

Endowing the Old with the New, Advancing with the Times: The Sinicization of Marxist View of Journalism

Jingfan Yue¹

¹ Zhengzhou University, Zhengzhou, Henan, China

¹ Corresponding author. Email: 202012072011538@gs.zzu.edu.cn

ABSTRACT

With the rapid development of the Internet, information communication has entered the era of Web 2.0 from the era of Web 1.0, and new phenomena of news communication anomie with different internal logic and external representations emerge endlessly. The root cause is that some journalists do not grasp the historical foundation and realistic perspective of Marxist view of journalism. In the current practice of journalism and communication in China, how can journalists deepen their understanding and grasp of the Marxist view of journalism, and hand over answers that are satisfactory to the times and reassuring to the people? Combining the background and research methods of linguistics and history, the author examines the connotation of Marxist view of journalism from the perspective of textual interpretation, traces back the inevitable path of Marxist view of journalism taking root and sprouting in China from a historical perspective, summarizes the development of Marxist view of journalism in the new era, and explores solutions to theoretical and practical dilemmas.

Keywords: *Marxist view of journalism, Endowing the old with the new, Advancing with the times, Party spirit, Affinity to the people.*

1. INTRODUCTION: THE IMPLICATION OF MARXIST VIEW OF JOURNALISM

It is necessary to deconstruct the words of "Marxist view of journalism" to clarify its original meaning. In addition to Marx, who is the "first thinker of the millennium", namely "doctrine", "journalism", and "view", the authors will clarify the relevant implications one by one.

1.1 Starting from "Doctrine"

Referring to Marxism, people are familiar with it as a systematic theoretical theory or ideological system about Marx. The term "doctrine" refers to both the "doctrine and morality can be said as yuan", which refers to the observance of benevolence and righteousness; There is a "dare to offend the face, so as to make the Lord's actions moral" of things; There is also the main theme of "taking political science as the principle"; Yang Shuda said that "Erya doctrine" also refers to the interpretation of

the meaning of words. From this perspective, "doctrine" in the Chinese context is closely related to specific social, political, and economic systems, as well as the Party's ideological style. Marxists believe that the capitalist news agenda is controlled by those in power and serves to legitimize and maintain the status quo of the capitalist and neo liberal world outlook. The impassability of other doctrines and the success of the CPC's revolution lead to the only Marxist theoretical thinking and operating techniques that can solve China's own problems, and the only Marxist view of journalism can guide China's journalism practice.

1.2 The Special Significance of "Journalism"

Due to the particularity of journalism as a social tool, in China's long-term journalistic practice, it is often regarded as a career work that should have humanistic care and correct orientation, as well as an intersection of humanities and social disciplines. Journalists should consider journalism as a career

rather than a profession. From the perspective of language translation, "journalism" is not only news in a narrow sense, but also "journalism" with a caring nature and emotional and moral value judgments. When "public relations", "communication", and even stigmatized "propaganda" emphasizing effectiveness appear, "news" faces social science or administration, characterized by technology, but its core related to moral and ethical values is not taken seriously. In other words, excessive dissemination or technicalization can lead to the loss of the ethics or emotions that media itself should have. The language of China's tradition of "using less to express more" expresses the truth of everything in short phrases. The word "journalism" is the concise expression that best carries its function, conforms to social expectations, and combines truth and reason.

The second is the optimal choice in external discourse narration. From "orders to the bottom" to "publicizing policies", the millennium tradition has continued to this day. Publicity has long been a common practice among Chinese people. However, when introducing propaganda departments and organizations in national institutions, such as the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, to overseas people, there are still constraints. The reason lies in the special meaning of "propaganda" as a religious concept in its early stage, and the stigmatization after the two world wars. The term "propaganda", which was once regarded as effective dissemination, has been demonized and negative. "Propaganda" has the tendency of one-way transmission from top to bottom, and it seems to become an image that ignores facts, distorts information, and does everything evil to achieve a certain purpose of the communicator. In order to avoid stereotyping, Edmund Gulion, a former American diplomat, proposed "public diplomacy" in 1965, which in fact was a benign replacement for terms such as "propaganda" and "psychological warfare", and was used to make a clearer distinction between the democratic practices of the country and the policies pursued by the Soviet Union.¹ Stuart Hall proposed that effective communication cannot be separated from "encoding" and "decoding" processes, so cross-cultural differences in "decoding" must be considered in "encoding". For example, if the "dragon", which symbolizes the totem of the Chinese nation, is simply translated as "dragon",

the decoder may also have misunderstandings. For other countries with different historical traditions from China, if the official institutions that undertake this function are introduced as "propagandize", the audience is prone to generate a sense of rejection. Before and after 2000, the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of China also chose to refer to this function with more neutral terms such as "publicity", or "communication" from the Office of External Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and "information" from the Information Office of the State Council.

Therefore, in the current context of China, considering the particularity of news itself and effective external communication, news is still given a high position. In this context, Marxism emphasizes a "news perspective" rather than a Western "communication perspective" or a negatively viewed "propaganda perspective".

1.3 "View" and "Thought"

"View" refers to the perception of things, such as worldviews, views on life, values, subjective and objective, or expressions such as "three views are incompatible" or "three views are completely destroyed." Examining the origin of Chinese characters, the ancient form of "Guan" originated from the deeper and lasting attention of birds to things, and later refers to people deliberately and carefully looking at things, such as "observing words and expressions", which has a deeper and more rational cognitive characteristics and gives a positive and positive evaluation. Therefore, "view" is not only a certain awareness, understanding, or concept of the formation of things, but also a synonym for a correct thinking system. Therefore, an effective and strategic news view has become increasingly prominent as a social expectation of a good solution. Examining Marxist view of journalism from this perspective can be summarized as a set of views on journalistic work that have been proven correct by practice, providing basic operational techniques and thinking concepts for journalistic practice, and serving as a guide for journalistic work.

In addition, "thought" plays an even more important role in various tasks than political functions. It has become a very important and familiar idea to grasp and solve various problems in real life, including the confusion of news practice, from the perspective of thought. Currently, journalistic practice has encountered problems that

1. Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past

need to be addressed urgently. Internet media has changed the way information is presented and consumed, and various orientations and information noise are rampant. As Miliband pointed out, media shapes our view of the world we live in (Miliband, 1976). Media carries out social reconstruction through a selective process. For example, in the wake of the recent "Second Uncle" explosion, there are various ways to alleviate the different biases in media reporting. When such news hotspots appear to be biased, there are various solutions for the proper grasp and correct guidance of the media. However, behind these specific technical operations, the fundamental approach lies in ideological guidance. From a literal perspective, "thinking" has a "heart" base, while "thinking" is based on a self observation of the heart. In reality, however, it is not the heart but the brain that thinks, and while mental work is a rational activity, the 'heart' is actually more emotional, moral, compassionate, etc. "Thought" has multiple meanings in real life, and thought in the macro sense is an emotional and moral issue related to politics, a moral, intellectual and even political task. This tradition of thought leadership is also evident in the Party's revolutionary history, whether in the May Fourth Movement, the Yan'an Rectification and Reform and Opening, or in the ideological theories of successive national leaders, from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping, where the importance the Party attaches to the building of thought and its work can be seen. Against this background, there is a need to explore ways to confront the various issues that arise in journalistic practice from an ideological perspective, such as resorting to a Marxist view of journalism.

2. ENDOWING THE OLD WITH THE NEW: THE CHINESE HISTORY OF MARXIST VIEW OF JOURNALISM

As a link in social life and a component of the social fabric, it is impossible to talk about news without departing from history and the environment. To deeply understand the Marxist view of journalism, it is necessary to expand the depth of vision. The authors use the research perspective of "the past can always be the new" in order to straighten out the source², to try to interpret the inevitable trend of sinicization of Marxist view of

journalism, and build a communication bridge linking the past and the future.

2.1 Deep Soil of Traditional Chinese Culture

The core of the Marxist news view is "party spirit" and "people's nature". So how do "party" and "people" evolve in the Chinese traditional culture? How does it constitute the important principle of the Marxist news view?

2.1.1 "The Party" and the Historical Evolution of Party Spirit

The principle of party spirit is the essential requirement and core meaning of Marxist view of journalism, and it is also the most typical manifestation and clearest summary of contemporary Chinese journalism practice. The emotional transformation path of the "party" character "neutral negative positive" also reflects the ruts of Chinese history. Originally, it refers to a group of friends formed by like-minded people, such as the "party of harmony with parents" in the "Book of Rites"; Or people in the same family divided according to the registered residence system, such as "village party". In the past, "party" was scattered, and they may form a party because of their surname, geography or peers. However, with the development of centralized power, its meaning gradually became heavily political, and often compared to words such as "cohabitation" and "gullibility", such as Ouyang Xiu's "On Friend Party". Later, in the long history around 1900, the "party" evolved into a small group of friends formed by private interests, which was endowed with an alienated image of gang formation. Therefore, when Sun Yat-sen launched the revolution to establish the Chinese Revolutionary League and the word "association" created for the bourgeois revolution, the people also looked at it from a negative perspective.

It was not until the introduction of Marxism and the establishment of the CPC that the media image of the "party" could be reshaped. Li Dazhao was the first to publicly introduce Marxism and its political party, extol it as a revolutionary socialist party, actively correct the image of the party, and create a good atmosphere of public opinion through newspapers and periodicals; Newspapers such as the "Republic of China Daily" in Shanghai and the "Morning Bell" in Beijing objectively narrate the October Revolution in Russia, building a positive

2. Sha Yao, Yu Gu Wei Xin: A Future Oriented Perspective on the History of Journalism and Communication [J]. Nanjing Journal of Social Sciences, 2021(08): 110-117+138.

discourse space for the party. Even at that time, there were also some distortions and misinformation, such as the belief that the Bolshevik Party was a "disorderly party", but it is undeniable that during this period, the image of the Party began to change in the reporting activities related to Marxist movements and theories. By the founding of the CPC in 1921, it had further strengthened the positive significance of the party and made a distinction from the former Kuomintang, Chinese Revolutionary League, etc. At this point, the "party", which clearly has a strong political mission and runs through the entire development process of China, has been finally established.

Modern western political science believes that one of the "party" is a mission oriented party, such as the Leninist party that pays attention to organizational discipline, and the CPC has a clear political task with the mission of "rejuvenating the Chinese nation and liberating all mankind". Such a new political party with a strong sense of mission is different from the political parties in Britain and the United States that elect according to political opinions. The CPC is a political party with a mission, a distinct organizational and disciplinary nature, and thus the concept of "party spirit" later came into being and evolved. "Party spirit" was originally a philosophical concept, a different argument between philosophical factions. By the time of Lenin's transformation, it had become a very militant concept, and it emphasized the organizational principles behind it. It should be based on the party's rights and wrongs, and the party's propositions should be upheld. The relationship between individuals and groups should be subordinate to the party under the general principle of democratic centralism.

2.1.2 *The Historical Evolution of "People" and Affinity to the People*

Affinity to the people is another core idea of Marxist view of journalism, which complements and complements Party spirit, and is also a distinctive feature that is different from Western liberal journalism. In the oracle bone inscriptions of the Shang Dynasty, the term "people" resembles an eye pierced by a branch, indicating that prisoners of war who pierced the eyes served as slaves.³ Mencius said, "Those who think hard govern others,

3. Guo Moruo, *Self Criticism of Ancient Research*. 1900.

and those who work hard govern by others." Therefore, in ancient times, the "people" had the image of blinding the eyes, lacking wisdom, and bowing to the throne. All the people in the world were subjects of the emperor, who were passive in power, obedient to policies, and weak in the times. Even in China's historical tradition, there are factors that attach importance to the affinity to the people. For example, the ancient "people oriented" thought experienced from the Yin and Shang dynasties when "there is sun in the sky, just like we still have the people" emphasis on heaven and ghosts to the Western Zhou Dynasty when "the emperor and heaven have no relatives, and only virtue is auxiliary" respect and protect the people, and then from the Spring and Autumn period when "politics flourished, in obedience to the hearts of the people," emphasis more on people than heaven, to the Mencius' benevolent government thought of "putting people before monarch", Even in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, the criticism of the autocratic monarchy of "the world is the dominant, and the monarch is the guest", but its foundation or premise has not yet broken through the cage of feudal ruling ideology and failed to change the trajectory of historical progress.

Until modern times, the image of the "people" began to change. At the end of the 19th century, Liang Qichao proposed the "new people theory" to transform the people and shape new people. The introduction of the liberal and equal natural human rights thought praised by the reformist newspapers and the theory of evolution also promoted the thought of liberating the people. Its education in nationalism and patriotism has aroused the self awakening of the people, but this political organization still believes that the people are only the passive objects at the bottom of the country, and has not yet straightened out the important relationship between the people and the construction of the country. For example, the Kuomintang is a party called "National People". Before the founding of the Communist Party, the common people were workers who dare not resist and have no future. Let's see if the "亠" glyph showed no signs of rising above or falling below. If the glyph showed signs of rising above, it would be safe to go into the soil "土"; If the glyph showed signs of lower head, it is "千" means working hard. So history asks the Communists how to change the passive revolutionary consciousness of the ordinary people?

Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao proposed to launch a political campaign to "transform the national

character", using "New Youth" as a position to arouse the ideological enlightenment of the people. Li Dazhao called the October Revolution of Russia the victory of democracy, and enthusiastically praised the great role and position of the people in "The Victory of the Common People". Lu Xun's "Madman's Diary" woke up the numb nation with a thunderbolt. Various newspapers and periodicals interpreted the policies of the October Revolution with the nature of people's sovereignty, such as "farmers dividing land, workers supervising", and changed the narrative to actively empower. The bottom class, which symbolizes that the "people" are no longer subject to human domination, has stepped onto the historical stage, and advanced elements have also begun to use Marxism to examine the world situation and the fate of the country. With the establishment of the CPC, the party leaders launched the Anyuan road and mine strike, proposed to reform the workers' ideology, and shouted the slogan "once a bull and now a man". The "工" glyph is not prominent from top to bottom, but the combination of "工 (gōng)" and "人 (rén)" is "天 (tiān)", with a sacred meaning of the center of everything. This formulation has completely changed the humble image of workers at the bottom. Also influenced by the international anti fascist war in the 1940s and the translation of Soviet Russian literature against the backdrop of China's Anti Japanese War, and faced with the dual contradiction between external ethnic and internal affinity to the people, they specifically translated "affinity to the people" to focus on expression, and gradually spread to contemporary Chinese journalistic practice. Then the word "people" gradually overwhelmed the words "the nation" and "citizens" and became an important aspect of the political legitimacy of the CPC. The CPC attaches great importance to the position of the people in the country. Human dignity starts from the Communist Party's concept of people and human dignity. Other doctrines serve the property class, but Marxism serves the vast majority of ordinary people at the bottom. The affinity to the people is the most distinctive character of Marxism, and on this basis, the "affinity to the people" and the "unity of party spirit and affinity to the people" emphasized by the Marxist view of journalism have been derived.

2.2 *The Rooting and Germination of Marxist View of Journalism*

The first is a technological breakthrough. Telegraph, as the early network of Marx's era, made the rapid transmission of information a reality,

spanning a vast space and time distance. New technological inventions such as telegraphy, ships, and railways made Marx realize the significance of new media for journalism and communication. This lightning propagation broke through the limitations of time and space, gradually deepened people's communication, and led to the emergence of a global trend, which led to the proposition of "exchanging time for space." Secondly, Marx and Engels summarized effective journalistic guidelines from their rich journalistic practical experience. Marx used to be the editor in chief of newspapers and periodicals, and worked as a long-term freelance writer for the "Herald Tribune" in the United States. Engels also had journalistic practice experience, making him familiar with the capitalist newspaper operation system and news operation process. German scholar Walter Benjamin once said that the original sentimental expression of literati in the capitalist era was completely destroyed.⁴ Marx also clearly recognized that human beings are alienated into the body of workers in capitalist society.⁵ Marx's mastery of journalism and his criticism of the capitalist view of journalism led him to propose a proletarian view of journalism. After that, Lenin enriched and developed the Marxist view of journalism in leading political struggles and participating in journalistic practice, emphasizing the important functions of the press as a tool for class struggle and as a collective organizer. At this point, the newly formed Marxist view of journalism was introduced into China and took root with the efforts of Li Dazhao and others. The Marxist view of journalism in China has a deep practical foundation and advanced consciousness, and has been continuously enriched and developed with the historical context.

3. **ADVANCING WITH THE TIMES: DEVELOPMENT OF MARXIST VIEW OF JOURNALISM IN THE NEW ERA**

The Marxist view of journalism should achieve the organic unity and mutual embeddedness of history and reality, theory and practice, transforming from social determinism to social interaction theory, the wheels of history rolling

4. (Germany) Walter Benjamin, *Lyric Poets in the Era of Developed Capitalism* [M]. Zhang Xudong, Wei Wensheng, trans., SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2007.

5. Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844* [M]. People's Publishing House, 1985

forward, with economic and market development, new technology iteration, and changes in the international environment, etc.

3.1 Unity of Party Spirit and Affinity to the People

The political principle of the unity of party spirit and affinity to the people is an important new development of Marxist view of journalism in contemporary China. In the early years of journalism, such confusion emerged endlessly, such as "speaking for the party or the people, opposing the party is opposing me, and helping the people but not cadres". Media workers also have similar misconceptions, such as statements that completely violate human nature after the sinking of the *Oriental Star*, such as "How lucky to be a Chinese!" and "The shipwreck sees China's determination."; After the explosion of the oil pipeline, "Qingdao Daily" reported that the handling was untrue and "grateful for the care of the party and government"; The report on the Xiamen explosion and the Changyuan KTV fire is full of leadership instructions. Inside such a press operation, the people have been discarded, the affinity to the people has been abandoned, the relationship between the party and the people has not been reflected at all, and there is even less respect for the people. In 1947 the *Xinhua Daily* proposed that "the party and its people's nature are identical." But after the twists and turns of history, this question, which had a clear answer, became complicated and sensitive due to some special reasons of the times, and even formed a wrong understanding among the people and the leading cadres, while the affinity to the people was gradually abandoned, and even put the party and the affinity to the people in irreconcilable contradiction.

This divergence or tension between the two was not unified until Xi Jinping's theoretical development and emphasis on the Marxist view of journalism. The 8.19 speech spoke of the unity of party and affinity to the people, the 2.19 speech again argued for the relationship between party and affinity to the people, and the 20th National Congress report mentioned the people more than a hundred times. And such a formulation, which also drew the high attention of the press, reintroduced the parallel mention of party spirit and affinity to the people, in effect breaking the artificially created no-go area for decades and restoring the excellent legacy of the Chinese Communists back then,

which is also an important contemporary advancement and development of the Marxist view of journalism of great significance. In his New Year messages in recent years, Xi Jinping has always referred to the people who have suffered in disasters, and has shown practical concern for their lives as well as their health. Xi Jinping's motto "I will not fail the people without me" and former *Xinhua News Agency* president Mu Qing's motto "Never forget the people" are similar in their ideological interests, and the unity of party spirit and people's spirit is also an important line of development of the Marxist view of journalism in contemporary China. The unity of party spirit and affinity to the people is also an important line of development of the Marxist view of journalism in contemporary China.

3.2 Combating Formalism and Improving News Reporting

Journalism under the new situation faces many serious challenges, and problems such as corruption, bureaucracy, formalism and detachment from the masses are still serious. To the audience, the news in the TV and press is obvious in terms of the repetition of clichés, the predominance of conference news and the length of programmed content, but there is a lack of valuable new information. The most typical practice is news posing, such as the old desktop phone used by a nurse to make a phone call in the 2011 Tangshan Evening News photo, where the phone line was not plugged in; In 2012, "Today Morning Post" studied the spirit of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China by placing the front page of the newspaper in front of the camera, but it was interested in reading the supplement; In 2022, Jiyuan reported that teachers were working overtime with flashlights after a school power outage. However, the computer in the video was clearly a desktop computer that needed to be plugged in. In all these cases, it can be seen that formalism has reached a serious point, and Xi Jinping emphasises that "empty talk misleads the country, practical work prospers the state", and that it is important to avoid formalistic content and to improve journalism according to the three principles of work need, news value and social effect. A good example of this in recent years is Inner Mongolia's Party Secretary, Sun Shaozheng, who asked the media to shorten their coverage of events and leave more content to the people. The media also have a role to play in implementing the affinity to the people, conforming to news values

and breaking away from formalistic and formulaic reporting. For example, in the headline, Xi Jinping is quoted as saying, "Beijing faces many worrying problems"; when Xi Jinping inspected a Beijing compound and mentioned the disposal of domestic waste, he directly put "Xi Jinping asks where the gutter oil has gone" in the big headline; the headlines in the Beijing Times, such as "Atmospheric control most prominent", clearly capture the issues that are of most concern to the people. So, whether it is social news or reports on conferences or leadership events, as long as the media put their hearts and souls into the news, they can still produce news reports that are distinctive and have good communication effects.

In addition, it is important to pay attention to "timing, degree and effectiveness", and to grasp the timing and rhythm of reporting, the strength and proportion of reporting and the effectiveness of reporting. For example, the 2016 Beijing Evening News article entitled: "For that slap in the face, can the Communist Party still not win the world", about a Red Army soldier who was slapped by a cadre after eating a popular sweet potato. Although this was written to promote the Party's strict organisational discipline, it ignored the prohibition of beating and scolding people as part of the three main disciplines and eight points of attention, which clearly violated the principles of "timeliness, proportionality and effectiveness" of journalism and did not have the sense of a politician running a newspaper.

3.3 All Aspects of Journalism Must Be Correctly Oriented

The practice of journalism requires the correct orientation of public opinion, but with the development of the market economy, the orientation of advertisements, film and television productions and short videos has become unclear or even vulgar. For example, in 2017, Vanke advertised a property next to Zhengzhou University with the slogan "It's better to get drunk in the spring breeze than to have a student girl under the tree", which triggered criticism from students and society at large; as Zhengzhou's epidemic occurred mostly in Erqi District, when Zhengong City resumed business after the epidemic this year, one of the lines in the advertisement was "It is better to have a bed by the roadside than to have a suite in Erqi", which quickly aroused strong dissatisfaction and complaints from the residents of Erqi district. While it is understandable that the advertisements

are designed to attract attention, attention should still be paid to whether they are filled with inappropriate content that may cause some psychological discomfort to the public, or even problems with correct orientation, which runs counter to the correct orientation of public opinion advocated by Xi Jinping. In addition to advertising chaos, ruinous film and television works are also popping up, and short videos are also commonly used to attract eyeballs with rubbish content ... Under the new problems of the times and new dilemmas in practice, Xi Jinping clearly proposed that all aspects of the news, including television stations, newspapers, new media, supplements and feature advertisements, should be about correct orientation, otherwise they will cause adverse social impacts.

4. CONCLUSION

Few people today actually think about the meaning of the media anymore, or have even almost abandoned the role of the press as a collective organiser. However, in recent years, the live webcasts with goods, the access to information during epidemics, and the release of relief during heavy rains, etc., can be seen to play an irreplaceable role in the functioning of society. On 23 October, the top news questioning platform asked about the situation of the epidemic in Zhengzhou. As an up-and-coming platform that dares to speak out and truly serve the people, its responsible and responsible media image was praised by the public. The media is not only the executor and implementer of the Marxist view of journalism, but also the watcher and guardian of modernization; not only the publisher of information, but also the organizer of society; the fire that holds fast to the heart in the dilemma of watching the gap between theory and practice.

From this perspective, Lenin's function as "organiser of the press" seems to have been renewed in a new form and perspective in the present day. The image of a pen in the poster of the TV series "The Age of Awakening" carries the vicissitudes of that era. "Three thousand hairpins are not as important as a pen of a scholar." Media is self-evident in its importance to social and political change. Mastering the media well can bring liberation to the people and progress to the country. In the new Internet media communication environment, it is important to deeply understand and practice the Marxist view of journalism. In particular, history and the people have asked the

media to put into practice Xi Jinping's important statements such as "the party media should be called the party", "the people should be the centre" and "the unity of the party spirit and the affinity to the people", and to play a leading role in the ideology and culture of the party media in national construction and even national liberation. It is believed that in the continuous exploration of the future, media workers will definitely use that pen, that keyboard and that lens in their hands to deliver a satisfactory answer to the times and the people.

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