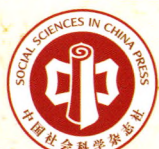


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2017

历史研究

HISTORICAL
RESEARCH



SSCP

中国社会科学杂志社

历史研究

1954年2月创刊 双月刊 总第365期 2月25日出版

1/2017

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Marxist Historical Theory and Method

A Critique of “Everyman His Own Historian”: With Comments on the Relativist Interpretation of History

Zhang Jiang(4)

Editor's Note: As an interpretation of history, relativism is an ancient theoretical view and school of thought that has had a profound influence. As with relativism in the field of philosophy, historical relativism has played a significant role in the evolution of the idealist view of history. In terms of theoretical logic, historical relativism ultimately leads to historical skepticism and becomes the ideological and theoretical basis of historical nihilism. Starting with examining the American historian Carl Becker's proposition, “Everyman His Own Historian,” Professor Zhang Jiang's article provides an in-depth analysis of the theoretical features of historical relativism, putting forward a series of propositions on historical theory that concern major ideological principles. This merits reflection and study. We publish this article by Professor Zhang Jiang, not, of course, to revive the slogan Becker put forward more than 80 years ago, but hopefully to arouse discussion, to encourage the rethinking of basic theoretical issues in the field of historical research, to further clarify the ideological origin of historical nihilism from the perspective of its philosophical and epistemological significance, to put forward our own iconic concepts and propositions, to build a theoretical and discourse system with Chinese characteristics, Chinese style and Chinese spirit, and to promote the healthy and prosperous development of Chinese historiography along the path of historical materialism. We welcome members of the academic community, especially historians, to participate actively in the discussion and to contribute to our journal on this topic.

Abstract: The American historian Carl Becker's famous slogan “Everyman His Own Historian” is an iconic declaration of the turn from positivism to relativism in the contemporary theory of Western historiography. It represents an absolute relativistic view of history. Becker deals incorrectly with the relationships between events and facts and between memory and facts; abandons objectivity by separating objective history from the subjective understanding of the objective history; and claims that history is the history of imagination, bringing about the unfortunate development of absolute relativist theory. History is fact, not imagination; history is about a nation, a people and even the development of human society as well as the facts and evidence of general laws, rather than fragmented personal experiences and memories. The great trend of history is made up of three directions: the events that determine or influence the historical process; the state of life of the human race and national society; and the general laws of historical development. Empirical study of history is indispensable, but the fundamental significance of historical research is to grasp the trend of history, to discover the laws of history, and to indicate the future for the actions of contemporaries. The unfolding of history is the unfolding of facts and laws. Imposed interpretations of history deviate from historical facts, subvert factual benchmarks, and interpret preconceived historical conclusions with set positions and patterns. Toynbee's model of historical civilizations, studies that treat ontological history heavily-handedly using established theories from other disciplines, and the erroneous belief that literary discourse can be used as historical discourse, are the main characteristics of imposed interpretations of history. The application of any theories from other disciplines should be limited. It is necessary to clearly distinguish between literary historical texts and historical literary texts. Imposed interpretations of history are not history.

Research Articles

The Politics of the Reign of the King Li of Zhou as Seen in Multiple Sources, and a Re-evaluation of the King

Du Yong(22)

“Rui Liangfu Bi” (A poem of caution by Rui Liangfu), recently found in the Tsinghua Bamboo Slips, is a satirical political poem. Its author could have been another nobleman who lived in the same time as Rui Liangfu and who occupied some official position. Truthfully reflecting the political crisis in the latter half of the reign of King Li of Zhou, the poem is

valuable in that it enables a correct academic evaluation of the king. A comprehensive analysis of the external wars and ruling policies of the reign of the King Li of Zhou based on “Rui Liangfu Bi” and other literature reveals that in terms of national defense, King Li of Zhou neglected the threat from nomad peoples and did not keep up the frontier defenses; in terms of domestic affairs, he was a greedy ruler who valued profit and abused the people. This evidence indicates that the King Li of Zhou broke through bottom-line national ethics and was a total tyrant. He was not a “reformer” with “achievements” whose reputation must be restored.

Changes in the Ting System in the Qin and Han Dynasties from the Perspective of Settlements and Transportation

Wang Yanhui(38)

The formulation “every ten *li* (miles) is a *ting* (pavilion)” and “every ten *ting* is a *xiang* (township)” in documents from the Qin and Han dynasties reveal an actual institution. The setting up of *ting* followed two principles: they were not to be far from settlements, and not to be isolated from transportation. *Youting* (postal pavilions) were mostly located along main traffic routes between the capital and kingdoms, and between kingdoms and counties; *xiangting* (township pavilions) were mainly located in the vicinity of settlements and along sub-routes under the administration of kingdoms. The administrative regions of *xiangting* and *youting* were called *tingbu* (pavilion sectors); as both population and the need to cultivate the land grew, new settlements gradually formed within a *tingbu*. Such settlements are called *qiu* (hill) in the Eastern Han dynasty bamboo slips found at Changsha Wuyi Square, and in the bamboo slips from Wu of the Three Kingdoms period. New settlements were called *qiu* rather than *li* (mile); this fact indicates that *qiu* were named by region, rather than by local administrative organization. The formation of a *qiu* served both as a path for local town inhabitants to move out, and as a channel for immigrants to resettle through “reclamation” under state policies such as granting people grasslands or mountain lands. With changes in the local management system in the Eastern Han dynasty, *tingbu* began to administer the scattered settlements and *qiu* within the area of its administration like townships; thus a superior-subordinate relationship between *ting* and *qiu* formed. After *tingbu* withdrew from the historical arena, a *qiu* was put under the administration of the *xiang* (township) it belonged to; where a township was nonexistent, a new one was set up. The administrative systems of *xiang-li* and *xiang-qiu* were therefore different. In the wave of *ju* (settlement) and *qiu* formation, the *xiang-li* organizations aimed at uniting households that had existed from the Qin and Han dynasties on gradually loosened. *Ju* evolved into geographical units, indicating that state management had abandoned the tradition of the *xiang-li* system with *li* as the foundation, as well as that of multiple levels of regulation. Although the *xiang-li* administrative system still existed, the process of weakening rural administrative power had already begun.

The Information Game between the Emperor and Courtiers: An Inspection of the Delivery of Memorials of the Runei Neishi Sheng and the Jinzou Yuan

Cao Jiaqi(54)

During the Song dynasty, there were two channels of communication for memorials between the central and local authorities: one was the Jinzou Yuan (the memorials office) and Tongjin Si (the Tongjin secretary’s office); the other was the unofficial channel of Runei Neishi Sheng (the palace domestic service). The two channels were constantly competing for influence, and took turns to gain the upper hand. After the Yuanfeng Reorganization, the Runei Neishi Sheng became an important prop enabling the emperor to control the delivery of classified memorials and imperial edicts and thus stop the courtiers from deciding affairs of the state. But the role of the Jinzou Yuan was not stable. The tension and overlap between the roles of the Jinzou Yuan and the Runei Neishi Sheng in delivering classified documents is an important manifestation of the information game the Song emperors played with the courtiers. The emperors’ control of the Jinzou Yuan and their use of the Runei Neishi Sheng shows the marks of dictatorship; the ups and downs of scholar-officials’ resistance and struggle is a feature that shows the lively political forms of the Song dynasty. At the same time, the functions of the internal and external ministries that surrounded the Tang emperors, as well as the political features that accompanied them, were still at work in the Song dynasty. From the mechanisms of the monitoring system of the ministries in the imperial palace, including the Runei Neishi Sheng, Nei Dongmen Si (the

inner department at the east gate), Yu Yaoyuan (the imperial pharmacy), Gemen (the cabinet office), Sifang Guan (office of foreign affairs), and the Kesheng (office of rituals concerning foreign affairs), and their functions in daily administration, it seems that in the Song dynasty, there existed an "inner court."

The Second Case of Siming Gongsuo and the Expansion of the French Concession in Shanghai

Ge Fuping(68)

The second case of Siming Gongsuo was a major event in Shanghai at the end of the 19th century which led directly to the expansion of the French Concession in Shanghai. If we examine it from the background, process and results of the second case of Siming Gongsuo, it was not a conflict between modern municipal construction and backward national consciousness and customs, but an integral part of the imperialist powers' partition of China at the time. In the course of negotiations, the Qing government used strategies including "local diplomacy" and "using barbarians to subdue barbarians." To some extent, this achieved the purpose of relieving the pressure on the central government and resisting some of the aggressive demands of the French government, eventually making it give up Pudong and relinquish its aspirations to expand southward. However, the effectiveness of "local diplomacy" and "using barbarians to subdue barbarians" was limited. Not only were they unable to help the Qing government achieve its wishes; they made it appear equally difficult for Qing diplomacy to advance or retreat. Ultimately, the result was that the "barbarians" colluded to coerce the Qing government, and the loss outweighed the gain. Although there were conflicts of interest between Britain, France and other powers in the process of carving up China, they would eventually sacrifice the interests of China to reach a compromise.

The Modern Colonial Development of the Forests in Northeast China and Changes in Their Ecological Space

Wang Xiliang(85)

Northeast China has long been known as "linhai" (sea of forests). Firstly, in the late Qing, using the joint construction of the Eastern Railways as an excuse, Russia deforested the land along the Bin Sui (Harbin to Suifenhe) Railway and the Bin Zhou (Harbin to Manzhouli) Railway, as well as the land on the Chinese side of the Chinese-Russian border. Subsequently, by means of the Russo-Japanese War, Japan seized the interests of Russia in South Manchuria, leading to an unprecedented catastrophe for forests in the Yalu River basin and the Hunjiang River basin. After the September 18 Incident, Japan occupied northeastern China. Thereafter, forest zones including the Greater and Lesser Khingan Ranges, the Changbai Mountains, the Zhang Guangcai Ridge, the Wanda Mountains, and the Laoye Ridge and other resource-rich forest areas experienced devastating felling. The two imperialist countries of Russia and Japan acquired 440 million cubic meters of timber through their destructive colonial exploitation of the forests in northeastern China, resulting in the disappearance of forest resources along the railways in the region and in the Yalu River and Hunjiang River basins. The Changbai Mountains, the Greater and Lesser Khingan Ranges and other key forest zones also became logging areas. The sharp decline of forest resources caused the deterioration of the ecological environment in northeastern China and led to changes in ecological space, including changes in human living environments and in production modes and ways of life.

Zhang Xueliang's Reading and Studying of Marxist-Leninist Theories during His Imprisonment in the Mainland

Guo Shuanglin(104)

In the Zhang Xueliang book collection stored at Columbia University Library in the US, there are a large number of "red" and leftist books. Zhang Xueliang directly purchased some of them, and Liu Yiguang, who was responsible for the care of him, and others purchased others on his behalf. While he was imprisoned in the Mainland, Zhang Xueliang carefully studied some of the Marxist-Leninist theoretical works. He made detailed notes from *Bianzheng weiwulun yu lishi weiwulun* (Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism), vol. 1, *Zhexue xuanji* (A philosophical Anthology), and theoretical articles published in some magazines, leaving a large number of note cards. Looking at the content the cards record and Zhang's diary of the same period, we can see that at the time Zhang not only had a comprehensive and in-depth

understanding of Marxism-Leninism, but also consciously used its theories and methods to observe and analyze problems. This discovery not only helps to understand the ideological situation of Zhang Xueliang at that time, but also benefits us in understanding certain of his actions in the course of the Xi'an Incident.

The Discourse of *Admonitio* and the Political Culture of the Carolingian Period Liu Yin(123)

State governance characterized by the dispersion of power and diversified political participation was the major political legacy the Frankish Carolingian period left to medieval Europe. The use of "admonition" in Charlemagne's capitulary *Admonitio Generalis* and Hincmar of Rheims' treatise *De Ordine Palatii* reflect the unique contemporary understanding of *ministerium* as the center of the principles of political and religious life. This shows the political culture of cooperation between the political and religious elites and the Carolingian regime. This political culture constitutes the intellectual basis for the practice of "cooperative politics" in the Carolingian period. The Christianization of state governance activities in the Carolingian era marked the formal establishment of "theocracy" in medieval Europe.

The Origins of Industrialization in Medieval Western Europe Xu Hao(141)

Research on industrialization in Western Europe should focus not only on how it was perfected, but also on its origins and development. This helps to restore and interpret the historical process concerned and enables us to fully understand the characteristics of this transformation and the laws of its development. The industrialization of Western Europe originated in the market-oriented production activities of urban and rural craftsmen in the middle period of the Middle Ages. With the expansion of the market, industry embarked on the road to industrialization through technology and the evolution of production organization. Thereafter, the production activities of individual urban and rural craftsman for local sales and markets attained unprecedented coverage. Milling, cloth rinsing, metallurgy and other industrial sectors became mechanized to different degrees, and rural industry based on domestic spinning and weaving suddenly appeared on the scene. These three areas constituted the main contents of the origins of industrialization in Western Europe in the mid- and late Middle Ages and prevailed until the Industrial Revolution. The origins of late medieval industrialization, the growth of early modern industrialization and the completion of late modern industrialization are essential parts of the process of industrialization in Western Europe and are important elements of research on this subject.

Discussion and Remarks

A Debate on Slave Society: Revisiting the Debate on the Stages of Slave Society in China

Chen Minzhen(159)

The basic questions in the debate on the stages of Chinese slave society include the following: What is slave society? Did Marx regard slave society as one of the "five social formations"? Did slave society exist everywhere in human history? Did slave society exist as a social stage in China? Which Chinese historical period was a slave society? The theory that the Shang dynasty was a slave society is the focus of the debate. The theory has two pillars: that the human sacrifices excavated from the Yin Ruins were slaves, and that the terms *zhong* (众) and *min* (民) in the literature handed down and the unearthed documents designated slaves. Scholars have focused on these two pillars in multiple debates. In recent years, new materials have emerged which will help answer the questions. Studies of slave society in China are based on archeological, anthropological, philological, intellectual history and other perspectives; these need to be integrated. To explore the characteristics of the form of ancient Chinese society and its background, we need to focus on the particular process of its occurrence and the early development of Chinese civilization, and undertake a more comprehensive study of the "Chinese path" from the perspective of world civilization.

Historical Notes

Reinvestigating and Renaming the Kharakhoto Jin Book of Calvary and Infantry Armies in the Northwest Held in Russia

Fan Xuehui(179)

历史研究

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

2017年 第1期 (双月刊)

主管: 中国社会科学院
主办: 中国社会科学院
(北京建国门内大街5号)

编辑: 《历史研究》编辑部

出版: 中国社会科学杂志社

(北京市朝阳区光华路15号院1号楼11-12层, 邮编 100026)

编辑部: 010-85885414

E-mail: zzssxb@163.com

网上投稿: <http://www.cssn.cn/>

发行: 010-85885198

E-mail: skbfxb@126.com

网上订阅: 中国社会科学在线 <http://www.csstoday.net/dingyue/>

中国社会科学网 <http://www.cssn.cn/>

印刷: 北京科信印刷有限公司

订阅处: 全国各地邮局

国外发行: 中国国际图书贸易总公司

(北京 399 信箱 邮编 100044)

如发现印装质量问题, 请与印刷厂联系调换。电话: 010-62903036

ISSN 0459-1909



刊号: ISSN 0459-1909
CN11-1213/K

本刊国内代号 2-77 国外代号 BM14 定价: 60.00