

# An Analysis of the Development and Contemporary Value of Research on the History of Harbin Youth Movement

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**Abstract:** *Youth movement is an important form of active participation of young people in social activities, and occupies an important position in the in-depth study of the development of the youthful generation. The history of Harbin youth movement has flourished since the May Fourth Movement in 1919, and has roughly gone through three stages: the period of new democratic revolution, the period of socialist revolution and construction, and the process of socialist construction with Chinese characteristics. The Harbin Youth Movement has always adhered to the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and has had a profound influence on ideological change and social progress in all periods. In the new era, it is necessary to promote the research work of the regional youth movement, insist on summarising the experience and achievements of the research on the history of the youth movement, and on this basis continue to contribute to the research methodology and team building of youth work in reality.*

**Keywords:** *Harbin; Youth movement; History of development*

## 1. Introduction

The hope of a country and a nation stems from its youth, and the future of a nation cannot be without its youth. Over the past century, young people have made indelible contributions to social development. The theme of the era of Chinese youth movement is the struggle to realise the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The history of youth movement is the main process of youth participation in social practice in different periods, and it is the key entry point for exploring the course of youth development. From the perspective of the history of youth movement in Harbin, summarising the Harbin youth movement in the period of the new democratic revolution, the period of socialist revolution and construction, and the process of the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics and exploring its contemporary value, it is possible to inherit and carry forward the valuable historical experience in the development of Harbin Youth Movement, identify the laws of youth movement in a targeted way, further stimulate the sense of historical mission and youthful vitality of young people, and lead the young generation to play the role of a vanguard and a vanguard on the historical journey to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation under the background of the present era.

## 2. The Period of the New Democratic Revolution: The Rise of Youth at a Time of Social Unrest

Harbin is one of the earliest places where Marxism-Leninism was spread in China. Harbin was still an insignificant fishing village in the 19th century. Since the completion of the Middle East Railway in 1903, a large amount of capital was injected into it, and commerce developed rapidly, with more than 30 countries setting up consulates and banks here[1]. With the railway as the basis and trade as the intermediary, Harbin developed and became the gateway for China to receive fresh information from the outside world, which in turn paved the way for advanced ideas. After the May Fourth Movement in 1919, the youth movement in Harbin began to flourish, especially after the founding of the Youth League in 1923, the Harbin youth and the Youth League organisation, under the correct leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), held up the banner of patriotism, mobilised and organised the majority of young people to bravely participate in the war of resistance against Japan and the liberation struggle, and widely carried out all kinds of support activities.

The May Fourth Movement broke out in 1919. In those days when there was no Internet, Harbin's progressive youth held a large-scale demonstration on May 6 after only one day's preparation, with more than 4,000 students and some citizens of Harbin's Donghua, Daoli Yucai, Sanyu, and Model Schools taking part in the demonstration [2]. The following summer, Zhou Enlai went to Harbin to introduce the

May Fourth Movement, and in March 1923, the Beijing Committee of the CPC sent Communists Chen Weiren and Li Zhenying to Harbin to open up party work [3]. In July of the same year, the Harbin branch of the Chinese Socialist Youth League, the first branch in Heilongjiang, was established. Chen Weiren was commissioned by Li Dazhao to open up party work in the Northeast, and the Harbin group of the CPC was established thereafter. In 1928, Zhang Zuolin was forced to sign the "Manchurian-Mongolian New Five Roads Pact" with Japan, which betrayed his right of way in the Northeast. Once the agreement was fulfilled, Japan would lay five railways in the Northeast, which would not only help Japan to seize the Manchuria and Mongolia, but also boost Japan's power to fight against Russia. On 9 November, more than 5,000 students from Harbin universities and secondary schools went on general strike. Students from the Technical University, the University of Political Science and Law, the Medical College, and the First, Second and Third Middle Schools assembled in the auditorium of the First Middle School to set up the "Federation for the Maintenance of the Right of Way" to oppose the seizure of China's right of way by the Japanese imperialists, but they were suppressed by the reactionary military and police, resulting in a bloody incident [4]. According to incomplete statistics, 8 students were seriously injured and 140 students were slightly injured in the "11/9" anti-Right-of-Way Movement. This youth movement combined with the struggle for the right of way in all parts of the Northeast and in all walks of life to strike a blow at the Japanese imperialists. Thereafter, although Japan tried to implement the so-called Manchurian-Mongolian Five-Road Pact by various means, its ambition to build five roads ultimately failed in the face of the complex struggle of the imperialists for the hegemony of north-eastern China, and in particular the strong opposition of the people of the north-east.

During the war period, young people in Harbin mobilised and organised the masses to carry out heroic anti-Japanese struggles through flying rallies, street speeches, strikes, fund-raising campaigns, literary performances, articles and other forms of propaganda and mobilisation, supported the front line to join the army and the war, participated in anti-Japanese guerrillas and the anti-Japanese allied forces of the Youth Self-Defence Forces, the Junior Company, the Youth Company, and so on, and fought bravely without fear of sacrifice. In May 1932 the Harbin Municipal Committee of the Communist Youth League was established. In November 1936, the CPC Central Committee issued the Decision on Youth Work, and the Communist Youth League in Harbin was transformed into the Youth Anti-Japanese General Association, the Youth Anti-Japanese Salvation Association and other youth mass anti-Japanese salvation groups [5].

In the pre-liberation period, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), a group of progressive literary youths in Harbin used the pen as a weapon to actively carry out the revolutionary literature and art movement, propagating Marxism, exposing the crimes of the Japanese invaders, criticising various movements and corrupt ideas, and enthusiastically eulogising the anti-Japanese struggle, which inspired and stimulated the spirit of patriotism of the whole nation and the fighting spirit of the resistance against the invaders. On 11 August 1946, the Harbin Democratic Youth League was founded, and as the first progressive youth association in the Northeast, it quickly became the core organisation of the youth movement in Harbin and the whole of the Northeast, and played an active role in the management of Harbin in the early years of its liberation. On 21 May 1947, the Harbin School of Youth Cadres was founded. On 23 August 1948, a conference on youth work was held in Harbin, at which a number of issues relating to the work of the youth movement were discussed, as well as the draft provisional constitution of the Mao Zedong Youth League of the Northeast Liberated Areas, and it was decided to set up a preparatory committee for the Mao Zedong Youth League of the Northeast Liberated Areas. On 28 October of the same year, the Preparatory Committee of the Mao Zedong Youth League of the Northeast Liberated Area decided to change the name of the Mao Zedong Youth League of the Northeast Liberated Area to the New Democratic Youth League as of 1 November. During this period, the vast number of Harbin Youth League members remained loyal to the CPC and established important feats for the revolutionary cause of Harbin area in the test of life and death.

### **3. The Period of Socialist Revolution and Construction: Rising to the Challenge, Zigzagging Ahead**

During the period of socialist revolution and construction, the youth of Harbin, with faith as their sail, stood at the head of the tide of the times, and emerged as the first batch of new China's national model workers, such as Wu Guilan, and Wei Shuqin, the standard-bearer for theoretical study of Marxism-Leninism and the writings of Chairman Mao, and other positive examples, who were received by the State leaders in a cordial manner and were welcomed by the entire nation.

In 1956, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee put forward the concept of "intellectual youth going to the mountains and the countryside", which quickly set in motion a mass movement of young urban intellectuals settling and labouring in the countryside across the country. In fact, a year earlier, the first youth reclamation team in China, the Beijing Youth Volunteer Reclamation Team, had already been established. The team of 60 volunteers, selected from more than 800 applicants, travelled all the way

from Beijing to Luobei County, one of the four major wildernesses in Heilongjiang, which is now known as the Gongqing Farm. Yang Hua, the team leader and one of the initiators at the time, left his hometown with a vow: absolutely voluntary; not a penny from the state; go and put down roots and never come back. Yang Hua fulfilled his promise, and after coming to Heilongjiang, he led the team to develop the wasteland diligently, repairing the deed of 3,000 square metres of houses in five years, reclaiming more than 18,000 acres of wasteland, and producing more than 400,000 kilograms of grain. In the Beijing Youth Volunteer Reclamation Team came to Gongqing Farm in the same year, the Harbin Municipal Committee to the Harbin Municipal Committee put forward the report, which about the organisation of Harbin City Youth Volunteer Reclamation Team, and the establishment of the Harbin City Youth Volunteer Reclamation Team Preparatory Committee[6]. On 30th October, the first advance team of 104 people, led by Mei Shusheng and other young people, settled down under Fengming Mountain in Gongqing Farm, and the rest of the 420 people arrived in two batches, becoming the first generation of pioneers in New China. This team consisted of advanced youth, in which Li Shi, the daughter of General Li Zhaolin, also participated in the Reclamation Team, which is a unique history of Harbin Youth Movement. In 30 years, from the wilderness to the wheat field, from a few hundred to tens of thousands of people, it is not only a legend, but also the embodiment of the youth pioneers of an era. In 1957, the Songhua River Basin rainfall was frequent, and the river's highest water level reached 120.30 metres in August, which is the largest flood since hydrological records were made. Mission Harbin City Committee in accordance with the Harbin Municipal Committee "urgent action, all for the purpose of overcoming the flood, to ensure the safety of Harbin" instructions, issued a "Notice to the City's Members of the Communist Youth League, Young People," convened 3,500 people to form the Harbin Youth Flood Control Commandos, and the military and civilian flood fighting day and night. At this stage, a large number of young people in Harbin took the initiative to take the responsibility of the times, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, following the guiding principle of "the central work of the Party is the central work of the Youth League", leading the majority of young people to study Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong's writings, and leading the majority of young people to actively engage in the production of the front line of the production and labour, and fully played the role of the army of the living and the role of the commando, and made positive contributions to the cause of socialist construction in Harbin.

#### **4. The Process of Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics: Not Forgetting the Original Intent and Keeping the Mission in Mind**

Since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, facing the east wind of reform and opening up, Harbin Youth League organisations are tightly united around the Party, making outstanding contributions to economic and social construction. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the party central committee held the history of the first party group work conference, Harbin Youth league organisation to further strengthen the top-level design, focus on strengthening the ideological and political leadership of young people, and continue to deepen the reform of the Communist Youth League, so that the work of the league presents a new atmosphere, the cadres of the league show a new face, the league organisation is full of new vitality. Bathed in the sunshine and rain of the Communist Party of China, the work of the Harbin Communist Youth League has flourished, with the Congress of the League, the Youth League, the School League and the Young Pioneers held every five years, and the organisational development is thriving. Various brand activities of the Youth League are also flourishing, including a series of activities to commemorate the May Fourth Movement, selecting and commending the "Two Reds and Two Excellencies" advanced collectives and individuals, organising the Youth Workers' Job Skills Competition, selecting the "Youth Civilisation", and practising the "Dedication, Collaboration, Excellence and Devotion" principle. "The company has also established the Harbin Youth International Travel Agency, carried out activities such as the Protection of the Mother River, Youth Volunteerism, Project Hope, the Oath-taking Ceremony for Adults at the Age of 18, and the Cultivation Project for Young Marxists, which have all made outstanding contributions to the construction of the city's spiritual civilisation. In addition to this, it has firmly grasped the two key areas of entrepreneurship and innovation and poverty alleviation, adapted to the characteristics of the times, and actively explored the construction of work carriers that meet the needs of young people and set up work carriers with the characteristics of the Harbin Communist Youth League, creating the Harbin Youth Exchange, the Youth Innovation Exchange, the Youth Benefit Exchange and the Youth Winning Exchange.

In 2022, in order to deeply implement the Medium and Long-term Youth Development Plan (2016-2025), the Communist Youth League Central Committee and other 17 departments jointly issued the Opinions on Carrying out Pilot Construction of Youth Development-oriented Cities, and Harbin became a city selected for the list of the country's first 45 pilot cities for the construction of youth development-oriented cities. The city is more friendly, the youth is more productive. By constructing youth-oriented

cities, we can truly achieve a development model where the high-quality development of young people and the high-quality development of cities mutually promote each other. This further embodies the concept of prioritizing the development of young people and better meets the policy and social environment that caters to the diverse and evolving needs of young people at different levels. The development model of cities, where the vitality of youth innovation and creation resonates with the vitality of urban innovation and creation, promotes the high-quality development of both young people and cities, enabling youth organizations to achieve a more modern and higher-quality development. The majority of young people strive to be Harbin comprehensive revitalisation of all-round revitalisation of the living force, showing self-confidence and self-improvement, positive and enterprising spirit, with a more confident attitude, more spirited stride into the new era, for the party and the country's cause of the historic achievements to contribute to the power of youth.

## **5. Exploring the Contemporary Value of the History of Harbin Youth Movement**

The history of the youth movement in Harbin is a vivid sample of how to follow the Party closely. Harbin is the earliest liberated city in the country, and has a lot of valuable experience in youth movement, and there are many historical phases and contents that are unique to Harbin youth movement. The history of the youth movement in Harbin shows the different forms of youth organisations in Harbin. Since 1923, youth organisations in Harbin have gone through various forms of existence, providing organisational guarantee for the continuous development of the youth movement. After the liberation of Harbin, the Harbin Democratic Youth League, the Northeast Democratic Youth League, the Harbin Mao Zedong Youth League, the Harbin New Democracy Youth League, and the Communist Youth League were all formed. One of the most distinctive features is that the Harbin Youth Movement organisation went through a period in which a youth league was named after a leader - the Harbin Mao Zedong Youth League - which is rare in the country and is the most monumental piece of the Harbin Youth Movement.

The history of the Harbin Youth Movement is a profound summary of a return to its origins. By learning from history, we can know the rise and fall. Only by looking back at history and the way we came, and by figuring out where we came from and where we are going, will we be able to take a better and more stable path in the future.

### ***5.1 Politics is Always the First Attribute of the YCL***

Throughout the history of the youth movement in Harbin, a large number of facts have proved that the youth movement can flourish only under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China. After the founding of New China, Harbin Youth League organisations at all levels, under the leadership of the CPC, carried out the general line of the CPC during the transition period, supported the Movement of resisting the US and Aiding North Korea, carried out the "Three Againsts" and "Five Againsts" campaigns, and went through the whole party's rectification work, the anti-rightist and anti-"rightist" campaigns, and the "Four Clean-up Campaigns", etc., and withstood the trials and tribulations. The "rightist", anti-rightist, anti-dumping, and four-cleaning campaigns, etc., have withstood trials and tribulations, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, when, following the guiding principle of "the central work of the Party is the central work of the League", advanced youth models such as Wu Guilan and Wei Shuqin emerged, which all demonstrated the need to We must not forget the original heart of the Party and remember the historical mission of youth. All the work of the League boils down to one point, that is, to be a good assistant and reserve army of the Party, and the flag of the Party is the direction of the League flag. Only by taking the Party's flag as the flag, the Party's direction as the direction, and the Party's will as the will, and by closely surrounding the Party's central work in all periods of history, and focusing on the main responsibilities and main business and taking the initiative, can it glow with enduring vitality.

### ***5.2 The Cause of the Komsomol is Developing through Succession***

The history of the Harbin youth movement has shown profoundly that the current methods and carriers of youth work are constantly being updated and improved as times change. But its core is consistent, and its valuable experience comes from historical accumulation. As early as the 1950s and 1960s, Harbin set up various types of organisations such as the Youth Commando Team, the Flood Control Commando Team, and the Five Good Groups, and carried out youth united front work at that time. The particularities of the times have different guiding effects on youth value choices and practices. Each generation of young people should plan their lives and create history under the conditions of the era in which they live. All of this shows that young people go through different stages of evolution at different times, which is the process of inheritance, but the core spirit will not change, and there is the spirit of "persevering in the face of difficulties", the determination of "one crop after another, one hammer

after another," not forgetting the original spirit, not forgetting the original spirit, and not letting go of the original spirit and not forgetting the original spirit. In our work, we will have the spirit of "biting the green mountain and not letting go" and the determination of "working one crop after another and hammering one hammer after another", so as not to forget the original intention and not to change the channel, so as to make the cause of the League innovative and developing in succession, and to withstand the test of history and time.

### 5.3 Grasping the Youth is Grasping the Root of the Development of the YCL

The development of the Harbin youth movement has been driven by the determination of the majority of young people. The unique vigour and simplicity of youth can be seen in the typical young people of all historical periods. For example, Yang Hua, the leader of the first Chinese youth volunteer reclamation team "Beijing Youth Volunteer Reclamation Team", came to Heilongjiang and set his mind on "never relying on the state and staying in the reclamation area voluntarily and never coming back". He drew the first plough on the North Great Wilderness, wrote the first line of the history of voluntary reclamation of the North Great Wilderness youth, and set up a glorious image of Chinese youth with great ambitions, the courage to fight against difficulties and hard work for the needs of the motherland and the people, and became a model of youth that will remain in people's hearts forever. The youth movement of the May 4th period also reveals us that in order to promote the practical development of the Chinese youth movement in the new period, we should work on the leadership of youth values, organisational safeguards, and the stimulation of vitality and creativity [7]. All of these profoundly show that all the work of the Youth League can only win the popularity of young people, grasp its roots and move into the future if it always takes young people as the main body and solves the problems of who it represents, who it relies on and who it is for.

## 6. Conclusion

As can be seen from various historical journeys, the youth movement has always been a pioneering force in the development of ideas and social change. Harbin youth movement history is a history of youth struggle engraved in the heart, with a glorious history. The majority of Harbin youth always respond to the party's call, follow the pace of the times, play the role of the party's assistants and reserves, with the spirit of the spirit of the strong sound of youth, with extraordinary performance painted a picture of youth, the youth of Harbin and the Communist Youth League to the glory of the city's development will always be engraved in the history of the annals of the history of the city.

In the new era, it is of great reference value to build a perfect theory of the history of youth movement to guide the practice of youth, especially the history of youth movement in different regions has more characteristics and research significance. Harbin young people use the history of youth struggle without forgetting the original intention to show to the history, to the times and to the Party that the youth of the new era will be firmly determined to follow the Party's original intention and Marxist beliefs, and will contribute to the building of a modern socialist country in all aspects and to the realisation of the second hundred years of struggle.

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