

CHAPTER «POLITICAL SCIENCES»

PROJECTS FOR MODERNIZATION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL PARADIGM OF CHINESE MARXISM UNDER THE SLOGAN "BACK TO MARX"

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Abstract. A scientific deideologized analysis of contemporary processes of rejuvenating paradigmatic Chinese (Sinicized) Marxism, emphasizing the objectives and tasks of reforming or revising its philosophical foundations, evaluating the nature and extent of the *most recent strategies for updating* its theoretical and methodological foundations, and categorical apparatus **are relevant** for the modern community of philosophers and policy researchers, and *may help* form adequate conceptual ideas about the tendencies in the development of Marxism from the middle of the 19th century to the early 21st century, as well as a methodical understanding of the essence, specifics, and historical significance of those national forms or unique theoretical models that hold the status of metanarratives in society.

The **purpose** of the research is to analyze the processes of modern Chinese (Sinicized) Marxism's development and to conceptually cover the reasons behind its emergence, its objectives, and the future prospects for implementing the modernization projects put forth by PRC representatives of the philosophical scientific community at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Within the framework of this issue, it becomes necessary to clarify the specifics and highlight the essence of the general tendency for China to westernize the Marxist philosophical and socio-political theory traditional for this country,

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which was developed under the influence of the Soviet Marxist-Leninist metanarrative and inherited its inherent ideational, structural-functional, political, and ideological advantages and disadvantages. First and foremost, it served as the foundation for the political philosophy and state socioeconomic policy of the CPC as a universal dialectical-materialistic philosophical notion that evolved into a metaparadigmatic one in the condition of socialist China.

The results. A theoretical platform for a conceptual examination of the essence and goal of the most recent projects for the modernization of paradigmatic Chinese Marxism under the slogan "Return to Marx" is proposed. This theoretical platform is based on a concrete and historically oriented comparative analysis of the key ideas of the founders of Marxism and the tendencies of the transformation of Marxism-Leninism in the USSR in the second half of the 20th century, and on the other hand, the clarification of the peculiarities of the history of the formation and the main features of the institutionalized in the PRC national-type Marxist philosophical teaching (including its ideological and political guidelines). It is proven that within the Chinese philosophical scientific community, efforts have intensified to revise the ideational-theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the Chinese model of Marxist philosophical theory; strategies for radical correction of its traditional structure and functions are being developed and made public; and there is a growing tendency toward reforming it by incorporating ideas and methods from Western Marxist and non-Marxist schools and trends from the 20th and early 21st centuries. As a result of critical consideration of the basic provisions of the most influential trends in the history of Marxism, the attributive features of ideological-theoretical, methodological and ideological attitudes are characterized *the newest Chinese* the possibilities of their implementation are outlined, and the prospects for introducing pro-Western counter-Marxist narratives into the philosophical discourse of the PRC are assessed.

The research methodology is based on the combination of principles and epistemological instructions of concrete historical, comparative, systemic, structural-functional, and discursive analysis, applied in accordance with the requirements of the scientific approach.

Practical implications. The results of the research **can help improve** the **scientific** understanding of the general and nationally specific processes of the genesis of Marxist philosophical teaching during the second half of the 19th and early 21st centuries, *optimize* the methodology of knowledge and theoretical modeling of tendencies in the modernization of the ideological and theoretical principles of the most influential Marxist metanarratives in the world (Soviet Marxism, Leninism, and Sinicized Marxism), as well as clarify the specifics of the paradigmatic model of Marxist philosophy created and institutionalized during the second half of the 20th century in the PRC, and increase the adequacy of the assessment of those reformist and revisionist projects for rejuvenating modern Chinese Marxism, which were developed on the ideas and methodology of currently popular schools and movements.

Value. The suggested methodological framework, conceptual generalizations, and distinctive data regarding the evolution of Marxism as a theory, ideology, and political practice exposed aspects of its primary metanarratives' origins as a nationalization or adaptation of Marxist ideas to the particular social and political contexts of various nations. The scientific community of philosophers and social scientists may find this useful in advancing our understanding of the motivations behind, objectives, character, and effects of Western-oriented projects aimed at modernizing Marxist theoretical models of philosophical knowledge and cognition. Based on the theoretical reconstruction and methodological recommendations of Western non-Marxist currents and schools of the past century, the developed theoretical reconstruction and predictive evaluations of the logic of reforming the *Chinese model* of Marxist philosophy – whose traditional foundation and structural-functional core is the diamatistmat conception of development – can serve as an additional ideational-theoretical and methodological basis for the study of the prospects of its *potential transformation or revision*.

1. Introduction

Our estimations state that in order to improve the efficacy of the analysis and the degree of sufficiency of scientific reconstructions of general tendencies and the distinctive specifics of the development of Marxist teaching in the realities of Soviet-type political systems, it is first necessary

to take into account and compare its two most influential varieties, or theoretical models, which in socialist societies were also given the functions of metanarratives¹.

Both Soviet Marxism (*Marxism-Leninism*) and Chinese Marxism (*Sinicized Marxism*)² were philosophical paradigms that were also political-ideological doctrines at the same time. In addition, it should be noted that theoretical comprehension of the positive achievements and mistakes of Soviet philosophers and social scientists, which became obvious as a result of the numerous attempts to modernize Marxism-Leninism after the death of I.V. Stalin and before the collapse of the USSR, became of great importance³, especially for the scientific and heuristic study of Chinese Marxism and an adequate assessment of the possibilities, goals, and prospects for its optimal renewal in accordance with the conditions of the modern world. One of the main reasons for the need to consider the Soviet and post-Soviet experience of rethinking and re-evaluating the axiomatics and functions of Marxist-Leninist theory in order to conduct an effective analysis of promising tendencies in reforming the paradigmatic version of Marxism for China (as a conceptually integral model, ideologically and ideationally consistent system of philosophical and socio-political postulates and prescriptions of the second half of the 20th, beginning of the 21st century) is that Chinese

¹ As you are aware, *metanarrative* is not the only valid theoretical model, teaching, or paradigm accepted by the majority of scientists. *It is a conception or theory* on the one hand that "claims universality, cultural dominance, and legitimizes" knowledge, various social institutions, and a particular way of thinking, and it is *ideology* on the other hand that "imposes on society and culture as a whole a certain ideological complex of ideas," "limiting, suppressing, ordering, and controlling" social life, and "committing violence against a person, his consciousness" [19, p. 459]. By the way, the "irony" of dialectics in the movement of world history, as evidenced by a large number of publications, including those by Western scientists, publicists, and political and economic experts, turned out to be that something symptomatic and similar happened at the end of the 20th century – at the beginning of the 21st century with liberalism (as a symbiosis of political ideology, philosophy, and ideological values, as well as the postulates of economic theory). Its most striking manifesto was the program work of Francis Fukuyama "The End of History?".

² It is important to note that, in contrast to its Russian-language version of the Constitution of the Communist Party of China and works by Chinese authors published in the Russian Federation [see, for example, 20; 24; 29; 34; 42; 43], in the *CPC Program's English translation* the terms "*Sinicized Marxism*" or "*Sinicization of Marxism*" does not use. *The following construct is used instead: "adaptation of Marxism to the Chinese context."*

³ More specifically, the distribution of the territory, production, and resource base between the highest republican and union party, managerial, and economic nomenclature, which held complete political, economic, ideological (spiritual), and administrative power in the Soviet Union, rather than the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

researchers faced the same ideational-theoretical, methodological, and ideological problems, that were also relevant for Soviet Marxists in the second half of the last century and were important for professional philosophical communities even after 1991. First of all, Ukrainian and Russian [see, for example, 3, p. 115–139; 7, p. 35–45; 11, p. 47–55; 13, p. 41–53; 18; 35; 44, p. 45–56].

It should be noted that, as shown by the publications of members of the contemporary scientific community of philosophers and political scientists in the PRC, their interpretations and theoretical analyses of the intricate processes of Marxism's development in this country, including modeling and projecting potential and necessary trends in its modernization, are largely restricted to the study of national, that is, Chinese specifics. In China itself and beyond, it has now received generally accepted names: "*Chinese*" and "*Sinicized*" *Marxism*.

Meanwhile, the real and significant theoretical, methodological, and historical-philosophical disadvantage of this approach is, *first*, the fact that the genesis, as well as the structural and functional features of Marxist teaching (in its basic philosophical and social science components), have long been studied and analyzed in the PRC quite autonomously, without taking into account the achievements of those ground-breaking and influential trends, directions, and schools in Marxism that were formed and developed in the USSR, Europe, and the United States since the second half of the twentieth century. There have been many attempts to reconsider the nature and origins of Marxist dialectical-materialistic theory from a purely intra-Chinese perspective. However, most of these studies have been limited to the history of socialist China, resulting in modern projects by representatives of its scientific community aimed at modernizing "nationally specific Chinese Marxism," primarily focused on correcting and partially reforming the philosophical theoretical model for the People's Republic of China. This model was essentially a replica of the Marxism-Leninism model officially supported in the Soviet Union.

Secondly, such variants or projects of modernization of Marxism in China have so far been usually developed and are being developed without taking into account Soviet (as well as post-Soviet pro-Marxist) scientifically and socially necessary ideational, theoretical-methodological,

politico-ideological and worldview innovations [see, for example, 2, p. 96–107; 4, p. 11–16; 7, p. 35–45; 8, p. 60–95; 12, p. 53–71; 13, p. 41–53; 14, p. 41–46; 18, p. 5–15; 35, p. 12–133; 41, p. 187–212; 44, p. 49–54]. Although all of them (both in their time and in the future) became the main and effective tools for overcoming primitivism, scholasticism, orthodoxy, party-ideological servitude, and functions of theoretical apologetics of the political system, which were integral signs of official Marxism in the Soviet Union; ensured its purposeful conceptual and value renewal, significant de-ideologization, and effective adaptation to the modern world's realities, current challenges, and demands.

But in general, for an adequate and heuristic analysis of Chinese (or, as some scientists from the PRC prove, exclusively Sinicized) Marxism, it is possible, in our opinion, to proceed from the assumption that *in similar conditions*, that is, in the situation of active reform of economic and political relations (on the one hand, during the "Khrushchev Thaw", and then the "Gorbachev perestroika" in the Soviet Union, and on the other hand, fundamental socio-economic and political-ideological rejuvenation in the PRC, which began in the late 1970s, including radical transformations of the foreign policy strategy of its leadership), in connection with the urgent need to correct the Marxist-Leninist doctrines of the ruling Communist parties and reorient the ideological values of the masses from narrow-class to conditionally general democratic or general civilizational issues (although extremely abstract) in the intellectual environment of socialist-type societies (despite the differences in their political and spiritual culture, traditions, value preferences and mentality), *similar systemic requests were generated*.

One of the conceptual responses to them was the intensification of efforts to rethink the origins, essence, structure, and functional goal of Marxist philosophical, dialectical-materialistic conception by members of the community of philosophers and political researchers (both in the USSR and the PRC). For the most part, such research activities in modern China have focused on the preparation and implementation of projects in the form of or under the slogan "*de-Stalinization of Marxism*" (or in the terminology and interpretations of some Chinese scholars – "*de-Leninization*"), that is, the modernization of that version of Marxist teaching, which by the middle of the twentieth century had become orthodox, dogmatic and excessively

scholastic, and in the political system and the state ideology of the countries of socialism (regardless of their level of development), as well as in the mass consciousness of their population, continued to perform the functions of metanarrative and, above all, the theoretical foundation and scientific apology of the doctrines, socio-political strategies, and policies of the ruling Communist parties.

In the end, the general call for Marxism to be revived, or at the very least, for its fundamental philosophical and social-political postulates and scientific, public, and political functions to be adjusted to modern realities (which were fundamentally different from those that were in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; in the USSR in the 1920s; in the first half of the 20th century; and in China in the 1950s and early 1970s), naturally sparked the full spectrum of issues directly related to the interpretation of the essence and role of Marxist-Leninist philosophical and socio-political teaching in general, as well as to its ideational-theoretical foundations, that is, dialectical and historical materialism. The reasons for this are quite obvious since it was the diamat and istmat axiomatics (along with Lenin's, Stalin's, and partially post-Stalin editions [see, for example, 6, p. 43–49; 3, p. 116–139; 5, p. 59–74; 10, p. 323–334; 34]), that determined the essence and structural-functional specifics of the construction of the philosophy model, including the methodology of knowledge, that was declared a kind of model of the variant of Marxism that became paradigmatic in the USSR and the People's Republic of China and served for decades as a single scientific-philosophical and political-ideological standard of both philosophical theory and the Communist Party doctrine.

2. Ideational-theoretical and Methodological Prescriptions Study of the Modernization Processes of Chinese Marxism

The research is based on structural-functional, comparative, and discursive approaches, along with the method of content analysis and the principles of scientism and historicism, where the method of comparative analysis is recognized as the most effective and efficient analytical model for studying the concept and specifics of Chinese (Sinicized) Marxism and may play a system-forming role in the conceptual study of its genesis. The methodological approach used here combines the cognitive capabilities

of various scientific analysis methods. This approach (taking into account the ideational-theoretical and institutional features of the development of Marxism in the PRC during the second half of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries) allows for an adequate and holistic analysis and assessment of at least three basic factors. These factors include ideological sources, a system of political and ideological prescriptions, and their influence on Chinese Marxist philosophical theory and social studies. The approach also considers their achievements, conceptual shortcomings, pressing problems, needs, tasks, and prospects for further modernization at the present historical stage.

If we carefully summarize and analyze the key factors that have influenced the development of Marxism in modern China and have contributed to its rejuvenation, we must recognize the official Soviet philosophical and socio-political theory *as the first* and foremost determinant. This refers to the version of Marxism-Leninism that was paradigmatic in the Soviet Union. The doctrinal and program documents of the Chinese Communist Party, as well as the extraordinary ideas of its leaders, have always been *the second* complex and important factor. However, they cannot be seen as independent, national Marxist innovations, detached from external objective and subjective factors. Instead, they should be compared – at least textually, ideologically, and conceptually – with the relevant documents adopted by the leadership of the CPSU and the USSR during the second half of the twentieth century. Finally, *the third* ideational-theoretical and political-ideological element of the proposed comparative model, or approach to the analysis of modern Chinese Marxism, is a variety of theoretically and ideologically significant publications by influential representatives of the scientific community of philosophers and social scientists from the PRC.

As for a wide range of theoretical models and various author's proposals for solving the problem of renewal in theoretical and practical (applied, pragmatic, utilitarian) aspects of Marxist philosophy and socio-political studies in the modern PRC [see, in particular, 9, p. 57–76; 20; 24; 34; 36; 38; 41, p. 186–217; 43, p. 96–83], understanding the ideational and theoretical framework of the subject field, political and ideological prescriptions and theoretical and methodological constants that are attributable to Chinese/Sinicized Marxism at the beginning of the 21st

century, then they can, in our opinion, be effectively and systematically reflected by analyzing its various (especially alternative ones) projects, models, and reform strategies. A significant number of such variants or projects on modernizing Chinese Marxism (which often represent explicit or hidden ideological sympathies and theoretical preferences of their creators) allow us to get a clear and accurate conceptual idea of the permissible (for Chinese philosophers and social scientists, as well as party ideologists and functionaries) boundaries, optimal directions, and goals for structural and functional restructuring, reformatting that Marxist philosophical teaching and that political and socio-philosophical theory that has turned into metanarrative in modern China. To achieve the most optimal analysis and holistic understanding of the essence and features of the latest theoretical and methodological approaches and narratives, which are currently being developed and actively form the modern Chinese scientific philosophical and social science discourse and offer different (and sometimes even mutually exclusive) answers to the question of the possibility, necessity, tasks and prospects for modernizing the version of the Marxist teaching, which was mainly formed in China by the middle of the twentieth century with very little correction compared to its Soviet version, but hardly was the subject of scientific, ideologically unbiased research for representatives of philosophical communities outside its borders, it is necessary not to apply the methodology of abstract analytical reflections, arbitrary hypostatization and modeling or interpretation based on it, but rely directly on the analysis and citations of texts by Chinese philosophers, political scientists, historians, as well as programme documents of the CPC. It is this way of concentrated, scientific, and specifically historically oriented (in accordance with the peculiarities of historical realities and prevailing ideological narratives of the era) reproduction of the authors' (including the Communist Party leaders) theoretical ideas and politico-ideological beliefs that allow ensuring the authenticity, adequacy, and information saturation of the systemic representation and correct conceptual reconstruction and assessment of the complex of ideas, axiomatics, epistemological positions, politico-ideological and socio-political prescriptions, public and political ideals, and ideological values, which is typically called "*Chinese*" and "*Sinicized*" *Marxism*. Of course, also with their main component as a party-state

doctrine and strategy – "*socialism with Chinese characteristics*" [see, for example, 2, p. 94–107; 4, p. 11–16; 9, p. 56–74; 24; 41, p. 187–212; 43, p. 70–81].

3. "Back to Marx" as an Ideologeme of the Strategy for the Revision of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy

The results of the analysis of publications devoted to the evolution of Marxist philosophical thought in the People's Republic of China at the beginning of the 21st century demonstrate the relevance and complexity of the issues that relate, on the one hand, to explaining the reasons behind the emergence of a plural spectrum of concepts and different authors' proposals for reforming Chinese or Sinicized Marxism, and, on the other hand, to improving the scientific research platform, the methodology of which will provide optimal opportunities for an adequate understanding of the system of primary ideational-theoretical constants and imperative political-ideological prescriptions of the model of Marxist theory that is paradigmatic for the Chinese philosophical community. These issues can be conceptually resolved by examining and evaluating various strategies for reforming traditional Marxist philosophy in China. After all, many options for rejuvenating Chinese Marxism have been announced recently. These options, which are frequently justifications for either the overt or covert ideological sympathies, conceptual designs of philosophical theories, or valuable worldview preferences of their creators, allow one to not only gain a clear understanding of what is acceptable (for Chinese philosophers and social scientists, as well as for party ideologues and functionaries) in terms of the boundaries, best practices, and objectives of the structural and functional restructuring of the system of philosophical knowledge and cognition that is widely used in the PRC today but also determine the distinctive features of that variety of Marxist philosophical teaching and political and socio-philosophical theory, which according to its functional features, socio-political and spiritual-cultural (including mental) role have turned into a metanarrative in modern China. As is widely known, it, along with Soviet Marxism (Marxism-Leninism), became one of the two most self-sufficient and influential metanarratives in the world (primarily

the global world system of the last century), although it was formed and evolved for several decades under the influence, sometimes even ideational, and especially political and ideological pressure of the Soviet, Marxist-Leninist metanarrative, the scientific validity and universal practical effectiveness of which were defended by the state propaganda machine and the ruling institutions of the Communist Party of the USSR.

The article of Sun Weiping "*Marxist Philosophy in Modern China. Research Status and Trends*" is a significant publication among many works by Chinese philosophers. Our estimates suggest that the article is of great interest in historical, general philosophical, theoretical, and methodological aspects.

Here, first of all, it should be noted that in analyzing various innovative directions and trends in reforming Marxist philosophical thought in the PRC, Sun Weiping (in contrast to many of his colleagues in modern China, for example, Li Junzhu [see, for example, 9, p. 57–74; 10, p. 323–333; 24; 43, p. 69–83], to explain the special specifics of Chinese Marxism, does not use the concept of "*Sinicized Marxism*", but uses only such terms as "*Chinese Marxism*" and "*Marxist philosophy in China*."

The initial positions on which both Sunem's analytical generalizations and his systematization of innovative directions are based were developed as projects to reform the paradigmatic "*dogmatic*" and "*scholastic*" Marxist philosophical approaches in China. However, these positions were actually developed in the USSR in the 1930s and were the dominant approach in most socialist countries until at least the end of the 1960s. To be clear, these positions are as follows.

First, since 1978, "China has conducted theoretical research and practical searches under the conditions of socialism with Chinese characteristics", according to Sun Weiping. For this reason, scientific research was based on "criticism of „Stalin’s“ system of philosophy" (or, as it is called in the Chinese professional community, the "traditional system of textbooks", that is, such a theoretical model of Marxist philosophy, "when the course of dialectical and historical materialism, created in the 30s of the XX century in the USSR, is taken as a model") as well as on the reflections of "Chinese Marxist philosophers" "over

what philosophy in general and Marxist philosophy in particular is". According to Sun, Chinese philosophers and social scientists needed to reinterpret Marx's teachings and incorporate modern questions into Marxist philosophy to meet the intellectual and socio-political challenges of the new era [34]⁴.

Second, the general and main ideological prescription for modern Chinese reforming the institutionalized model of Marxist philosophy (that, in our opinion, now serves as a public slogan of the reform movement aimed at combating the dominance of orthodox traditionalists and adherents in the intellectual space of the *diamat-istmat* "textbook systems") *is*, according to Sun's interpretation, a recognition of the necessity "*to return to Marx*" through his "new reading." The reasons and motives for such a research instruction, he notes, are due to the fact that Chinese philosophers realize that "Karl Marx considered philosophy to be „an extract of the spirit of the epoch“, „the living soul of civilization“" [34]⁵.

Thirdly, according to the researcher, modern philosophers and social scientists in China eventually acknowledged the obvious. That is, the fact that 150 years after its creation, the philosophy of Marxism "very much diverged from the „spiritual extract of the era“" and "did not offer new theoretical generalizations and conclusions." Most of all, the researcher claims, this concerns the "orthodox Marxist philosophy" that "has evolved

⁴ Summarizing this process, the authors of the article "*Western Marxist Philosophy in China. Logic of Changes and Research Topics*" (Hu Daping, Zhang Yibing, Zhang Liang) write that "Marxist philosophy has a significant place in Chinese public thought, and the philosophy of Western Marxism, being a special sphere due to its kinship with Marx's philosophy, occupies its specific place. It is an exit that clears the waters of Marxist philosophy fairway and, at the same time, a passage through which the concepts of philosophical movements, brought by traditional textbooks beyond the boundaries of orthodox Marx's philosophy, enter Marxist philosophy." In addition, the authors of the article concluded that "**thanks to Western Marxism** (as well as other Western currents) they understood that **historical differences are of theoretical significance**. Therefore, the following words of Xiaoming are very important: "By reading texts, as well as the review territory created by expanding and deepening the dialogue with modern life and contemporary philosophy, the modern meaning of Marx's philosophy is revealed." In general, the article emphasizes that due to the above-described processes, "Chinese scientists realized that the creation of a conceptual apparatus of modern Chinese Marxist philosophy based on a combination of the texts of Marx's philosophy and the conditions of modern life is becoming an urgent theoretical task (emphasis added, *K. V.*)" [36].

⁵ By the way, it was this idea of Karl Marx that the creators of the Kyiv School of Philosophy used in their philosophical search in the early 1960s [see, for example, 13, p. 41–53; 18, p. 53–70; 35; 43, p. 44–55].

in China." It "was seriously influenced by the Soviet „Stalin's philosophical system“, which "deviated far from the spiritual essence of Marx's philosophy", and "distorted the true image of Marxist philosophy" [34].

We believe that in order to better understand the theoretical reconstruction of innovative projects and the main trends in the rejuvenation of modern Chinese Marxism (including the reasons for their emergence, ideological orientations, goals, and objectives), we can refer to the analytical generalizations and assessments of the main positive and negative outcomes resulting from the active and diverse development process (*especially Westernization*) of Marxism in the PRC over the past few decades. These are presented in a joint article by Hu Daping, Zhang Yibing and Zhang Lian titled "*Western Marxist Philosophy in China: Transformation Logic and Research Topics*."

Their interpretation suggests that the revival of traditional and orthodox Chinese Marxism, which was based on the Soviet philosophical and socio-political theories of Marx and Lenin in the mid-twentieth century, was initiated under the slogan "*return to Marx*". However, in reality, it was reoriented and radically corrected through random, eclectic, and sporadic ideational-theoretical and methodological borrowings from various Western interpretations and reinterpretations of system-forming Marxist ideas and postulates. Meanwhile, in China, this process of enriching and renewing Marxism quite naturally and consistently reinforced the tendency of its convergence with ephemeral, coherent Western Marxism. Which was modernized during the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Especially in the social and political philosophy that is a part of the Marxist teachings and partially in the philosophy of culture. In addition, in reality, the rejuvenation of Chinese Marxism on the ideational and ideological basis of Western Marxism led to a revision of the axiomatics and methodology that were created by K. Marx and F. Engels and then creatively developed by V.I. Lenin for the era of socialist revolutions and the initial period of socialist construction (of state, socio-economic, national, cultural, etc.). One of the tendencies of such theoretical nihilism was that some modern Chinese scholars in recent years explicitly stated that "Leninism" (this is the name they give to Lenin's socio-political and philosophical innovations) is not a continuation and result of the process of development of the theory of the

founders of Marxism; it does not have a direct relationship with it or is even its distortion⁶.

In our research, we find the authors' judgments and generalizations about the role of Western Marxism in modern Chinese philosophy and social science particularly interesting.

So, *firstly*, they argue that one of the main reasons for the appearance in the scientific community of Chinese philosophers of slogans and instructions about the need for a "new and unorthodox" (that is, not on the basis of such an interpretation of the essence and functions of Marxist philosophy, which is rooted in Chinese "*traditional textbook system*", as tracing papers from the Soviet Marxist-Leninist model of philosophical teaching/theory) reading and interpretation of Marx's texts and ideas was "familiarization, critical learning of lessons", and then (albeit indirectly) "discussion and dialogue" of Chinese scientists with leading representatives of the plural and ideologically diverse Marxist movement in the West [36]. And first of all, the topics and problems of Chinese Marxists included the study and understanding of innovative ideas, the methodology of knowledge, and the postulates of the concepts of Lukács, Gramsci, Althusser, Sartre, and representatives of the Frankfurt School. Especially Jurgen Habermas.

⁶ To better understand the essence of the problem of "*distortion of Marxism*" by "*Leninism*", which became widely discussed among Chinese social scientists in the 21st century, let us turn to the examples given in the article "Leninism is a Brilliant Example of the Russification of Marxism" by Zhang Shuhua. In it, he notes, in particular, "**In recent years, some Chinese scientists have begun to deny that the ideological origin of Leninism is Marxism.** A 2007 article, "The Model of Democratic Socialism and China's Prospects", argued that the **Cannon volleys of the October Revolution sent Leninism to us, not Marxism**", and that "*Leninism is an inheritance and development of Blanquism.*" It was even stated that **the Marxism perceived by the Chinese was Marxism "distorted", and "deformed" by Lenin.** There is a belief among some that Plekhanov, rather than Lenin, was a true adherent of orthodox Marxism. In the article "A New Knowledge of Leninism", it is stated in the introduction that Marxism and Leninism originated in different times and places. Furthermore, they are based on unequal human relations and socio-political situations (emphasis added, V. V.)" [38]. Zhang's conceptual assessments and reasoned conclusions that are formulated in detail can be recognized as another example of an alternative approach for those Chinese researchers who insist that "*Leninism*" is not Marxism, not its natural stage of development and theoretical enrichment, and also argue that the renewal and further progress of Marxist theory in the PRC should be based solely on a return to the "spiritual essence of Marx's philosophy", which is the only correct version of true Marxism (later, for certain reasons, distorted by its Russian, Soviet, and Chinese adherents). He writes, "**There is an organic unity between Leninism and Marxism in the form of joint reliance and development, continuity and creativity; therefore, it is impossible to emphasize the return to K. Marx and deny V. Lenin. It is absolutely impossible to deny Lenin's study of Marx's teaching and the progress he made in this regard, and even more so, you cannot break the internal connection between the relationship of continuity and development between Lenin and Marx's teachings** (emphasis added, V. V.)" [38].

Secondly, in their article, Hu Daping, Zhang Yibing, and Zhang Lian insist that historically, the subject-thematic reorientation of Chinese researchers from Soviet Marxism to Western Marxism is far from a new phenomenon. As it was said, "it was at the beginning of the 1980s that "such a Western social ideological trend as 'Western Marxism' has become popular and influential in Chinese social science." As a result, a completely "natural question arose about its place in the general system of Marxist philosophy", and "*studying of „Western Marxism“ allowed us to take a fresh look at the legacy of Marx himself.*" "It is not surprising that a movement „Back to Marx“ has emerged among Chinese Marxists," the researchers write in their conclusion [36].

Explaining the sense and meaning of their statements, Chinese philosophers declare, "So, *two theoretical slogans – „back to Marx“ and „Marx, our contemporary“*» – have the same scientific explanation. It is widely accepted by scientists that understanding the „historical distance“ between Marx and the modern world is crucial. They also argue that, as they cannot surpass the dichotomy of capitalism and modernity within Marx's discourse, they must approach his views as a point of truth. On the other hand, **the modern world makes Marx's ideas more prominent, which are still important for understanding the basic idea of modern life** (emphasis added, *V. V.*)" [36].

The article argues that the rejuvenation of Marxist theory in China until the end of the 20th century was achieved by incorporating ideas and concepts from Western Marxist thought into the research of Chinese philosophers. "This allowed for a deeper discussion of the relationship between Western Marxism and Marxism" as a global and nationally specific phenomenon. The authors suggest that this approach helped to better understand the true essence and specificity of Marxist theory in China, including its theoretical, methodological and ideological elements. The main tendency of the mentioned interaction "*was manifested in the change of the research logic: from denial and criticism to affirmation and learning lessons, from immediate use to direct dialogue with Western Marxism*"⁷. Although generally speaking, "the

⁷ The authors of the article tried to avoid possible criticism from their colleagues and accusations of revisionism, rejection, or diversion from the axiomatic postulates and politico-ideological prescriptions of paradigmatic and official Marxism used in the education and science systems of the People's Republic of China, as well as programmatic ones in the Charter of the CPC. They also stated, "**We adhere to two positions in the process of studying Marx himself and the philosophy of Western Marxism: „back to Marx“ and deep interpretation of texts** (emphasis added, *V. V.*)" [36].

call to „*return to Marx*“ (which received harsh criticism from the majority of traditionalist Marxists in the Chinese scientific community. – V.V.) *precisely meant that the only way we can engage in discussions and dialogue with Western scientists is by understanding the original message from the source texts* (emphasis added, V. V.)" [36].

The authors, when pointing out the most significant outcomes of the revival of orthodox and dogmatic Chinese Marxism (i.e., Marxism as Marxism-Leninism for the "*traditional textbook system*"), mention the following: "**Precisely because Western Marxist philosophy occupies a significant place in modern Marxist philosophy research, it has become a crucial source for updating textbooks, serving as evidence of their obsolescence or innovation** (emphasis added, V. V.)." Through this process, a precise task has been identified. Chinese philosophers note that it was formulated by their colleague Chen Xiuming as follows, "To understand how Western Marxism directed and developed the views of traditional Marxism", "**we must free ourselves from the burden of theoretical criteria and, even more, get rid of the criteria accepted in the system of textbooks created according to the Soviet model** (emphasis added, V. V.)." As a result of the renewed connection between Chinese Marxism and Western Marxism at the turn of the millennium, there has been a significant and radical impact on the philosophical thinking methods of Chinese scientists. This viewpoint is held by Hu Daping, Zhang Yibing, and Zhang Liang, who state that "**there has been a change in the methods of philosophical thinking of Chinese scientists** (emphasis added, V. V.)" [36].

After all, "**mastering the methods of thinking of the philosophy of Western Marxism not only increases the ability of Chinese scientists to study the texts of Marxist philosophy, but it also allows them to enrich philosophical thinking.** *Perhaps for this reason, research into the Western Marxist school of thought has become more popular in recent years. It is perceived with hope as a potential means of reviving the language and conceptual framework of Marxist philosophy* (emphasis added, V. V.)" [36].

In the end, describing and evaluating the productivity, prospects and special significance of the Marxist Westernization of modern Chinese philosophy as an absolutely necessary prerequisite for its further development (which was proclaimed under the imperative slogan-euphemism "*return to Marx*", or the requirement to "read him again"), the authors of the article

note, "*The history of the Western Marxist philosophy's „journey“ in China is evidenced by a change in the comprehension of Marx. After all, **different representatives of Western Marxist philosophy approach the new understanding of Marx from different positions** (one can talk about Hegelian, structuralist, spiritual-analytical, and existentialist Marxism, Marxism of the analytical school, etc.) **and conduct a discussion about a „new reading of Marxism“**", "paying special attention (in contrast to Soviet and official Chinese Marxism. – V. V.) **to the incompleteness of Marx** (emphasis added, V. V.)" [36].*

Regarding the origins, driving forces, and reasoning behind the conceptions that formed the Westernization tendency (which was first observed in Soviet philosophy and, in the last twenty years, in Chinese philosophy as well), it should be noted that this process of philosophical and ideological revision of Marxism in the West – particularly in the form of Marxism-Leninism from Stalin's era – started and is still going strong under the same standard slogan: "**Back to Marx!**"

Such an idea-slogan itself has diverse and multidimensional socio-political, socio-cultural, ideological and philosophical-theoretical sources, determinants, "ideational parents" and adherents, multivariate meanings and historical context (even subtext), goals and implementation strategies, etc.

And if the "*Back to Marx*" movement in the political history of the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries, both globally and in specific nations, can be seen as an expression of the broader trend of critical reevaluation and ideological revision of both classical Marxism and Soviet-type Marxism, which for over a century was sparked by a cynical, even nihilistic, attitude towards the orthodox doctrinal provisions and policies of the ruling or leading communist (partially social-democratic) parties in Eastern and Western Europe, both Americas, and Asia, and became the ideational and ideological credo of numerous individuals who can (in some cases) be linked to such a mass movement and ideological rhizome as "*the new left*," then for the philosophical thought of this period, it had its own reasons, conceptual answers and ideological trends.

It is important to acknowledge that, despite the notable distinctions between the two processes (political and intellectual), they can both be viewed as radical and unpredictable events due to their shared systemic causes and motivations, particularly their intensification in Europe since the

middle of the last century. These are primarily changes in the ideological platform (program and doctrine) and political strategy of the CPSU, caused, provoked and stimulated by the dissemination of information from the secret 1956 anti-Stalin Khrushchev's paper on the cult of the individual reported to the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR (which, in turn, soon became one of the influential factors in the aggravation of the ideological and political confrontation between the leadership of the CPSU – USSR and the CPSU – PRC); the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 also known as the Hungarian Uprising in October-November 1956, the Prague Spring in the Czechoslovak SSR. In many ways similar events occurred in other socialist countries (Yugoslavia, Poland) and during the French Student Demonstrations of May 1968.

The ideational-theoretical content of conceptions and the logic of the "*Back to Marx*" reform process were synthesized, concentrated, and built directly within the framework of Marxism, which was the most influential philosophical teaching and ideological trend of the twentieth century. These beliefs included the notions that, *first*, "*Marxism paved the way for Stalinism*" and that the totalitarian and counter-revolutionary "experience of Stalinism tarnished the entire Marxist tradition up to Marx himself." *Second*, it is believed that "*Engels reduced Marxism to a positivist form of materialism.*" Therefore, it is more appropriate to call "Marxism of the 20th century a form of „*Engelsism*“ – the illegitimate son of Marx's original ideas, in which the removal of idealism and materialism is reduced to a positivist, mechanistic, fatalistic caricature of the original." And *third*, in the history of Marxism, "*there is a clear, consistent evolution from Engels to Lenin and Stalin,*" and *Stalin took this tradition of Engels and Lenin's Engelsian side to the extreme*" [1].

Alternatively, as Paul Blackledge pointed out in a comprehensive publication on the evolution of Marx's thought ("*Engels vs. Marx? Two Hundred Years of Frederick Engels*"), Marxist critics in the West "often say" that "Stalin's interpretation of historical and dialectical materialism (diamat and isthmat) was based on Engels' works." Specifically, Blackledge recalled that "Carver and Thomas" "share the view held by Levine that „*Engelsism*“ is the source of Stalin's ideology," and that "in 1981, Carver wrote that „the political and academic life of the official institutions of the Soviet Union“ „is aimed at unwavering commitment to dialectical and historical

materialism stemming from the works of Engels". A few years later, the same researcher stated that "„the postulates“ of Engels' philosophical works „extended to lectures and textbooks up to official Soviet dialectics“" [1].

Therefore, it can be acknowledged that the philosophical and political-ideological process of de-Stalinization of Marxism (the impetus and "turning point" of which "was the year 1956", and which was based on dubious, usually unproven, assumptions that "have their roots reaching back to the 19th century," about "Engels' distortion of Marx's ideas") during the 1960s–1980s, in the Western intellectual environment, particularly among the specialists in the history of Marxist thought and numerous creators of various left-wing ideologies, turned into a search for arguments and the creation of a system of evidence to confirm the hypothesis-judgment according to the formula: "*Young Marx*" is a "*hero of the Marxist science*," and "*late Engels* is a thief." To put it another way, this resulted in the emergence of a well-established and powerful philosophical tendency in Western Marxism, anti-Marxism, or counter-Marxism in the West, as well as in Soviet Marxism-Leninism in covert forms and currently in Chinese Marxism, or Sincized Marxism. This is a sort of reformist or revisionist intellectual tradition of "contrasting the young „humanistic“ works of Marx with the „scientific“ interpretation of Marxism by Engels" [cited by 1].

In fact, the tendency of Soviet Marxism to revise the "true teaching of Marx" (and thus Marxism in general) is essentially philosophical and historical, and this tendency is only understood by Western researchers as a process of politically determined and ideologically motivated movement that, in theoretical terms, follows this path of ideational rebirth or transformation: "*from the political and philosophical teaching of the founders of Marxism – to Marxism-Leninism formed according to Soviet standards in the form of the conception of dialectical and historical materialism.*" It is argued, in other words, that Marxism underwent a consistent ideational transformation from the early days of Marx (via the writings on Engels' "dialectics of nature") to the distortion or denial of some of their ideas (mainly socio-philosophical and political-economic) by Lenin and Stalin, and subsequently by Soviet Marxists-Leninists, their adherents, and colleagues among philosophers and social scientists in other socialist countries.

In addition, it should be noted that Paul Blackledge adopted a philosophical theoretical stance, an analytical approach, and an attitude toward Western critics and their criticism of Marxism (specifically, *"attempts by critics of Engels to find something in common between his views and Stalin's poor version of Marxism"*). This researcher not only thoroughly examined their arguments and expressed disapproval of their typical, by now standardized (benchmark for the West) conclusions, but he also provided his theoretically justified explanation of the reasons behind Stalin's innovations as a distortion of the system of philosophical and socio-political axiomatics of the founders of Marxism.

In the first case, there is much to be interested in regarding the scientific relevance of Blackledge's historical and philosophical argument, as well as his satirical revelation of the genuine intentions of Western opponents of Marxism who cannot be reconciled. It is summarized as follows: "The myth of the discrepancy (between the theoretical views of Marx and Engels, particularly between the philosophical ideas of "Marx the young" and "Engels the late," primarily as the author of *Anti-Duhring* and *Dialectics of Nature*. – V. V.) allows critics of Marxism to blame Engels for a certain aspect of classical Marxism that they want to reject"; *"engelsophobes"* or *"Engels' critics hold him accountable for any part of Marxism that they did not like."* P. Blackledge is also convinced that, generally speaking, *"Western Marxists tend to simply deny the existence of the actual dialectics of nature"* and that *"a strong inclination towards various forms of philosophical idealism" characterizes their philosophical views and beliefs; "rather than looking in Marx's writings for means that would help free Marxism from the extremes of mechanistic materialism on the one hand and philosophical idealism on the other, they instead support the driving of wedges between the idealist interpretation of Marx and the mechanistic-materialist interpretation of Engels."* Consequently, Paul Blackledge concludes, *"As a thesis about the differences" between Marx and Engels' philosophical perspectives or conceptual concepts, others who criticize Marxism "tend to attribute something much more to insignificant differences between them."* Additionally, *"at worst, they create controversies where none existed at all."* Moreover, they do this only for one purpose: to "confirm" their own "biases." And in general, a vast majority of supporters are motivated by ideology, not facts, to

support the thesis about the discrepancy (between the conceptual ideas of Marx and Engels) [1].

As for the other aspect, that is, Paul Blackledge's own explanation of the illegitimacy of the proclamation of I.V. Stalin as the ideational heir or faithful successor of the "Engels lifework" in the theory of Marxism (allegedly made by a Soviet Marxist with the help of selection, rejection of a part of Marx's ideas and the use and absolutization of the exclusively philosophical postulates of Engels' concept, which again "did not correspond to the spirit and point" of the general and socio-philosophical views of Marx, especially the "young one"), as well as the interpretation of the causes and essence of Stalin's theoretical innovations, which is atypical for the Western community, as a distortion and vulgarization of Marxism. In this case, his evaluations and conclusions appear to be convincing arguments to confirm the validity of the assumption that "*Marx must be separated from the legacy of Stalinism,*" since "*Stalin himself directly rejected a number of key guidelines arising*" from Engels' works. "Thus," writes Paul Blackledge, "he (Stalin, *V. V.*) removed from official Soviet theory Engels' criticism of the idea of socialism in a particular country, his vision of socialism, which was characterized by the extinction of the state, and his assertion that the law of value would cease to exist in a socialist society." "As for philosophy," Blackledge notes, "Stalin removed the law of negation of the negation from the presentation of dialectics that became orthodox in Russia in the 1930s," although these "Engels' ideas were by no means secondary aspects of Marxism" [1].

The researcher emphasized that as part of his social-scientific concept, Stalin "also took measures to implement the historical scheme set out in Marx's 1859 preface to the „Critique of Political Economy“, in order to exclude from orthodoxy the concept of the „Asiatic mode of production“ of Marx and Engels, which they used to explain repressive class relations in societies without private property and could easily be applied to clarify class relations in Soviet Russia" [1].

As a result, Blackledge concludes, "If the political motives behind this decision are obvious, then the fact that while he (Stalin, *V. V.*) tried to justify the role of the state in the development of the Soviet economy, he was still forced to swap the correlation of the basis to the superstructure described by Marx and which was given in his famous essay (referring to Stalin's

"Short Course in the History of the CPSU (b)." – *V. V.*)" And it "shows that Stalin's revision of the ideas of Marx and Engels was dictated not by a healthy research interest but by clumsy demands related to the banal task of justifying the socialist title of a „non-socialist society““ [1]. Furthermore, Paul Blackledge agrees with Alfred Evans' study and adds, "Stalin's „innovations“ fueled" such an "interpretation of Marxism, from which any revolutionary prerequisites for socialist development were cut out." Thus, it is paradoxical that a large number of modern Western critics of Stalinism, Stalin's theoretical legacy, and political strategy essentially follow his steps in their attempts, in Evans' words, to "turn Marxism inside out by turning Marx into a theorist of peaceful constitutional change" [cited by 1].

In general, Blackledge came to the following conclusion, "Engels' ideas are not only incompatible with Stalin's ideology but can also be successfully used to explain the counter-revolutionary essence of Stalinism." This conclusion can be very indicative of the true essence and true intentions of all modern (including Chinese) critics and reformers of Marxism, acting under the slogan "*Back to the young Marx*" (due to the rejection of the philosophical heritage of the "late Engels" and the *destruction of ideational-theoretical and system-forming fundamental principles* of the Soviet model of the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism). Thus, Paul Blackledge concludes, "Stalin's revisions of Marxism, at least in this regard, demonstrate his acute awareness of the critical and revolutionary implications that arise from Engels' writings – something that is not often the case with the writings of many anti-Engelsian writers. Engels' ideas were incompatible with Stalin's dictatorship because of their criticality and revolutionary nature. And if this revolutionary essence explains why Stalin attempted to neutralize Engels' Marxism, then contemporary socialists have a legitimate cause to honestly reevaluate Stalin's contribution to socio-political theory in light of the anti-Stalin conclusions derived from his writings" [1].

4. Theoretical Reconstruction of the Projects for Modernization of Paradigmatic Marxist Philosophy in the PRC by Sun Weiping

Returning to the consideration of the essence and specifics of Sun's theoretical reconstruction of the main projects of modernization or reform of paradigmatic Chinese Marxism (primarily its general philosophical basis and main component), it is necessary to emphasize that its analysis and

conceptual generalizations are based on the belief that *updating Chinese Marxism in the "spirit of the modern era" requires not only "a deep study of the peculiarities and spiritual essence of Marxist philosophy and studying of its new forms", but also taking into account "Chinese cultural traditions and real-life practices."* Thus, he concludes, as a result of a practically oriented theoretical rethinking of Marxism and adequate assessments of "the possibility of creating new forms of Marxist philosophy of the 21st century" in Chinese philosophical discourse, "sprouts of new forms of Marxist philosophy" appeared; innovative "tendencies in the development of modern Chinese Marxist philosophy came into being and were conceptually formed" [34].

Within the problematics of our analysis, one of particular relevance is the new trend that the Chinese philosopher calls "**Marxist philosophy as dialectical materialism**". Describing the essence of this modernization project, Sun Weiping notes that its supporters "defend the traditional system of textbooks", because they "take as a model" the "course of dialectical and historical materialism", created "in the 30s of the twentieth century in the USSR" (find it in one of the paragraphs of the fourth chapter of I. V. Stalin's work "History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). Short Course" its first 1938 edition was also published in a separate article on 12 September 1938 in the Party's main newspaper Pravda) [see, 3, p. 116–125; 6, p. 42–50; 32, p. 253–280]. According to the postulates of the orthodox (Stalin-based) project, the "subject of philosophy" pertains to "the boundless material world", and the "understanding of Marxist philosophy is delimited to the fusion of materialism, which mirrors the existence of the material world, and dialectics, which mirrors the dynamics of motion within the material world" [34].

Furthermore, the creators of the above-mentioned theoretical model of modernizing Chinese Marxism on the basis of the Soviet version of the interpretation of *diamat* and *istmat* explicitly or implicitly became hostages of Stalin's idea, which postulates that if "Marxist philosophy is a scientific worldview", then "**it can only be a worldview of dialectical materialism**" [6, p. 47–49; 32, p. 253; 34].

As for the interpretation of *the essence and role of istmat within the framework of the above-mentioned (i.e. "diamat") project*, Sun makes some theoretically important remarks. First of all, he states that the orthodox,

Leninist-Stalinist version of it has no research prospects since it is limited in its possibilities to the study of global and regional processes of social development. For example, revealing the fundamental shortcomings of this approach, the philosopher points out that if the "history of society" is presented "only as a limited sphere of movement of the universe" and, thus, is understood as "an extremely short stage," then the conclusion becomes inevitable, *according to which the theoretical model of historical materialism* (as was characteristic of the axiomatics of the Leninist-Stalinist, as well as post-Stalinist Soviet interpretation) "can only be an extension of *dialectical materialism*" to the *sphere of social life phenomena* [34]⁸. As a result, it turns out that such important, even primary for Chinese Marxism, applied and pragmatic aspects of philosophical knowledge and cognition will be limited to the following prescription: "The theory of practice is only a small part of the view of history and therefore is a component of dialectical materialism" [34].

In his publication, Sun Weiping emphasizes that the project of Marxist philosophy "as *dialectical materialism*" is criticized by Chinese philosophers for being too scientific, abstract, scholastic, and lacking any interest in the problems of human existence. In modern Chinese Marxism, he states, this approach "not only defends the views of traditional textbooks" but also, because of "its conservatism" and "due to its inherent internal contradictions", is subject to "very serious and harsh criticism."

⁸ V.I. Lenin, explaining the content of the concept of "*historical materialism*" in the article "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism" (it was first published in the monthly Bolshevik theoretical legal journal *Prosvita* in 1914), wrote, "**Deepening and developing philosophical materialism, Marx brought it to an end; he extended his knowledge of nature to the knowledge of human society. Marx's historical materialism was the greatest achievement of scientific thought.** *The chaos and arbitrariness that have hitherto prevailed in views on history and politics have been replaced by a strikingly complete and coherent scientific theory that shows how one way of life, due to the growth of productive forces, evolves into another, higher form – capitalism grows out of serfdom, for example.*

Just as human cognition reflects nature, which exists independently of it, that is, a matter that develops, public knowledge of man (i.e., different views and teachings, philosophical, religious, political, etc.) displays the economic system of society. *Political institutions are a superstructure over the economic basis.* We see, for example, how the various political forms of modern European states serve to strengthen the domination of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat (emphasis added, *V. V.*)" [23, p. 44].

Regarding the definition of *ismat* by I.V. Stalin, he, in fact, repeating Lenin's wording, proposed the following definition: "**Historical materialism is the extension of the provisions of dialectical materialism to the study of social life, applying the provisions of dialectical materialism to the phenomena of social life, to the study of society, to the study of the history of society** (emphasis added, *V. V.*)" [32, p. 253].

After critically analyzing the arguments, the researcher concludes that the supporters of the "*diamat project*", which is supposed to be innovative, "disregard the subjectivity of human beings and their significance in their own lives" [34].

In modern Chinese Marxism, he states, this approach "not only defends the views of traditional textbooks" but also, because of "its conservatism" and "due to its inherent internal contradictions", is subject to "very serious and harsh criticism." After critically analyzing the arguments, the researcher concludes that the supporters of the "*diamat project*", which is supposed to be innovative, "disregard the subjectivity of human beings and their significance in their own lives". They do not acknowledge "the importance of choice, creation, and creativity in human life", nor do they consider the impact of their values and freedoms. Therefore, the opponents of this method of rejuvenating Marxism absolutely rightly point out the absence of humanism in it and the focus on solving practical tasks. Ultimately, Sun concludes, the project to modernize Marxist philosophy "*as dialectical materialism*" has no prospects. Mostly because its implementation will not lead to a meaningful and responsible spirit of the era of filling the "doctrine of man" [34].

In theoretical and methodological terms, Sun Weiping notes that the reasons for anti-humanism and, in general, the cognitive limitations of the innovative version of Marxist philosophy (identified with *diamat*) are initially due to the fact that its initiators and adherents, *first*, "present philosophy as „knowledge“ analogous to the scientific theory" and *second*, unify the "view of nature" and "view of society and history" [34].

In addition, in the general theoretical aspect, supporters of the "*diamat*" modernization of Marxism, "ignoring several subjective factors", "especially irrational and psychological ones", become hostages of the scientific and philosophical (almost Cartesian) model of total determinism and rationalism in explaining human activity [34].

Revealing the theoretical weaknesses of such a philosophical concept, Sun critically notes that it "promotes necessity but ignores randomness", and, within the framework of social studies, inevitably comes to the absolutization of the role of the class factor both in the historical process and in the life of an individual.

However, the Chinese philosopher is convinced that "human problems, socio-historical problems, as well as problems of social practice, are not class problems in Marxist philosophy", as they are not "private issues" in it but, on the contrary, "have a general fundamental character, permeate it all." Thus, he claims that the *diamat* deterministic philosophical model proposed by modern Chinese researchers (as a variant of the modernization of orthodox Marxism) is theoretically erroneous and unpromising. Furthermore, *such "philosophy is not on the same level as the philosophical texts of Marx"*. The final assessment of this variant of the philosophical modernization of Marxism by Sun Weiping is highly critical. It goes as follows: **"Without taking into account man and his practical activities, without considering problems from the point of view of subjectivity, without adhering to this principle in philosophy, without taking into account relativism and randomness, it is impossible to create a holistic picture of the world and provide effective theoretical weapons for its transformation** (emphasis added, V. V.)" [34].

In the publications of members of the contemporary professional philosophical community in the PRC, Sun Weiping lists **"Marxist philosophy as historical materialism"** as one of the main directions for modernizing the orthodox Marxist (but still Lenin's and Stalin's) philosophical theoretical model.

Meanwhile, according to our estimates, this approach also cannot be considered innovative or theoretically promising. The only thing that makes it novel is how unorthodox the task at hand is. It narrows down only to the necessity of excluding from the entire set of problems and questions (knowledge and theoretical modeling of the development of nature, society, consciousness, etc.), which have traditionally been the object and subject of Marxist and Marxist-Leninist philosophy (and thus Chinese), the problems of dialectical materialism and limiting the subject area to the study of only the processes of social life. Moreover, this approach requires studying society and its history not in all aspects and manifestations, not in the variety of structural and functional features of subsystems of society, not in the complexity of regularities and multilevel nature of its object-subject relations and interrelations, but exclusively from the standpoint and theoretical-methodological guidelines of Marxist

political economy theory⁹, which in fact is a purely objective-deterministic theoretical model of the functioning and development of society, because according to its postulates and methodology, the role of subjective factors (phenomena of individual and mass consciousness, the influence of the activities of individual (even outstanding for a particular period of history) personalities, etc.¹⁰.

⁹ Here it should be mentioned that V.I. Lenin (although he did not propose a clear and logically complete definition of *istmat*) still formulated a basic theoretical approach and several ideas within the framework of the axiomatics of K. Marx and F. Engels [see, for example, 23, p. 44; 21, p. 50-51, 55-77], which were virtually mandatory in Soviet Marxism until the mid-1960s, *almost imperative prescriptions, or instructions*. And the most significant thing, in this case, was that Lenin (who was recognized as the undisputed scientific authority for Soviet Marxists and party ideologists) began the tradition and became the founder of the tendency to interpret both the concept and functional purpose of historical materialism through the postulation that *istmat*, in its essence and philosophical genesis, was proclaimed a materialistic completion of *diamat* upwards." He (the Russian successor of Marx and Engels's life work) emphasized that *istmat* is primarily the application of the *diamat* methodology of knowledge, principles, and laws of materialistic dialectics to the scientific understanding and explanation of the entire history of human society, its fundamental processes, and its basic subsystems (economic, social, political, legal, spiritual, and cultural, etc.). Lenin also created a theoretical framework, or method, that was adopted by Soviet Marxists as the *standard* for their analysis of society's fundamental nature and its entire history. The main difference, a distinguishing trait of Lenin's strategy, was that it was founded on the use of axioms and the categorical apparatus of Marxism's political-economic theory rather than on the theoretical and ideological instructions and models developed in socio-philosophical or philosophical-historical teachings.

Although V.I. Lenin was not a theoretical innovator in Marxism, he did advocate for this approach (whose *fundamental analytical prescription is economic determinism*) to understand and explain the logic of the world-historical process and social life. He only developed his basic ideas and principles regarding the conditions and features of the world and the Russian socio-economic and political processes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, whereas the postulates of Marxist social science's "*economic determinism*", in their laconic essence, were formulated by F. Engels. In general, it is important to remember that the creators of Marxism did not use the term "*historical materialism*" as a scientific concept or category of their social and political-philosophical teaching. Engels's comments to his book "The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science" (this work, as a concentrated presentation of the two chapters of "Socialism" from Engels' "Anti-During," was written at the request of Paul Lafargue to popularize the ideas of scientific socialism in France and published as a separate booklet in Paris in 1880) in the introduction to the English publication (1892) can serve as an explanation in this case. In it, F. Engels noted, "...I hope that British respectability will not be too outraged if I use in English, as in many other languages, the *expression "historical materialism" to denote that view of the course of world history that finds the ultimate cause and decisive force of all important historical events in the economic development of society, in changing the method of production and exchange, in the division of society into classes, which comes from here, and from the struggle of these classes with themselves* (emphasis added, *V. I.*)" [39, p. 305–306].

¹⁰ After Marxism became the dominant ideological trend in European political thought in the last quarter of the 19th century, as well as the influential ideological doctrine of European and Russian social democracy, many of its ideological leaders began to criticise the Marxist teaching for allegedly absolutizing the role of objective factors and patterns (economic basis, system of industrial relations, etc.) in the processes of functioning and development of society. For this reason, F. Engels (already after the death of K. Marx) was forced at the end of the 19th century to give additional theoretical clarifications and oppose the accusations of Marxism of total "economic determinism."

Thus, concisely characterizing the essence of the basic research attitude of those Chinese philosophers who set out to modernize Marxist philosophy by creating a concept of "historical materialism" from it, Sun Weiping writes, "Proponents of this approach argue that Marx concretized „practice“ to the practice of productive labour and, on this basis, to the practice of humanity, and through this, he created historical materialism. In *their opinion, only modern practice, based on the material development of a particular historical and real society, is the true beginning of Marx's new worldview. Marx's materialism reveals the movement of human history through the movement of the economy; the sense of the „new reading of Marx,“ the „return to Marx,“ is not a simple commentary on Marx's texts but a new clarification of the value of his ideas in accordance with the movement of the history of modern society* (emphasis added, V. V.)" [34].

Indeed, K. Marx (of course, with the active participation of F. Engels, who is often forgotten or not known by philosophers of the 21st century as well as Marxists) created a theoretical model of world history that defined social development as a progressive, natural, and intentional change in socio-economic formations completely determined by the interaction and revolutionary resolution of contradictions between the productive forces of society and the production relations existing in it (property, exchange, distribution, and consumption). With the help of such a theoretical construction or modelling of the processes of social life, the founders of Marxism identified and characterised the primitive communal, slave-owning, feudal, capitalist, and communist formations (with two phases – socialism and communism itself) in the history of mankind.

First of all, these include his "Letters on Historical Materialism" [for example, their special edition, 40], written in 1890–1894 by such influential European political thinkers and ideologists as K. Schmidt, I. Bloch, F. Mehring, and V. Borgius. (Engels's letters are published in volumes 37 and 39 of the 2nd edition of The Collected Works of K. Marx and F. Engels.) It should be mentioned here that the "father" of Russian Marxism and the social democratic movement in Russia, G.V. Plekhanov, spoke out against the accusations of Marxism in economic reductionism or determinism in modelling socio-historical processes at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. In particular, regarding the Marxist interpretation of social determinism, the following works are of theoretical significance: "On the Question of the Role of the Individual in History" (first published in 1898); "A Little Bit about History"; "On the Economic Factor. Final Edition", "On the Materialistic Understanding of History" [see 28], which had a great influence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries on the formation of philosophical ideas and political beliefs of both Western European and Russian Marxists, determined the nature and direction of ideational polemics between numerous ideological trends in Marxism and the social democratic movement.

However, Marx and Engels focused their in-depth and detailed analysis on the earliest communal, feudal, and capitalist formations. Although the revolutionary transition from capitalist society to the first stage of the communist formation (socialism), as well as the objective and historical logic of the construction, operation, and development of communist society, were only briefly discussed in their writings. They were characterised primarily by ideas about the ideal organisation of social life. In fact, there are only a few fairly abstract draft essays on the theoretical vision of the method or cause-and-effect mechanism of building a communist society, a system of principles and norms of its functioning (social, economic, political, moral, etc.), to be found in the writings of the founders of Marxism (first and foremost, in F. Engels' 1947 "Principles of Communism" and the jointly written 1848 "Manifesto of the Communist Party"). Therefore, it should be emphasized that V.I. Lenin and his Marxist followers in Russia and in the USSR, when describing the theoretical achievements of K. Marx and F. Engels in creating a revolutionary socio-political teaching that justified the collapse of bourgeois society and the objective historical inevitability of its revolutionary transition to a communist socio-economic formation, stated in their works that **the founders of Marxism did not create a theory of scientific communism** (as was done in the Soviet Union during the second half of the 1960s-1970s), but **"the theory of scientific socialism."**¹¹

It is important to remember, underline, and place an important theoretical emphasis *on the fact that Lenin's concept of "scientific socialism" in relation to Marxism was finally and entirely replaced by the concept of "scientific communism" in Soviet social studies and political-ideological discourses after the XXII Congress of the CPSU (1961)* [see, for example, 12, p. 53–71; 45, p. 48–54]. **It became the only basic concept in Marxist-Leninist theory of social development and the political and ideological doctrine of the CPSU.**

From an ideological standpoint, it makes perfect sense that the ideational construct and concept of "*scientific communism*" emerged in Soviet social studies and was later actively developed by social scientists, even evolving into a holistic theory that served as the main foundation for the party doctrine

¹¹ Let us give a convincing example from Lenin's 1909 work, "The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion." In it, V.I. Lenin puts emphasis on the following, "**Social democracy** (including Lenin's RSDLP(B) party, *V. V.*) **builds its worldview on scientific socialism**, that is, **Marxism** (emphasis added, *V. V.*)" [22, p. 415].

and strategic programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. *First of all*, this was yet another affirmation that the Marxist-Leninist theory of communism was not a utopia, as all pre-Marxian conceptually formed notions about socialist and communist society were. *Second*, this was a sort of public declaration by the Soviet party and ideological hierarchs that Stalin's stage of constructing socialism (or "socialism in general") in the USSR was over and the next organic *stage* (or, more precisely, a phase, in the terminology of the founders of Marxism, V.I. Lenin and Soviet Marxists) of the development of ***one communist socio-economic formation*** – *building the socio-economic foundation of communism* – had begun. *Third*, Marxist-Leninist philosophy has always positioned itself as "***ideological science and scientific ideology***", so the use of the concept of "scientific communism" did not allow any doubt that the process of creating a communist society in the USSR would be based not on the fantasies or dreams of communists, and above all, on the leadership of the CPSU of the Khrushchev period, but solely on the basis of scientific knowledge about society, on the objective laws of its entire history that are known and scientifically-theoretically understood by Marxists.

In order to provide a scientific assessment of the political history of the USSR, it is important to recall that the ideologeme and theoretical concept of "scientific communism" started to be actively used and promoted in the official program documents of the CPSU, in the speeches of its leaders, and during the Khrushchev, post-Stalin and anti-Stalin epochs. For example, in the Resolution of the Extraordinary XXI Congress of the CPSU (from January 27 to February 5, 1959), it was stated: "The strength of the Communist Party lies in its loyalty to Marxism-Leninism, in the creative application and development of the theory of scientific communism" [17, p. 421]. In his address to the XXII Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (1961), which traditionally served as a report of the CPSU central committee, First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, N. S. Khrushchev, used a similar formulation. "Our party's strength resides in the fact that it has been able to unite in its revolutionary and transformative actions the theory and practice of scientific communism," Khrushchev said in it [27, p. 125]. And, for example, in the new program of the party adopted by the XXII Congress of the CPSU, it was stated that the party was publicly called "**the party of scientific communism**" [31, p. 546].

Additionally, since the end of the 1950s, "*the founders of Marxism*" (after Stalin, these were thought to be only Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Vladimir I. Lenin in the Soviet philosophical and sociological communities and, above all, in the political and ideological discourse) have also started to be called the "*creators of scientific communism*" in party publications and speeches by the Communist Party of the USSR leaders. Though it is important to note that neither in their political and ideological teachings nor in their social and philosophical analysis, the classics of Marxism themselves did not use the concept of "*scientific communism*."

The development and introduction of "scientific communism" as a basic component of Soviet social theory and political doctrine can be associated with M.S. Khrushchev, and above all, an influential ideologist in the Politburo of the CPSU, M.A. Suslov [see, for example, 12, p. 54–64; 16; 33; 42, p. 48–54], as well as with the initiatives of a new generation of philosophers, historians, and sociologists – future influential scientists and leaders of leading scientific academic institutes – Yu.P. Frantseva, M.M. Rutkevych, O.M. Kovalov, academicians and social scientists P.M. Fedosieieva, and O.M. Rumiantseva. In their minds, "*scientific communism*" would be comparable to "*socialist society change theories*" or "*sociological science*", *but without sociological data but with a forecast of the near future*. This, in their opinion, was what you needed to know about Soviet society in order to participate in its final transformation into a communist one. It is not for nothing that the third program of the party, adopted at the XXII Congress of the CPSU in 1961, finally gave a detailed definition of communism" [cited by 33]¹².

In general, in order to fully evaluate the factors that led to the emergence of "scientific communism" as a field of social studies and an compulsory

¹² **The definition of communism** was first formally put forth in 1961 in the CPSU program at the state level. It read: "Communism is a classless social system with a single national ownership of the means of production and full social equality of all members of society, where, together with the comprehensive development of people, productive forces will grow on the basis of constantly developing science and technology, all societal wealth-generating resources will be in full flow, and the principle "from everyone according to their ability, to every one according to their needs" will be achieved." "Communism is a highly organized society of free and conscious workers, in which public self-government will be established, work for the benefit of society will be the first vital need for everyone, and as a conscious necessity, everyone's abilities will be used to the greatest benefit for the people" [31, p. 544].

academic discipline¹³, it is important to keep in mind that in the early 1960s "the request for political science came from above in the Soviet Union, from people who were closely involved in political practice" (interests of the CPSU Central Committee Presidium members, ideas and convictions of young, proactive consultants of the CPSR Central Committee apparatus, and in the future, notable political scientists like R. Shakhnazarov or F. Burlatsky, who were involved in the creation of the new 1961 party program) And, first and foremost, it was "about global changes in the entire state's social and political life," and "this required science to justify the transformation" of the dictatorial, pro-cultural, totalitarian state" of the Stalin era "into a modern, civilized, and democratic" [15, p. 170].

As a branch of socio-political studies, "*scientific communism*", had its own object, subject, tasks, functions, and so on. Within the framework of Marxism-Leninism, Soviet Marxism was typically, though not without ideological pathos, understood and defined as a theory that "logically completes the other two parts of Marxism – the philosophy and political economy of socialism and communism – and organically connects them

Political science researchers and individuals who are not familiar with the history and postulates of the Soviet party doctrine should be aware that the most recent explanation made by the CPSU is contained in the "new edition" of the Party's program. It was adopted at the beginning of the "perestroika" period in the USSR by the XXVII Congress in 1986; it proclaimed the following in an optimistically utopian and abstractly-humanistic way: "Communism is a classless social system with a single national ownership of the means of production, full social equality of all members of society, where, together with the comprehensive development of people, productive forces will grow on the basis of constantly developing science and technology, all societal wealth-generating resources will be in full flow, and the principle "from everyone according to their ability, to everyone – according to their needs" will be achieved. "Communism is a highly organized society of free and conscious workers, in which public self-government will be established, work for the benefit of society will be the first vital need for everyone, and as a conscious necessity, everyone's abilities will be used to the greatest benefit for the people" [25, p. 138].

As a result, when compared to the 1961 definition, the "new" (1986) redaction of the CPSU program actually maintained the same definition of the key components of communism. A new feature was added to the definition of communist society: "*public self-government will be established,*" and instead of the wording: "using the abilities of each *with the greatest fullness* for the people", a similar paraphrase of their social application was proposed: "*with the greatest benefit*".

¹³ Modern Russian and some Western researchers (in particular, Paul Carter) consider M. Suslov's speech at the All-Union Meeting of Heads of Social Sciences Departments on January 30, 1962 as the initial administrative impulse in the process of the emergence of "scientific communism" as an educational discipline in the higher education system of the USSR, where he, in particular, proclaimed, "Shouldn't we instruct the Ministry of Higher Education, the Academy of Sciences, Philosophy, History, Economics, and the Academy of Social Sciences institutes under the Central Committee of the CPSU, with departments involved, to now practically engage in thorough preparation for teaching independent courses in universities on the foundations of scientific communism, developing course programs and preparing a textbook?" [cited by 33].

with the movement of the masses of the people fighting for communism"; a branch of social studies that has its own subject of research and "does not merge with either historical materialism or political economy"; "the science of the laws of the class struggle of the proletariat and the socialist revolution, about strategy and tactics of the class struggle and dictatorship of the proletariat, ways and methods of building socialism and communism"; "socio-political science that "gives a complete picture of communist society, characteristics of the phases and stages of its development" [37, c. 496].

Another illustration of the typical definition of "scientific communism" that has been put forth in scientific and reference works, particularly in numerous Soviet textbooks, manuals, and scientific and methodological publications, is the following: "Scientific communism is an integral part of Marxism-Leninism. It studies the patterns of the development of the world revolutionary process and the regularities of the emergence and development of the Communist formation as the highest stage of human progress. These patterns determine the main content of social changes of our epoch – the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism and communism... **Marxist-Leninist** teaching and coherent *system of philosophical, economic, and socio-political views* that complement each other. Only the sum of all these viewpoints offers a theoretical foundation for addressing the issues posed by the revolutionary transformation of society. **In a broad sense, scientific communism (or its equivalent, scientific socialism) is in its essence Marxism-Leninism** (emphasis added, V. V.)" [26, p. 3–4].

Giving a general assessment of the "*istmat project*" for the further renewal of Chinese Marxism, it must be admitted that if the goal was to modernize the philosophy of Marxism by turning it *only into the "theory of historical materialism"*, then this would not be a "revival of Marx", but a repetition of the postulates of Lenin and Stalin. After all, it was in their works, treated as absolute truth in the Soviet Union and largely in the Chinese philosophy and social sciences of the late 1930s and early 1960s, that the postulates and theoretical-methodological attitudes of cognition and explanation of socio-historical processes were formulated not on the basis of classical standards, categorical apparatus, and methodology of socio-philosophical or philosophical-historical studies but solely on the basis of guidelines, axiomatics, and senses-meanings of the concepts of the theory of political economy of Marxism, including some political-ideological prescriptions of the CPSU or CPC doctrine.

The Chinese researcher himself highlights yet another significant flaw and theoretical restriction in *the project's implementation of reducing the entirety of Marxist philosophy to a single conception of historical materialism*. He emphasises, "The project of „historical materialism“ is criticised for the superiority of its one side at the expense of the whole. Yes, if Marxist philosophy is historical materialism, then what should we do with its view of nature, dialectics, epistemology, and the theory of values? How to put them in the system? In response to this criticism, the project's supporters put forth the concept of „historical materialism“ in a broad sense as a way to explain philosophical systems pertaining to the existence of the universe, nature, and society. But is it possible to create „historical materialism in a broad sense?“ If its very content has gone beyond the socio-historical approach, then what is the point of sticking to the category of „historical materialism?“ [34].

Sun Weiping identifies and generalises a number of other innovative tendencies in addition to the unpromising trend or direction of Chinese Marxism's revitalization within the framework of Lenin and Stalin's and, more broadly, Soviet Marxist-Leninist *diamat and istmat* paradigms. Some of them are similar to those that were characteristic of Soviet Marxist philosophical thought/science in the second half of the 1960s and 1980s [see for example, 2, p. 94–107; 3, p. 116–139; 6, p. 43–49; 7, p. 35–44; 44, p. 44–54]. First of all, such tendencies and programmes include those that the Chinese philosopher gives the names of "Marxist philosophy as a doctrine of man, "Marxist philosophy as „practical materialism“, "Marxist philosophy as „practical anthropologism“, and Marxist philosophy as the „philosophy of values“ [34].

Summarizing all of the above, it should only be noted that of the eight projects identified and analyzed by Sun Weiping, which are now proposed during the intensification of the process of rejuvenation of philosophy and the complex of social sciences in the PRC, the developers of two of them propose not a correction of Marxist teaching based on the ideas, methodology, and conceptual apparatus of Western Marxism but a radical transformation of its ideational-theoretical foundations that is based on the postulates and methodological prescriptions of those non-Marxist conceptions and teachings that have gained popularity in the West over the past century. After all, their real goal is to transform Marxism and orthodox Marxism-Leninism

by directly borrowing from theoretical and methodological prescriptions, ideas, ideals, and values that are incompatible with it or even alternative to it (in fact, anti-Marxist). Or, in other terms, they propose a reform of Marxist teaching based on axiomatics and the system of values that are system-forming in some popular and influential trends and schools in Western (actually, not Marxist) philosophical thought of the late 19th and first half of the 20th century. As for the names of these innovative or modernising fields, Sun Weiping suggests the following names, which have now been put forth by members of the Chinese philosophical and social science community: "*Marxist philosophy as the philosophy of life*", and "*Marxist philosophy – the philosophy of existence* (that is, existentialism. –V. V.)" [34].

In general, it should be admitted that the processes and projects of rejuvenation described above can recreate the situation and processes that manifested themselves in Soviet Marxism-Leninism (especially in the second half of the 1980s). These processes are characterized as a Westernization of Chinese Marxism and occasionally as a rather radical reforming of its paradigmatic version (according to the logic of the idea of "*returning to Marx*", under the slogans "*de-Stalinization*", "*Leninization*"), reorientation to the problematics, and compliance with the standards that were attributable to the Western Marxist and non-Marxist philosophical thought of the 20th century. Namely, to *strengthen and actively stimulate the tendency of increasing ideological and value convergence*¹⁴ of Chinese Marxist philosophy and social studies, not so much with conceptions

¹⁴ Here, a philosopher's personal preferences and expectations are frequently just as important as his scientific and theoretical beliefs or their area of research. For instance, the founder of the Kyiv Worldview School and eminent Soviet philosopher P.V. Kopnin, who supported the convergence theories, was described as holding the following beliefs by the Ukrainian philosopher historian P. Yolon, "Kopnin believed that while both capitalism and Soviet-style socialism lack a historical perspective, they both have significant positive and negative features. The truth is somewhere in the middle. The main flaw in the Soviet model of socialism, according to Pavel Kopnin, was that it did not allow for individual freedom or democracy and, as a result, could not create the conditions for the progressive development of society. He argued for some form of socialism and capitalism's convergence. The Society of the future must absorb all the best that has been produced by each of these socio-economic formations: from socialism – an improved socio-economic system, taking into account the experience of capitalism, based on public property and the principle of social justice; from the capitalist system – historically developed norms of human rights and democratic forms of government. **This new society should be nothing else, than democratic socialism. In the Soviet Union, according to Pavel Kopnin's conviction, the processes of democratic transformations in internal party life and their subsequent extrapolation to society as a whole were supposed to be the beginning of the formation of such a society** (emphasis added, V. V.). The element of utopianism was clearly inherent in these expectations" [18, p. 69].

developed by Western Marxists but with non-Marxist or pseudo-Marxist philosophical teachings and sociological and political-philosophical theories that were created and became popular in Western Europe and the United States. First of all, this concerns the conceptions of socialism, democracy, political power, and elites, as well as the ideologeme (and, as it has now become clear, in many ways the mythologeme) of liberalism and globalism.

5. Conclusions

According to the content of publications of representatives of the modern scientific community of philosophers and researchers of politics in the PRC, their interpretations and theoretical assessments of the complex processes of development of Marxism in this republic, including modelling and forecasting possible and necessary trends in its rejuvenation or reforming, are limited in the subject area by the national (that is, Chinese) specifics. It is known as *Sinicized Marxism* in China and other countries.

A significant theoretical, methodological and historical-philosophical disadvantage of this approach is that the genesis of Marxist teaching (in its philosophical and political components) is studied in the PRC to a large extent independently, regardless of the innovative and influential trends, and schools in Marxism that were formed in the USSR, as well as in Europe and the United States since the second half of the twentieth century. Therefore, efforts to comprehend the fundamentals and origins of general and socio-philosophical Marxist theory within the context of wholly intra-Chinese discourse, particularly within the history of socialist China, frequently result in the fact that various projects for the modernization of Chinese or Sinicized Marxism are concentrated only on modernizing its orthodox Leninist-Stalinist and, in fact, the official Soviet model of the middle of the last century, which was traditionally called Marxism-Leninism. *This means that efforts to modernize the Marxism developed in their country by Chinese scientists are being made without taking into account the many late Soviet, post-Soviet, and Western ideational, theoretical, methodological, and ideological innovations in Marxism itself*, which became a denial of primitivism, scholasticism, and its orthodoxy and were focused on its adaptation to the realities, current challenges, and demands of the modern world.

Of course, the unique political history of China in the last century manifested itself in the fact that Stalin's model of Marxist philosophy, which

was based on dialectical and historical materialism, was transformed by the end of the 1970s in this country not just into a paradigm in philosophy and social studies but into a metanarrative. It prevailed in the system of philosophical and socio-political knowledge and cognition in China (which was isolated from external ideational) influences and was subject to great pressure and restrictions from the doctrinal political-ideological imperatives and guidelines of the Communist Party authorities.

Therefore, in the process of implementing the socio-economic and political strategy of the CPC, based on the principles of a market economy and the norms of a liberalized system of political representation (that is, at the stage of building socialism, as well as socialist culture with Chinese characteristics and in conditions of openness to the Western world and its values), the scientific community of philosophers and political scientists in the PRC quite naturally faced the problem of modernizing conservative and orthodox Marxist-Leninist teaching. The fundamental issue was that, while it was politically and ideologically impossible to abandon Marxist doctrine, Stalin's interpretation was completely outdated because it was unable to (ideologically) justify the CCP's goals and objectives for fundamental and extensive socialist and democratic (*partially liberal*) transformations in China.

The solution to this problem required, *first*, critical comprehension and reassessment of the achievements and disadvantages of orthodox Marxism (i.e., *Leninist-Stalinist diamat-istmat model of the "textbook system"*) in the form in which it functioned and dominated in China during Mao's time. *Second*, the creation of rejuvenation projects of *Chinese/Sinicized* Marxism (as Sun Weiping clearly showed), as well as the trends in the development of Marxism-Leninism in the USSR in the 1960s and 1980s [2, p. 94–107; 3, p. 116–139; 7, p. 35–44; 8, p. 60–94; 44, p. 44–54], could only be carried out through minor corrections, that is, its structural transformation, thematic innovation, and some ideational borrowings from non-Marxist philosophical teachings of the twentieth century. *Third*, it was believed that a non-radical, even apologetic, way of reading and interpreting Chinese Marxism's non-standard, nationally oriented interpretation would solve the issue of modernizing it. This, in turn, required «*a new name*» to fix its uniqueness in comparison to other variations of Marxist teaching. As numerous authors demonstrate in their publications, the essence of this strategy rests in the recognition of Chinese Marxism as a theory with the capacity for ongoing

modernization and immanent development [4, p. 12–16; 9, p. 58–75; 20, p. 11–142; 24; 38; 41, p. 187–196, 203–212; 43, p. 709–82]. In general, the solution to the problem was reduced to the fact that Chinese Marxism began to be interpreted as a special, national variation of Marxist teaching. The notion of "*Sinicized Marxism*" was introduced into scientific discourse and made widely known in literature and political party documents in order to support the theoretical validity and argumentation of this.

Fourth, the latest, more radical, and, above all, pro-Western conceptual position of modern Chinese Marxists (mostly philosophers, partly social scientists), on the basis of which it can also be proved that Marxism should have exclusively national forms or varieties, is based on the already corrected, common theoretical and methodological principle. It proclaims and states that, as a result of its scientific research and due to Western Marxism, *researchers in the PRC* in the late 1980s and 1990s clearly **"realized that due to differences in historical conditions and their changes, modern Marxist philosophy must exist in various forms** (emphasis added, V. V.)." Or, as the authors of the article "*Western Marxist Philosophy in China. Logic of Changes and Research Topics*" emphasize, "We, as Chinese scientists, find the following words of Chen Xuemin to be very important: "*Marxist theoretical workers must be convinced that **Marxism is unity in diversity***", and Chinese philosophers (as well as social scientists) "must strive for unity while maintaining differences, reject all internal non-essential disputes, direct all efforts on the presentation of the modern meaning of Marxism, move forward to rejuvenate Marxism on the basis of combining theory and practice (first of all, by analyzing real conditions, processes and main tendencies in the development of our own national society, politics and culture. – V. V.)" [38].

In addition, it should be noted that in contrast to late Soviet and post-Soviet Western studies, contemporary Chinese general philosophical and historical-philosophical works devoted to the analysis of the processes and prospects for the development of Marxism in the PRC and the determination of the tasks of its further reformation are characterized by their purportedly de-ideologized nature, conventional, formal scientism, or scientific-like character. It manifests itself in the fact that philosophers and researchers of politics in China, interpreting the postulates and methodological foundations of Marxist teaching and especially the specifics of the history

and theory of Marxism in this country, almost openly declare or avoid clear ideological assessments of Chinese Marxism, personal political sympathies, and preferences (as it was, for example, in the USSR during the declared strategy of "perestroika").

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