

Deeply Elucidating Self-Correction Capability of the Communist Party of China To Enhance Theoretical Criticism of Historical Nihilism

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Abstract: The greatness of the Communist Party of China (CPC) does not lie in its avoidance of mistakes but in its strong self-correction capability, in that, it has never concealed its mistakes for fear of criticism. This scientific conclusion is made on the basis of the historical background, which has a profound theoretical logic, value logic, institutional logic and practical logic.

1. Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a great clamor around historical nihilism, which has seriously corroded the spiritual world of Party members and cadres, and masses, and caused extremely negative influence. Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the People's Republic of China, points out, "The purpose of historical nihilism is to fundamentally deny the guiding position of Marxism and historical necessity of China to head towards socialism, and deny the leadership of the Communist Party of China."^[1] If historical nihilism kept sprawling without any restrictions, the consequences would be hard to imagine. Over these years, some theory researchers have consciously upheld the banner of historical materialism to resist against and criticize historical nihilism with a firm and clear stance. These researchers play a critically important role in restoring the truth of history and dispelling ideological confusions.

The essence of historical nihilism is to look at history from the idealistic view of history. One prominent reflection is "partial denial and partial affirmation", that is, to repeatedly mention and willfully exaggerate some mistakes made by the CPC in history so as to take a part for the whole and achieve the ulterior political purpose. In fact, there has not yet been a party in the world that can avoid making mistakes, and the CPC is no exception. But to make mistakes is something to be dread of. What matter is whether the party can immediately discover its mistakes, take the courage to admit its mistakes, and know how to correct its mistakes. All this constitutes the linchpin to maintaining the super adaptability and vigor of the party. A major gap of the current theoretical criticism is that some theory researchers are unwilling to face up mistakes committed by the party in history. Even if these mistakes are mentioned, they tend to skate over these mistakes, which is inconsistent with the idea of historical materialism, nor is their attitude a rigorous one required by theoretical research. Worse still, their research might become a major target to be attacked by historical nihilists, thus failing to effectively complete the theoretical criticism. "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of the CPC" clearly points out, "To ignore or to conceal mistakes is not allowed, which is in itself a mistake that might cause more serious mistakes."^[2] Therefore, the author thinks that, to fundamentally refute historical nihilism, the research focus is to profoundly expound on and rigorously demonstrate, under the prerequisite of facing up to mistakes, which factors have supported the CPC to walk out from the mire of mistakes and which abilities have ensured the CPC to head towards victory based on comprehensive and accurate historical materials, and in-depth analysis.

On February 13, 2017, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the People's Republic of China, gave a clear response to this issue in an important speech made by him on the seminar of the Sixth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC. Xi pointed out, "Why could our Party stand out from a repeated contest with various political forces in contemporary China? Why could our Party

remain on the forefront of our era and become the backbone of the Chinese people and nation? The root cause is that we have maintained the spirit of self-revolution and the courage to commit and correct our mistakes. One after another time, we have taken the initiative to address our problems. This capability is a significant symbol that separates our Party from other political parties in the world, and an important reason for the eternity of our Party."^[3] The "capability" mentioned in this speech actually refers to the capability of the CPC to correct their mistakes on their own. The above speech of General Secretary Xi Jinping not only highly summarized the importance of the CPC's capability to correct its own mistakes, and emphasized that the self-correction capability is a core capability for the CPC to survive and seek further development, but also specified the direction for disclosure and criticism of historical nihilism. The greatness of the Communist Party of China (CPC) does not lie in its avoidance of mistakes but in its strong self-correction capability, in that, it has never concealed its mistakes for fear of criticism. This scientific conclusion is made on the basis of the historical background, which has a profound theoretical logic, value logic, institutional logic and practical logic.

2. The Communist Party of China has a strong capacity for self-correction

2.1 The theoretical characteristic of Marxist self-correction constitutes the theoretical logic for the self-correction capability of the Communist Party of China

Marxism has been a scientific truth that has been repeatedly proved by particularly Chinese revolutions, construction and reform practices over the past one hundred years or so. To say that Marxism has the theoretical characteristic of self-correction does not mean that Marxism is fully correct but that it is practical and realistic, and keeps pace with the times. Marx and Engels advanced with the times to develop their ideas by publicly correcting their previous judgments without any reservation. For example, after publishing *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels wrote seven prefaces to it subsequently. The idea reflected throughout these seven prefaces is what is pointed out in the German version of prefaces in 1872, "Practical applications of these basic principles should be based on the changing historical conditions."^[4] Marx and Engels faced up to their mistakes, clarifying that some ideas in *The Communist Manifesto* had been outdated. This is the fine quality which Marxism has been born with, according to which one verifies his own theories and judgments by practice, and keep on pursuing truth and modifying mistakes at any time and in any place.

2.2 The fundamental guideline of serving the people wholeheartedly is the value logic of the CPC's self-correction capability

The destiny of the CPC and the destiny of the Chinese nation share weal and woe with the destiny of the Chinese people. The CPC works for interests of the country, nation and people instead of pursuing any other special interests. The stance of the Chinese people represents the fundamental political stance of the CPC. To serve people wholeheartedly is the fundamental guideline of the CPC. This is an obvious characteristic that separates the CPC from other political parties. The CPC's self-correction capability is highly and fundamentally consistent with the CPC's fundamental guideline. Back to the Yan' an Period (1935-1948), Mao Tse-tung, the former President of the People's Republic of China, specified, "The CPC should stick to truth at any time, for any truth is in line with the interests of the people. The CPC members should be ready to correct their mistakes for any mistake is out of line with the interests of the people."^[5] General Secretary Xi Jinping also kept on emphasizing, "We CPC members should 'be ready to uphold truth and correct mistakes at any time.' As long as one thing is beneficial for the Party and its people, we should keep on doing it persistently and unremittingly. As one as one thing is not beneficial for the Party and its people, we should correct it without any hesitation or any reservation or any delay."^[6] Thus, it can be seen that the fundamental guideline of the Party decides that the Party must take the courage to correct its own mistakes, for the self-correction capability of the Party is directly related to the immediate interests of its people.

2.3 The inner-Party system with democratic centralism at its core constitutes the institutional logic for the CPC's self-correction capability

The system is a more fundamental, comprehensive, stable and long-term issue. These characteristics of the system decide that to govern the Party by regulations is the most effective, vigorous and lasting way for Party governance. The self-correction capability of the CPC is guaranteed by a complete set of institutional systems with a rigorous logic. To sum up, these systems can be divided into the following aspects, including the leadership and organizational systems with democratic centralism at their core; survey and research systems supported by the route of the masses; democratic life systems with criticism and self-criticism as the major content; periodical educational mechanisms with Party and work style rectification as the major form; self-purifying mechanisms with punishment of corruption as the major content; and external monitoring systems with the supervision of the democratic party as the supplementation. Take democratic centralism for example. Its self-correction function is mainly reflected as its sticking to the Party's collective leadership, fully advocating democracy, extensively taking heed of advice and suggestions to ensure scientificity and democracy of the decision-making, and decision-making to be in accordance with law. The history of the CPC has repeatedly proved that, to stick to democracy centralism well can ensure a clean, healthy and vigorous work style, and robust development of Party's undertaking. If democracy centralism is damaged, contradictions and mistakes within the Party will sprawl, thus damaging the atmosphere within the Party and dealing a heavy blow to the Party's undertaking.

2.4 To be good at summarizing positive and negative influence constitutes the practical logic of the CPC's self-correction capability

The greatness of the CPC is reflected not only as the thriving and victory of Party's undertaking, but more importantly as its courage to self-revolutionize and correct its own mistakes and shortages, and adjust its policies and policies. In the initial development period of the CPC, the right opportunism resulted in the failure of the great revolution. Thanks to the holding of the "August 7th Meeting" which immediately corrects mistakes, a correct path featuring surrounding the cities from the countryside and wresting political power by armed force was ushered in. During the period of Agrarian Revolution, the left-leaning mistakes almost plunged the Party into a hopeless situation. Then, Zunyi Meeting was held to immediately make vigorous efforts to turn the situation, which again saved the Party and the Party's revolution from the crisis. During the socialism construction period, "cultural revolution" brought about a serious catastrophe to the Party, military and people. Once again, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee brought order out of chaos, thus starting a new historical period of reform and opening-up. History is the best textbook, and also the best dose of sobriety. All the above paths, either correct or wrong, failed or successful, have a genuine portrayal of the CPC in its strenuous exploration of the revolution, construction and reform, and also an important process for the CPC to constantly deepen and sublimate its ideological thinking, and also to establish and modify its systems.

Conclusion

Party's self-correction capability is a research issue requiring immediate attention, a serious political proposition, and an effective theoretical weapon. To attach great importance to this research issue, exposition and publicity of this research issue can provide not only theoretical guidance for the self-correction capability construction of the CPC, but also theoretical support to fundamentally criticize historical nihilism.

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