

# Education on the Ideals and Beliefs of China's Youth from the Historical Lessons of Ideological Construction in the Soviet East

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## Abstract

**The reasons behind the sudden coup d'état in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries in the last world, which led to the "return to liberation" overnight, are more complex and diverse. However, from the perspective of ideological construction, the lack of education on ideals and beliefs among the youth of Soviet Eastern European countries quickly led to a total collapse of self-confidence in socialist theories, beliefs and systems, which eventually led to tragic consequences. This paper attempts to analyze the reasons behind the lack of ideological construction of youth in the Soviet Eastern European countries and draw some present-day inspirations from them, taking into account some contemporary challenges in the field of youth ideology in China. Reviewing the lessons and warnings of the former Soviet Eastern European countries has both historical and practical significance for the current youth ideal and belief education work in China.**

## Keywords

**Youth ideology; The Soviet East's dramatic change; Marxist theory; Ideals and beliefs; Ideological and political education.**

## 1. Introduction

Ideology is usually defined as the "science of ideas". The materialistic concept of history tells us that ideology, as a stable conceptual form, is itself a reaction to social existence, which can be understood as the understanding and cognition of things, bringing together various human views, ideas, value pursuits, life ideals and other elements in one, which triggered violent social upheavals and was eventually replaced by the capitalist system. From the perspective of national ideology, the lack of work on mainstream values in countries such as the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe led to a series of subsequent coups d'état as a result of a lack of national confidence and trust in the people. The root causes of the ideological changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries have also been hotly debated in the academic community. Deng Xiaojun believes that the misunderstanding and lack of ideological and political work of the youth in the Soviet and Eastern European countries led to insufficient ideological beliefs and patriotism among the social successors, i.e. the youth groups; Liao Xiaoming believes that a deep understanding of the dilemma encountered in the ideological development of the construction of the political soft power of the Soviet Communist Party can lead to a deeper understanding of the importance of adhering to Marxism and the Western propaganda of the "final conclusion of ideology" Zhang Lang analyzes the causes of the Soviet East's dramatic changes from the perspective of historical synergy theory, and summarizes the lessons learned from the Soviet East's dramatic changes and the inspiration for us. This paper attempts to analyze the reasons for the lack of youth ideology from the misconceptions and deficiencies in the construction of Soviet East ideology, and aims to bring some inspiration to the construction of contemporary youth ideal and belief education in the light of the current challenges in China's ideological field.

## **2. Historical Tracing: The Reality of the Lack of Ideological Education for Youth in the Soviet and Eastern European Countries**

Back in the last century, the countries of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe attached more importance to education in State ideology, especially at the beginning of their existence, and attached great importance to the education of young people in ideals and beliefs. The reasons behind the subsequent problems are more complicated when we look deeper into them. One thing is certain, "the upper beam is not right and the lower beam is not right" is the main reason for a series of coups "from the top down". As the ancients say, "When the people rise, they suffer; when they fall, they suffer." The iterations of a regime or dynasty are not directly related to the people, but closely related to the actions of the ruling party, that is, the ruling class of the country. A glance at the literature and an examination reveals that the Soviet Eastern European countries did not save the country from the disastrous situation of ruin under the new situation, mainly because of several reasons, namely, personal cultism, disorganization of the Communist Youth League and infiltration of external color revolutions.

### **2.1. Excessive Pursuit of Personal Cultism and One-sided Emphasis on Ideological "Total Penetration"**

With regard to personal cultism, it has occurred in various countries, the worst of which was the Soviet Union. Among the successive leaders of the Soviet Union, two developed the cult of the individual to its peak, one of them was Stalin and the other was Brezhnev, who became the new leader of the Soviet Union in 1964 when Khrushchev, who was bent on reforms, was ousted. During Brezhnev's time in power, the personal cult of Brezhnev reached a level that could not be attached to him. By mass printing and publishing the works of the current leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, headed by Brezhnev, it was expected to create a "lofty" image of the party and state leaders and to educate the youth to follow their example and to hold on to the lofty ideals of communism. At the same time, the Communist Party in Eastern Europe and other socialist countries also had a serious cult of leadership personalities, for example, the Romanian Communist Party distributed Ceausescu's memoirs in large numbers in the Romanian Communist Youth League organization, which at that time had a more positive effect on the education of the young generation in ideals and beliefs. [1] However, contrary to expectations, a large number of political publications of the leaders swept the country, the vast majority of them political propaganda newspapers, with a unilateral emphasis on "total penetration" in the ideological sphere, which, together with the extreme instability of the policy system of the Soviet leaders, led to a serious uncertainty in the minds of the youth of the country. This was evident in the later cases when many of the writings of the leaders, which had been touted as "classics", were later reduced to "fraudulent books". The "total penetration" of the ideological sphere had little effect, and to some extent was even counterproductive, much to the discontent of the Soviet youth, ironically.

### **2.2. The Disorganization of the Communist Youth League in the Soviet Eastern European Countries, Which Gradually Deviated from Its Original Purpose**

Since its establishment in 1926, the Komsomol played an active role in the construction of the state economy and in voluntary social service. However, at a later stage, especially during Brezhnev's reign, the construction of the Komsomol and the mechanism of youth training became lax and "permissive", and gradually began to go downhill, while the huge education system was full of "relations" and "backdoor", and society was divided into three, six and nine classes, with rich and powerful people chasing after prestigious universities. "The society was divided into three, six and nine classes, with the rich and powerful chasing after prestigious universities, while the children of the lower social strata could not go to universities in big cities. The corruption and extravagance of Brezhnev and other children of senior leaders and cadres

were rampant, which even more seriously damaged the image of the Komsomol and even the Soviet Communist Party among the people. With the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev, under the influence of his "reforms and new thinking", the Komsomol no longer focused on the collective production of advanced science, but on projects that would bring economic benefits, and organized a series of commercial activities, such as the "Youth Economic Cooperation" (YEC), which was jointly established by the Komsomol organizations of the Soviet Eastern European socialist countries. "youth economic cooperatives", etc. The Komsomol organizations were gradually reduced to money-making factories, and the middle and senior cadres gradually became a group of "rich people" whose political consciousness was basically disorganized or even completely absent. [2]

### **2.3. The Contrast Between the Penetration of the Ideology of the Values of Western Interests and the Bottlenecks in Their Own Development**

After the formation of the two camps, the Western capitalist countries, led by the United States, adopted various methods of ideological infiltration with the intention of containing the development of the Soviet Union, the big brother of socialism, which eventually became an important reason for the peaceful evolution of the Soviet Union. As we all know, the Western capitalist camp and the Eastern socialist camp have been incompatible since ancient times, with constant friction and fierce ideological struggle between them. As early as the 1950s, the West's ideological infiltration of the Soviet Union had never stopped and was intensifying. They consistently resorted to the so-called "economic assistance", which was in fact a "wolf in sheep's clothing", aimed at carrying out a color revolution and achieving the sinister goal of self-defeat. On the one hand, Western capitalist countries are good at making use of the mass media to consciously, systematically and deliberately incorporate some ideological concepts and implement the so-called "flowering in the middle" tactic, advocating "human rights" and "democracy", using these banners to infiltrate the Soviet state and carry out "espionage" procedures. On the other hand, in the 1960s and 1980s, the political situation in the Soviet Eastern European countries was unstable, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union wavered on the question of "how to uphold and develop Marxism", and its guiding ideology was stagnant. This contrasted with the prevalence of Western interest values among the youth population, which impacted on each other like a flood, dismantling the mainstream ideology of the youth population step by step and posing an unprecedented threat.

### **3. Challenges Present: The Treacherous Situation Facing the Mainstream Ideological Field of Our Youth in the New Era**

With the increasing development of modern science and technology, a new information revolution is taking place worldwide, the world has left the "age of violence and money control", the idea of using "hard means" as a means of attacking other countries is no longer the best option, and the option of launching a colour revolution to achieve invulnerability is increasingly coveted by many capitalist countries. The idea of using "hard means" as a way to attack other countries is no longer the best solution, and the option of launching color revolutions to achieve unbreakability is gradually coveted by many capitalist countries. As the fastest growing country in the world and the "big brother" in the socialist camp, China has been repeatedly attacked, threatened and suppressed by certain capitalist countries in recent years in the process of promoting the illegal revival of the Chinese dream. Undoubtedly, this is inevitable, but as a new era of youth groups, as a socialist baton bearer, as the mainstay of the future development of socialism, each of us young people should always tighten the "ideological" string. From a comprehensive perspective, our young people are currently facing the following challenges in the field of mainstream ideology.

### **3.1. The Western Socialist Camp Intends to Stage A Colour Revolution By Turning Against the Youth in Our Country**

Today, more and more Western powers are realizing that the appropriation and plundering of other countries is an accumulation of wealth at a low level, while at a higher level is the long-term penetration of a country's cultural soft power, where quantitative changes have reached qualitative changes and eventually curb the economic development of potentially threatening countries or even achieve the purpose of dismantling the occupation. Since 2000, under the correct guidelines of the country's leaders, China's economy has been developing at a rapid pace, once surpassing many developing countries in the international arena, with world records reaching record highs. However, this has also become a key target of "westernization" and "division" by the Western hostile forces. By virtue of their own political, cultural and military power advantages, they have been promoting their "liberal and democratic system" as the internationally accepted "universal value" in various covert ways. [3] Through various forms, such as lectures for international students and public welfare fund support programs, they lure and force young Chinese students to identify with Western values in order to achieve cultural infiltration of non-Western countries and peaceful evolution of socialist countries, especially China, a large developing country. The problem is particularly prominent among the group of international students, such as international students who, after graduating from their studies abroad, target the country's core fields of technology and adopt high salaries to attract talents and hinder their return to China, which is also a concrete form of ideological threat to our youth. Therefore, our country should pay particular attention in this regard and always be on guard against cultural infiltration by hostile Western forces.

### **3.2. Impact and Influence of the Plurality of Social Trends on Youth Ideological Education**

The era of the intersection of "involution" and "post-epidemic" is driving the continuation and intensification of "utilitarianism" and "egoism". The "egoism" and "utilitarianism" continue to flourish and intensify. From a global perspective, China is currently in the process of realizing the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and in the face of the world's unprecedented changes in the past century, it is necessary to properly handle the relationship between exports and imports, epidemic prevention and control and economic development, trade and politics, international relations and humanitarian aid. And while doing a good job in this series of work, we will also face the potential hidden danger of external ideological infiltration. After all, it is not realistic to close the door and work behind closed doors; to move to the center of the world stage, it is necessary to deal with external countries and suggest their deep friendship. On the other hand, from a domestic perspective, is still in an important stage of prevention and control of the epidemic, the face of "external continued import, internal multi-point blossom" of the serious situation, as the ruling party, the test is heavy, the pressure is huge. The more "turbulent" the time, the more there will be some unscrupulous elements want to take advantage of the fire and watch the fire from across the shore. And their is to target is some young people in our country, at this time is in the key stage of shaping the values of life, intends from them first to get some curse, deep into the enemy. As the new generation of the times, the young generation must be highly alert, establish the bottom line thinking, enhance the four self-confidence, and firmly follow the mainstream ideology.

### **3.3. The Emergence of New Forms of Communication in Cyberspace Has A Subtle Impact on Youth Ideology**

In the Internet era, the ideological struggle has also moved from "offline" to "online", and it has intensified on the online media platform, becoming the forefront and main battlefield of the ideological struggle in the new era. As we all know, the network platform has such significant

features as fast dissemination and wide influence, which are in line with the conditions required for "ideological export". Youth groups have long exposure to the Internet and are highly dependent on it, so it can be said that "no Internet is unpleasant", and they are in the "front-line battlefield" of the Internet ideological struggle. Therefore, it is easy to understand why our government attaches such great importance to the supervision of online platforms, especially some application platforms involving the vital interests of youth groups. From another perspective, more and more young entrepreneurs are joining the "Internet+" entrepreneurial army, giving rise to a large number of new century talents and "unicorn" enterprises. However, the rise of the Internet has both advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage is that it has made people pay too much attention to the scientific and technological aspects, while neglecting to think deeply about the ethical and moral aspects. The dominant ideology in the Internet age is that of a tool in the guise of science and technology, which may lead to a machine controlling people, as depicted in American technology blockbusters. With the ever-changing technological revolution, people are more concerned about the level of science and technology, the comprehensive national power of each country, and the competition between talents and science and technology, while at the same time, young workers lack due attention to the ethical and moral aspects of science and technology, and their own obvious class ideology may fade out.

#### **4. Mirror of the Times: The Reality of the Soviet East's Dramatic Change for Youth Ideological Education in China**

"Taking history as a lesson, you can correct your clothes." There are many lessons and warnings that we can learn from the major historical events of the Soviet revolution. General Secretary Xi Jinping once said, "The Chinese dream is historical, realistic, and future; it is for our generation, and even more so for the young generation." [4] In terms of China's youth on the cause of ideological education, since the country is now moving to the center of the world stage, as a contemporary socialist aspirant youth, as a qualified socialist successor, how should we be firm in our road confidence and consciously assume the mission of a great nation? According to the study, the following three aspects must be achieved.

##### **4.1. Consciously Establish High Ideals and Beliefs**

As the saying goes, ideals are the sails that lead young students to set sail. Undoubtedly, young university students are the "tide" of the times and the solid "back wave" of the highly sophisticated development of society. General Secretary Xi Jinping once said on a public occasion, "The majority of young people should be firm in their ideals and beliefs, aim high, be practical, be the tide of the times, fly their youthful dreams in the vivid practice of realizing the Chinese dream, and write the chapter of their lives in the unremitting struggle for the interests of the people!" [5] In fact, it is true that only when the whole country is united and united, will it be able to make steady and rapid progress on the way forward. If the youth have ideals, the country will have strength and the nation will have hope. Whether you are a university student or an active person who has already participated in social practice and work, every one of us young people should be full of the spirit of truth-seeking and innovation, the spirit of daring to be the first, and the vigor of vigor, and take up our own obligations in our respective positions, and carry out our duties in a practical manner. Only when you have a firm ideal and belief in your heart, the persistent spirit of "not relaxing when you bite down on the green hills" and the tenacity of "being resilient after a thousand strokes", you will be able to be firm and unyielding when you encounter difficulties, setbacks and temptations, and always maintain the spirit of "being resilient after a thousand strokes". The spirit of "any of the east and the west, the north and the south wind, sitting on a fishing boat" is full. Things always progress in the twists and

turns of development, people are also the same. The knife is sharpened on the stone, and people practice on things, so that the harvest season will be fruitful.

#### **4.2. Enhance Road Confidence and Develop Professional Skills**

Self-confidence is usually understood together with self-confidence, expressing a stable psychological characteristic, the basic meaning of which is "believing in oneself". The report of the 19th Party Congress points out that "the whole Party should more consciously enhance road, theoretical, institutional and cultural self-confidence, neither take the old path of closure and rigidity nor the evil path of changing the flag, maintain political determination, adhere to practical work and prosperity, and always adhere to and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics." [5] As can be seen, at the top of the list is road self-confidence, enough to demonstrate its importance and central position. To a certain extent, the other three self-confidence are the crystallization and sublimation of road self-confidence. The four are both distinct and unified with each other, and there exists an inherent logical dialectical relationship between them. To summarize, the road practice is the premise of the theory, system and culture, and the other self-confidence is derived from the summary of the lessons learned from the road practice. The system is the vehicle through which our road, theory and culture can develop, while providing guarantees for their development. The report of the 19th Party Congress states, "When the youth thrive, the country thrives; when the youth are strong, the country is strong." [5] The majority of young people should be firm in their ideals and beliefs, aim high, be grounded, be the tide of the times, fly their youthful dreams in the vivid practice of realizing the Chinese dream, and write the chapter of their lives in the unremitting struggle for the interests of the people. If you train your body to be a vajra, you will not be afraid of a hundred poisons. Young college students are a flag, only when they firmly believe in the ideal, do not forget why they started, use the bright flag of ideal beliefs to lead the pace of progress, and fly their youthful dreams on the way forward, they can write the most beautiful chapter of their lives. The good image and spirit of young college students will definitely promote the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and gather majestic power for the realization of the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

#### **4.3. Consciously Implementing the Pursuit of Values Through Practical Actions**

"A man cannot stand without his spirit, and a nation cannot be strong without its spirit." [6] Youth are the most energetic, dynamic and creative, and in the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, blossoming youthful dreams, youth should first construct the nest of their souls, follow the Party without forgetting the original intention and firmly establish their ideals and beliefs. General Secretary Xi Jinping made a wonderful discussion on the issues related to road confidence in "Several Issues on Adhering to and Developing Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" published in the magazine Seeking Truth, which is logically rigorous and detailed. Although the length is not long, but every word is pearls of wisdom, simple and concise, worthy of readers' in-depth scrutiny and reflection. At the same time, every young person should shoulder the heavy responsibility given by the times, dare to suffer, be diligent in practice, be good at pioneering, and strive to be a pioneer, so as to achieve the "youth of struggle". As an old saying goes, "The most important thing in life is faith, and the faith is stronger and newer every day". This should be the lifelong pursuit of young college students, so that they can write the most beautiful chapter of their lives in style. Consciously practicing the pursuit of values with practical actions is the fundamental guarantee to realize the Chinese dream, and every young person is duty-bound and obliged to do so. As young people of today, we should strive to carry out our promises and initial intentions with practical actions on the basis of our four self-confidences. Only in this way will China gradually approach the center of the world stage, and each person will write his or her own chapter of life. The majority of socialist successors should adhere to Marxist theoretical education, adhere to the pursuit of

mainstream values, study and think together, be diligent in their work, strive to arm their minds with knowledge, shine their ideals and beliefs into reality with practical actions, create a gorgeous and colorful life, and be participants, witnesses and inheritors of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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