

The industrial workers, the most important part in the army of proletariat will in the not-so-distant future, just like the mental workers of today, seek a way out. At that time, the mental workers who have accepted Marxist thoughts will act as their guides.

New Years Greeting: The return of Marxism and

The Opening of a New Age

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One. What is the meaning of the leftward shift in opinion in the general public?

Many had this feeling in 2020, that there was a rapid turn towards the left in public opinion. This feeling was linked together by a series of trending topics.

April 9th, 2020, Guancha.cn posted an article titled “What Truly are the Identities of the ‘Jack Ma’s in Socialist China”, calling Jack Ma a “people’s rich”. Later a topic was started on Zhihu, “How to comment on the fact that Guancha.cn called Jack Ma a ‘people’s rich’?” There was almost 2000 answers. One had more than 4000 likes, it was just one sentence, “a big capitalist decorated himself as if he is with the working class.” Another answer ensued getting more than 10000 likes, it cited one sentence from Jin Yuelin’s “Formal Logic”, “Bourgeois ‘theorists’, in an effort to maintain their class interests, babbled on about false concepts like ‘the people’s capitalism..... The process

of development of human knowledge is where real concepts gradually replace false ones, where deep concepts gradually replace surface concepts.”

Later, Jack Ma’s speech “Business is the Best Charity”, was bombarded on Bilibili. The live comments are full of sentences like “proletarians of the world unite”, “your worker daddies are coming to get you”, “996 is a blessing, down with capitalists”. [“996” is reference to the grossly excessive overtime work expected of many workers in China, meaning work from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., 6 days per week. —Ed.]

May 1st, Bilibili posted the video “coming tides”, the live comments section was again besieged, people even went to Hei Bing’s weibo to curse him, saying “can you stop making these kinds of disgusting videos, be realistic and don’t lie like fortune cookies. Do your acting, if you don’t have any shows to act just take a break, don’t disgust us.” “Make your fortunes in silence, your kids will still be going abroad, you’ll still go enjoy your life, while the kids of the lower classes will still be waiters and waitresses, all big shots like you can do is help their restaurants out by visiting.”

Later, someone proposed an “entrepreneur festival”. Again, his weibo was bombarded. Someone said sarcastically, “People’s Representative? Are you really a People’s Representative? A People’s Representative, or a capitalist’s representative? 996 was enough, us being played for suckers was enough, you even want to have a festival for it?” Someone cursed, “You represented the capitalists, you are the enemy of the people! Down with all running-dogs of the capitalists!” Someone asked, “Do

capitalists represent the people?” Some declared, “This is my verdict, as a member of the proletariat, I don’t approve of this.”

Many more examples exist and will not be listed here.

There is another important question, which is how we should view this change in public opinion. Is the shift towards the left specific incidents or a widespread phenomenon? Was it recommended to us by the algorithms based on our personal preferences, which was why it felt so obvious, or was there indeed some sort of widespread trend? If there was indeed a trend, then what was the basis for it, and how will it develop? These are the questions we should answer.

Let’s first look at a chart, which documented four keywords: “Capitalist”, “proletariat”, “Mao’s selected works” and “him”.

In it, the first two have clear leftist tendency (nationalists and liberals tend to use entrepreneurs instead of capitalists, workers or employees instead of the proletarians), this can be used to measure the number of internet users using left-wing vocabularies.

The third keyword is “Mao’s selected works” (many Chinese turn towards Marxism by reading Mao’s selected works), this can be used to measure change in the number of people who spontaneously/consciously learn theory (assuming that the percentage of people searching the term compared to people reading it is constant).

The fourth is a neutral term; it can be used to roughly measure the number of users for the Baidu search engine.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
资本家	300	338	340	381	514	759
无产阶级	549	594	694	785	960	1134
毛选	254	311	394	415	580	1039
他	3340	2876	2517	2727	3185	2814

 佐伊23

百度关键词日均指数

	2016同比	2017同比	2018同比	2019同比	2020同比
资本家	12.67%	0.59%	12.06%	34.91%	47.67%
无产阶级	8.20%	16.84%	13.11%	22.29%	18.13%
毛选	22.44%	26.69%	5.33%	39.76%	79.14%
他	-13.89%	-12.48%	8.34%	16.80%	-11.65%

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百度关键词日均指数同比

(The first graph is the average daily number of times the term was searched; the second graph is the change in percentage compared to last year)

From the graph we can see that between 2015 and 2020, the number of users searching left-wing terms grew. In it, the change between 2015 to 2018 was relatively slow, a sudden increase happened in 2019, an even greater increase happened in 2020. Between 2015 and 2020, the number of people searching “Mao’s selected works” increased as well; its pattern was similar compared to the first two words.

This indicates that the shift in public opinion towards the left is not an isolated event, it was universal, it wasn't a bias created by algorithms, but instead, there really was a leftward shift in public opinions on the internet.

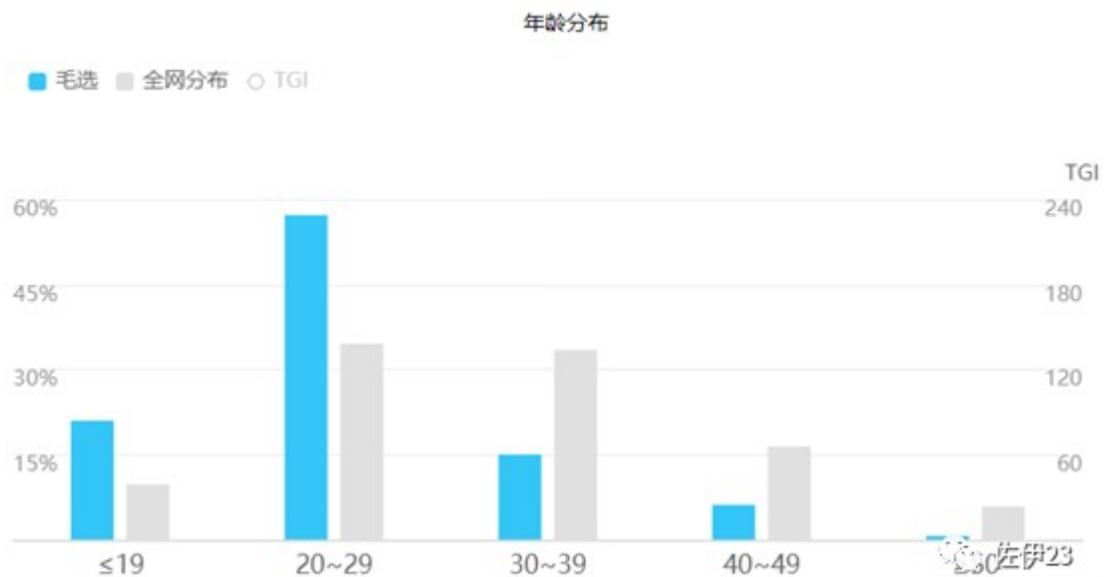
This turn towards the left is especially obvious in the youth.

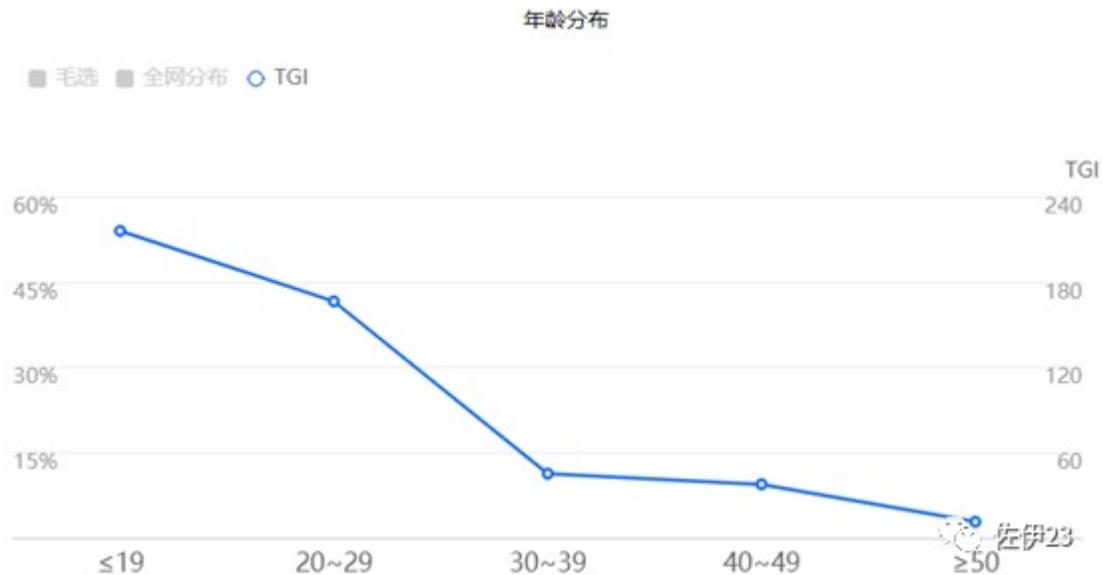
Take Bilibili as an example, where the user base is relatively young, there are numerous (absolute numbers, not percentage) junior or senior high school students, some have read "The Communist Manifesto", some "State and Revolution", Some read "Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism", others even read "Capital" in senior high school. There are also young content creators on Bilibili (as well as Zhihu, Weibo and QQ) spontaneously promoting Marxism, there are so many that suspending accounts does nothing. Some turn Mao's Selected Works into audio for dissemination, or turn political economy into popular videos, some play music from the Soviet times in memory of that red era, some use the point of view of classes to describe trending topics. Many more are drawn by this penetrating worldview, expressing their spontaneous resistance against reality in the form of memes.

Some people believe the memes occurring on Bilibili are just what the youths do when they are bored, this is false. The nature of the memes is that young people with incomplete worldviews when attracted by thorough (Marxist-Leninist) world views and methodologies, do not know how to connect it with their own practices, and so express

their resistance against reality in this way. This resistance is a spontaneous resistance in narratives, and so it's feeble, but this reflects an unstoppable tide of progressivism.

The acceptance of Marxism among the youth is also not isolated. Statistics from Baidu indicated that most of the people searching Mao's selected works are young people. More than 75% are people under 29. Looking at the TGI value ([percentage of people in an age group searching Mao's selected works/the percentage of people searching Mao's selected works in all age groups]*100), the percentage of people under 19 is the highest.





As the out-of-bounds actions of the capitalists received more and more condemnations, more and more people began to see the world through the concepts like class and capitalists, the people searching Mao's selected works grew exponentially (therefore the people reading Mao's selected works grew exponentially as well), and this is mainly the youth, more and more young people propagandize spontaneously online, all this means one thing----**Marxism as a school of thought (not an action) returned among the youth, this is the fundamental implication of the leftward shift in public opinions.**

Engels was proud how the German workers inherited the theoretical literacy of the German nation, Lenin also described the scene of Russian workers learning "Capital", saying that they had inherited the theoretical consciousness of the German workers.

No doubt, this trend is again rising in China. **The advanced section of the Chinese proletariat (and their reserve army)'s interests in Marxism grows yearly, the trend accelerated in 2020.** From what can be seen now, this trend has the following characteristics: **(1) Even though these people take up a very small percentage of the working population, their absolute number is certainly not small; in fact, it is growing. (2) The majority of these people are young mental labourers or students. (3) Their admiration for Chairman Mao and the spontaneous study of his works form the bridge for their ideological transformations.**

Two. Under what subjective and objective conditions did Marxism return?

Under what subjective and objective circumstances did the Marxist school of thought return, this is the second question we need to understand. That is to say, what political, economic and class conditions resulted in the return of Marxism? On an opinion platform like this, we cannot analyse the history and presence of every condition. Here we will mainly analyse the economic root of the return of Marxism.

After 1978, the economy of our country can be divided into three large stages.

1 1978-1992

This was the resurgence of capital. At this stage, capital was summoned again, a national unified market for commodities, finances and labour power was constructed. At this stage, capitalists as a class reemerged. In the cities, workers in state-owned

enterprises were in fact turned into wage labourers, but they still had job security. In the countryside, small-peasant economy became dominant, large numbers of peasants left their villages, becoming migrant workers in the cities. A wealth divide reemerged, ideological debates raged on, but mostly within the government system. The economic interests of the urban workers were not impacted, while in the countryside the peasant's income (from increased prices on agricultural goods and opportunities to be wage labourers) increased, they didn't care much about ideology.

2 1992-2008

This was the stage of rapid capitalist developments. At this stage, capital was recognized legally, private capitalists as a class were recognized politically, capitalist operations in the state-owned enterprises pushed forward rapidly in practice. In the cities, SOE [State-Owned Enterprises] workers were laid-off en masse, the new generations of workers faced brutal exploitation from capital. In the countryside, the "three peasant problems" emerged (namely problems with villages, farming and peasants), rural villages became decrepit. The ideological struggle within the government mostly concluded, but a left mainly made up of old workers rose in the population. In this process, mental workers rapidly grew as a stratum, they were the engineers in factories, clerks in companies, technicians working on the Internet, teachers in schools, etc, while they were oppressed by capital, they also enjoyed the

benefits of rapid capitalist growth, as a result, they wholeheartedly sang praises for capital.

3 2008-2020

This was the stage of decline of capital from its peak. In the early stage, monopoly capital formed rapidly. But from 2012 onward, the economic growth rate plummeted. In order to secure jobs and people's livelihoods, the state stimulated the economy multiple times, resulted in sky-rocketing real estate prices. At this stage, the activities of the old workers in the SOEs ended, most of them retired and were on pensions. A new generation of workers replaced them, becoming the main force of the proletariat. They are workers who grew up under capitalism, so their struggles were only spontaneous economic struggles, with no socialist political elements present. The countryside was run-down, rural young labourers migrated en masse, easing the "three peasant problems". Used to benefiting from the growth of capital, the mental workers fell into the embrace of liberalism. However, when monopoly capital formed, and the speed of economic growth slowed, the oppression of capital on the mental workers grew in severity. Housing prices, education and healthcare costs, etc, are like mountains on the backs of the mental workers, suffocating them. The mental workers are a group with university educations, meaning that they were in contact with the basic ideas of Marxism. They scoffed at the force-fed concepts like "classes", "capital", "exploitation" when they were in school. This force-fed learning and reality did not match, so naturally

it should be scoffed at by the youth. But, when they entered society again, that is to say when they are truly facing exploitation and oppression by capital, all these attitudes change.

The group of old workers (including old leftists) are still here; they and the youth groups influenced by them (extreme minority) promote Marxism spontaneously or consciously online. This propaganda has been on-going for the past decade. The majority of people who were in contact with this propaganda were the mental workers, and they rejected it: "What do you want! Going back to the past?" "Don't stir up class antagonisms out of nowhere!" "What exploitation, this is just division of labour!"

The seeds were sown, but the soil was too dry, so not many budded.

The rapid formation of monopoly capital, even-intensifying class antagonisms, changed the soil. Mental workers born after the '90s, especially after 1995, as they entered the labour force, found that buying property with their own wages is entirely impossible. Class stagnation was a hot topic even when they were in school, and more and more of them see this society through the lens of classes. Every lash from the whip of capitalism prompted them to think, "Why!" "Why is this!" Some of them were looking for a way out, and concepts like "classes", "exploitation", "capitalists", etc become the bridge that leads them back to Marxism.

The rapid development of the Internet speeds up the rate of transformation. The mental proletariat and their reserve army (mainly university students), gained access to a large quantity of materials promoting Marxism, and these materials are so thorough that the youth who are without prejudices are deeply convinced.

Not every young person will return to Marxism, but, the conditions are ripe for the youth as a group to return to Marxism.

Specific historical processes and real environments, made the mental workers the main force for the revival of Marxism as the generation of manual workers changed.

Under these objective and subjective conditions, Marxism as a school of thought returned to the youth.

Three. Trends in the future

Presently, there are mainly four groups promoting Marxism: Young students, young mental workers, old workers (including old leftists), and a new generation of workers.

In the not-so-distant future, what sort of changes in the subjective and objective conditions for these four groups to accept Marxism occur? Furthermore, will the number of people who accept Marxism increase or decrease in these four groups? On this point, we cannot analyse things in depth, but we can sketch a general trend.

In these four groups, the largest ones are the mental workers and students.

The characteristics of the mental workers are that they have accepted Marxism through various channels after experiencing severe oppression. Looking at future trends, there's no reverting 996, the capitalist oppression of the mental workers will only strengthen. So there will only be more reasons for them to accept Marxism, and Marxists in this group will grow in number

The characteristic of young students is that they have accepted Marxism from learning theory and reading materials (like reading about how mental workers are being oppressed), without experiencing class oppression themselves. Looking at future trends, the chances for them to see relevant materials (theory and anecdotes) (because more people will propagate them consciously or spontaneously), and objective conditions (real oppression and public opinions) will make them more accepting of propaganda. So, this group will have an increasing number of people accepting Marxism.

Old workers (including old leftists) are large in number, but they have exited production, and are not familiar with the internet. They are worthy of praises because they are the dusk of the previous era, and have contributed greatly in enlightening this era. This group, as they grow old, is shrinking.

The new generations of workers are small in number. Their work is too grueling, most of them work 6 days a week, 12 hours a day, even more. They usually don't go on to platforms like Zhihu, Bilibili or Weibo, where leftists congregate, so they have less time and channels to get in touch with leftist thoughts. However, the new generations of

workers are the main force. They are in control of social production, and are growing as industries develop. They suffer the worst oppression, and they are the least likely to make a fortune for themselves out of all the groups. They can either be wage slaves for the rest of their lives, or make money standing up straight.

So, under what conditions will the new generations of workers accept Marxism? We won't make any specific predictions, but a bold judgement can be made:

As the most important part of the army of proletariat, the industrial workers, will, in the near future, search for a way out, just like today's mental workers. And the mental workers, who have accepted Marxist thoughts, will act as their leadership.

2020 is about to pass, a new age is about to start.