

Mingde Strategic Dialogue 2024

Strategic Dialogue 1: “Chinese Modernization and the World: New Challenges and Opportunities”

Larry Catá Backer (白轲)

Remarks: “A Question on Chinese Modernization and the Vanguard Party”

I am very grateful to the vision of Renmin University and more particularly to superlative work of Wang Wen, Dean of the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, and his team, for organizing this event. Today a group of leading scholars and officials have been brought together to discuss a matter of significance not just for China but also for the world—the nature and effects of China’s socialist modernization both as a major development of Chinese political theory in its New Era but also for the power of the principles that this form of modernization represents for world, and especially for China’s friends along the Silk Roads, many of whom are gathered here in Beijing now to attend the China Africa Summit.

To those ends, but only as well as a foreigner is able, I have attempted a diligent study of the Resolution/Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Further Comprehensively Deepening Reforms and Promoting Chinese-style Modernization” recently adopted at the 3rd Plenum of the 20th Congress as well as the General Secretary’s guidance, recently published in Qiushi Journal, as the Explanation of the Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Comprehensively Deepening Reform and Promoting Chinese-style Modernization.¹

I would like to pose a question that may help deepen my understanding of a fundamental implication of the 3rd Plenum’s principles and a fundamental question of Chinese Marxist-Leninism. To those ends I would seek guidance on the following points:

1. I start with the fundamental question of socialist modernization in the new era. Socialist modernization is an expression of the fundamental obligation of the Party, embodying the leading forces of society, to ensure that all productive forces contribute to the challenge of the current general contradiction in every era of historical development.

Socialist modernization is an all-around concept that from my perspective might be reduced to six key elements:

¹ 习近平：关于《中共中央关于进一步全面深化改革、推进中国式现代化的决定》的说明

First, it is Chinese. This is driven by a presumption that national characteristics matter when transposing theoretical principles into the concrete realities of a cultural-political community. Modernization may be universal; its manifestation is inevitably local.

Second, it is socialist. That requires a very specific approach to understanding the relationship of national sources of productive wealth (human and other resources) with state policy. When combined with the first principle, one speaks about socialism with national characteristics.

Third, it is premised on the core role of the productivity of national forces. The principle of productive forces has its roots in classical Marxism referring to the combination of human productivity with the means of production. In Chinese socialism the notion of the development of productive forces became a central element of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics.

Fourth, it is premised on an understanding that productive forces must be applied to a particular set of tasks. In this case it is to move the notion forward along the socialist path at the end of which, ideally, is the realization of a communist society.

Fifth, modernization is dynamic. Modernization must change with the times and build on the successes as well as learn from the challenges of the past.

Sixth, modernization is a comprehensive concept in China's current historical era. China has developed the original 19th Century notion of productive forces from one that centered on economic production to one that includes the comprehensive development of the nation and of China's productive role in the world.

Together these core elements provide the structure for understanding the role of socialist modernization, the insights and experience gained over the year, and the rationalization of the practices of continuously and comprehensively deepening reform. That reform and deepening is measured against forward movement along the socialist path. The dialectics of socialist path and socialist modernization, then, serve as the guardrails for movement toward the ultimate establishment of a communist society in China.

2. That brings me to the question for which I hope this group of eminent scholars and officials may help me consider correctly. *The question: Is the Communist Party itself the*

manager or supplier of national productive forces or is the Communist Party also a superior productive force? The question thus focuses on the extent and manner to which the Party must itself apply the principles of socialist modernization, especially as they have been thoroughly explained by the General Secretary, to its own organization and to the contribution of its own productive forces to China's forward movement along the Socialist path.

Under the leadership of the General Secretary and at the core of the 3rd Plenum's consideration of developing socialist modernization theory, it has become clear that the need to meet the challenge of the current general contradiction requires the focusing of all of the nation's productive forces. Those productive forces, in turn, serve as the engine of socialist modernization itself by embracing the entirety of the productive capacities of the social, cultural, economic and political spheres. It is also aligned with China's international relations.

It is now well understood that these necessary evolutionary changes also required a change in conception— from productive to New quality productive forces. The emphasis is on innovation, being in accord with the times, bring the past forward and moving into the future. Nonetheless new quality production applies comprehensively, suggesting the path forward for the current realization of socialist modernization.

3. It is in this respect that the issue of the way in which the principles of socialist modernization, and especially of its concepts of new quality production apply to the work of the Party and its organs.

The issue arises from the question— what are productive forces to which socialist modernization applies? Traditionally the focus was on economic production. Under New Era theory it has been broadened to all social forces producing economic, social, cultural wealth in the sense of contributing to positive movement along the Socialist path. ON the one hand one might argue that productive forces are materialized as State Assets with respect to which the overall direction is undertaken by the Party and also in its leadership of the nation's consultative organs.

Nonetheless, from a Leninist perspective the most critical productive force are its leading forces—the communist party together with its state apparatus, mass organizations, and consultative and allied organs. Indeed, in reading the General Secretary's "four

urgences”² one gets the sense of the centrality of the Party and its organs to and as socialist modernization through new quality production principles. This is especially relevant to the first and fourth of the urgences: (1) The urgent need to realize the central task of the Party in the new era and new journey; (4) The urgent need to promote the steady and far-reaching development of the cause of the Party and the country.

One might then wonder whether the superior productive force represented by the Party and its organs must then be understood as the principal or rationalizing productive force for the nation. It sets the tone and provides the example the way its cadres do the same within the mass line dialectics. This is especially emphasized in light of the 3rd Plenum Report alignment of innovation to China’s people’s consultative democracy mechanisms and rule of law.

4. Here then is the central question that perhaps may be useful to the elaboration of the comprehensive program of reform in the 3rd Plenum Report: Does the responsibility to comprehensively deepen reform under new era principles of socialist modernization start with and include both the Party and its State apparatus because they are the core elements of Chinese new quality productive forces?

This provides the framework for the questions which I hope this group of eminent scholars and officials may help us consider correctly:

(A) Does it follow that new quality production as an applied factor of new era socialist modernization must be undertaken under the leadership of the party; and that this leadership must be exercised through the socialist modernization of the party itself?

(B) Should the Party comprehensively practice the style of setting the example for and leading all mass organizations in new quality production innovation in its own working style?

² (1) 实现新时代新征程党的中心任务的迫切需要; (2) 推进国家治理体系和治理能力现代化的迫切需要; (3) 更好适应我国社会主要矛盾变化的迫切需要; (4) 推动党和国家事业行稳致远的迫切需要 [(1) The urgent need to realize the Party’s central task in the new era and new journey; (2) The urgent need to advance the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity; (3) The urgent need to better adapt to the changes in the main contradictions in our society; (4) The urgent need to promote the steady and long-term development of the cause of the Party and the country]

(C) Can there be deep socialist modernization among mass organizations unless the Party itself takes a leading role in applying its principles to itself as the leading and guiding force of the nation?

In that context perhaps one might start with the fundamental principles that (1) the Party leads by example, (2) that innovative disciplinary techniques have already been embedded through discipline inspection and social credit regimes, and (3) that big tech innovation, along with smart cities, already suggest that the Party and its apparatus leads by example in terms of innovation and confirming to the needs of the times.

The relationship between being a productive force and directing or supplying productive forces for the nation, might be considered a central element in evolving Chinese Marxist-Leninist theory. It focuses on the nature of the manifestation of the leading forces of society within or as a communist party. That leading force is essential for the production of correct guidance and comprehensive leadership. The question for Marxist-Leninist theory, then, is whether that overarching productivity is of a different character than productive forces theory applied under new era theory to every other aspect of social, political, economic, and cultural life. In other words, if the communist party is not itself an apex embodiment of productive forces, then the question of what it means to be an institutionalized organ of leading social forces becomes critical. The issue perhaps contributes to deeper understanding in institutional form of the General Secretary's emphasis on self-revolution, and the way in which the dialectics of Chinese Marxist Leninist theory against evolving general contradictions may serve as a way of understanding the force of vanguard's productive capacity and duty over the long course of the development of Marxist-Leninism with Chinese characteristics. In "What is to be done?" Vladimir Lenin proposed the concept of revolutionary vanguardism; Chinese Communists have developed the concept to suit the times and the circumstances of a revolutionary vanguard now in power. The correct relationship between Leninist vanguardism and the contemporary concept of productive forces in socialist modernization may require more study.

I hope to learn much from the discussion that follows.

Thank you.

明德战略对话 2024

战略对话 1: “中国现代化与世界: 新的挑战 and 机遇”

Larry Catá Backer (白轲)

评论: “关于中国现代化和先锋党的问题”

我非常感谢人民大学的远见卓识, 尤其是重阳金融研究院院长王文和他的团队的出色工作, 组织了这次活动。今天, 一群顶尖学者和官员聚集在一起, 讨论一个不仅对中国而且对世界都具有重要意义的问题——中国社会主义现代化的性质和影响, 这既是新时代中国政治理论的重大发展, 也是这种现代化形式对世界, 特别是对丝绸之路沿线的中国朋友所代表的原则的力量, 他们中的许多人现在聚集在北京参加中非峰会。

为此, 我尽我所能, 认真学习了最近在二十届三中全会上通过的《中共中央关于进一步全面深化改革 推进中国式现代化的决议/决定》以及最近在《求是》杂志上发表的总书记的指导意见《关于中共中央关于进一步全面深化改革 推进中国式现代化的决定的说明》。

我想提出一个问题, 它有助于加深我对三中全会原则的一个根本含义和中国马克思列宁主义的一个根本问题的理解。为此, 我将就以下几点寻求指导:

1. 我从新时代社会主义现代化的根本问题开始。社会主义现代化体现了党作为社会主导力量的根本责任, 即确保所有生产力都为应对历史发展中每个时期的普遍矛盾做出贡献。

社会主义现代化是一个全面的概念, 在我看来, 可以归结为六个关键要素:

首先, 它是中国的。这是由这样一种假设驱动的: 在将理论原则转化为文化政治共同体的具体现实时, 民族特色很重要。现代化可能是普遍的, 但它的表现形式必然是地方性的。

第二, 它是社会主义的。这需要采取非常具体的方法来理解民族生产财富来源 (人力和其他资源) 与国家政策的关系。当与第一项原则相结合时, 人们就会谈论具有民族特色的社会主义。

第三, 它以民族力量生产力的核心作用为前提。生产力原则源于古典马克思主义, 指的是人类生产力与生产资料的结合。在中国社会主义中, 生产力发展的概念成为中国特色社会主义现代化的核心要素。

第四, 生产力发展的概念建立在这样一种认识之上: 生产力必须应用于特定的任务。在这种情况下, 生产力发展的概念是沿着社会主义道路前进, 理想情况下, 社会主义道路的最终目标是实现共产主义社会。

第五, 现代化是动态的。现代化必须与时俱进, 在成功的基础上继续前进, 并从过去的挑战中吸取教训。

第六，现代化是中国当前历史时期的一个综合概念。中国将 19 世纪最初的生产力概念从以经济生产为中心的概念发展为包括国家全面发展和中国在世界上的生产作用的概念。

这些核心要素共同构成了理解社会主义现代化作用的结构，为理解一年来获得的见解和经验，以及对不断全面深化改革实践的合理化提供了框架。改革和深化是衡量社会主义道路前进的标准。社会主义道路与社会主义现代化的辩证法，是中国最终建立共产主义社会的护栏。

2. 这就引出了我希望这群杰出的学者和官员能够帮助我正确思考的问题。问题是：共产党本身是国家生产力的管理者或供应者，还是共产党也是优越的生产力？因此，问题集中在党本身必须在多大程度上和以何种方式将社会主义现代化原则（特别是总书记已经详细阐述的原则）应用于自己的组织以及自己的生产力对中国沿着社会主义道路前进的贡献。

在总书记的领导下，在三中全会关于发展社会主义现代化理论的讨论的核心下，很明显，应对当前总矛盾的挑战需要集中全国所有的生产力。这些生产力反过来又成为社会主义现代化本身的引擎，因为它涵盖了社会、文化、经济和政治领域的所有生产能力。这也与中国的国际关系相一致。

现在人们已经充分认识到，这些必要的变革也要求观念上的转变——从生产力到新质量生产力。重点是创新，与时俱进，继承过去，面向未来。然而，新质量生产是全面适用的，为当前实现社会主义现代化指明了前进的道路。

3. 正是在这方面，社会主义现代化原则，特别是新质量生产概念如何适用于党和党的机关工作的问题出现了。

这个问题源于这样一个问题——社会主义现代化适用于哪些生产力？传统上，重点是经济生产。根据新时代理论，它已经扩大到所有创造经济、社会、文化财富的社会力量，这些财富都有助于沿着社会主义道路积极前进。一方面，人们可能会认为生产力是国有资产，党对国有资产进行总体指导，并在其对国家协商机构的领导中也进行指导。

然而，从列宁主义的角度来看，最关键的生产力是其领导力量——共产党及其国家机关、群众组织以及协商和联盟机构。事实上，在阅读总书记的“四个紧迫性”时，人们会感受到党及其机关通过新的高质量生产原则对社会主义现代化的核心地位。这与第一和第四个紧迫性尤其相关：（1）迫切需要实现党在新时代和新征程中的中心任务；（4）迫切需要推动党和国家事业的稳步和深远发展。

人们可能会想，党及其机关所代表的优越生产力是否必须被理解为国家的主要或合理生产力。它为党的干部在群众路线辩证法中所做的同样的事情定下了基调并提供了榜样。这一点在三中全会报告中特别强调要将创新与中国的人民协商民主机制和法治结合起来。

4.那么，在三中全会报告中，一个可能有助于制定全面改革方案的核心问题就是：在新时代社会主义现代化原则下全面深化改革的责任是否从党和国家机关开始，并包括党和国家机关，因为它们是中国新质量生产力的核心要素？

这为这些问题提供了框架，我希望这群著名学者和官员能帮助我们正确思考：

(A) 是否意味着，作为新时代社会主义现代化应用要素的新质量生产必须在党的领导下进行；并且这种领导必须通过党本身的社会主义现代化来实施？

(B) 党是否应该在自己的工作作风中全面实践为所有群众组织树立榜样、带领群众组织进行新质量生产创新的作风？

(C) 如果党本身不作为国家的领导和指导力量，在群众组织中能否实现深刻的社会主义现代化？

在这种背景下，也许我们可以从以下基本原则开始：(1) 党以身作则，(2) 创新的纪律技术已经通过纪律检查和社会信用制度得以嵌入，(3) 大型技术创新以及智慧城市已经表明，党及其机构在创新和顺应时代需求方面以身作则。

生产力与指导或为国家提供生产力之间的关系，可以被视为中国马克思列宁主义理论发展的核心要素。它关注的是共产党内部或作为共产党的社会领导力量的表现性质。这种领导力量对于产生正确的指导和全面的领导至关重要。那么，马克思列宁主义理论的问题是，这种总体生产力是否与新时代理论下应用于社会、政治、经济和文化生活其他各个方面的生产力理论具有不同的性质。换言之，如果共产党本身不是生产力的最高体现，那么它作为领导社会力量的制度化机构意味着什么就变得至关重要。这个问题或许有助于从制度上更深入地理解总书记对自我革命的强调，以及中国马克思列宁主义理论对不断发展的普遍矛盾的辩证法如何成为理解先锋队在中国特色马克思列宁主义发展过程中的生产力和责任的一种方式。在《该怎么办？》中，弗拉基米尔·列宁提出了革命先锋队的概念；中国共产党人已经发展了这一概念，以适应时代和现在执政的革命先锋队的情况。列宁主义先锋队主义与社会主义现代化中当代生产力概念之间的正确关系可能需要进一步研究。

我希望从下面的讨论中学到很多东西。

谢谢。