

The origin and influence on sinicization of Marxism by scholars of Harvard University

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Abstract: Since the 1940s, scholars of Harvard University represented by John King Fairbank, Macfarquhar, Benjamin I. Schwartz have created the characteristic research field of overseas sinicization of Marxism. They have conducted in-depth and systematic research on sinicization of Marxism from the perspective of international scholars, and achieved a series of research results with great academic and social influence. The research of Harvard scholars involves various aspects of the sinicization of Marxism. Because their research is the representative results of examining the application and development of Marxism in China based on the ideology, values and political experience of westerners, it can provide reference for the research and discipline development of the sinicization of Marxism in China. Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to clarify the original features and core issues of the study of sinicization of Marxism by Harvard scholars.

Key Word: Study on the sinicization of Marxism by Harvard Scholars; Original context; Core ideas; Academic and social impact.

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Since the 1940s, scholars of Harvard University represented by Fairbank, Macfarquhar, Benjamin I. Schwartz have created the characteristic research field of overseas sinicization of Marxism. They have conducted in-depth and systematic research on sinicization of Marxism from the perspective of international scholars, and achieved a series of research results with great academic and social influence. This paper intends to start with the basic problems of the study on the sinicization of Marxism by Harvard scholars, and provide useful reference for further deepening the related research work by repositioning and explaining some core issues.

I. RE-EXCAVATION OF THE ORIGINAL CONTEXT ON MARXISM SINICIZATION BY HARVARD SCHOLARS

The research of Marxism Sinicization at Harvard University has a long history. Benjamin I. Schwartz formally put forward the concept of Maoism in his published monograph "Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao". His research was "the first scholarly account of Mao" ^{[1][17]} in abroad. The establishment of the Fairbank Center for East Asian Studies at Harvard University in 1955 marked the formation of the research on the Chinese Communist Party and Marxism Sinicization. Scholars at Harvard have formed a research tradition around the history of the Communist Party of China, the construction of the party, the evaluation of historical figures, the ruling law of the party and so on. Although this process has ups and downs, it has continued to this day. It is of great significance to rediscover the original features of the study of Marxism sinicization at Harvard University for a thorough understanding of the whole context of the study and the understanding of foreign scholars on Chinese ideology.

The sinicization of Marxism studied by Harvard scholars is not only a sensitive practical problem, but also an academic issue with political color. After the founding of the Communist Party of China, its international influence has been expanding, which has gradually attracted the attention of the international academic circles. In order to study the Communist Party of China in depth, with the support of the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation and even the U.S. Department of Defense and other government departments, Harvard scholars such as Fairbank established the Center for East Asian Studies at Harvard University, which focuses on Chinese communism and Chinese Communist Party research. The research center is an important academic center for the study of Marxism sinicization overseas, which is the inevitable result of the integration of specific political and academic factors. ^[2]

II. ANALYSIS OF CORE VIEWPOINTS ON SINICIZATION OF MARXISM BY HARVARD SCHOLARS

Harvard scholars' study of sinicization of Marxism lies in the study of Chinese communist movement and the Communist Party of China. Harvard scholars have deeply studied the organization, theory, reform and history of the Communist Party of China. The main body of sinicization of marxism is just the Chinese communist party, and the theory construction of the Chinese communist party mainly refers to the sinicization of marxism. The core problem of the initial origin of the study of Marxism sinicization by Harvard scholars is how to view the theoretical essence of Marxism sinicization.

2.1 Study on the relationship between the sinicization of Marxism and orthodox Marxism

Harvard scholars of Chinese studies basically hold a liberal critical attitude towards Marxism. Schwartz believed that Mao Zedong was not a Marxist, and some of the basic principles of Marxism were wrong. He declared openly that "I believe in political liberalism"^[3]. Harvard scholars study and criticize Marxism from a liberal standpoint. The relationship between Mao Zedong Thought and Marxism is the core issue in the study of Marxism Sinicization overseas. The "Maoism" could be traced back to Fairbank's America and China in 1948, in which he clearly pointed out that there was "Anomaly" in Marxism, which took the peasant movement as the class foundation of the revolution.^[4]²⁶ Based on the "heresies" of Fairbank's Chinese revolution, Schwartz proposed the term "Maoism" in his doctoral thesis *Communism in China Until the Rise of Mao*. He believed that the essence of "Maoism" was "a party that believes in the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and is founded in accordance with the principles of Leninism, which is based on a pure peasant movement"^[5]. The theory of "heresy" mistakenly defines the innovation and transformation of Marxism-Leninism by Mao Zedong and other Communists as the deviation and heresy. Fairbank, Schwartz and other harvard scholars didn't realize the essence of Marxism Sinicization is the absorption and development of Marxism by Chinese ideology and culture, and did not fully realize the integration and innovation of Chinese communism with Marxism. The essence of "Maoism" is the creative application of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism by Chinese Communists and Chinese communism.

2.2 Harvard scholars' understanding of the sinicization of Marxism and the study of Chin's path and model

The sinicization of Marxism is to combine the basic principles of Marxism with the practice of Chinese revolution, construction and reform, and it is the concrete application and development of Marxism theory in China. The process of sinicization of Marxism is also the process of exploring the Chinese mode and the Chinese road. In his book "China Observation" published in 1987, Fairbank clearly stated that "no foreign country can provide China with a model, and Chinese people must create their own model"^[6]. Harvard scholars believe that China should go its own way, because China has a unique historical and cultural background, and the American model of modernization and democratic politics is not suitable for China. This is the conclusion drawn by Fairbank after examining all the revolutions and reforms in China over the past one hundred years. In Fairbank's view, the thought that the western democratic model is universal reflects the narrowness of western politics, which is rooted in the false belief of denying the "scientific universalism" that specializes in "regional" research. Fairbank saw the shortcomings of the western model and criticized those who advocated the American model in China.^[7] Goldman, a researcher at Harvard's Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, and Andrew James Nathan of Columbia University, believed Deng Xiaoping struck the right path. "In the second half of the 20th century, China's communist leaders tried a variety of development models in China, however, until the days of MAO era, the communist party of China embarked on a road that coordinated historical traditions and realistic experiences and faced the reality of East Asia's development, China really took a path which has led to the prosperity and has the world influence"^[8]. Harvard scholars see a new model of Chinese characteristics created by the Chinese Communists with Deng Xiaoping as its core.

III. THE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE SINICIZATION OF MARXISM BY HARVARD SCHOLARS

The study of sinicization of Marxism by Harvard University scholars is the reflection of the attraction and cohesion of socialist core values and ideology in the western academic circles, and an important window for western countries to understand the ideology, values and political system of contemporary China and the Communist Party of China. Just as the famous American scholar A. Doak Barnett said, "China-US relations are affected by the intricacies of geopolitics, political security, military security, ideology, culture, politics, economy and other factors."^[9] After decades of development, the sinicization of Marxism by Harvard scholars has great academic and social influence.

The study of sinicization of Marxism at Harvard University has formed a relatively independent

professional research and teaching group. Fairbank founded the Center for East Asian Studies at Harvard University, later renamed the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, which focused on Chinese communism and the Communist Party of China. For more than 70 years, Harvard University has witnessed the continuous growth of its research team in the field of Chinese studies. It has also trained a large number of teaching and research talents in contemporary Chinese research for many renowned universities and research institutions. Professor MacFarquhar pointed out that Fairbank separated the Chinese studies from Orientalism in the 1940s, “really highlighted the study of contemporary Chinese history from the general historical studies and gave American students the opportunity to enter such a professional field of study”^[10]. Fairbank and other Harvard scholars have trained hundreds of professionals for Chinese Communist Studies in the United States. Among them, Benjamin I. Schwartz and MacFarquhar became the backbone of Harvard University. Benjamin I. Schwartz is a famous American historian, political scientist and expert on Chinese issues. MacFarquhar is one of the world’s leading experts on contemporary Chinese studies and one of the founders of *China Quarterly*. Stuart R. Schram did postdoctoral research on the Communist Party issues in the 1960s at Harvard University Center for East Asian Studies, where his early representative work, *Mao Zedong’s Political Thought* (1963) was the subject of research. Since the establishment of Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University, it has pioneered and developed the research on Chinese Communist party in west countries. These scholars have studied and taught on the nature, history, construction, theory, politics, diplomatic and other related issues of the Chinese Communist Party, which have produced fruitful academic achievements and had great influence on the international Chinese research community.

The Chinese studies of Fairbank and other Harvard scholars have promoted the development of Sino-US relations to some extent. After the retreat of McCarthyism, Fairbank and others put forward the proposition of recognizing the new China. In the 1960s, experts on China and international issues such as A. Doak Barnett, Fairbank and Benjamin I. Schwartz expressed their views on developing relations with China at a series of “China Hearings” meetings. Fairbank testified that “After more than ten years of construction, the People’s Republic of China, which was born in 1949, has under changed greatly in all aspects and greatly improved its status in the world. The US policy of isolation and blockade has no effect. It should not isolate or blockade China in the future, but take the initiative to engage with China. Engagement with China will not only pose no threat to the United States, but also help the United States solve the intractable problem of the Vietnam War.”^[11] He urged the American government to establish diplomatic relations with New China. Fairbank, Benjamin I. Schwartz, Ezra F. Vogel and other well-known Chinese studies scholars wrote a letter to Richard Milhous Nixon proposing to recognize China and to send envoys to visit China in secret. Nixon’s visit to China and the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States fulfilled the Harvard scholars’ advice on the American government towards China policy. The suggestions of Harvard scholars have played an important role in the development of Sino-US relations in terms of consultation and public opinion, and produced a positive and far-reaching impact.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the field of contemporary Chinese studies abroad, the related research on the sinicization of Marxism has always been the focus of academic circles. Based on their own political stand, theoretical background, academic preferences and subjective feelings, foreign scholars have published a large number of research works on the sinicization of Marxism, which constitute the enduring “academic hotscape” of contemporary Chinese studies abroad. In a word, we should absorb the right place and criticize the wrong ideas from the research of the sinicization of Marxism by Harvard scholars, so as to gradually form an international environment for the development of the communist party of China and the socialism with Chinese characteristics, which is exactly what the overseas Marxism sinicization research wants to achieve.

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