

The Impact of Historical Nihilism on the "Four-sphere Confidence" of University Students and Countermeasures

JinTao Xie^{1*}

¹*School of Marxism, Shanghai Normal University, China*

*Corresponding author: 609200246@qq.com

Abstract

The trend of historical nihilism, accompanied by "information fragments", has invaded the ideological defenses of university students. Under the guise of "rational thinking" and "reevaluation", it sets theoretical traps, writes revisionist articles, distorts history, and questions the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, significantly impacting the "Four-sphere Confidence" of university students. In this context, it is urgent to explore countermeasures to get rid of the impact of historical nihilism on the "Four-sphere Confidence" of university students, forming a powerful synergy to resist this trend and guide university students in strengthening their "Four-sphere Confidence".



Full Text Article



Copyright (c) 2024 The author retains copyright and grants the journal the right of first publication. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Keywords: Historical nihilism; University students; "Four-sphere Confidence"

Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that misguided patterns of thinking such as money worship, hedonism, egocentricity, and historical nihilism were common, and online discourse was rife with disorder. All this had a grave impact on people's thinking and the public opinion environment. [1] In the 21st century, driven by the economic globalization, the trend of historical nihilism intertwined with other diverse social ideologies like neoliberalism has profoundly impacted the "Four-sphere Confidence" of Chinese university students and caused them to waver. Therefore, it is crucial to deeply analyze the erroneous orientations of historical nihilism and investigate its impact on the "Four-sphere Confidence" of university students, as well as to explore countermeasures to eliminate its impact, which has profound value implications.

Organization of the Text

1. The Erroneous Orientation of the Historical Nihilism

Historical nihilism is a typical historical idealism, characterized by isolated interpretations, one-sided examinations, and misrepresentations of facts. It downplays the truth and denies the objectivity of history, questioning the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

1.1 Questioning the Necessity of the Path of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

The issue of the path is a fundamental problem of historical nihilism, which is essentially an erroneous answer to the question of which path China should take. Practice has proved that the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the choice of history and the people. Historical nihilists attempt to erase the profound impact of the Chinese revolution and challenge the legitimacy of the socialist path, relentlessly attacking the leadership role of the Communist Party of China and negating the achievements of socialism with Chinese characteristics, revealing a dangerous attempt to promote Westernization. Secondly, they disregard the historical contributions of the Revolution of 1911, the New Democratic Revolution, and the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, falsely asserting that choosing socialism is a series of missteps, a stance not only absurd but also deeply harmful. Furthermore, historical nihilists use the setbacks China faced at the inception of the People's Republic of China, propagating the notion that socialism has reached its end. They exaggerate the setbacks in Chinese modern history while ignoring the remarkable achievements of socialist construction. At the same time, historical nihilists leverage various lectures and publications to indoctrinate university students with the idealized image of capitalist societies. Out of curiosity, many university students begin to identify with capitalist development models amid the rampant spread of historical nihilism, which inevitably undermines their shared ideal of socialism and shakes their confidence in the socialist path.[2]

1.2 Questioning the Scientific Nature of the Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, as a scientific truth repeatedly tested by practice, not only addresses key theoretical and practical issues in China's development but also provides profound guidance in both worldview and methodology. This theoretical system stands in sharp opposition to historical nihilism. Historical nihilists attempt to negate Marxism by labeling its historical perspective as rigid dogma or even derogatory derivatives of religious doctrines. They seek to confuse the public's understanding of historical nihilism and launch attacks on Marxism out of context, thereby undermining the foundations of its mainstream ideology. The harm of historical nihilism lies not only in its deceptive nature; its deeper intention is to weaken the younger generation's belief in Marxist theory. Under the control of certain domestic and international forces, attacks are launched on the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics through bribing agents and other means. Internet platforms like Weibo, Baidu Tieba, QQ, and WeChat have become platforms for spreading so-called "truth revelations", distorting and hyping Chinese history. This phenomenon is not just an overflow of online public opinion but has also permeated higher education. Extreme cases have emerged where university classrooms openly question Mao Zedong Thought and socialism with Chinese characteristics. Such behavior not only

desecrates academic ethics but also influences students' development of a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values. Undeniably, historical nihilism aims to destroy the ideals and beliefs of young students, eroding the contemporary influence of Marxism, and causing university students to lose solid support in theoretical guidance and spiritual reliance, with its erosion of their theoretical confidence not to be overlooked.

1.3 Questioning the Superiority of the System of socialism with Chinese Characteristics

The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the greatest advantage and institutional guarantee for China's development today, as well as the steadfast force of self-confidence and self-reliance. [3] Historical nihilism questions the superiority of this system in two ways. On the one hand, historical nihilists completely negates Soviet history, criticizes the October Revolution and the socialist system it produced, ignores the complex and diverse historical reasons behind the drastic changes in Eastern Europe, and selectively disregards the "color revolutions" implemented by Western capitalist countries. Instead, historical nihilists unfairly blame everything on communism, claiming that capitalism triumphed over communism in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, they attempt to leverage various contradictions and problems that arose during China's reform and opening-up as points of attack. With reform and opening-up, China has inevitably encountered issues such as a wide gap between the rich and poor, corruption and bribery, environmental pollution and food safety that society must confront and solve, especially during the transformation period. However, historical nihilists overlook the achievements of reform and opening-up. They focus on enlarging and criticizing individual issues without distinguishing them, even erroneously attributing these challenges to the socialist system itself and proposing an extreme "socialist failure theory." They also ignore the inherent defects of the capitalist system and praise it unilaterally. The prevalence of historical nihilism undoubtedly presents a major challenge for university students in establishing correct historical viewpoints and solidifying their socialist beliefs.

1.4 Questioning the Advancement of the Culture of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics

Chinese civilization, with its profound historical foundation and unique cultural charm, not only encapsulates the wisdom of the nation but has also inscribed a brilliant chapter in the history of world civilization. Its unparalleled cultural allure, dissemination power, and far-reaching influence have left an indelible mark globally. However, historical nihilist overlooks this, disregarding the indelible mark Chinese culture has left on the world stage, neglecting the role of this cultural system in consolidating national common emotions and values, and even dismissing the contributions made by the Chinese nation to world civilization. This ideology seeks to erode the cultural system and undermine national cultural confidence. Beginning from a "cynical" stance, historical nihilist attempts to deconstruct the historical process of the Chinese nation and its heroes. [4] It uses unscrupulous methods to distort the stories of figures like Qu Yuan, Yue Fei, and Liu Hulan, whose identities have become targets of ridicule. The intention is to destroy the national spirit—formed by long-term historical development and centered around patriotism—thereby negating the outstanding traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture of China. Ultimately, this erodes the cultural self-confidence of university students.

2. The Impact of Historical Nihilism on the "Four-sphere Confidence" of University Students

The trend of historical nihilism, accompanied by "information fragments", has invaded the ideological defenses of university students. It often disguises in terms of "rational thinking" and "reevaluation", sets theoretical traps and distorts history to capture attention. It aims to mislead university students, inducing them to fall into the abyss of nihilism, undermining their confidence in the path, doubting their confidence in theory, challenging their confidence in the system, and dissolving their confidence in culture.[2]

2.1 Undermining Confidence in the Path

The issue of what path we take is of vital importance for the survival of the Party, the future of China, the destiny of the Chinese nation, and the wellbeing of the people. Confidence in the socialist path is confidence in both the direction of socialism with Chinese characteristics and its future. Staying true to confidence in the path means steadfastly following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This is an essential path to achieve socialist modernization, an objective truth proven by modern history, the fundamental guarantee for the Party to lead the people from one victory to another, and also the fundamental guarantee for the Chinese nation to become prosperous and stronger and ensure a better life for Chinese people. Confidence in the path is crucial to the success or failure of the Party's and the country's endeavors. The spread of historical nihilism influences university students' historical understanding and national identity, undermining the foundations of their confidence in the chosen path. Firstly, historical nihilism often denies or distorts historical events, seeking to erode people's sense of historical identity. If students are influenced by this ideology, they may develop doubts about historical truths, weakening their pride and attachment to national history and culture, which in turn affects their ability to establish solid confidence in the path. Secondly, historical nihilism skews students' understanding of the country's realities. It often attempts to erase or distort national historical events, leading to a skewed understanding of the nation among students. This can generate negative emotions and confusion, ultimately affecting their choice of future paths and their confidence, undermining the foundation of their confidence in the path. Lastly, by attempting to obliterate national historical glory and cultural traditions, historical nihilism may cause students to weaken their national identity and awareness. This diminishes their sense of responsibility and mission toward the nation and society, ultimately affecting their ability to shape and maintain confidence in the path.

2.2 Doubting Theoretical Confidence

Theoretical confidence is a profound belief and conscious adherence to the truthfulness, scientific nature, and practicality of Marxism and its sinicized theoretical achievements. [5] It reflects confidence in the scientific nature of Marxist theory, particularly the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Staying true to the confidence in theory means having firm confidence in understanding the laws of Communist Party governance, the laws of socialist construction, and the laws of human social development. It also means having unwavering confidence in achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and creating a better life for the people. Historical

nihilism stands in opposition to the scientific truth of Marxism, and its overflow inevitably fosters a psychology of theoretical insecurity among university students. Firstly, it causes university students to develop cognitive biases about Marxist theory. Critics of historical nihilism sharply criticize Marxism, claiming it lacks scientific and systematic coherence and arguing that its concepts are outdated. They even denigrate Marxism as the greatest nihilist ideology in history. These viewpoints have led students to misunderstand the theory, posing challenges to ideological shaping. Secondly, they deny the scientific and rational nature of Marxist theory in contemporary society. By annihilating Soviet history, historical nihilists blame the collapse of the Soviet Union on errors in Marxist theoretical guidance, thus questioning the scientific basis and applicability of Marxism in contemporary social development.

2.3 Challenging Institutional Confidence

The driving force behind institutional confidence stems from the "practice, theory, and efficacy". From the perspective of practical motivation, it is a system that aligns with China's national conditions, is effective and practical, and is insincerely supported by the people. From the perspective of theoretical motivation, it is a theoretical system guided by Marxism. From the perspective of efficacy motivation, it is a system mechanism that can be transformed into governance efficacy.[6] Institutional confidence is the powerful assurance for realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. By denying the New Democratic Revolution, criticizing socialist transformation, and distorting the socialist nature of Reform and Opening-up, historical nihilism not only denies the historical legitimacy of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics but also subverts its socialist essence, damaging university students' confidence and support for the national system. Influenced by historical nihilism, many students find it challenging to use the laws of historical development and contemporary contexts to profoundly grasp the essence of history, struggling with rational analysis. When faced with the seduction of historical nihilism, they tend to waver in their established political and historical views, losing the ability to discern the authenticity of history and fail to distinguish primary from secondary in historical events and contradictions. This phenomenon poses a severe challenge to rational cognition.

2.4 Dissolving Cultural Confidence

Culture is a country and nation's soul. A country will thrive only if its culture thrives, and a nation will be strong only if its culture is strong. Cultural confidence is the full affirmation and active practice of a nation, a country, and a political party in the value of its own culture, as well as a firm belief in the vitality of its culture. Strengthening cultural confidence is a critical issue concerning national prosperity, cultural security, and the independence of national spirit.[7] The overflow of historical nihilism inevitably leads university students to erode their cultural confidence. Firstly, it causes the Chinese nation to lose the spiritual motivation for survival and development. With its deep historical accumulation and rich cultural connotations, Chinese civilization holds a unique and brilliant chapter in the history of human civilization. The excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation, having been passed down for thousands of years, not only builds a complete cultural system but also has its spiritual core and values recognized globally as a crystallization of

human wisdom. Historical nihilism belittles Chinese excellent traditional culture, stigmatizes modern revolutionary history and national heroes, and glorifies negative figures in history, potentially causing university students to develop a sense of cultural inferiority, thereby losing collective consciousness and national awareness, making it difficult to gather strength to overcome adversity. Secondly, it affects the sense of identity with the path, theory, and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Cultural confidence is more fundamental, widespread, and profound, embodying the root of confidence in the path, theory, and institution of socialism with Chinese characteristics.[8] Historical nihilism weakens university students' cultural confidence, affecting their support for the path, theory, and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Lastly, it affects the process of building a modern and powerful socialist country. Historical nihilism makes university students lack pride in Chinese excellent traditional culture, confidence in revolutionary culture, and recognition of advanced socialist culture, making it difficult for them to shoulder the cultural mission of building a culturally powerful nation, thus affecting the process of building a socialist cultural power in China.

3. Countermeasures to Get Rid of the Impact of Historical Nihilism on the "Four-sphere Confidence" of University Students

To curb the spread of historical nihilism and diminish its negative impact on university students, it is urgent to form a comprehensive and multi-dimensional synergy to get rid of historical nihilism, guiding students to firmly strengthen the "Four-sphere Confidence." [2]

3.1 Building a Network Position to Counter Historical Nihilism

In today's information and network age, the Internet has become a vital platform for the clash of various ideologies and viewpoints. With the help of the Internet and new media, historical nihilist remarks continue to proliferate in cyberspace.[9] Therefore, it is particularly important and urgent to build an effective network position to counter historical nihilism. Firstly, we should strengthen the online communication capacity of official media. Official media should leverage their authority and credibility, using platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and news websites to promptly release accurate and comprehensive historical information, guiding online public opinion. Secondly, we should establish professional historical research websites and databases, providing authoritative and accurate historical materials for the public to help students correctly understand history. Moreover, in constructing network position, we should focus on diversified promotional methods. Historical-themed films, documentaries, and animations can vividly present historical facts, enhancing the attractiveness and persuasiveness of mainstream ideological content. Additionally, live broadcasting and short videos can be employed to attract more university students' attention and participation. Lastly, we should encourage university students to participate in online discussions. By organizing online forums and discussion groups, students can be encouraged to participate in historical discussions, forming a correct view of history.

3.2 Strengthening Theoretical Research and Promotion of the Histories of the Party, New China, the Reform and Opening-up, and the development of socialism

The study and education of the "Four Histories of China" is a crucial channel for enhancing the historical education for party members, cadres, and the public. Through learning about the history of the Party, the history of New China, the history of reform and opening-up, and the history of socialist development, people can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the developmental progress of the party and the nation's endeavors, profoundly recognize the correctness of the socialist path with Chinese characteristics, and firmly continue along the Long March in the new era. Furthermore, studying the "Four Histories of China" is an essential weapon against the invasion of historical nihilism. Only by deepening the understanding of history can one better recognize the essence and hazards of historical nihilism and consciously resist its erosion. Strengthening theoretical research and the promotion of the "Four Histories of China" is key to resisting the invasion of historical nihilism. Firstly, it is necessary to enhance theoretical research, deeply exploring the rich connotations and contemporary value of the "Four Histories of China" to provide solid theoretical support for promotion and education. Secondly, we should innovate promotion and education methods, utilizing modern communication media like the Internet and new media to make learning about the "Four Histories of China" more lively, vivid, and engaging. Additionally, we should also focus on integrating "Four Histories of China" education with practical work, encouraging students to convert learning outcomes into powerful motivations for working.

3.3 Strengthening the Construction of Ideological Work Mechanisms in Universities

Ideological is crucial for establishing the foundation of the nation and the soul of the people. Therefore, constructing a long-term mechanism for ideological work is a necessary guarantee for universities to effectively resist erroneous ideologies like historical nihilism.[10] Firstly, it is essential to construct and improve a working mechanism where the Party committee takes overall responsibility, the publicity department takes the lead, and relevant departments collaborate, forming a "vertical and horizontal cooperation, taking a multi-pronged approach to guide students' ideological and political education. Furthermore, we should establish and improve monitoring and early warning mechanisms for ideological work to promptly identify and address emerging and tendentious issues, ensuring campus ideological security. Moreover, we should strengthen the leading role of ideological and political theory courses. Universities should fully leverage the leading role of these courses to guide students in establishing correct views on history, the nation, and the ethnicity, firmly strengthening the "Four-sphere Confidence" in their minds. Lastly, we should standardize course settings and teaching content in universities, focusing on the ideological nature of course settings and the scientific nature of the teaching content, to ensure that the knowledge imparted to students has a correct view of history and values. By interpreting history from a multiple perspectives and levels, students are inspired to perceive the depth of history with historical thinking, cultivating solid historical understanding and cultural confidence to guard against the impact of historical nihilism.

3.4 Creating a Campus Cultural and Ideological hub Led by Socialist Core Values

To safeguard the cultural domain, it is imperative to establish a campus cultural and ideological hub led by socialist core values to resist the invasion of historical nihilism. The campus is a crucial place for shaping students' thoughts and values, while campus culture represents the long-lasting and shared value pursuit developed during the long-term running of the university.[11] Facing the challenge of historical nihilism, we must adhere to the socialist direction of campus culture, integrating socialist core values into every aspect of education. Through classroom education, campus cultural activities, and social practice, various forms can be used to create an uplifting, inclusive, and harmonious campus environment for students, allowing them to deeply understand the remarkable deeds of national heroes, experience the noble spirit of revolutionary martyrs, and learn from the excellent qualities of exemplary figures. This encourages students to deeply comprehend and identify with socialist core values, thereby forming correct views on history, nation, and state. Additionally, specific historical commemorations can be leveraged to carefully plan red culture promotion activities. Organizing speech contests, hero story quizzes, watching revolutionary-themed movies, and appreciation of dramas can ignite students' patriotism and passion for the party, deepening their understanding and insight into historical events, fulfilling cultural missions, resolutely following the socialist path, and build a solid foundation for Marxist beliefs and communist ideals. Furthermore, universities should emphasize ideological leadership and cultural inheritance, continuously enhancing youth pride, confidence, and identification with the Chinese excellent traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture, augmenting their discernment of foreign cultures, and their resistance to decadent, backward cultures, thus solidifying cultural confidence. At the same time, universities should pay attention to the development of the times, integrating socialist core values with contemporary advancements, guiding students to focus on national development and national rejuvenation, enhancing their sense of responsibility and mission.

Conclusion

The historical nihilism has a severe threat to the mainstream social ideology in many aspects. It poses varying harm to the construction, development, and recognition of the path, system, theory, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. History must not be tarnished or arbitrarily altered. In the context of the development of diverse social ideologies, and facing to the impact of historical nihilism, university students of the new era should be more determined to follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, learn the excellent, correct, and scientific socialist theories, have faith in the socialist system led by the Party and the state, promote and inherit the culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, uphold the "Four-sphere Confidence" and strive to be Chinese youth of the new era.

Acknowledgment

All contributions of the third parties can be acknowledged in this section.

Conflict of Interest

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14552992>

Xie, J. (2024). The Impact of Historical Nihilism on the "Four-sphere Confidence" of University Students and Countermeasures. *Journal of Modern Social Sciences*, 1(2), 336 – 344.

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Xi, J.P. (2022). Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive in Unity to Build a Modern Socialist Country in All Respects ---Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, *Beijing People's Publishing House*.
- [2] Hu, Y., Xiong, Y.N. (2019). The Critique of Historical Nihilism and the Education of Contemporary College Students on "Four-sphere Confidence", *Studies on Core Socialist Values*, (03), 75-81.
- [3] Xi, J.P. (2016). Xi Jinping's speech at the conference commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Red Army's victory in the Long March, *People's Daily*, Vol. 02.
- [4] Li, Y.Z. (2019). The Dangers of Historical Nihilism and the Construction of Cultural Confidence, *Henan Daily*, Vol. 032.
- [5] Huang, H. (2021). Rational Reflection on Firm Theoretical Confidence in the New Era, *Studies on Marxism*, (09), 60-70.
- [6] Long, L.B. (2022). The Motivation, Value Purport and Practice Orientation of Xi Jinping's Discourse on Institutional Self-confidence, *Academic Exploration*, (04), 38-44.
- [7] Xi, J.P. (2013). Firming cultural confidence and building a strong socialist cultural country, *Seeking Truth*, Vol. 12.
- [8] Hu, C.S. (2020). Methodological Perspectives of Philosophy of Culture Oriented Toward Reality, *GuangMing Daily*, Vol. 13.
- [9] Jiang, D.W. (2018). Counteracting the spread of historical nihilism on the Internet requires precise efforts, *Red Flag Manuscript*, (02), 10-12.
- [10] Zhang, Y., Tang, Y.Z. (2021). A Study of Strategies for Counteracting Historical Nihilism in Colleges and Universities, *The Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools*, (02), 87-89.
- [11] Sun, L. (2019). Leading Education Modernization with University Culture of Chinese Characteristics, *Governance*, (48), 45-46.