



Mao Zedong's Social Surveys and China's Revolution

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Supported by the Fundamental Research Funds for Central Universities in 2015 Southwest University (SWU1509335), the stage achievement of the project "A Research on the Using Traditional Festival Cultivating Youth Socialist Core Values".

Received 5 December 2014; accepted 9 March 2015
 Published online 25 April 2015

Abstract

Throughout Mao Zedong's revolutionary career, even though the situation was unpredictable, the social surveys were almost always associated, particularly surveys during 1928-1933, which provided detailed information for Chinese revolutionary struggle, thus Marxism was gradually acclimatized to China's ground. Meanwhile, it laid the practical foundation for Chinese revolution getting rid of dogmatism and carrying out revolution according to the actual conditions. The social surveys of Mao Zedong explored a new road for China's revolution, saved the effective strength, helped to deploy agrarian revolution, found the reliable force, cleared the targets of revolution, consolidated the revolutionary base and led the revolution to set foot on Chinese soil.

Key words: Chinese revolution; Mao Zedong; Social surveys

Ding, Y. F. (2015). Mao Zedong's Social Surveys and China's Revolution. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 11(4), 25-28. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/6829>
 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/6829>

Since 1840, thousands of men and women with high ideals dauntlessly explored and sacrificed for saving the nation from peril, but most of them ended in failure. Even in the early stage of revolution, under the guidance of Marx doctrine and the leadership of the Communist Party of China also often led to frustration. But in the end

what made Marx's out in the Chinese died fate and how to avoid? This paper attempts to explore a clue from Mao Zedong's social investigation in 1928 -1933.

1. THE HISTORY CHOSE MAO ZEDONG

During the revolution, historical context and the leadership of revolution were tightly bunched together, the one who can be said to have mastered the revolutionary leadership if he grasped the trend of history. After the failure of the great revolution, where would the revolution go? Would Marxism like other social trends only a fad in China? The problems confused every Communist Party Member. Some people were thus depressed and pessimistic while Mao Zedong answered the historical problem by his personally involved surveys and thus mastered the leadership of revolution, making history choose Mao Zedong. This is mainly manifested in the following four areas.

A. Mao Zedong held the "pulse" of revolution through his social surveys. Holding the "pulse" of revolution refers to Mao seized the rule of revolutionary struggle, adopted favorable politics according to different circumstances, and firmly grasped the initiative in his own hands. Mao Zedong summed up the guerrilla "16-word pithy formula" according to his investigation into the circle methods of the local bandits. He once explained this tactic: the most important in the tactics of Red Army is to concentrate its main strength on attack and then disperses rapidly. That is to say, it needs to avoid positional warfare and in the movement to use every means of contacting with part of the enemies and defeat them (Snow's Notes, 2009, p.73). It helps to mobilize and lull the enemy in the case of the enemy is strong and the Red Army is weak. It defeats enemy in the movement and takes the tactical initiative for revolution. Meanwhile, Mao paid more attention to the movement of among the enemies, so he sent people to collect newspapers and letters wherever he went. Thus he

could know about the conflicts among the enemies, seek the opportunities, and constantly expand the victory of the revolution, which let the army grasp the initiative under the weak circumstances both in numbers and strength.

B. Social survey helps Mao Zedong find the breakthrough of the revolution. The revolutionary breakthrough is the weak points of enemy, which is also found through the social surveys of Mao and the experience of the revolutionary struggle. It is the borders of warlords and the remote mountain areas. Mao Zedong pointed out that, because of the long-term division of the white regime and war, one or several pieces of small red areas led by the Communist Party can be born and survived in the surround of the white... We just need to know the splits and wars among the white regimes can't stop and the red regime will be born, survived and developed undoubtedly (*The Selected Works of Mao Zedong Volume 1*, 1991, p.49). He theoretically proved the inevitability of the existence of the bases and the weakness of the enemy, found the revolutionary breakthrough and improved the army's revolutionary enthusiasm and belief in the triumph of the revolution.

C. Social surveys made Mao Zedong get rid of the book worship. Mao Zedong pointed out we how to treat the guiding ideology of revolution Marxism: the Marxist "book" needs to learn, but it must be combined with the reality of our country. We need book worship, but the unrealistic book worship must be corrected (*The Selected Works of Mao Zedong Volume 1*, 1991, pp.111-112). Mao Zedong explicitly pointed out that dogmatic Marxism can only make the Chinese revolution in a more precarious situation. At that time, the central authority didn't understand the actual situation of the China's revolution. They blindly copied the experience of Soviet and proposed some unrealistic slogans, thus the revolution suffered a lot. Mao Zedong more thoroughly realized the nature of the dogmatism, especially the "March failure" and the "August failure" in the base of Jinggang Mountain and firmly decided to carry out social survey to find out the right revolution road. Mao Zedong ever pointed out: it needs to distinguish the creative Marxism and the dogmatic Marxism (*Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong II*, 1993 p.327) and continued to publicize the manifestation and dangers of the book worship, making every revolutionary be alerted.

2. CHINESE REVOLUTION WAS SOLIDLY ESTABLISHED THROUGH THE SOCIAL SURVEY OF MAO ZEDONG

Mao Zedong solved the historical problem and grasped the direction of history through social survey, so he paid much more attention to the investigation and research. He pointed out: no investigation, no right to speak; no right investigation, no right to speak (*Essays on Mao Zedong's*

rural survey, 1982, p.13). How did Mao Zedong's investigation make the revolution solidly established on China? The following seven aspects will talk about it:

A. Social surveys kept the seeds of revolution. The seeds of revolution are the effective force of the revolution—the revolutionary ranks. After the failure of the Autumn Harvest Uprising, Mao Zedong led thousands of soldiers to south. But in the way he heard that the Nanchang Uprising failed, so he had to pause the army to the south. At that time, Mao Zedong used every opportunity to do a detailed investigation of the situation of Jinggang Mountain and then wrote two reports about Yongxin County and Ninggang County. During the investigation, he learned that there were superior geography situation, weak enemy rule, and under the leadership of the party, the local people battled with the landlords and the evil gentries, so there was wide mass foundation. Meanwhile, there was a greenwood armed force which had received adaptation by the party. Mao Zedong had mentioned many times after the failure of the great revolution that when necessary the revolutionary troops needed to "mountain". Given that the weak force of the Red Army and the surrounding situation were very suitable for establishment, Mao Zedong decided to build a base on the mountain. Subsequently, Zhu De led the rest army from the Nanchang Uprising to join Mao, strengthening the revolutionary force. Soon, influenced by the "left" rout instructions, the March Revolution and the August Revolution failed, which suffered serious losses and influenced the construction of the base. Therefore Mao Zedong was more convinced that the revolutionary force was very weak, and only in the remote mountain and rural areas, could the revolution be possible.

B. Social surveys figured out how to ensure the "quality of seed" in the "poor soil". The "poor soil" refers to the rural environment where the revolution was; the "quality of seed" is to ensure the proletariat to lead the army, namely about how to build the proletarian party in the rural areas. To ensure the importance of the proletarian party leadership in the rural environment, Zhou Enlai stated that: if there was no strong proletarian party leadership, even at the "village center", revolution is likely to fail. In fact, revolutions in many places failed. At that time, Hailufeng had stronger forces and better conditions than Jinggang Mountain, but the Hailufeng Uprising still failed. One of the important reasons was that there was no deep leadership of the proletariat as well as the leadership came with the petty-bourgeois revolutionaries (*The Selected Works of Zhou Enlai I*, 1980, p.178). Because of the impact of the prevailing situation and environmental, the mass basis most was peasants and petty bourgeoisie. In order to clarify the party's position, Mao launched a series of investigations. During the investigation in Hunan-Kiangsi border area, Mao found many places had strong provincialism and lack of effective support and contact with each other. Meanwhile, the composition

of joined members was not pure, even including some speculators. Many similar problems were found in the party during the investigation. To solve these problems, Mao Zedong carried out proletarian thoughts and political education through various ways in party, government organs and army. To perfect the organization construction of the party, Mao proposed “building party branch in the company” and implemented democratic centralism to improve the quality and class consciousness of members. In Gutian Conference Resolution Cases, Mao summarized the lessons of experience of the party’s thoughts and political education work, laid down the measures about how to establish proletarian party in the rural areas and ensured the character and leadership of the party.

C. Social surveys cleared what was the required “soil” and what was the “gravel” of the revolution. The problem of “soil” and “gravelly” is the problem of dependent forces of the revolution and the revolution’s enemies, that is, to distinguish the revolutionary targets of the revolution, which has gone through a process of awareness. In the early days of armed insurrection, it was not clear to distinguish the revolutionary targets, resulting in riots occurred indiscriminate killing and burning, and also forced petty bourgeoisie into the proletariat revolution, which established more enemies. Work in the city, due to lack of experience, the experience from rural struggle was blindly copied into the city struggle: in April 1930, after successfully captured Xinfeng County, the Red Army confiscated the commodity goods in the shop regardless of the circumstances, which directly affected the lives of ordinary residents. Facing these urgent issues, Mao Zedong understood the class status in rural area and the city’s industry and commerce through field research. During the surveys in Western Fujian in July 1929, Mao Zedong pointed out distinguishing between landowners and their families and gave the landlord’s family right amount of land so that they can survive. And pointed out that if distributed nothing to the landlords, they would have nothing to eat; if only distributed some poor lands to the rich peasants, they would be half-starving. They must be forced to revolt and the poor peasants and farm workers must be isolated (*Essays on Mao Zedong’s rural survey*, 1982, p.22). And Mao Zedong continued to improve the city’s politics. After being stationed in Tingchow, *The Message to Businessmen and Intellectuals* was issued, which pointed out: the abolition of levies to protect merchant trade; ordinary businessmen and petty-bourgeois property, no forfeiture at all; the intellectuals’ only way out is to participate in the workers’ and peasants’ revolution. At this point, the revolutionary targets became clear: the main objective is to eliminate the landlord class; limiting the rich peasants; protecting industrialists and businessmen; transforming intellectuals so that they can actively participate in workers’ and peasants’ revolution.

D. Social surveys explored the needed water for the growth of revolutionary seeds – the agrarian revolution. As water is the primary condition for seeds to germinate, the agrarian revolution provided primary material premise for the revolution, which most mobilized the revolutionary forces, nourishing the revolution. Therefore, it has become a focus of Mao Zedong’s social survey. In order to better carrying out the agrarian revolution, Mao Zedong’s investigation has been accompanied in the strained military struggles. And according to different experience from different periods and areas, as well as the opinions of the masses, Mao constantly revised and supplemented the agrarian policies. In the Jinggang Mountain periods in December 1928, the land law was ruled: confiscating all land to the Soviet Government, the ownership of land was owned by the Government rather than farmers and farmers only had the right to use. All land which was confiscated by the Soviet Government and after that distribution, was prohibited for sale (*Essays on Mao Zedong’s rural survey*, 1982, p.35). Then in April 1929, according to Mao Zedong’s surveys in Xingguo County and other places, as well as the related center spirit, the land law was modified: confiscating all public lands and landlords’ lands to the rejuvenating workers and peasants representative meeting government and distributing the lands to the peasants who have no land or have few lands (*Essays on Mao Zedong’s rural survey*, 1982, p.38). It narrowed the scope of the confiscation of land, which reduced resistance on the implement of the policies to a certain extent. The *Land Problems Resolution* enacted in July 1929 in Western Fujian province, proposed more drawing and fewer giving principles. Mao Zedong did a survey in Xunwu in May 1930, pointed out: I did the Xunwu survey and realized the problems of rich peasants and landowners, so I proposed the solutions to solve the rich peasants problems, namely not only to draw more and give less, but also to draw the fat and give the thin so that all the rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants and farm laborers can survive (*Essays on Mao Zedong’s rural survey*, 1982, p.22). In 1931, Mao redressed the land ownership issue, allowing land sale, thus the land law took initial shape. It is Mao Zedong’s large number of social surveys and constant amendments to the land law that the agrarian revolution can be effectively promoted, which laid a solid mass foundation for the victory of the Chinese revolution, consolidated the basic construction and provided material security for the revolution.

E. Social surveys offered plenty of oxygen—the masses of the people, for the revolutionary seeds to grow. As oxygen is to make the seed from rest to a renewed vitality, people are the cornerstone of China’s revolutionary from death to rebirth. They supported and ensured the vitality of the revolution and provided powerfully dependent forces. While it went through a long period to realize the importance of the masses. When

the Red Army left Jinggang Mountain to the southern Jiangxi and western Fujian, due to lack of the publicity to the masses, “wherever the Red Army went, the local people were deserted and quiet”, and even without reliable information, making the army on the March feel again and again frustrated and very passive. After research, Mao found the false thoughts and then seriously criticized the army: the Red Army can not only fight and destroy the enemy's military strength, but also preside over the advocacy, organize and arm the masses and help them to found revolutionary regime and Communist Party's organization and other important tasks (*Essays on Mao Zedong's rural survey*, 1982, p.86). When Mao Zedong did social surveys, he also paid much attention to the local people's life. In his *Changgang Country Investigation*, he made detailed understanding about the local people, including their lack of food condition and the reasons, and prices of the necessities, comprehensively understanding their standard of living. Mao also stressed in the survey: only through Soviet exhausting all efforts to solve the problems of the masses and really improving the livelihood of the people, can they believe in the Soviet to mobilize the masses to join in the Red, helping the war to smash the enemy's “encirclement and suppression” (*Essays on Mao Zedong's rural survey*, 1982, p.308).

CONCLUSION

The reasons why the Marx doctrine was able to guide the China revolution to victory and why Chinese revolution

under the leadership of the Communist Party succeeded are due to Mao Zedong's social surveys which broke through the book worship and the stereotype to combine the Marxism with China's practical situation, through which the party explored a new revolutionary road and developed new theories. The social surveys consolidated the revolution, kept the revolutionary force, solved the problem of how to establish the proletariat political party organizations in rural environment, explored the way of countryside surrounding the city and seizure of power by armed, deployed the agrarian revolution and cleared the targets of revolution, the masses becoming the reliable force. Finally, the revolution was planted in China, which laid foundation for the success of Chinese revolution.

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