

# The Enlightenment of Lenin's Cultural Leadership Thought to the Party's Cultural Leadership Construction in the New Era

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**Abstract:** This article looks at the period from the victory of the October Revolution in Russia to the implementation of the New Economic Policy, and aims to make people more accurately understand the importance of cultural leadership in the construction of socialism by studying Lenin's cultural construction on how to build socialism in backward countries. Based on this, the article further explores the important enlightenment and reference significance of Lenin's cultural leadership construction thoughts on the construction of the cultural leadership of the Communist Party of China, and under the background of socialism with Chinese characteristics entering a new era, discusses the invasion of western values and the diversification of domestic social trends of thought, how should the Chinese Communist Party firmly grasp the ideological leadership and strengthen the construction of ideological discourse power.

**Keywords:** Lenin; cultural construction; Party; cultural leadership

## 1. Introduction

With the continuous development of economy, China's comprehensive national strength has been continuously strengthened and its international status has been improved. At the same time, we should pay more attention to the construction of cultural leadership, so as to strengthen cultural confidence, show China's style in international affairs, and better contribute China's strength to the maintenance of world peace and development. Through combing the articles and books about Lenin's cultural thought from the victory of the October Revolution to the implementation of the new economic policy, this paper studies Lenin's cultural construction on how to build socialism in backward countries, so as to make people more accurately realize the importance of cultural leadership in socialist construction. In the face of the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the invasion of Western values and the diversification of domestic social thoughts, this paper explores how the Communist Party of China should firmly grasp the ideological leadership and strengthen the construction of socialist ideological discourse.

## 2. Cultural Leadership theory explanation

The concept of "cultural leadership" was first proposed by Antonio Gramsci, the founder of the Italian Communist Party and an early representative of Western Marxism. Gramsci's "Notes from Prison" written in prison provides a comprehensive and profound exposition of the theory of cultural leadership. His cultural leadership theory mainly includes three parts.

The first part explains the theory of the state with "civil society" and "political society". Gramsci believes that the superstructure of modern social structure includes two aspects, one is the "state" as a political society, and the other is the "civil society" as a private sphere. As a form of governance, the state is manifested in political dominion in the government category, that is, the coercion of state machinery, which mainly uses the army, police, courts and other repressive machinery. In the context of civil society, it is expressed as "cultural leadership", that is, the ruling class vigorously promotes the values and world outlook of the class through the manipulation of various organizations and institutions in civil society, so that the general public will recognize and accept it as a common sense. Then, by mastering cultural leadership, we will win the people's approval and achieve our goals.

The second part describes that achieving "cultural leadership" must rely on the support of "organic intellectuals". Gramsci emphasized the important role of intellectuals in acquiring cultural leadership. He believed that the acquisition of cultural leadership should not only rely on ordinary people, but also must obtain the support of intellectuals. Gramsci divided intellectuals into organic intellectuals and traditional intellectuals. The so-called organic intellectuals refer to intellectuals who keep pace with the times, and represent the interests of and serve the emerging classes, and they are the disseminators and practitioners of ideology. Therefore, the proletariat must also have its own organic intellectuals and use them to propagate the proletarian culture and ideology, so that the people can completely get rid of the shackles of the bourgeois ideology.

The third part contributed to the struggle strategy of "positional warfare". The so-called "positional warfare" is relative to "movement warfare". Gramsci believed that "movement war" refers to launching a direct and frontal attack on the bourgeois state power, which aims at seizing leadership. The "battle of positions" is to expand and consolidate the position of the class in the field of civil society by constantly propagating the ideology and culture of the class to win the support of the broad masses of people, and finally defeat the ideology of the bourgeoisie and obtain the final leadership.

Affected by different views of the country, different social structures, and different views on the revolutionary situation, as the main representative of Marx in different camps in the East and West at the same time, Lenin had different interpretations of cultural leadership. Cultural leadership is also known as ideological leadership. In Lenin's view, ideological leadership is either socialist or capitalist, and there is no intermediate ideology. It proves that for Lenin, class nature is the most basic feature of ideological leadership. In addition, Russia at that time not only became the common enemy of imperialism in the world, but also had complicated domestic contradictions, especially class contradictions. Therefore, class attribute, especially party spirit, is Lenin's main principle of ideological division. Moreover, Lenin believed that the main position of ideological leadership is the political state, which mainly implements the function of compulsory dictatorship through dictatorships such as prisons, courts, and the army. Violent revolution is the way to gain leadership.

Lenin and Gramsci have roughly the same understanding of the overall aspect of leadership, but they hold different opinions on the connotation of leadership and the way to acquire leadership. Facing the challenge of the invasion of Western values and the diversification of domestic social thoughts, we should learn more about the theory of ideological leadership, strengthen ideological construction, firmly grasp ideological leadership, and ensure that development always advances in the direction of socialism.

### **3. Analysis of the content of Lenin's cultural leadership theory**

After the October Revolution victory, Russia established the world's first socialist country, but at that time, Russia was still in a predicament of internal and external troubles. It not only became the target of imperialist countries in the international arena, but also in various domestic activities. Various industries are still waiting to be rebuilt, the economy is regressing sharply, and the people's living standard needs to be improved urgently. In this regard, Lenin decided to shift the focus of his work from politics to economic construction. At the same time, he realized that economic construction and cultural construction complemented each other, so he began to explore and research cultural construction and Lenin's theory of cultural leadership came into being. The content of Lenin's cultural leadership theory is mainly divided into the following parts.

#### **3.1. The key is the party**

After experiencing the armed seizure of power, Lenin became more aware of the importance of leadership. Leadership is not only political, economic, and military leadership, but also cultural leadership. Leadership should be in the hands of the proletariat at all times, to ensure that all developments advance in the direction of socialism. In order to maintain the stability of state power, Lenin did not completely rebuild state institutions and organizations, but took over state institutions from the old period. Most of the staff of the institutions were staff members, who worked in the old period, but they have serious ideological backwardness, petty-bourgeois character, and they were contaminated with bureaucracy from the Tsarist Russia period, which have greatly affected the party's morale, work quality, and efficiency. There has been an arrogance, corruption and bribery in the party, and there are even Communist Party members who should have been executed for crimes. Secondly, the political accomplishments and abilities of the vast majority of party members are insufficient. After

the Communist Party of Russia (Bolshevik) came to power, a large number of peasants, petty citizens and intellectuals rushed to join the Communist Party, but not only did they lack Marxist theoretical knowledge, but most of them were illiterate and had low level of education, which made them unable to participate in politics at all. Due to the lack of science and culture, the plan formulated was "empty talk"; constantly promulgating statutes and documents official documents were pushed like a mountain. In response to these circumstances, Lenin was even more aware that the key to consolidating power lies in the reality of the party itself. He proposed the policy of abolishing redundant staff, abolishing overlapping state agencies, and strictly selecting public officials who enter state agencies. At the same time, he must strengthen the party's own construction. Office workers must work hard to learn business knowledge. Lenin especially emphasized the construction of cultural leadership, otherwise there is a danger of being "conquered". He stated that, "A nation conquers another nation. When a nation conquers another, the conquering nation forces the conquered nation to accept its own culture if it is superior to the conquered nation, otherwise the conquered force the conqueror to accept its own culture if is not." Therefore, Lenin believed that, in order to ensure the ultimate victory of the revolutionary cause and socialist construction, the establishment of cultural leadership should be highly valued, "it is not accidental, but inevitable" that the construction of cultural leadership is now referred to as the primacy of the party's entire life.

### ***3.2. Emphasize organic intellectuals***

Organic intellectuals refer to the intellectuals of their own class who are brought up along with the development of the new class in the course of social development. They can spread the culture and ideology corresponding to their own class, and perform corresponding functions in the political, economic, and social fields. "Organic intellectuals" are also the backbone of the proletarian party and play an important role in spreading proletarian ideology. Therefore, Lenin pays special attention to organic intellectuals, which mainly reflected in the struggle for and transformation of the original teachers. At the beginning of the Soviet establishment, some teachers did not understand the proletarian revolution and did not support the Soviet regime. However, Lenin believed that they had no fundamental conflict of interest with the proletariat. As long as they carried out long-term education, unity and assistance, most teachers could switch to support. Practice has proved that Lenin's approach is correct, and many teachers have changed their positions from the pillar of the bourgeois system to the pillar of the Soviet system. Lenin trusted and cared for teachers politically, supported outstanding teachers to bear certain education management work, he also improved the material living standards of teachers, even in the most difficult period of acquiring food, he also asked for more Food supply for teachers and distribution of daily necessities. He really succeeded in convincing people with morality, taking care of them in life, encouraging them spiritually, and draw them into the construction of proletarian socialism. In addition, Lenin put the development of national education in an important position. Under extremely difficult circumstances, the Soviet government also provided a large amount of funds for education. Even in the years of war and famine, Lenin still emphasized not to reduce to the Ministry of Education of the People's Committee. Lenin also attached great importance to the development of scientific undertakings. In an extremely difficult financial and economic situation, the Soviet government still established a considerable number of scientific research institutions, doing its best to create research conditions for scientists. Lenin's measures to attach importance to organic intellectuals effectively solved the problem of how Russia responded to bourgeois intellectuals and made them serve the construction of socialism. It not only clarified the importance of organic intellectuals to the cause of building socialism, but also showed Lenin's emphasis on talents.

### ***3.3. Consolidating cultural leadership must be combined with safeguarding the interests of the people***

Lenin believed that the construction of cultural leadership is inseparable from the active participation of the broad masses. Lenin pointed out that the reason why the Bolshevik Party, with only over 200,000 members, can obtain and maintain state power is that it has the support and participation of the broad masses. The construction and consolidation of cultural leadership must also rely on the masses. The masses of the people are the creators of history, the masters of the country, and the main body of the socialist cause. The level of people's cultural knowledge and ideological awareness is directly related to the rise and fall of the socialist cause. Lenin pointed out that it is necessary to actively mobilize the enthusiasm of the people, safeguard their interests, and enable them to participate in socialist construction. However, many old systems, old ideas and concepts left over from the history of autocratic tsarist rule made it difficult for the Soviet Russian people to accept new things and thus

were unable to smoothly implement new economic policies and consolidate their leadership. In response to this situation, Lenin put forward the need to raise the cultural level of the masses. Lenin believed that education must be universal, that illiteracy must be wiped out, that everyone could literate, and then that they could actually use their literacy skills to participate in politics. In his view, "illiteracy is outside of politics", "If you don't know how to read, there can be no politics. If you don't know how to read, there can only be gossip, lies and prejudice, but no politics." Lenin pointed out, "Illness should be eliminated, but literacy alone is not enough. We must also have the cultural literacy that can teach people to fight against bureaucracy and procrastination to ensure the power and interests of the people". On October 17, 1921, Lenin made a report entitled "The Tasks of the New Economic Policy and Political Education Committee" at the Second Congress of the All-Russian Political Education Committee. In addition, he pointed out that, although the Soviet laws are good and made it possible for individuals to fight bureaucracy and procrastination, but almost no one takes advantage of that possibility. This shows that although the people have this kind of power, they are unable to participate in politics because they are illiterate. Therefore, Lenin vigorously launched a literacy campaign to ensure that while maintaining leadership, it can be combined with the protection of the people's interests. In addition, in order to smoothly advance the literacy work, Lenin signed the literacy decree, which stipulates: "All residents of the Republic are from eight to fifty years old. Those who cannot read or write must learn to read." Not only that, but also established the All-Russia A specialized agency such as the Literacy Committee.

#### ***3.4. Transformation of traditional cultural resources***

In dealing with the inheritance and development of traditional culture, two tendencies have formed in Soviet Russian society. One tendency is to absolutize the role of inheritance in the development of social history. This view regards culture as simply accepting and inheriting the previous cultural achievements. In fact, the development of culture is not a simple copy of the previous cultural heritage, but a sublation and creation on the base of the original development. Another tendency is the view held by historical nihilists and proletarian cultural groups that deny the existence of cultural inheritance. Lenin severely criticized this tendency and pointed out that "proletarian culture did not fall from the sky, nor was it fabricated by those who claim to be experts in proletarian culture. If this is the case, it would be completely nonsense. Proletarian culture should be the development of all knowledge created by mankind under the oppression of capitalist society, landlord society and bureaucratic society in accordance with laws." Lenin believed that culture has inheritance and continuity, and it should not be discarded when building and developing socialism because the original cultural achievements belong to the bourgeoisie. In the process of leading the people in the construction of socialist culture, Lenin not only attached great importance to the sublation of traditional Russian culture, but also attached great importance to studying the outstanding civilization achievements of capitalism. In his view, learning from the outstanding achievements of capitalism is of great significance to the construction of socialist culture.

Lenin emphasized: "We cannot fill our stomachs by destroying capitalism alone. We must acquire all the culture left over from capitalism and use it to build socialism. We must acquire all science, technology, knowledge, and art. Otherwise, it would be impossible to build a life of a communist society. This fully embodies his quality as a qualified Marxist, who is able to view things with a critical eye, and successfully realizes the transformation of traditional cultural resources.

#### ***3.5. Improve the guidance and control of news and public opinion***

The Party's news and public opinion work is also one of the components of the Party's cause. It is an important way to propagate and safeguard the Party's theory, and it is the main position to firmly grasp the discourse power of ideology. Lenin's journalistic thought is an organic part of the Marxist outlook on journalism and an important result of the Sovietization of Marxism. Lenin's thoughts on the party's news and public opinion work are mainly concentrated in the book "Party Organizations and Party Publications." Lenin pointed out, that, firstly, the party's publications should defend, propagate, innovate and develop Marxism, resolutely criticize anti-Marxist trends, and dare to fight against it. Secondly, the party writers must adhere to the noble writing style of the proletariat, abandon the bad habits of feudalism and the bourgeoisie, and maintain the purity of the party's style. Thirdly, we should guard against heterogeneous publications and ensure the purity of the party. In his long-term revolutionary practice, Lenin deeply realized the profound influence of party publications and non-party publications on the purity of the party." All legal newspapers and periodicals are non-party

newspapers and periodicals, but they are 'leaning' towards this or that political party." "All illegal newspapers and periodicals are party newspapers and periodicals, which were published by various organizations and sponsored by groups that have some connection with groups of practical party workers." In the face of such a complicated situation, he emphasized that we must strive to make publications the party's publications and make them consciously join the party organization and accept party management. Lenin pointed out that the party must recognize the seriousness of the corruption of non-party publications to the purity of the party organization, and earnestly strengthen the party's guidance and control over publications.

#### **4. Enlightenment**

Lenin's theory of cultural leadership is of great significance to the consolidation of Soviet Russia's proletarian power, the construction of Soviet socialism, and the development of Soviet Russia's economy. Moreover, in-depth study of the main content of Lenin's cultural leadership theory is of great practical enlightening significance to the construction of cultural leadership in China.

##### ***4.1. The Party must uphold the leadership of socialist culture***

In the context of the rapid development of social informatization, cultural diversification, and the rise of diversified social thoughts, people's ideas and behaviors are changing, and the world outlook, outlook on life, and values have been shaken, which is not conducive to the socialist cultural construction and the leadership of the party is facing serious realistic challenges. The riots broke out in Hong Kong some time ago. With the support of Western countries, "Hong Kong independence elements" were even more confident. Many vicious incidents, such as beating police officers, maliciously wounding people, and parading through the streets, seriously endangering the people's safety, social order and economic development. With the serious development of the situation, China promulgated the "The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ". Western politicians, however, use the excuse of "undemocratic" to attack China by public opinion. At the same time, they also want to use these dirty hands, by whatever means, to slowly change the values of the Chinese people and use what they call freedom and democracy to brainwash the Chinese people. This ideological attack is more vicious and deadly. Therefore, our party must firmly grasp the cultural leadership and let the Chinese people have their own spirit and beliefs. Only in this way can we avoid being eroded by the foreign culture of the West.

Comrade Mao Zedong pointed out that "Mastering ideological leadership is the first to master all leadership." The leadership of a party is not only embodied in the political, economic, and military aspects, but also embodied in the cultural leadership with ideology as the core. The ideological realm has always been an important battlefield where hostile forces compete fiercely with us. If something goes wrong in this battlefield, it may lead to social unrest or even loss of political power. We should fully realize the extreme importance of ideological work, learn from experience and lessons, assign party members with a firm stand, good ideological and theoretical literacy, and strong organizational leadership capabilities to relevant leadership positions in ideological work, and use them to grasp the right direction and Propaganda the role of socialist ideology. For once, the line of thought is broken, no other lines can be held anyway. Historical experience tells us that cultural leadership must remain firmly in the hands of the Communist Party. The main reason for the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s was that the proletariat gave up its leadership over culture, therefore we should draw lessons from our predecessors and avoid the same mistakes in the process of building socialism.

##### ***4.2. Cultivating socialist successors***

At all times and in all over the world, every country trains people in accordance with its own political requirements. In the context of the era of building a powerful modern socialist country and realizing the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the party should continue to vigorously train socialist builders and successors in order to occupy a major position in the cultural and ideological fields. Party culture can only rule the social order, dominate people's values and concepts, and guide people's behavior only if it is in the mainstream of social culture. In 2002, we implemented the strategy of "Reinvigoration China through Human Resource Development", and the measures in it demonstrate the cherish and care of our country's talents and intellectuals, and are of great significance to the development of socialist culture, the grasp of cultural leadership, the building

of socialism, and the enhancement of comprehensive national power. At the 2018 National Education Conference, General Secretary Xi Jinping stood at the strategic height of the overall development of the party and the country, pointed out the fundamental tasks of education, and clarified the six key tasks of cultivating socialist builders and successors. The education powerhouse provides a fundamental follow. Regarding how to train socialist builders and successors, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized in his speech that efforts should be made in six areas. It profoundly reflects that the party and the country have been working hard on the road of cultivating socialist builders and successors. On March 18, 2019, when Xi Jinping presiding over a symposium for teachers of ideological and political theory courses, he emphasized that "The most fundamental thing for a good ideological and political theory class is to fully implement the party's educational policy, and solve the problem of who to train, how to train, and for whom to train." He pointed out that "Teenagers are the future of our country and the hope of our nation. Our party is committed to make great achievements for the Chinese nation and must train generation after generation of useful talents who support the leadership of the Communist Party of China and China's socialist system, and are determined to fight for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics for life. This shows the party's expectation for the new generation of young people and its emphasis on cultivating socialist successors.

### ***4.3. Treat history and culture correctly***

Culture has the characteristics of class, nationality, and inheritance. We must not only actively accommodate the advanced cultural achievements of our own country, but also be tolerant of foreign cultures, and take the essence and discard the dross to make it a part of Chinese culture. As early as in the period of socialist transformation, the first generation of the CCP leadership collective with Mao Zedong as the core had already explored the construction of Chinese socialist culture. On the issue of dealing with the achievements of Chinese traditional culture and Western culture, he proposed "party policy for art and literature: let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" and "policy for making the past serve the present and foreign things serve China". During the period of reform and opening up, Deng Xiaoping proposed to strengthen the construction of "spiritual civilization", repeatedly emphasizing that spiritual civilization and material civilization "grasp both hands, and both hands must be powerful." In 2000, Jiang Zemin put forward the important thought of "Three Represents" during his inspection work in Guangdong, one of which is "The Communist Party of China must always represent the direction of advancement of China's advanced culture". At the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Hu Jintao proposed a socialist "harmonious culture" to promote the construction of a socialist harmonious society. In the new era, General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward the concepts of "cultural self-confidence" and "a community of shared future for mankind." These cultural guidelines and policies are in not only the same line, but also advancing with the times; they are in line with China's national conditions and the requirements of the development of the times; they have been tested in practice and are conducive to cultural development. We should stick to it consistently and not give up due to interference from outside public opinion. In today's globalized world, there is no culture can develop independently in a closed and isolated state. As a major socialist country, China must have the style and demeanor of a big country, and must respect and tolerate cultural diversity. In addition, we should inherit and carry forward the excellent Chinese national culture with five thousand years of tradition, tell Chinese stories and spread Chinese voice well. We should also seriously criticize and treat historical nihilism and cannot deny history. We must unswervingly develop the "Matters of Confidence; the confidence in the path; theory; system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics". Only by enhancing cultural self-confidence, enhancing cultural soft power, and enhancing cultural consciousness can we continue to innovate and develop Marxism with Chinese characteristics; can we correctly grasp the basic laws of the construction of Marxist cultural leadership; and can the masses accept and master Marxist culture Leadership. At this stage, our trade war with the United States is still in a stalemate. In fact, the war between China and Western countries is not just a simple economic and trade war on the outside, but a cultural war, a war of ideology, and a war of social systems in essence. As long as communism has not been realized and there are still differences in social systems, the Sino-US trade war will not end, and the ideological war between China and the West will not end. It is precisely because our party has clearly seen this reality that our country is now accelerating the construction of a new development pattern of "domestic cycle as the main body, domestic and international double cycles promote each other".

#### ***4.4. Strengthen the construction of the socialist core value system***

In order to ensure the party's cultural leadership, the most fundamental thing is to consolidate and strengthen the socialist core value system with Marxism as the core of the party members and the masses, actively cultivate and practice the socialist core values, so that party members will always be loyal to the party and the people, loyal to the cause of socialism, and serve the people wholeheartedly, make the people firmly support the socialist banner. Moreover, we must maintain the attractiveness and cohesion of the socialist ideology, endow it with Chinese characteristics, include China's excellent traditional culture, and make it accepted by the broad masses of people and always keep pace with the development of the times and keep up with the trend of social development. In addition, publicity needs to be increased. The ancients said: In terms of succession, knowing first. We should widely publicize the socialist core value system and core values in society. Different methods are adopted for different groups. The young people mainly study in textbooks and schools; the young people mainly carry out relevant cultural training and team building in the company; the elderly mainly use the community to promote or use radio and TV dramas to spread related values. Effectively internalize the core values of socialism into a spiritual consensus, and externalize it into conscious action.

Second, we must concentrate on institutional improvement. In recent years, Western developed countries have stepped up their penetration of China's network ideology by virtue of their technological advantages. Edward Snowden, a former technical analyst of the CIA, once left the CIA to expose the "Prism Project" implemented by the US government—The United States uses advanced Internet technology to analyze the details of personal contact information and action data from audio, video, mail, stored data, log-in time, and connection information, and secretly spies on people's phone records. This is one of the reasons why our country should strengthen the legal construction of Internet and vigorously research and develop mobile phones independently. With the development of science and technology and the widespread use of the Internet, there are more than 900 million Internet users in our country. We should strengthen network management, improve network system construction, strictly control online public opinion, and grasp the Internet as a tool for spreading ideology. As Xi Jinping said "According to the needs of the development of the situation, I think that online public opinion work should be the top priority of propaganda and ideological work." [9] In addition, there is also a phenomenon that some party members and cadres have their own defects. They do not strictly require themselves in accordance with the party rules and regulations in their daily lives, lack of theoretical study, lack of practical experience, bureaucracy and corruption, which seriously hinder the party's self-construction, and they cannot find their jobs in their positions. This led to a crisis of identity with the party. Party members and cadres should strictly implement relevant party regulations and disciplines, and form a "steel-like discipline" within the party. Lenin once issued a call to "learn, learn, and learn again" to the whole party to promote the party's own construction. We should also learn from them, strive to improve our learning level and ability, continuously improve creativity and always maintain advanced nature.

## **5. Conclusions**

As Gramsci said: "A social group can and must exercise 'leadership' before winning power (this is one of the first conditions for winning power); when it exercises power in the future, it becomes the ruler, but even if it is firmly in control Power must also be 'leader' as always." [10] The culture of a country can only develop in the direction of safeguarding the interests of the class under the leadership of the political party that represents the interests of the class. That is, only under the leadership of the Communist Party of China can the socialist culture with Chinese characteristics be better constructed and developed. Only when the Communist Party of China has the power of cultural leadership, can it control people's power to guide people's values, beliefs, and can lead the direction of cultural development and make it develop in a direction that is conducive to socialist construction. The CPC's control of cultural leadership is a requirement for the development of China's advanced culture. The development process of China's history shows that whether the CPC can grasp the cultural leadership determines the success or failure of China's advanced culture.

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