

Analysis of the Problem of Ideological Tendencies in the Marxist Perspective

Ruiqi Hao

Marxist College of Fuzhou University, Fuzhou, Fujian, China

Abstract

As ideological tendencies have an important influence on the direction of social development, it is necessary to use the Marxist philosophical method to analyse the ideological tendencies of "left", left, middle and right. The use of orientation words to indicate different ideological tendencies comes from the West and is also used in China. The tendency of the left is in line with the original nature of the movement and development of everything in the world, the tendency of the right and the so-called "middle" goes against the historical trend, and the tendency of the "left" is a subjective understanding that goes beyond objective reality. Marxists must consciously become leftists, steadfastly oppose the right tendency and correct the "left" tendency, understand and transform the world under the guidance of scientific thought, and promote the continuous advancement of human society.

Keywords

Ideological Tendency; Leftism; Anti-rightist Correction of the "Left".

1. Introduction

Ideas guide action. Putting ideas into practice requires several important stages of development from thinking to action, of which the disposition to think is an integral and potential expression of thought. The manifestation of the tendency to think is determined by a person's thinking activity, his or her ideology. Good thinking will manifest ideological tendencies that drive social development and progress, and conversely, bad thinking will manifest ideological tendencies that hinder social progress. In 2018, General Secretary Xi Jinping clearly stated in his important speech at the conference celebrating the 40th anniversary of reform and opening up that "direction determines the future and the road determines destiny." [1] 516 As ideological tendencies can become an extremely important influence on the direction of social development, their effective prediction and correct guidance is an important part of ideological work in the new era, and an important task of the propaganda and ideological front.

2. Origin of Left, Right and other Ideological Tendencies

Ideological tendencies can be divided into revolutionary and progressive and conservative and regressive, or, to put it more colloquially, into left and right. The use of left and right, etc. to denote different ideological tendencies originates from the western bourgeois revolution and is also much mentioned in the historical process of China's new democratic revolution and socialist revolution, construction and reform.

Left and right are originally two orientation words. During the French Revolution, at the Constitutional Convention of 1791, those who advocated the retention of the king were on the right side of the chamber, and those who advocated the abolition of the monarchy were on the left. Since then, left and right have been given a political orientation: left for change and right for the status quo. The meaning of their political leanings continues to be used to this day. With the formation and development of the political party system, political parties or political forces

are differentiated into left-wing and right-wing, such as the Social Democratic Party and the Labour Party in western countries, which are left-wing parties, and the Conservative Party, which is right-wing; within the same political party or political coalition, there are sometimes left and right factions, such as the right faction represented by Chiang Kai-shek and the left faction represented by Liao Zhongkai in the Chinese Kuomintang; In the same political party, within the same faction, there are sometimes "left" or "right" tendencies. This reflects the universality of contradiction, that is, the fact that contradiction is everywhere and at all times, and that this is true of everything in the world. In addition to the terms left and right, there are also the so-called "centrists", such as Kautsky of the Second International. In recent years, there are also scholars in China who hold such a view and propose to "transcend the bipolar thinking of left and right", Some politicians in Western countries, such as Macron, also ran for president on a political platform of "not left, not right".

The 100-year history of the struggle of the Chinese Communist Party is the history of constantly correcting various wrong ideological tendencies, thus profoundly grasping the development trend of society and always moving forward in the right direction. After the struggle against Chen Duxiu's right-leaning opportunism, Qu Qubai's left-leaning blind activism, Li Lisan's left-leaning adventurism, Wang Ming's left-leaning dogmatism and right-leaning surrenderism, the line of thought represented by Comrade Mao Zedong was established; after rectifying the serious mistakes of the Cultural Revolution, it has restored the ideological line of seeking truth from facts, and in the reform and opening up and socialist modernization, it has adhered to the four basic principles and opposed bourgeois liberalization in a clear-cut manner. Based on the correct ideological line, the Party formulated the correct political and organisational lines and united and led the people of all nationalities to achieve great victories in revolution, construction and reform.

As early as 1992, Comrade Deng Xiaoping pointed out in his Southern Talks that "At present, there are things of the right that affect us and things of the 'left' that affect us." [2]375 Therefore, adhering to the correct political direction and not being confused by any interference is extremely important for concentrating on the great cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics.

After the 18th Party Congress, in 2015, General Secretary Xi Jinping spoke at the National Conference on the Work of Party Schools, "In the present era, social ideologies and value orientations are increasingly active, mainstream and non-mainstream coexist at the same time, advanced and backward are intertwined, and social trends of thought are diverse and turbulent." [3]328 Faced with the trend of partial pluralism, diversity and change in the ideological field, the norm of various ideas being diverse and mixed, and various forces competing for voice, Marxism is needed to lead social trends of thought, and this process is the process of aligning diverse social trends of thought with mainstream ideology and keeping them in the same direction as mainstream ideology, so as to consolidate the common ideological basis for the unity and struggle of the people of all nationalities.

3. Analysis of Left, Right and other Ideological Tendencies

To do a good job of propaganda and ideological work in the new era and to ensure that the Party and the state always move in the right direction without deviation, it is necessary to use the Marxist position and viewpoint method to analyse the four ideological tendencies of "left", left, middle and right, to understand the world with theories that truly follow the historical trend and the general trend of the times, and to transform the world under its scientific guidance.

3.1. Left Ideological Tendencies are in Line with the World as It is

Dialectical materialism holds that things are universally connected. By connection, we mean the relationship between elements within things and between things that influence, constrain and interact with each other. The interconnection of things involves the interaction of things, and the interaction inevitably leads to the movement, change and development of things. The interaction between things results in changes of varying degrees in the original state and nature of things. Movement in a certain form implies a certain amount of change. The basic tendency of change is development.

Since the world is material, matter is in motion, and motion implies change, if subjective perception is in accordance with objective reality, one must apply the viewpoint of connection and development to all things in the world, and in the tendency of thought, one must be left.

Development is a forward, upward movement, and the essence of development is the creation of new things and the extinction of old things. The development of things is a process. Everything has its own process of rise and fall and change. Nothing remains the same forever, the only thing that never changes is that it keeps changing. Materialist dialectics is, by its very nature, critical and revolutionary in spirit. Engels, in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, points out that before dialectical philosophy "there is nothing final, nothing absolute, nothing divine; it points out the temporality of all things; nothing exists before it except the constant process of generation and extinction, the endless ascent from the lower to the higher. It is itself the reflection of this process in the thinking mind." [4]270

It follows that the view of development, which is the view of the left, is the view of revolution. The world as it is, is just that. As Lenin said in *Materialism and Empirical Criticism*: "There is nothing in the world but matter in motion" [5]137.

3.2. The Right and So-Called "Middle" Ideological Tendencies are Against the Historical Trend

As mentioned earlier, movement implies change, and the basic trend of change is development, which is a forward and upward movement. The view that advocates maintaining the status quo ante is the right view. To maintain the status quo ante is to keep the original state unchanged. Everything is subject to change, and to conceive of matter that is not in motion would lead to metaphysics. The right view, which does not agree that things change, is incompatible with the form of existence of matter, is contrary to the fundamental properties of matter, and is therefore reactionary. The right view is bound to be left behind by the movement, change and development of things.

One kind of understanding of things is to conform to the movement, change and development of things, which is progressive and leftist; the other kind is to disregard the fundamental properties of the movement of things and want to keep things unchanged as they are, which is to hinder the development of things, subjectivist, reactionary and rightist.

To remain unchanged in the face of changing realities is to go backwards, because "if you don't move forward, you go backwards". Movement is absolute and stasis is relative. The struggle between left and right is a struggle between forward and backward. Between the forward and the backward, there is a so-called "middle" force that tries to reconcile the two.

This force, known as the "middle", appears to be impartial and seems very just. However, it is simply not possible to keep things from moving forward without maintaining them as they are. Alternatively, some of the "middle" views are neither forward nor backward, advocating "maintaining the status quo", which is in fact a transposition of the right view. Therefore, the so-called "middle" does not exist, but is either led to the left, taken to the right, or is originally a disguise for the right.

The "middle" view sometimes advocates "harmony". There are contradictions everywhere and at all times. The struggle of contradictions is unconditional and the sameness of contradictions is conditional. Harmony is a special expression of contradiction, reflecting the interdependence, mutual promotion and common development of both sides of the contradiction, but harmony does not mean absolute identity of the contradiction. Only when both sides of a contradiction are in balance, in harmony and cooperating, do things display a state of harmony. Harmony, too, is about making use of contradictions and moving forward, rather than and cannot eliminate them.

Social harmony is the pursuit of people in ancient and modern times. This harmony is only global; locally, internally, there will still be various contradictions, which, although non-confrontational, are still contradictions. In 1957, Comrade Mao Zedong published a work entitled *"On the Correct Handling of the Internal Contradictions of the People"*, in which he systematically discussed the existence of two types of contradictions of different natures in socialist society, namely the contradictions between the enemy and us and the internal contradictions of the people; in 2017, General Secretary Xi Jinping, in his report to the 19th Party Congress, discussed the "Great Struggle" also pointed out that "society moves forward in the movement of contradictions, and where there are contradictions, there will be struggles." [6]15

Left and right can also be understood in terms of affirmation and negation. There are affirmations and negations within things. The affirmative is the factor that maintains the existence of existing things and the negative is the factor that contributes to the extinction of existing things. Negation is the link in the development of things. Only through negation can the old be transformed into the new, and the old quality leap into the new. The dialectical development of things passes through two negations and three stages, forming a cycle. Each cycle is open, the end of the previous cycle is the beginning of the next, and there is no end that is not negated. The right view sees only the affirmative and is unwilling to acknowledge the negative, i.e. it does not follow the laws of the development of things and therefore will not guide practice to success.

3.3. Analysis of Different Ideological Tendencies from the Perspective of Whether Subjective Perceptions are in Line with Objective Reality

Dialectical materialism holds that matter is the first and consciousness is the second, and that matter determines consciousness. Cognition is the active reflection of the subject on the object on the basis of practice. Cognition comes from practice and guides new practice. Only when subjective cognition conforms to objective reality can it play a correct guiding role. Objective reality is in motion, changing and developing, so accurate subjective cognition is necessarily left cognition. If subjective understanding lags behind objective reality, it is right; if subjective understanding transcends objective laws, it is "left". If right is to hinder the development of things, then "left" is to eagerly wish for the development of things. To use the analogy of planting seedlings, if the seedlings have a need to grow, right means not watering and fertilising them, not satisfying their growth needs; if the seedlings do not need to grow that high, "left" means pulling them up and helping them grow, again not satisfying their actual needs. Both of these approaches are not conducive to the healthy growth of the sapling.

The right is the understanding that lags behind reality. Objective reality has to keep moving forward, but the subjective understanding of the right does not meet the requirements of the development of reality, and practice guided by this understanding will hinder development and is therefore reactionary. We must oppose the right.

The "left" is an understanding that transcends reality and that objective reality has not yet developed to the stage reached by the understanding, and the "left" subjectively wants reality

to develop faster, but this understanding is beyond the reach of current reality. The practice guided by the "left" understanding is also objectively harmful to development.

If one adheres to the general view of the materialist dialectic of universal connection and eternal development, one is necessarily opposed to the right. Therefore, the right must be firmly opposed. If objective reality is to develop in a healthy manner in its original form, efforts must be made to correct the "left".

Subjective knowledge that conforms to objective reality is the truth. Practice is the only criterion for testing the truthfulness of knowledge. If right understanding lags behind reality, it will be ruthlessly eliminated by practice; if "left" understanding goes beyond reality, it will be severely punished by practice. Whether it is right or "left", it will not pass the test of practice.

We must pay more attention to the practical, actively engage in practice, and focus on linking theory to practice while carefully studying and deeply understanding scientific theory. The victory or defeat of the struggle of ideas can only be decided by practice. The only way to be truly left is to seek truth from facts and do our best to make our subjective understanding conform to objective reality.

4. Correctly Dealing with the Wrong Ideological Tendencies of the Right and the "Left"

People who see things with a left or right perspective are called leftists and rightists.

The leftists carry out their practical and cognitive activities according to the original face of the world, in line with objective laws, in accordance with historical trends, and in pursuit of progress. We must firmly establish our leftist understanding and consciously become leftists.

The right is against the law of development of things and moves against the tide of history. We must resolutely oppose the Right. Our attitude towards the Right is one of unrelenting criticism and total opposition. We must expose the reactionary nature of such rightist thinking as neo-liberalism, which advocates privatisation and "market omnipotence", historical nihilism, which distorts history and discredits heroes, and retrogressivism, which ignores the changes of the times and clings to tradition, so as to avoid being led down the evil path of changing flags and banners.

The "left" ignores the actual degree of development of things and transcends the stage of reality. We must work to correct the "left" tendency. The attitude towards the "left" is twofold: on the one hand, we should support and encourage its revolutionary enthusiasm for progress; on the other hand, we should criticise and correct its deviations that go beyond reality.

The right is opposed to us, so we must draw a clear line; the left is deviating from us, so we must set it right.

In our quest for progress, we are sometimes prone to a "left" bias. But we must try to detect and correct them in time, to punish the former and to cure the latter. Externally, we must emphasise the fight against the right, and internally, we must focus on correcting the "left".

The left but the right should also be wary. The right knows very well that the right is unpopular and that the "left" is destructive. Therefore, the right will turn to the right under the banner of the left, or pretend to be "left" and use the "left" to undermine the left. We also need to respond in a clear manner to any trend of thinking that questions the reform and opening up and the socialist nature of socialism with Chinese characteristics, so as to avoid returning to the old closed and rigid path.

What was "left" in the past may become left in the present, and what is left in the present may become right in the future. We need to be forward-looking in our understanding, but such forward-looking should be based on the current actual situation. In the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we have to both win the victory in building a moderately

prosperous society in all aspects and start a new journey of building a modern socialist country in all aspects. The 19th Party Congress has made a clear strategic arrangement from 2020 to the middle of this century, depicting a grand blueprint for realising the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The 19th Party Congress called on all Party members to not forget the original intention and bear in mind the mission. General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that we should not forget that we are communists, that we are revolutionaries, and that we should not lose our revolutionary spirit. As the wheel of history rolls forward and the world tide swells, we must be brave enough to change and innovate, never ossify and never stagnate, carry on the great social revolution led by the Party to the people consistently, and strive for the progressive cause of liberation of all mankind!

References

- [1] Xi Jinping: On Adhering to Comprehensively Deepening Reform (Central Literature Publishing House, China 2018).
- [2] Deng Xiaoping: Selected Writings of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. 3) (People's Publishing House, China 1993).
- [3] Xi Jinping: Xi Jinping talks about governance (Vol. 2) (Foreign Language Press, China 2017).
- [4] Marx and Engels: Collected works of Marx and Engels (Vol. 4) (People's Publishing House, China 2009).
- [5] Lenin: Selected works of Lenin (Vol. 2) (People's Publishing House, China 2012).
- [6] Xi Jinping: Building a moderately prosperous society across the board and seizing the great victory of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era - Report at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (People's Publishing House, China 2017).