveness (the theory of getting rich first), and from self-reliance to international interdependence. Since the predominance of Mao's thought, after collectivisation and the Cultural Revolution, there has been a greater political pragmatism following Deng's 'opening up' reforms that recognises the force and integration of world markets—a recognition sometimes referred to as 'post-socialism', 'market socialism' or 'state-capitalism'. [6] In the 1980s, both "National Socialism" and "State Socialism" all happened to produce a new kind of socialism, which is socialism with Chinese characteristics. In 1982, Deng Xiaoping explained "socialism with Chinese characteristics" as follows. "In carrying out our modernization program we must proceed from Chinese realities. Both in revolution and construction, we should also learn from foreign countries and draw on their experience, but the mechanical application of foreign experience and copying of foreign models will get us nowhere. We have had many lessons in this respect. We must integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete realities of China, blaze a path of our own, and build a socialism with Chinese characteristics -- that is the basic conclusion we have reached after reviewing our long history." [7]

The content of this economic growth strategy is to stop collectivized agriculture, change to self-management of farmers, from price control to several liberalizations, the activation of the market economy, the coming of foreign capital and technology from the west, the implementation of opening up, etc., and the completely stagnant national life has regained its luster. But the structural reform of the most important state-owned industrial sector has not been successful. Because fundamental changes in ownership and prices have been avoided. We know a lot about the effort China has put into creating hard infrastructure over the last three decades since the reform process started, with studies of its railways, roads, and energy systems. However, on the whole, the strict planned economic system has dissolved, and the economic "separation from socialism" is steadily advancing.

Over the past decade from 1980 to 1990, China has undergone comprehensive changes. First of all, economic and social mobility and diversification result in the disclosure of economic interests, the birth of various economic organizations, and the social independence of state power. Secondly, the struggle in the field of ideology is weakened. "It doesn't matter a cat is black or white; if it catches mice, it is a good cat" [8] embodies Deng Xiaoping's idea of de-ideology in the economic field. Besides, it has consciously avoided random political mobilization and mass operation. With the clear goal of economic growth, in this way, China's political system has been divorced from the classical socialist system of the Soviet Union and China, and socialist China has changed.

### CHINESE SOCIALISM AS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STABILITY

Deng Xiaoping designed the socialist system with Chinese characteristics for China. However, how to build a socialist system with Chinese characteristics is a difficult problem for China to explore after Deng Xiaoping's death.

The recasting of Chinese socialism: The Chinese New Left In post-Mao China, a group of Chinese intellectuals who formed what became the New Left sought to renew socialism in China in a context of globalization and the rise of social inequalities they associated with neo-liberalism. As they saw it, China's market reform and opening to the world had not brought greater equality and prosperity for all Chinese citizens. [9] Reform and opening-up have brought more deep-seated problems. After the death of Deng Xiaoping in 1997, with the rapid economic development, China's social contradictions have gradually become prominent, especially the widening gap between the rich and the poor, corruption problems emerge endlessly, and social inequality stimulates a large number of social problems. Subsequently, China created the theory of three represents and scientific development.

The Three Representatives stressed that this experience and the historical experiences gained by the party since its foundation can be summarized as follows: our party must always represent the requirements for developing China advanced productive forces, the orientation of China advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people. [10] These are the inexorable requirements for maintaining and developing socialism, And the logical conclusion our party has reached through hard exploration and great praxis. This has enriched the connotation of the Chinese Communist Party, expanded the party's alliances, made the party more democratic, and increased the Chinese people's sense of identity and belonging to the party. It answers what kind of party to build and how to build a party. The scientific development concept proposes that Humanism is at the center of the scientific development concept. The people-oriented concept is "to take the interests of the people as the starting point and endpoint of all work, to continuously meet people's multifaceted needs and promote the overall development of people." It includes 4 specific aspects: Based on economic development, continuously improve the people's material and cultural living standards and health standards; Respect and protect human rights, including the political, economic and cultural rights of citizens; Continuously improve people's ideological and moral quality, scientific and cultural quality and health quality; Create a social environment where people develop equally and give full play to their intelligence. [11] This theory provides a solution for unequal development and, to a certain extent, realizes a more democratic China. It further answers what kind of development to achieve and how to develop. Driven by the Three Represents and scientific development, China has gradually formed socialism with economic and social stability.

In 2012, with Xi Jinping's rise to power, this socialism has been more fully consolidated. Xi Jinping's new socialist China thought came into being. It contains 14 aspects. [12] In terms of economy, it emphasizes innovative, coordinated, green, open, and shared development. In terms of society, it emphasizes safety, the rule of law, and a happy social environment. It continues to improve and answers what kind of socialism with Chinese characteristics to uphold and develop, and how to uphold and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Since the late 1990s, to further develop socialism with Chinese characteristics, China has made all-round improvements. Especially in economic and social stability. Economically, China continues to expand its opening up to the world, while adjusting its regional, inter-industry, unbalanced development of supply and demand internally, emphasizing a green economy. Xi Jinping said: "China highly values ecological and environmental protection. Guided by the conviction that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, the country advocates harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, and sticks to the path of green and sustainable development." [13] This is fundamentally different from the blind development of heavy industry in the past, ignoring the severity of environmental pollution. In terms of social stability, China has strengthened its control over the entire society, invested a lot of manpower and force to maintain social stability, improved the screening mechanism of online public opinion, established a national security agency in Hong Kong, and promulgated Hong Kong's national security laws to prevent widespread social movement. This series of operations is only to consolidate socialism with Chinese characteristics and ensure that socialism is still effective. However, how to effectively heal the tears in society and pacify the increasingly serious national sentiment is another outstanding problem in the future development of socialism in China.

## CONCLUSIONS

China is now in the primary stage of socialism, which is a long process of 100 years from 1956 to 2056. However, the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics is based on the theory of the primary stage of socialism. It is difficult to answer the difference between this theory and the theory of new democratic stages before 1953. The theory of the primary stage which lasted for 100 years is tantamount to shelving socialism itself. The socialism that China accepted was forced to be sinicized in China and the international environment at that time. The socialist construction after the founding of the People Republic of China was also constrained by the international environment and low economic level of the cold war and gradually changed. However, to realize the difficult problem of China's development, Chinese socialism has played a great role. Besides, based on restructuring the economy destroyed by war and oppression and realizing industrialization in the early stage, the centralized socialist economic system has made great contributions.

Looking back, the emergence of Mao Zedong's strategy in late 1950 is not just a manifestation that China's useful "socialism" has exposed its limit. Mao Zedong tried to break through it with idealism but failed miserably. Later, Deng Xiaoping called on the leading group to get rid of the erroneous "socialist" influence of the past through socialism with Chinese characteristics. Until now, China has been faced with the transfer from "how to accept socialism" to "how to accept capitalism". It is necessary to make full use of the ways and means accumulated by capitalism in its development stage and conducive to the development of productive forces.

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