Since several years, Chinese Communists have intensified an activity aimed at making their positions and their elaborations better known to the Communists, Marxists and anti-imperialists of all the world, both on the processes underway in China along the path of “socialism with Chinese characteristics”, as well as on the changes in the world framework and on the strategies of the international workers’ movement and of the anti-imperialist struggles and resistance.

The Italian comrades and scholars who follow us on the website www.marx21.it and in the magazine MarxVentuno (with the website www.marx21books.com) have had the opportunity to know and deepen the themes related to the Chinese way to socialism – the “socialism with Chinese characteristics” – and to the “sinicization of Marxism” thanks to the initiative taken by the Institute of Marxism of CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), directed by Professor Deng Chundong, who, since 2014, has promoted annually, in collaboration with “Marx XXI” and other organizations, the “European forums” on these issues, held in France, Germany, Spain, Italy. The marx21.it website has published several reports and speeches, and the book
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La Via Cinese
(The Chinese Road: realizations, causes, problems, solutions)
has been published by the “MarxVentuno editions” (Proceedings of the 2015 Conference, ISBN 978-88-909183-1-5). The book by Francesco Maringiò of interviews with the Chinese Marxists Cheng Enfu,

Deng Chundong

Lv Weizou
(ISBN 978-88-909183-3-9) is equally useful and interesting.

The World Socialism Research Center (WSRC) at CASS, led by Li Shenming (whom the readers of MarxVentuno magazine know for some articles in previous issues[1]), does not spare efforts to promote and develop international exchange opportunities at 360 degrees, with representatives of communist and workers parties, representatives of liberation and emancipation movements, intellectuals and organizers of Marxist, communist, anti-imperialist study centres and magazines from all over the world, to deepen the most interesting and burning issues. In recent years, on an annual basis, World Socialism Research Center, in collaboration with other bodies, including the CPC Foreign Department, has organized world forums in Beijing – usually in October, after the National Day for the Founding of the Peoples Republic of China – which have involved hundreds of communists, Marxists, left-wing representatives from around the world and allowed the study of fundamental issues such as: Analysis and implications of the great international financial crisis; Changes in the world framework; Characteristics of contemporary imperialism; the Imperialist Strategy of “Colored Revolutions”; Tasks and action of the communist parties and the workers' movement in the present phase; Meaning and developments of the October Revolution; Developments of socialism with Chinese characteristics. These forums were joined by in-depth forums on Mao Zedong and the Mass Line (2014) or, in Ningbo, on Reform and Opening up and Practice of Chinese Socialism (2017).

As Lv Weizhou (formerly deputy head of the Department of the International Communist Movement of the CASS) and Qin Zhenyan (Institute of Marxism, CASS) observed, the World Socialism Forum has become an important platform for dialogues among global Marxists and leftists, as well as for solid link between world socialist political parties and organizations. It is a positive response to the new world order and the new international and domestic opportunities and challenges, which is conducive to further innovation and development of Marxism. The World Socialism Forum has become a principal centre of analysing the present situation and future development of world socialism (World Socialism Studies No 1/2017). Two volumes in English have been published by Li Shenming, entitled
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In addition, thanks to the initiative of other CASS leaders, two World Cultural Forums (2015 and 2017) were held, which clearly set the theme of the struggle for the spread and development of a Marxist and socialist culture worldwide, taking the field of culture as one of the fundamental grounds in which the class struggle for socialism is practiced.


CASS also sponsors *International Critical Thought* magazine, published by Routledge and edited by Cheng Enfu (Institute of World Socialism, CASS; Department of Marxist Studies, CASS), David Schweickart (from Loyola University in Chicago) and Tony Andreani (from Paris 8). It publishes some texts by Chinese Marxists.

Since mid-2016, on the initiative of the World Socialism Research Centre, a new magazine has been published in Chinese with abstracts in English, which we reported some time ago on the sites marx21.it and marx21books.com, publishing the Italian translation of the abstracts of the first issue. This was followed by another number in 2016, 9 numbers in 2017 and 2 in 2018.

The 13 issues of the magazine so far – about 1400 large pages and 200 articles – clearly show the ideological, political and cultural orientation of World Socialism Research Center.

The magazine also has the contribution of several foreign authors. We remember here in particular Samir Amin (director of the Third World Forum and president of the World Forum of Alternatives, as well as scholar of contemporary imperialism, whose our website and magazine have often published the punctual speeches[2]), with his articles on the imperialism of financial monopolies and the need to build a vast united anti-imperialist front; Egon Krenz
the last general secretary of the Socialist United Party of Germany (SED) in the GDR, whose speech at the 8th World Socialism Forum is reported: “To pass to socialism or return to barbarism” (No. 8/2017);

**Martin Jacques**
(University of Cambridge, former director of *Marxism Today* from 1977 to 1991 and author of the widely circulated book *When China Rules The World*, 2009) with a crude analysis on the future of the United States after the election of Trump (No. 1/2017);

**Carl Ratner**
(Institute for Cultural Research and Education, Trinidad, California) who proposes an interesting analysis of multiculturalism in the United States, which – the author writes – is not a true diversity, because it does not pose any challenge to the American political and economic hegemony (No. 1/2016).


**Situation and tasks of the global workers’ movement**

Several articles are dedicated to knowing and analyzing the situation of the workers’ movement in the different realities. “The world today is witnessing an upsurge of mass and socialist movements, and China’s steady development has proved the advantage of socialism and created favourable conditions for the growth of the world socialist movement” – write Li Qiang and Li Shuqing (editorial committee of the magazine), in “Opportunities, problems and challenges in the spread of the Socialist Movement World”. However, world socialism still lacks good platform for its propagation, whereas Western media has kept presenting distorted information about socialism and the Chinese society. As a result, socialism is considered distant and unrealistic among ordinary people in the West, with limited knowledge and a myriad of misunderstanding of socialism with Chinese characteristics”. For this reason, the two authors propose to create an
effective communication platform, such as forums and magazines, inviting scholars and left-wing political activists from the West to participate (No. 1/2018).

From the Beijing observatory one looks strategically at the overall characteristics that global socialism can assume. According to Jiang Hui, party secretary at the CASS Institute for Information Studies and Deputy Director of the WSRC, they are based on the following elements: 1) the wider systemic advantages of socialism compared to capitalism are the sign of the revitalization of world socialism; 2) China becomes the backbone and flagship for the development of world socialism; 3) the balance of power between the two camps of the world will have an historical turning point after a long period of rivalry; 4) the number of socialist countries and the level of achievement of the socialist ideal become the criteria for assessing the state of development of socialism.

The future of global socialism in the 21st century will be determined by the organic unity of national and international, workers’ movement and a broad mass movement, social development and building ecological civilization in global socialism (No. 1/2016).

However, it must be recognized that the state of organization and coordination of the world workers’ movement is not adequate to the challenges and tasks that the new situation requires and that it is necessary a great effort and unitary work to reverse the current trend. As Li Caiyan (Chinese Social Sciences magazine) writes, while a global capitalist class is gradually taking shape, the global working class has not yet formed: the unity of the proletariat is still at a relatively low level and the process of its formation is rather slow. The antagonism between workers and capitalists is intensifying, but the unity of the working class is encountering many difficulties, so it is necessary and urgent to strengthen the unity of the proletariat. This necessary unity is a concrete possibility, provided that it is able to properly face the numerous problems and well manage the relations between the different subjects (“The need and possibility of the unity of the proletariat in the context of globalization”, No. 9/2017).

The same internationalist requirement is in the article of Samir Amin “It is imperative to rebuild the International of Workers and Peoples” (No. 9/2017). Globalization over the last 30 years has led to the following problems: the great ecological challenges cannot be resolved; scientific progress and technological innovations are limited; global governance is severely affected; there is extreme centralization of power; the historical imperialist powers plunder the resources of the Global South in an organized and planned way; the work of the Global South is being over-exploited; all other countries are being prevented from escaping the status of a dominated periphery. However, throughout the world, the struggle of the workers and the peoples who are victims has been extremely fragmented and has not made any substantial progress. It is therefore necessary to build an international front of workers and peoples from all over the world to strengthen international unity against imperialism and to address global issues together.

The long essay in three issues (1-2-3 of 2017) by Zhang Wenmu (Strategic Research Centre at the University of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Beijing) is certainly interesting on the changes in the world situation from a historical perspective and on the tasks of the world
socialist movement in the current phase. He argues that, despite the great historical changes in the world since the October Revolution, the fundamental characteristics of imperialism have remained the same. Imperialism of 21st century has developed from a stage where financial capital influenced all other forms of capital to one where financial capital is completely dominant. “According to historical experience, current balance between capitalism and socialism may well continue for twenty to thirty years, which gives China – if it remains to be socialist – considerably large space to rise. That is to say, there will be a fairly cairn international environment for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”. But the most interesting part for the communist militants and the Italian and European scholars is in the forecast that the decline of the United States and the rise of China will lead to the reorganization of the international financial capital, which, “if China does not collapse like the Soviet Union”, will move to Europe, with considerable implications for the ongoing unification process. From the analysis of the absolutely dominant character of financial capital, the author also deduces the strategy of the workers’ movement in the 21st century, which in a first phase should create a broad front of all the working and ruling classes of the real economy to concentrate the fight against financial capitalism and its class comprador, with the objective of subjugating it to the real economy, transforming it into a useful complement to industrial capital. In this first phase, the objective of the workers’ movement in the non-socialist countries is not to create a fully socialist society, but to create favorable conditions for the real economy, “that is, a socialist society with certain capitalist characteristics”. Only in a second phase does the objective become that of establishing a genuine socialist system. A united international front including industrial capital can prepare a new wave of advances in socialism.

The World Socialism Studies pages are very focused on the strategies and activities of the political parties and organizations of the workers’ and communist movement in the world. Starting with those in power in China and elsewhere: Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, North Korea. Referring to their party congresses held in 2016, Zhang Fujun (Institute of Marxism, CASS) notes that everyone decided to apply Marxism-Leninism to national conditions, adhere to the idea of development that places the people at the centre, scientifically plan their path of socialist construction and pursue an independent line of diplomacy. These four countries are exploring ways of developing that are adapted to their national conditions (No. 9/2017).

More than one article is dedicated to Cuba and to the figure of Fidel Castro, who died on 25 November 2016. Mao Xianglin (Institute for Latin America, CASS), in No. 1/2017 notes that Fidel has forged a revolutionary model in Cuba, leading the Cuban people in a victorious revolution, that from the democratic revolution proceeded to the socialist revolution. He reorganized the Cuban Communist Party and started building a socialist system. Under his leadership Cuba has become a revolutionary example for other Latin American countries in the relentless struggle against imperialism. Fidel Castro contributed to the development of socialist thought worldwide: by adhering to scientific socialism, he grasped the question of building socialism on the basis of the national characteristics of his country (“indigenization” of socialism).

Pan Jin-e (Marxist Institute, CASS), points out some similarities between China and Vietnam
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(“The Vietnamese Communist Party’s Theories and Practice of Party Building”, No. 8/2017). Since the 1980s, the Vietnamese Communist Party has attached great importance to party-building and the 12th Congress has accentuated its role, emphasizing the importance of a close relationship between party and people, as well as the party’s new spirit of government against corruption and luxury. “As the problems and challenges that the Vietnamese Communist Party is facing in the new time have certain similarities with those for the Communist Party of China, we should, like the Vietnamese Communist Party, pay more attention to and spent more effort in self-improvement of all party members in addition to continuously enhancing various party building initiatives”. See also Njuyen Wenqin: “Leadership of the Party as the Decisive Factor to Ensure Democracy in Vietnam” (No. 2/2016).

Pan Xihua (Academy of Marxism, CASS) writes that it is very important to study socialism in developing countries and regions. See its review of the Conference of “Socialism in Developing Countries: Past Present and Future” (No. 2/2018).

The magazine publishes several articles that focus on the situation and tasks of the communist parties and the socialist movement in different areas of the world, from the Philippines (Wang Jing, of the Institute of Marxism of the CASS: “The Communist Party of the Philippines and the Left Socialist Movement in the Philippines”, No. 8/2017) to Australia (Wang Yonggang on the times and socialist practice of the Communist Party of Australia, No. 8/2017), to the Japanese Communist Party, whose position on the construction of socialism in China is set out by Tan Xiaojun, of the Institute of Marxism of the CASS. He notes the positive judgment of the Japanese Communists on the eradication of poverty in China and he pays particular attention to the correctness of China’s direction in the construction of socialism. As for the problems that China is facing now and in the future, the Japanese Communist Party argues that socializing the means of production and guiding the people to properly understand the shortcomings and damage of capitalism is the key to achieving socialism in China (No. 7/2017).

European countries are another important field of investigation. One cannot ignore the fact that the workers’ movement was born in Europe, met the elaboration of the scientific socialism of Marx and Engels and developed with trade unions and political organizations, but today, particularly in Italy, it is going through a deep crisis: despite the prolonged and very severe capitalist crisis that exploded in 2007-2008, the Communist and workers parties of Europe, with few exceptions, are reduced to a minimum and they are now spectator-commentators rather than active players in the political struggle.

The magazine hosts reports and analyzes on the French presidential elections (Samir Amin, No. 4/2017); on the New British Communist Party (Andy Brooks, No. 5/2017); on the 5th Congress of the Party of the European Left (Liu Chunyuan and Shi Fangfang)
The magazine pays particular attention to the analysis of the USA after the election of Trump. **Song Lidan** (CASS Marxism Institute) writes that Trump was elected with the support of the financial oligarchy, the military-industrial complex and the conservative middle class, leveraging the three main ideologies of the United States: racism, liberal individualism and anti-communism. The election of Trump is the choice of the lesser evil for the capital. Its position as a member of the super-rich class means that its policies must be in line with the interests of American monopoly capital. As regards the relationship with China, Trump’s policy of “making America strong again” will not be possible without China’s full containment (“Issues to be clarified on the election of Trump”, No. 1/2017).

According to **Ma Zhongcheng** (Institute for Maritime Security and Cooperation), the racist tradition of the United States, an important tool to induce the white working class to support the monopoly capital, has led both the monopoly financial groups and a large number of voters of the subordinate classes to support Trump (“Why Trump Is Able to Go Up On the Historical Stage. Reflections on Trump, American Conservatism and Fascism”, No. 4/2017).

**Zhou Miao** (CASS Institute of Marxism) invites us to face the election of Trump in Marxist and class analysis terms, as a product of the crisis of the American neoliberal accumulation system, which resulted in the international financial crisis of 2008, sign of a further decline in US hegemony, which requires major adjustments and transformations of the international political and economic structure (“The Class Politics in the United States and International Situation during the Trump Administration”, No. 4/2017).

**Fang Guangshun** and **Su Li** (Liaoning University) believe that the US will not change its hegemonic strategy. The nature of the United States as an imperialist country remains unchanged, as does the class nature of the bourgeois monopoly. And the class nature of Trump...
as the main representative of the monopolistic capitalists remains unchanged (No. 5/2017).

Cheng Enfu and Duan Xuehui (Huaibei University) criticize harshly the “American-style democracy”, which, presenting itself as an electoral and procedural democracy, is essentially a monetary and family democracy and a democracy of the oligarchy. It damages production and trade and leads to periodic economic crises; it damages the financial order and causes financial crises; it damages public finance and leads to debt crises; it damages ecological civilisation and the environment and translates into a global ecological crisis; it causes material damage to life and well-being and significantly widens the gap between rich and poor (No. 5/2017).

Yu Li (University of Zhengzhou) believes that a comprehensive, multi-level strategy for China’s peaceful development needs to be formulated in a timely manner as a response to the decline of US hegemony (No. 6/2017).

Luan Wenlian, of the Institute of Marxism of the CASS, observes that crisis and long-term stagnation have been resolved in greater contradictions and conflicts between the major capitalist powers in the West. China should remain vigilant over American hegemony and capitalist contradictions, because in the potential comparison between China and the United States, most Western countries would take the side of the latter (“Deepened Crises and Contradictions in Europe and America. Notes on the Visit to Britain by the Research Group of “Current Situation of Capitalism since the 2008 International Financial Crisis”, No. 3/2017).

The 100 years of the October Revolution and the causes of the dissolution of the USSR

In 2017, the centenary of the October Revolution was celebrated and the CPRF organised the international meeting of Communist parties in Russia (Liu Shuchun, No. 2/2017).

Tong Jin (Marxism School, University of Economics and International Trade), after noting that the October Revolution showed the potential and energy of the working class to fulfill its historical mission and carry out new struggles for socialism in different countries, argues that the valuable experience of October should now be integrated with the concrete reality (No. 2/2016).

This anniversary was the occasion for a comprehensive analysis, from a historical perspective, of the role of the October Revolution, as well as of the causes of the collapse of 1989-91, which – especially in the WSRC and in the Marxist institutes of the CASS – is not stopped investigating, also looking at what could happen to the Communist political power in China, if the errors of the CPSU are not avoided. Interesting, from the ideological point of view, what Mei Rongzheng , of the University of Wuhan, writes in defense of Soviet Marxism, that is considered in China, especially in the social sciences, as non-Marxist. This position – according to the author – is wrong, it is a subjective invention of idealism against Marxism-Leninism and aims to reject the Four Cardinal Principles introduced by Deng Xiaoping in March 1979: 1) follow the socialist path; 2) support the dictatorship of the proletariat; 3) support the leadership of the Communist Party; 4) support Marxism-Leninism and the thinking of Mao Zedong (No. 3/2017).
The role of Gorbachev is strongly condemned. **Zhang Shuhua**, deputy editor of the magazine, director of the Scientific Information Institute at CASS, writes: “History shows that the collapse of the former Soviet Union is the result of degeneration of Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in the later stage of its regime. In reforming its political development road, CPSU did not adhere to Marxism-Leninism, but changed to capitalism” (“Lessons from the political reform and democratization of the Soviet Union”, No. 1/2016).

**Vladislav Schweide** is even harder in his assessment of the historical role of Gorbachev: the “surrender” of the Soviet Union through political agreements with the Western powers was not a test of stupidity by Gorbachev, but a real crime to be subjected to legal proceedings and sanctions (No. 2/2016).

**Ma Han** (Central Committee of the CPC, Party School of Teaching and Research on Socialism) sees in perestroika a serious deviation from Marxism that determined the transformation of social consciousness (No. 5/2017).

According to **Li Ruiqin** (Academy of Marxism, CASS) the collapse of the Soviet Union not only caused enormous economic losses to CIS countries, but also transformed Russia into a special blood donor to prolong the life of declining Western capitalism (“Russia’s New Reflections upon the Dissolution of the Soviet Union”, No. 6/2017).

**Li Shuqing** (editor of the magazine, Chinese Agricultural University) highlights the harmful role played by the theories of Harvard University in the collapse of the Russian economy after the dissolution of the USSR, allowing, through privatization, Russian oligarchs in cahoots with the West to rob the people without mercy; she concludes that it is necessary to watch carefully in China on similar situations (No. 3/2017).

A reflection on the collapse of the USSR had already been extensively elaborated in the Beijing conference of 2011, whose proceedings are published in the book edited by **Li Shenming On this reflects History**.

**Against “historical nihilism”: the cultural battle on the history of socialist revolutions**

The history of the workers’ and communist movement in China and throughout the world is a terrain of struggle in which to move with care and attention, knowing how to master the toolbox of Marxism. **Wang Weiguang**, President of CASS, party secretary, honorary director of **World Socialism Studies** , already spoke on this subject in the first issue of 2016 with the article “Accelerating the Development of Marxist Historiographic Theories with Chinese Characteristics and the Construction of Disciplinary Innovation System of Historiography under the Guidance of Historical Materialism”, in which he states that in recent years historical materialism has been seriously challenged by historical nihilism, an expression by which is meant the work of deformation, falsification, denigration of the history of the communist movement in every part of the world. It is necessary to respond to this by developing Chinese historiographic research on a Marxist basis.
Since the late 1970s – write Zhang Jiansong and Zhang Weiying – historical nihilism has experienced three stages of development in the cultural market, and has added fuel to the bourgeois liberalization. The essence of historical nihilism is to negate the leadership of the Communist Party of China and China’s socialist system, thus constituting a great danger to our society (“Three Evolutionary Stages of Historical Nihilism In The Cultural Market”, No. 5/2017).

The history of the USSR and of the revolutions of the 20th century is one of the fundamental areas on which a strenuous cultural and political battle must be fought. It is a particularly lively battle in China today[4]. The historical judgment on the main protagonists of the socialist revolutions of the 20th century, from Lenin to Stalin to Mao, is at stake. On the first – on which CASS has organized an important conference on imperialism in 2016[5] with the broad participation of Russian scholars – Wang Tingyou (Marxism School at Renmin University) denounced the trend, gradually developed in China after the collapse of the USSR, to deny Lenin and Leninism, with the aim of removing ideological and theoretical obstacles to the promotion of democratic socialism and the subversion of the leadership of the CPC and the socialist system. The denial of Leninism opens the way to an attack on Mao Zedong’s thought and the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics (No. 8/2017).

On the role of Stalin in the history of Russia and the international communist movement, the magazine presents several articles aimed at dismantling and rejecting denigrations and demonization. See in this regard: Li Rui and Liu Fan «Fallacy and Essence of the “Anti-Stalin Paradigm” in the Western Academia: Lies in Blood Land» (No. 2/2016); Wu Enyuan (CASS, Institute of Russia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia), “The demonization of Stalin as an attack on Russia and the Soviet Union” (No. 7/2017).

Bo Yang argues that the 20th Congress of the CPSU, where Stalin was reneged, is the starting point for the decline of the USSR. And he invites to draw the necessary lessons for China, “in which is now emerging the denial of Mao Zedong and other heroic figures of the Chinese revolution” (“Negating Stalin as the Turning Point for the Decline of the Soviet Union. Readings and Reflections of a College Student Born in the 1990s”, No. 7/2017).

Mao Zedong’s central role in the Chinese revolution

It is no coincidence that the figure of Mao Zedong occupies an important part of the magazine, in essays that deepen its historical role both in the long revolutionary phase that precedes the conquest of political power, and in the subsequent, in which the essential bases for the socialist transformation of the country are laid. Several articles are dedicated to rejecting attacks of historical nihilism in China. After all, the readers of MarxVentuno have already been able to know the position of the director of the WSRC Li Shenming regarding the Maoist direction of the first phase of the People’s Republic of China (1949-1978)[6].

Chen Yuan (Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference: CPPCC), proposes the study of five Mao essays as Problems of Strategy in the Chinese Revolutionary War; On Practice; On Contradiction; On Long-Term War and On Problems of War and Strategy. Mao’s thinking is a valid reference for both Western economy and philosophy and Chinese economy and philosophy, although it should never be copied and mechanically repeated (No. 2/2016).

He Xin, also from the CPPCC, points out that one of Mao’s greatest successes was the rapid industrialization and the achievement of food self-sufficiency, thus transforming China from an economically poor and culturally backward country into a country with a vast industrial base, in about 20 years. He continues: «The existing “socialist” system is not the ideal one of equality and fairness without class distinctions that he tried to create, but one in which there are still extremely profound and complex contradictions, conflicts, confrontations and struggles. In this regard, Mao Zedong has left exceedingly rich political heritage. It is of great importance that his revolutionary spirit and ideology have been deeply integrated into the political culture of the Chinese nation» (No. 2/2017).

Ge Yuanren expresses a largely positive opinion on the sending of young educated citizens to rural and mountain areas after the foundation of the People’s Republic of China. This movement, before and during the Cultural Revolution, shared the common goal of uniting workers and peasants, and this was not an error of the Cultural Revolution. Based on their hard work and knowledge, most educated young people cultivated abandoned land, practiced scientific agriculture, significantly improved local agricultural production, fostered the development of education in rural China and improved cultural and health conditions in the workplace. Although there were some problems, this was a passage in the history of the Chinese youth movement that is worth remembering, as educated young people went to work in the countryside to join workers and peasants, integrated into the national development process and embarked on a path for the development of their homeland and for the well-being of the majority of the population (No. 2/2017).

Li Xia, of the CASS degree course, praises the experience of university students in rural collective economy villages as an important basis for ideological and communist political education among university students; it builds a public opinion conducive to the development of the collective economy, helps clarify the direction of the deepening of the Reform for China’s
new socialist campaigns and continues to attract talent to build a campaign rich in all respects (No. 6/2017).

And again: **Zhang Yunsheng**, “Contributions of Mao Zedong to the socialist way and the rebirth of the Chinese nation” (No. 4/2017); **Zhang Yanzhong**, “Recognizing correctly the relationship between the Long March and Mao Zedong” (No. 9/2017); **Li Ya**, “Mao Zedong's Criticism of National and Cultural Nihilism in the Area of Traditional Chinese Medicine” (No. 2/2018).

In the struggle for the affirmation of Marxist economic theory, the article by **Zhou Xincheng** (Renmin University) against an approach based on economism is interesting. He takes his cue from Mao’s important notes on the first Soviet manual on political economy, a science that fundamentally studies the production relations rather than the development of productive forces (“Mao Zedong’s Comments on Socialist Political Economy Must Be Valued”, No. 4/2017).

**Socialism with Chinese characteristics is first of all socialism**

This anti-economicistic approach is not limited to the historical and theoretical revaluation of Mao’s role, but is at one – in the impetuous and complex Chinese transition – with the battle for the affirmation of public ownership, both in strategic industrial enterprises and in the countryside, where the collective economy and the model of cooperatives are exalted.

The magazine does not fail to point out that socialism with Chinese characteristics is first and foremost socialism, as **Zhou Xincheng** (Renmin University) writes, who observes that from the beginning of the Reform and Opening up many conceptions of socialism have emerged with Chinese characteristics both at home and abroad. The basic principles of scientific socialism cannot be set aside if you want to remain socialist. Based on scientific socialism, socialism with Chinese characteristics adheres to the basic principles of this, while taking on distinctive Chinese characteristics in accordance with the specific Chinese conditions and characteristics of the times: socialism with Chinese characteristics cannot be seen as an “independent form of socialism” or as a “completely new socialism”, nor be included in the sphere of capitalism (“How to understand socialism with Chinese characteristics”, No. 2/2016).

On the same line of defense of scientific socialism we can also place the article by **Yuan Xiuli** (Institute of Marxism, CASS), who denounces how Marx’s vision of socialism is sometimes distorted or even denied in China at present and invites us to defend its scientificity, taking position against “utopianism”, “vulgar pragmatism” and the tendency to separate Marxism from socialism with Chinese characteristics (“Correctly Understand and Uphold Marx's View of Socialism”, No. 4/2017).

According to **Gong Yun** (CASS, Research Center on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics), socialism with Chinese Characteristics is also the successful practice of scientific socialism in China, it is the dialectical unity of the theoretical logic of scientific socialism with the historical logic of social development in China. It is scientific socialism rooted in Chinese soil, which
reflects the aspirations of the Chinese people and adapts to the development of China and the times, follows the basic principles of scientific socialism, while meanwhile confers it distinctive Chinese characteristics depending on the conditions of the era and sets as its ultimate goal the realization of communism ("Socialism with Chinese characteristics in a new era", No. 8/2017).

**He Ganqiang**, professor at the University of Economics and Finance of Nanjing and researcher of the Marxism Institute of CASS, writes that “we need to stick to the basic tenet of historical materialism that social production determines circulation in the market and avoid confusing the dialectic relations between social production and market circulation with that between the government and the market. We should obtain a scientific understanding of the class nature of government functioning and uphold macro-economic control. We must ensure the dominant role of state-owned economy and incorporate foreign trade and the use of foreign investment into the macro-economic control. In addition, we must recognize the antisocialism nature of modern Western theories on market economy as well as the drawbacks of Western theories on macroeconomic regulation, and correct the problematic tendency of blind copying of Western economic theories. We should consciously apply the principle and methodology in *Capital* to guide our macro-economic control, firmly defend the right to discourse of Marxist political economy” (“Several Theoretical Issues that Require Special Attentions in Macro-Economic Control", No. 1-2/2018).

**Han Rusheng** is against vulgar economism, that does not recognize the importance of ideology. In the Chinese state economy there is a contrast between socialist ideology and capitalist ideology. Ideological struggle is essential to promote the development and growth of the economy of the state sector ("Strong Socialist Ideology as the Prerequisite of Strong State-Owned Enterprises", No. 1/2018).

**Yu Hongjun**, of the Party Committee of the University of Beijing, insists on the founding value for socialism of public, social property: As China is currently in the primary stage of socialism, private ownership and market mechanism are still necessary to some extent in the development of the socialist productive forces, but negative effects of private ownership and market economy must be avoided, and efforts should be particularly made to strengthen public ownership and state-owned economy so as to ensure the gradual realization of social justice. ("Strengthening public property as a prerequisite of social justice", No. 3/2017).

**Pan Wei** (University of Beijing), strongly supports the role of collective land ownership in rural areas of China as a key economic base for the consolidation of CPC political power. It is the only means that guarantees equal allocation of farming and housing land, the last defense against capital's deprivation of farmers right to survival, an economic and social bond among the villagers, and a bridge between the rural and urban areas (No 4/2017).

**Xie Xiaqing** (Beijing University), referring to the last “popular municipality” of Zhoujiazhuang, defends the role of the collective agricultural economy, based on the principle that "no family should be left poor or suffering and no one should be left behind". For half a century, Zhoujiazhuang has always contributed to common prosperity on the basis of the collective economy. The example of Zhoujiazhuang indicates the correctness of the strategic choice of the
“second leap” in agriculture, namely “adapting to the needs of scientific farming and socialized production and developing moderate scale businesses as well as collective economy” (“The Zhoujiazhuang Road: Realizing the Urbanization of People’s Hometown with Dignity”, No. 9/2017).

Zheng Yougui (Institute of Contemporary China at CASS) supports the dominant role of public ownership in promoting common prosperity (“Response to new changes in the structure of wealth with the unique experience of promoting common prosperity”, No. 4/2017).

Zhong Nanshan (Chinese Academy of Engineering) calls for the public nature of hospitals to be maintained as a key factor in health reform: hospitals, together with schools, are the most important and absolutely necessary public service, which should be managed primarily by the state and government. Delivering them to domestic or foreign capital would soon empty public hospitals and schools of the best members of their staff, with high pay offers from those privately run. In this way, people suffering from serious and complicated illnesses would be forced to go to private hospitals (No 4/2017).

The leading role of the Communist Party

The question of political leadership and the character of the Communist Party in the transition process in China is at the centre of the magazine’s reflections with several articles.

The line that emerged from the leadership of Xi Jinping is a solid one to strengthen the leadership role of the Chinese Communist Party and a correct approach to research into the history of the party is an integral part of that line. Wu Degang sets out the main criteria (“Carry out Party History Research with Marxist Position, Outlook and Methodology: Learning from Xi Jinping’s Comments on the Party History Related”, No. 1/2018).

Zhu Jiamu, President of the National History Association of the PRC, former vice president of CASS, consultant of Marxist Studies in China and World Socialism Studies, spoke on the subject with several articles. In “Why Must the Leadership of the CPC Be Upheld and Strengthened? On the 95th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China” (No. 1/2016) he argues that, since the CPC still has a long way to go to accomplish its historic missions, its leadership should not be weakened, but strengthened. It is a necessary requirement of the socialist economic base, a form to achieve popular democracy and a fundamental guarantee of the great rebirth of the Chinese nation. In a subsequent article (“On the Ruling Party’s Being Revolutionary or Not and the Nature of the Present Epoch”, No. 1/2017) he states that the CPC is both a ruling party and a revolutionary party. The idea of saying goodbye to the revolution and the demand that the CPC should turn from a revolutionary party into a governing party are unsustainable in theory and harmful in practice. Along the same lines see also: “Modes of Political Life within the Party Consistently Promoted by Chen Yun” (No. 6/2017).
Jiang Hui and Wang Guang insist, on the basis of the speeches and indications of the General Secretary Xi Jinping, on the rigorous application of the Party discipline, which requires clear rules and a strong education in the ideal and principles of communism. The “key minority” of the party officials is of great importance for a systematic, strict and comprehensive party disciplining. (“The Scientific Connotation of Comprehensively Enforcing Strict Party Discipline”, No. 2/2016).

Wang Zhigang (Kunlun policy Institute) stresses that the policy of “Reform and Opening” is based on respect for the Four Cardinal Principles set out in 1979 by Deng Xiaoping – follow the socialist path; support the dictatorship of the proletariat; support the leadership of the Communist Party; support Marxism-Leninism and the thinking of Mao Zedong – who are the political guarantee against bourgeois liberalization, which “often puts on a reasonable and legitimate coat in the name of reform and opening up”, while promoting “westernization” and “polarization” between wealth and poverty in China (“Adhere to the Basic Line to Ensure National Security. Reflections upon the Study of the Series of Important Speeches made by General Secretary Xi Jinping”, No. 2/2017).

Gao Changwu (Document Research Center of the CPC Central Committee) writes about the theoretical and practical significance of Xi Jinping’s idea on the “great social revolution”, that is a concise theoretical summary of the exploration and practice of CPC since its formation 97 years ago. CPC’s self-revolution is the means to carry forward the social revolution by the people under CPC leadership (No. 2/2018).

It is certainly interesting, also for the “Western Marxists”, Li Shenming’s reflection on the decisive importance of the formation of man in the life of the party: with respect to institutions, systems and mechanisms, man is the key that at the end determines the system and mechanism in the economic structure and superstructure. “Therefore, we must, under the correct leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, combine ideological construction with system building and embark on a new journey of keeping the party and the government from degeneration with high degree of vigilance, deep insight and extraordinary tenacity” (“Which Should Be the Key, Man or System and Mechanism? Reflections Based on the Study of General Secretary Xi Jinping’s Speeches on the Ideological Construction and Institutional Discipline of the Party”, No. 3/2017).

Tang Shuangning (China Everbright Group) underlines the leadership role of the party – animated by the spirit of the Long March and the long lasting war – in the government of state enterprises (“Adhering to the Leadership of the Party and Strengthening the Party Construction Are the Root and Soul of China’s State-Owned Enterprises …”, No. 2/2017).

The Xi Jinping Secretariat and the 19th Congress of the CPC

Li Shenming summarizes the latest theoretical elaborations of the CC of CPC, led by Secretary General Xi Jinping, into five important ideas that constitute five different concentric circles: economic system; development oriented towards the needs of the population; theoretical system, which is reflected mainly in the cultural field, acting as a guide for socialism with Chinese characteristics; political system; adherence to the leadership of the CPC (“Upholding
and Developing Socialism with Chinese Characteristics: The Essence of Xi Jinping’s Important Speeches”, n. 1/2016). A subsequent article by the same author (“Earnestly Study and Resolutely Implement the New Concepts, New Ideas and New Strategies on the Governance of China Proposed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China With Comrade Xi Jinping as the Core”, No. 5/2017) moves along this path. In another article, published after the 19th Congress, the author dwells on the role that the new China – which is moving from an independent nation to a prosperous and strong one – can play in the world, with which it relates to a Chinese way of building trust. The Chinese path to socialism, as a completely new reference, has contributed to human development with Chinese concepts of value, development and external relations. In the general context of structural change in the world, China is building a community with a shared future for humanity, actively participating in the construction of the global governance system, seeking to contribute with Chinese wisdom (“The Global Significance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era”, No. 1/2018). In his latest essay (No. 2/2018), the author stresses the importance of the thesis of the 19th Congress on the main contradiction in the current phase of Chinese transition: between the growing material and cultural needs of the people and inadequate and unbalanced development. For a correct path along the Chinese road to socialism, it is necessary the correct understanding and analysis of the contradictions between productive forces and relations of production, base and superstructure, man and nature, and between human beings, is fundamental. The study of the historical experience of the Chinese Revolution and the transition to socialism contributes to the correct understanding of contradictions in the present phase, framed by Xi Jinping’s thinking on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era.

Xi Jinping proposed the idea of strengthening the “Chinese power”, writes Xu Guangchun (Advisory Committee for Marxist Theoretical Research), starting from the principle that the people comes first of all, everything must be done for the people and you have to rely on the people, fully realizing popular creativity. The Chinese People’s Power is strengthened by rigorously and completely applying the Party discipline, assuring the leading position of Marxism, continuing the development of the economy with scientific and technological innovation as its driving force, in a culturally cohesive nation, endowed with strong military defense apparatus. This is to be implemented through the “rule of law”, placing institutional limits on power and improving the capacity to govern the country (“Gathering up Invincible Majestic Power to Meet the Great Struggle with New Historical Characteristics. Brief Discussion on the Idea of the Chinese Power of the Party Central Committee With Comrade Xi Jinping as the Core”, No. 2/2016).

Wang Weiguang, on the basis of the speeches of Xi Jinping, stresses the importance of building a system of philosophy and social sciences for the development of Chinese socialism and proposes to adapt to the new tasks that arise the level of studies of these disciplines fundamental in the university and academic (“Further Studying and Carrying out the Spirit of the Important Speeches of General Secretary Xi Jinping and Thoroughly Promoting the Construction of the Discourse System of Philosophy and Social Sciences in China”, n. 1/2017). This speech is taken up and expanded in the following text “Speed Up the Development of Philosophy and Social Sciences with Chinese Characteristics under the Guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era” (No. 1/2018).
After the 19th Congress of the CPC (October 2017) with the long report read by the secretary[7], we can further specify the features of Xi Jinping’s thinking on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era. Zhu Jiamu identifies the following distinctive characters: it stresses that development should be people-centered and reform should give the people a sense of achievement, reflecting a closer link with the people; it underlines the high ideal of communism and revolutionary militancy; more strongly supports the consistent position of principle of the Chinese Communist Party, the style of struggle and the fighting spirit ("The Distinctive Features of Xi Jinping Thought’s on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. Notes on Studying the Report to the 19th CPC National Congress", No. 8/2017). On this we can also see Jin Minqing, of the Institute of Marxism of the CASS: “The Great Innovation in the Party Building Theories of Sinicized Marxism”, No. 9/2017.

Wang Lisheng (Institute of Economics, CASS) underlines the great theoretical and practical significance of the new thesis taken up by the 19th Congress according to which “the main contradiction in Chinese society has shifted to that between the growing need for a better life and an unbalanced and insufficient development” ("New Judgment on the Principal Contradiction in the Primary Stage of Socialism", No. 9/2017).

Yin Yungong (Academic Steering Committee of World Socialism Studies) stressed the unprecedented importance that the party had attached to the role of ideology, the media and the Internet since the 18th Congress and accentuated by the 19th, and proposes to further improve the capacity in internal and international communication in the new era ("Guiding the Practice of News Media and Public Opinion with Xi Jinping’s Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era", No. 9/2017).

To carry out the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress – according to He Bingmeng, the former general secretary of the Presidium of Academic Divisions and researcher at the CASS – it is necessary firmly center the work on raising people’s quality of life as the key performance indicator of Chinese economy, social modernization and sustainable development. This is to conform to the requirement of new era and grasp the true meaning of “modernization” “scientific development” and “sustainable development” ("Carrying out the Spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress and Raising People’s Quality of Life as the Key Performance Indicator of the Reform and Sustainable Development", No. 2/2018).

The ideological struggle against the soft power of the West

In line with the reflections that the WSRC has been doing for some years and with the international forums it has promoted (remember in particular the VI Forum of World Socialism, 2015, dedicated to the “colored revolutions”, with a large contribution of political activists and scholars from the former Soviet area and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe), the magazine dedicates a number of articles to the fight against the ideological penetration of the West, which, with the help of all the tools at its disposal, from the Internet to NGOs, tends to impose its discourse, its narration.

Hence derives the great significance of the battle for the “right to speech”, which – Bian Qin
writes – does not form automatically: the flow of speech is not a simple “exchange” of information, but the result of a sophisticated control system operated by national power and hegemony (“The Vital Significance of the Direction of Discourse Flow to the Survival of the Nation and Civilization”, No. 2/2016).

Li Yanhong, in an interesting essay, studies the way in which the USA imposed their narrative on the Soviet Union. Since the beginning of the Cold War, they have adopted different language strategies in different periods. The “Research on Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and the Language Training Program” implemented since the 1980s is an important language strategy tool against Russia and embodies the strategic intention of the United States to achieve its policy objectives through language. In fact, the rise of the United States as a global power is not only due to its economic and military strengths, but also to its deep knowledge of the internal situation of other countries. The US language strategy also shows that national language skills are both hard and soft power, and full integration of language skills and regional knowledge is key to staff training in foreign languages and regional affairs (No. 2/2016).

Tang Qing (Chongqing Normal University) and Feng Yanli (Marxist Institute, CASS) analyze the three main measures taken by the U.S. to control the growth of Chinese soft power: 1) isolating China through value diplomacy; 2) strengthening the power of US institutional formation in the Asia-Pacific region through multilateral mechanisms such as trade agreements to weaken China’s regional influence; 3) launching cultural attacks through non-governmental organizations and cultural exchange programs with advanced networking technologies («Three U.S. “light weapons” to contain China», No. 2/2016).

For some years now, Chinese Marxists have been studying the role of the Internet, paying particular attention to the powers that effectively control it. This speech went through some of the world socialist forums in Beijing, as well as the European forum held in Rome in 2016[8].

Zhang Jie (CITIC Reform and Development Research Institute) notes (No 4/2017) that the US government, while formally handing over the administration of the Internet to ICANN (established in 1998 and which has become an international management body since 2 October 2016), remains de facto the effective controller of the Internet: it has not waived the right to administer the Internet, but has rather strengthened this right of US capital, so the PRC should not lower its guard. On the contrary, as Mou Chengjin (China Mobile Communications International Strategic Research Center) writes, it is necessary to accelerate the construction of China’s independent and controllable network security system, since “without network security, there is no national security”. The guiding principle for ensuring the security of China’s cyberspace is: systematically planned, independent, controllable and rapidly developing state-led networks (No 4/2017).

Of considerable interest is the criticism of abstract universalism, of the “universal values” of the West. CASS President Wang Weiguang, in the wake of the criticism of Marx and Lenin, denounces the false universalism of the West, that intends to propose as universal what is instead the product and the elaboration developed during a long history of Euro-Western culture. Under the banner of universal values, Eurocentric colonialism and imperialism are
hidden. And here the West intends to impose the monopoly of political discourse («“The anti-scientific, self-righteous and deceptive nature of “universal value”», n. 5/2017). The concrete universalism that the Chinese Marxists propose passes through the relationship with Western culture (not its elimination, or cancellation, as ethnocentric extremism of cultures in contrast with Marxism wants) and its overcoming (Hegelian Aufhebung) in a new, broader culture: see Xi Jinping’s speeches on the community of destiny. The sinicization of Marxism, far from being the affirmation of a particularism, is also the moment of passage towards concrete universalism (of the concrescence of the different cultures that world history has produced and nourished).

Xue Xinguo (Tianjin Normal University) points out the strategic difference between social democratic values, which he essentially inscribes in the category of capitalist values, and fundamental values of socialism with Chinese characteristics, rooted in scientific socialism and far from the abstract idea of “human nature” and “ethical socialism” (“A Comparison between Socialist Core Values and the Basic Values of Social Democracy”, n. 7/2017).

Zhang Shuhua sets out the strategic task of breaking the monopoly of Western political discourse, freeing people from the myth of Western democracy, in order to overcome it (aufheben) in a more advanced real democracy (“Political Values Such as Democracy Are of Central Importance in the World Struggle over the Right to Discourse. On How to Supersede Western Democracy and Enhance Our Global Voice”, No. 7/2017).

The export of the ideology and values of the West (see Xiao Li, No. 2/2016) is also articulated through institutions that present themselves as neutral and super partes, such as the Nobel Peace Prize, which is, instead, a political instrument of the West (Wang Xiaoshi, No. 2/2017). But in general it is the whole Nobel Prize system that has become involved, becoming — writes Qi Guifeng — an important instrument of the American hegemony to monopolize the orientations, the construction of rules and the final judgment on the awards for world scientific research. He played an important role as a soft ideological power in improving the image of American hegemony, recruiting talents from around the world, appropriating the wealth of other countries, breaking down the Soviet Union and choking China and Third World countries. Therefore, it is necessary to scientifically understand the Nobel Prize and the speeches related to it and to build an independent system of incentives for scientific research adapted to the historical process of rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (No. 2/2016).

From the editorial line of the magazine emerges a growing awareness of the strategic importance of the cultural and ideological battle, and of the need to prepare and equip all cultural institutions adequately, including universities and academic research. This is why antisocialist tendencies should be correctly identified and contrasted. Zhang Hongi denounces the markedly erroneous trends in Chinese scholars’ research into the history of the modern
world. In terms of academic research, the fundamental leading role of Marxism has been undermined and denied, while the bourgeois “universal values” are defended and the nature of the colonial invasion of the West is hidden. In political terms, the leadership of the party and the democratic dictatorship of the people are rejected, the leading role of state-owned enterprises is rejected and macroeconomic control of the state is denied. Furthermore, in research into European and American history there is little attention to research into Soviet-Russian history (“Great Emphasis Is Needed on Ideological Issues in Academic Research”, No. 2/2018).

The strengthening and development of philosophy and social sciences, as recommended by the 19th Congress, is also the theme of the article of Liu Dezhong, Wu Bo and Zhong Hui, who propose to be based on the guidance of Marxism and on Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era (No. 2/2018).

Hou Huiqin (World Socialism Research Center, CASS), commemorating the 170th Anniversary of the Publication of the Manifesto of the Communist Party, stresses that a real social revolution is necessarily an ideological revolution. Today we must read this classic work in terms of the revolution of world outlook (Weltanschauung), «stick to a world outlook based on dialectical materialism and historical materialism, resolutely criticize the various trends of de-materialization, de-ideologization and the blurring of “people” into individuals and carry forward the great course of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Whether to stick to dialectical materialism is the focus of the current struggle over world outlook. Whether to stick to the people-centered theory of history or individual-centered theory of history is the touchstone for genuine historical materialism. In order to undertake the great struggle we must focus on the struggle between two types of world outlooks» (No. 2/2018).

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As is normally the case with any study and debate magazine, the articles in World Socialism Studies can be fully shared or only partially shared - a magazine is made to fuel open reflections and discussions on the proposed issues -, but one thing we can observe and one lesson we should learn: Chinese Marxists are used to thinking strategically, not only for the immediate contingency, not only for reactive responses to a political-cultural agenda dictated by others. And to have a strategic thought – which for many years has been lacking in the Communists and the workers’ movement in Italy and the West – is an inescapable task if we want to reverse the disastrous course which, in the last decade in particular, the workers’ movement and the Communists have taken in Italy.

We believe that we can do something useful by attaching all the abstracts in English and in Italian of the main articles published in the 13 issues of the magazine, hoping to be able to equip ourselves to translate into Italian some essays present only in Chinese, that are of particular interest to us in Italy.

10 April 2018


See also by the same author the interview with Marxist Studies in China, 2016 (pp. 264-282) “The 21st Century will see revitalization of socialism”.


Li Shenming, “Properly evaluate the two historical periods before and after Reform and Opening up”, op. cit.

An Italian translation of the proceedings of the 19th Congress is currently being published at the MarxVentuno Editions.