

The Historical Logic Between China's New Political Party System and Development of Chinese-style Democracy

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Abstract

China's political party system, as a party-political form in the history of human development, has its own logic of historical generation. This article attempts to analyze the basic logic of the formation and growth of China's political party system, which is of great significance for promoting the development of Chinese-style democracy. It also has important theoretical and practical significance for realizing the modernization of China's system and capacity for governance.

Keywords

China; Political party system; Logic of historical generation; Chinese-style democracy.

1. Introduction

Different countries will make different institutional choices due to differences in historical background and value orientation. In the process of historical development, China has created and developed China's political party system and Chinese-style democracy based on the Marxist party theory and democratic theory, proceeding from its own national conditions, and profoundly summarizing the experience and lessons of revolution, construction, and reform practice. It is different from the western party system and democratic model. It has its historical inevitability and has multiple theoretical values and practical significance.

2. The Birth of the Communist Party of China and the Rise of Chinese-style Democracy

Marxist political economy believes that capital is inherently driven by the pursuit and expansion of profit, which keeps itself in a state of continuous accumulation and expansion, resulting in capital-based production falling into an expanding circular movement. According to historical materialism, the capitalist mode of production and its global expansion enabled the formation of the world market, thereby "making the production and consumption of all countries worldwide" (Marx & Engels 1995). Based on this, capitalist countries continue to expand production internally, and carry out colonial expansion and plundering of wealth abroad, resulting in increasingly sharp class contradictions and struggles at home. Colonial and semi-colonial people have also demanded national independence and liberation due to the extreme oppression and exploitation of imperialism. Therefore, under the guidance of Marxism, the founders of Marxism and their successors create a proletarian party with the lofty ideal of fundamentally changing the old world and liberating all mankind, which marks the emergence of the international communist movement.

After the First Opium War, Western powers used the firm arms to open Chinese closed door over a hundred year. Since then, China began to become a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and was forced to be involved in the capitalist world system. The signing of a series of unequal treaties during the Second Opium War severely damaged China's national sovereignty and

territorial integrity, which further deepened China's semi-colonization. The invasion of modern China by Western powers not only aggravated the national crisis, but also intensified class contradictions, so that Chinese people with lofty ideals began to make many attempts to save the nation from peril. Subsequently China experienced the failure of the competitive multi-party system at the beginning of the Republic of China and the popularity of invisible parties during the warlord period, all these unsuccessful attempts showed that China needed a strong revolutionary party. Therefore, the Communist Party of China was born in the 1920s, and shouldered the historical mission of saving the nation and surviving.

At the same time, the democratic theory of Marxism was introduced into China. Marx pointed out in *The Communist Manifesto* that the first step in the workers' revolution is to raise the proletariat to the ruling class and win democracy (Marx & Engels 1995). In leading the socialist revolution and the construction of a socialist country, Lenin pointed out more clearly that there can be no socialism without democracy, which includes two meanings: (1) If the proletariat does not contribute to the socialist revolution through the struggle for democracy, it cannot carry out this revolution; (2) A victorious socialism cannot maintain its victories and lead mankind to the demise of the state without practicing full democracy (Lenin 1990). So far, China's advanced intellectuals began to use Marxism-Leninism as an ideological weapon to explore new ways to save the state.

Hu Shi, Chen Duxiu and others launched an anti-feudal ideological and cultural revolution - the New Culture Movement in 1915, which advocated democracy and science. It inspired the democratic consciousness of the Chinese people and promoted the development of modern science in China. The May 4th Movement broke out in 1919, triggered by the failure of China's diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference. This movement evolved from an initial student demonstration into a national movement, and it became a patriotic movement that promoted the dissemination and integration of Marxism. Therefore, the May 4th movement was the beginning of China's new democratic revolution and laid the foundation for the formation of the Chinese people's concept of democracy. At the same time, it promoted the proletariat to enter the political stage, and ideologically prepared for the establishment of the Communist Party of China. In short, both the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement are interpreting Chinese-style democratic thought in different forms.

3. The Tortuous Development of The China's Political Party System and Chinese-style Democracy in the Period of Revolution and Construction

After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, China was caught in a situation of internal and external aggression. Since then, the national consciousness of the Chinese people has begun to awaken, and countless people have begun to explore new ways to save the state with a strong sense of national crisis and responsibility. The reformists represented by Tan Sitong and Yan Fu used western bourgeois political theories to criticize feudal monarchs with the viewpoints of "people is the most important while monarch is less important". They criticized the feudal autocratic monarchy and advocated the implementation of the bourgeois constitutional monarchy, but the results were not satisfactory and resulting in the intensified social contradictions. The bourgeois revolutionaries represented by Sun Yat-sen, Zhang Binglin, and Zou Rong established the first national bourgeois revolutionary party——China Tongmenghui, which put forward the Three Principles of the People, namely "Principles of Nationalism, Principles of Democracy and Principles of Livelihood". This is a relatively complete democratic revolutionary program, which has played a huge role in mobilizing and organizing the masses to overthrow the monarchy and establish a republic. Due to the limitations of the times and classes, the Three Principles of the People have flaws. Although "Principles of Democracy" emphasizes the establishment of a democratic republic, it ignores the status of the broad

masses of working people in the state, so it is difficult to ensure the democratic rights of the people. The Republic of China was established in 1912. Yuan Shikai stole the fruits of the revolution and became the provisional president. In 1915, he announced the restoration of the monarchy, indicating that the bourgeois republic demanded by the bourgeois revolutionaries was completely bankrupt. It can be seen from the practice of various political parties of the bourgeoisie in China that the bourgeois multi-party system and the bourgeois road do not work in semi-colonial and semi-feudal China.

The Communist Party of China was born in 1921. It is a completely new, unified working-class political party with communism as its purpose and Marxism Leninism as its guide to action, which points out a new direction for the Chinese revolution. Wu Peifu carried out a large-scale bloody suppression against the striking workers of the Beijing Wuhan railway that shocked both China and foreign countries in 1923. The Chinese Communist Party began to realize that it was impossible to win the revolution by its own strength. It is necessary to unite other classes and strata to form a revolutionary united front. At that time, the Kuomintang led by Sun Yat-sen became the first target of the Communist Party of China for cooperation. The first national congress of the Kuomintang was held in 1924, which adopted the New Three Principles of the People and determined the three major revolutionary policies. Therefore, the first cooperation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party was formally formed. The Kuomintang-Communist cooperation accelerated the pace of the revolution and dealt a heavy blow to imperialism and feudalism, but the bourgeois New Rightists represented by Chiang Kai-shek in 1927 created "the April 12 Counter-Revolutionary Coup" that shocked China and foreign countries. The bourgeois new rightists represented by Chiang Kai-shek created the "April 12 counter revolutionary coup" in 1927, and subsequently established the Nanjing National Government. After the "July 15 counter revolutionary coup", the Kuomintang established autocracy and military dictatorship on behalf of the landlord class and the comprador bourgeoisie throughout the country. This kind of behavior against the people and democracy made the Kuomintang lose its popular support and led to the breakdown of the first Kuomintang communist cooperation. Japan launched a full-scale war of aggression against China in 1937, and China entered a period of full-scale war of resistance. The Communist Party of China called on all the people to unite and fight against Japan. At the critical juncture of the state's peril, the second cooperation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party is an irresistible historical trend. Under the joint promotion of patriots and various democratic parties, Chiang Kai-shek was forced to recognize the legal status of the Communist Party of China, marking the formation of the anti-Japanese national united front.

During the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the Communist Party of China established an anti-Japanese democratic regime in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region, which implemented the principle of "Triangular Organization" Regime, that is, "In terms of personnel distribution, it should be stipulated that one-third of the Communist Party members, one-third of the non-Party leftist progressives, and one-third of the centrists". Under this form of political power, a direct, equal, and secret election system has been established. In order to effectively protect the freedom of candidates to participate in elections and vote for voters, the regulations on elections in the border areas stipulate that people shall not interfere with the electoral order. Citizens have the right to stop these people who obstruct the freedom of election by threats, inducements and other fraudulent means. They also have the right to report to the judicial organs and submit them to the courts for punishment. The election regulations also stipulate that all election expenses shall be paid by the Finance Department of the Border Region Government. This not only legally but also materially guarantees the people's democratic rights. In each election, the government reports its work to the voters. When the people inspect the government's work, they also criticize, propose and demand the government's work. These opinions are comprehensively sorted into proposals, which are

submitted to the General Assembly for discussion by senators. Once the proposal is adopted, it will become a policy and be implemented by the government. The Communist Party of China achieved democratic politics through elections in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region, which effectively strengthened and consolidated the unity and cooperation of various anti-Japanese classes and strata, and greatly promoted the political awakening of the Chinese people. With the victory of the Anti-Japanese War, Chinese people and all parties faced the question of the "two China". In order to avoid greater losses to the people caused by the war, the Communist Party of China decided to cooperate with the Kuomintang to establish the state (Sha Jiansun 2009). Finally, Chiang Kai-shek launched an all-out civil war, which forced the people's Liberation Army to rise up for self-defense. After three years of People's Liberation War, the reactionary rule of the Kuomintang was overthrown and the People's Democratic Republic was established.

In such a critical period of major historical decision, most democratic parties have made new political choices in the face of the oppression and attack of the Kuomintang (Qin Lihai 2008). The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued a slogan to commemorate the Labor Day on April 30, 1948, calling on all democratic parties, people's organizations, and social celebrities to quickly convene a new political consultative conference to discuss the People's Congress and establish a democratic coalition government, which received positive responses from all democratic parties. Since August 1948, representatives of all parties have successively arrived in the liberated areas to jointly carry out preparatory activities for the new Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. During the meeting, it was decided to establish a Standing Committee of the Preparatory Committee of the New CPPCC, which held several preparatory work meetings later. A consensus has been reached on the name and basic nature of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, as well as the content of important documents such as the Common Program, the Organic Law of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and the Organic Law of the Central People's Government.

The first plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference was held in Beijing on September 21 to 30, 1949, "There were CPC members (44%), workers and peasants and non-party Democrats (26%), and democratic parties (30%) among 662 representatives" (United Front Work Department of the CPC 2017). The meeting adopted the common program of the Chinese people's Political Consultative Conference with constitutional significance, and also adopted epoch-making documents such as the organic law of the Chinese people's Political Consultative Conference and the organic law of the Central People's Government of the people's Republic of China. This is the foundation of the contemporary Chinese national history and the history of China's political party system.

The successful convening of the Chinese people's Political Consultative Conference shows that all democratic parties negotiated with the Communist Party of China to establish new China, and accepted the new party system led by the Communist Party of China in the construction of the new state system. Importantly, they have worked with the Communist Party to develop and improve this system until now.

4. The Continuous Improvement of China's Political Party System and Chinese-Style Democracy in The History of Reform and Opening Up

The Cultural Revolution was a catastrophic event for all ethnic groups and the democratic parties. But fortunately, the united front, democratic parties and people's organizations have not been cancelled. "Mao Zedong has always insisted on the mistakes of the Cultural Revolution in the overall situation, but he has also corrected some specific mistakes to protect some leading party cadres and famous people outside the party, which preserved the foundation of China's united front (Xi Jinping 2017). At the same time, this catastrophic event also made China's

political party system face a severe test. After the end of the Cultural Revolution, China ushered in a new period of development. The democratic parties and the Communist Party of China quickly reconstructed the space of China's political party system and redeveloped Chinese-style democracy through putting order out of chaos.

In the redevelopment of Chinese-style democracy, China has ushered in the emancipation of the mind and the correction of chaos—from the absurd “taking class struggle as the key link” to the correct “focusing on economic construction”, and from autocracy and rule by man to the pursuit of democracy and the rule of law. The Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China established the principle of socialist modernization. Economic construction needs political construction and cultural construction to follow up at the same time, while political construction and cultural construction cannot develop without democracy. The modernization of political construction and cultural construction itself means democratization and pluralism, and requires a complete end to personal arbitrariness and excessive power concentration. Deng Xiaoping once stressed that there can be no socialism and socialist modernization without democracy. Meanwhile, he also emphasized that democratization should advance step by step (Deng Xiaoping 1994). The more socialism develops, the more democracy develops.

In terms of reconstructing the space for China's political party system, the report of the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and the “Opinions on Adhering to and Improving the System of Multi-party Cooperation and Political Consultation under the Leadership of the Communist Party of China” promulgated by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1989 put the basic principles of cooperation between the Communist Party of China and the democratic parties. The policy has been developed from the “eight-character policy” to the “sixteen-character policy”, which has further enriched the connotation of the cooperation between the Communist Party of China and the democratic parties, consolidated the political foundation of the cooperation between the Communist Party of China and the democratic parties, and gradually institutionalized political consultation and democratic supervision. During the two elections in 1992 and 1997, the democratic parties successfully achieved the transition of leaders and political handover. At the same time, they also strengthened the construction of local and grass-roots organizations of the democratic parties, which laid an organizational foundation for the development of the democratic parties and the improvement of the China's political party system. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China promulgated the “Opinions on Upholding and Improving the Multi-party Cooperation and Political Consultation System Led by the CPC” and “Opinions on Further Strengthening the Multi-Party Cooperation and Political Consultation System Led by the CPC” in 1989 and 2005. The work contents of this two documents are consistent with each other, and the work focuses are different. They are historical achievements made in the construction of China's political party system, indicating that China's political party system has reached a high level of institutionalization. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the China's political party system has been comprehensively elaborated, and the institutionalization construction has been further promoted, realizing the stereotyped development of the basic system, basic content and basic practice. This is a creative achievement made by people from all walks of life in China in exploring and experimenting with the new political party system under the new historical conditions.

Finally, the Communist Party of China and democratic parties have replaced fighting with cooperation and debate with consultation. With the help of political party negotiation, it promotes consultative democracy, and seeks the greatest common denominator of the wishes of the whole society. Democracy in China means a happy life for the people, a harmonious and stable society, the stable development of political parties, and the long-term stability of the state.

The indispensability of Chinese-style democracy in the process of modernization constitute the state's solid institutional foundation and sound political life.

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