

Studies of Rosa Luxemburg in China since 2006

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International Conference on "Rosa Luxemburg's Thought and Its Contemporary Value" was held by Wuhan University in 2006. Participants were from 12 countries: China, America, Japan, Italy, Holland, Poland, Spain, Britain, Germany, Austria, South Africa, Brazil. Topics included Political economy, Political philosophy and Socialist democracy of Rosa Luxemburg. In the conference, foreign scholars' papers and speeches brought the latest academic information about Rosa Luxemburg for Chinese academia and attracted the college scholars' concern about Rosa Luxemburg in China. It is in this year that more than 20 articles about Rosa Luxemburg were published in the most important journals of China. This phenomenon was unheard-of. The majority of those articles were from the Conference on "Rosa Luxemburg's Thought and Its Contemporary Value". An important part of the articles published were Chinese scholars', which concerned three dimensions: Rosa Luxemburg's philosophy; Rosa Luxemburg's political economy; and Rosa Luxemburg's politics, mainly about Socialist democracy. Another part were articles translated from foreign scholars' research: Ito Narihiko's *Nation and State in the Thought of Rosa Luxemburg*, Ottokar Luban's *Rosa Luxemburg's Criticism of Lenin's Ultra Centralistic Party Concept in a Socialist*, Paul Zarembka's *Late Marx and Luxemburg: Opening a Development within Political Economy*, Kevin B. Anderson's *Marx and Luxemburg on Non-Western and Pre-Capitalist Societies*, Peter Hudis' *Rosa Luxemburg's Concept of a Post-Capitalist Society*, Jan Toporowski's *Luxemburg, Minsky and the Socialisation*. Above-mentioned articles all attracted concerns in the conference. Besides, some American and Germany scholars' papers were published in *Marxism & Reality*, issue 6, such as Charles F. Elliott's *Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and the Dilemma of the Non-Revolutionary Proletariat*, and Blattler, Sonia and Marti, Irene's paper: *Rosa Luxemburg and Hannah Arendt: against the Destruction of Political spheres of Freedom*. Those articles pushed the research of Rosa Luxemburg in China to a climax.

In 2007 and 2008, there were more articles published in academic journals of China. They had not only increased quantity, but also broadened and deepened the research of Rosa Luxemburg: Many scholars began to elucidate the contemporary value of Rosa Luxemburg together with the social changes of China; some others reflected the state of Chinese research of Rosa Luxemburg via comparing the studies in China and abroad. The phenomenon shows that, Chinese scholars' research of Rosa Luxemburg does not rest on interpretation of texts any longer, but expands to social problems of contemporary China. It should be said that above-mentioned phenomenon shows the great impact of research of Rosa Luxemburg's thought on Chinese history of thought and the reason why Chinese pay attention to Rosa Luxemburg's thought. Here, I shall analyse, together with the articles, the impact of research of Rosa Luxemburg's thought on Chinese academia.

Since 2006, Chinese scholars' research of Rosa Luxemburg has focused on the relationship, especially the debate, between Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin, which means Chinese scholars are in the period of reflecting on our own theories and realities.

Theoretically, Chinese Marxists take the study of Rosa Luxemburg as the juncture to reflect upon our own philosophical theories. For a long time, Chinese Marxists have followed Lenin's and Stalin's thoughts. However, Chinese academia has introduced Western Marxism since 1980s, which has invoked the reflection. The research, especially from young scholars, of Western Marxism has substituted for that of Russian Marxism as mainstream between 1980s and 90s. A new academic interest has emerged: From early Western Marxism, such as Gramsci and Lukács to post-Marxism, e.g. Laclau and Mouffe. Because Laclau and Mouffe's thought of democratic politics begins from the theories of Rosa Luxemburg and Gramsci, some young scholars begin to concern about Rosa Luxemburg's political democracy. It is in such a condition that Charles F. Elliott's *Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and the Dilemma of the Non-Revolutionary Proletariat*, and Blattler, Sonia and Marti, Irene's paper: *Rosa Luxemburg and Hannah Arendt: against the Destruction of Political spheres of Freedom* are translated into Chinese. However, the real starting point of studying

Rosa Luxemburg is to study the debate between Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin, and the relationship between Rosa Luxemburg and Western Marxism. To study the debate between Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin is order to free Chinese thoughts from some bindings. Once, Chinese scholars did not study Rosa Luxemburg because of Lenin's critique of her thought. So, to rethink the debate between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg is the premise of studying Rosa Luxemburg. What are the focuses of the debate? Is Lenin's critique right? What are the valuable thoughts raised by Rosa Luxemburg? These are the problems for Chinese academia to understand. As a result, in the conference of Rosa Luxemburg held in Wuhan Universtity in 2006, some papers attracted Chinese scholars' concern: Ito Narihiko's *Nation and State in the Thought of Rosa Luxemburg*, Ottokar Luban's *Rosa Luxemburg's Criticism of Lenin's Ultra Centralistic Party Concept in a Socialist*. Of course, Chinese scholars also discussed the debate: I analyzed Lenin's and Luxemburg's difference on the accumulation of capital, and compared Luxemburg's and Lenin's theories of Imperialism, and revealed the respective meanings of Luxemburg's historical determinism and Lenin's non-determinism, further to make a conclusion: Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* has developed Marx's theory of accumulation of capital. Professor Zhao Kai-rong from Wuhan University also discussed Lenin's critique of *The Accumulation of Capital* and thought the debate limited to Marxist tradition were resulted from Luxemburg's and Lenin's different perspective of viewpoints: Luxemburg's theory was *pure* theoretical and focused on the method of totality, but Lenin was interested in practical matters. These papers not only researched into Luxemburg's thought itself, but also liberated Chinese academia from blind faith in Lenin's critique of Luxemburg. Only when we get rid of the blind faith, we can really study Luxemburg's thought in China. Besides, Chinese academia is interested in the relationship between Luxemburg and Western Marxism. Professor Li Dian-lai from Wuhan University analyzed the relationship of political philosophy between Luxemburg and Western Marxism. Doctor Xiong Min from Wuhan University and Professor Chen Xue-ming from Fudan University analyzed the impact of Luxemburg's thought of totality on

Lukács. Zhou Fan from Central Compilation & Translation Bureau of China and Xia Ying from Nan Kai University analyzed Laclau and Mouffe's critique of Luxemburg. According to these papers, what I want to emphasize are: Firstly, research on Rosa Luxemburg begins from philosophical sphere and the most research results belong to philosophical sphere in China. Because research of Luxemburg's philosophical thoughts is the juncture for Chinese to liberate themselves from Russian Marxism and create our own new philosophies. Secondly, in philosophical sphere, Chinese scholars evaluate Luxemburg's theory much more highly than Lenin's, which comes from the reflection upon the reality of China. This shows that Chinese scholars' interest in Luxemburg's theories not only from the theoretical need but also from practical need.

Practically, Chinese scholars' interest in Luxemburg is based on two elements:

Firstly, to think about globalization and modernization. Globalization and modernization have a strong impact on China since 1990s. How should China preserve her own particular characteristics and develop herself? It is a problem for Chinese academia to think about. Chinese scholars cannot find the answer in Lenin's philosophy, so they turn to Rosa Luxemburg. In my opinion, when Rosa Luxemburg incorporated non-Capitalist countries into global Capitalist system, and explained how world Capitalist system established via the process of oriental non-Capitalist countries' colonization in *the Accumulation of Capital*, in fact, she described, in terms of the mainline-capital- between oriental and western countries, the world structure in the period of Capitalism and showed us the necessity of oriental non-Capitalist countries' subjection to western Capitalist countries and the particularity of oriental non-Capitalist countries' capitalization. These theories has been reinforced and embodied in new styles: On the one hand, globalization has reinforced western countries' manipulation on developing countries, On the other hand, anti-globalization has brought about historical plurality. As a result, to rethink Rosa Luxemburg's theory of the accumulation of capital will help us to think about Chinese development in terms of the interaction between China and world. On the one hand, to put China into world system and to grasp China's role and function in terms of contemporary world

construction and essence, on the other hand, to formulate China's development strategy in terms of the particularity of China's modernization and accelerate the development of China's Socialist market economy. This is why Chinese scholars are interested in Luxemburg's *On Capital Accumulation*. So, in the conference of Rosa Luxemburg in Wuhan University, 2006, Chinese scholars were interested in some papers: American scholars, Paul Zarembka's *Late Marx and Luxemburg: Opening a Development within Political Economy*, Kevin B. Anderson's *Marx and Luxemburg on Non-Western and Pre-Capitalist Societies*, and British scholar, Jan Toporowski's *Luxemburg, Minsky and the Socialisatio*. Chinese scholars believed that the problems raised by Paul Zarembka, Kevin Anderson and Jan Toporowski enlightened Chinese scholars to analyze contemporary Capitalism and China's development.

Secondly, to think about the reform and construction of China's Socialist democracy. Democracy fitting for planned economy is out-dated, then, what kind of democratic system should be established? How to set up a new democratic system? They are the most important questions have been thought by Chinese academia since the new century. As far as Chinese scholars are concerned, it should solve mainly two problems for the establishment of China's democratic system: democratic rights in public sphere and the relationship between fairness and justice. When Chinese scholars think about these two questions, they return to Luxemburg's and Lenin's debate on Socialist democracy. Chinese scholars have published many articles to discuss Luxemburg's theories of spontaneity and Socialist democracy and her *The Russian Revolution* since 2006. These articles believe that Rosa Luxemburg's theory of Socialist democracy includes rich contents of dialectic, especially the most important parts: to regard the establishment of Socialist democracy as a process, and to emphasize the mass participation and healthy public sphere as the fundamental guarantee for Socialist democracy. These two points should become the theoretical resources for China's development of harmonious society.

Overall, the international conference on Rosa Luxemburg in 2006 has greatly promoted the study of Rosa Luxemburg in China. Here, I shall appreciate foreign scholars for the latest results of Rosa Luxemburg brought for Chinese academia, and

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hope broader academic exchanges between us.