

## **A Review of the Research on the "New Communism" Wave of Thought**

### **The Rise and Development of "Neo-communism" Thought: Alain Badiou, Zizek And Other Theorists**

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In the second half of 2008, a serious financial and economic crisis broke out in the capitalist world. The huge impact and influence of the crisis on the whole world reflected the crisis of the capitalist system itself, exposed the bankruptcy of neo-liberalism as an ideology, and triggered a mass movement against capitalism on an unprecedented scale.

Under these circumstances, the economic crisis developed into a political crisis, and the population gradually alienated itself from the capitalist ideology. At the same time, the population was programmed to be excluded from economic activities and political participation, and the sense of resistance, revolt and liberation increased. The return of history has led to a new wave of interest in radical thought and politics, but the question is, where does the mass struggle against capitalism go? This calls for the search for new forms of society as an alternative to capitalism. Against this background, the idea of "communism" with its own great potential and attraction re-energized the enthusiasm of the left-wing intellectuals. In this context, the left-wing radical intellectuals held many gatherings to continuously discuss the concept of "communism". In 2008 one of the most influential radical left-wing intellectuals of our time, the French philosopher Alain Badiou, published his book *The Communist*

Hypothesis, which attempts to bring the political focus of today back to the subject of communism and declares that "the word 'communism' can and must regain its positive value ". [1] This has led to extensive debate in Western theoretical circles. In response to this event, at the initiative of Zizek, in March 2009, the leading political philosophers of the Western left, represented by Badiou, Zizek, Michael Hardt of Duke University, the Italian Marxist Tony Negri, the Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo, the University of Bologna professor and ex-Marxist Alessandro Russo, and the poetics professor Judith Barsow, who works for the Institute of European Studies, as well as Albert Toscano, a lecturer in sociology at Goldsmiths College, London, the literary critic Terry Eagleton, and Cornell Professor Judith Balsor, along with Albert Toscano, lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Goldsmiths College, London, literary critic Terry Eagleton, and Bruno Postill of Cornell University, organized an international conference on the theme of "The Idea of Communism" for more than 1,000 people at the School of Humanities, Birkbeck College, London, England. An international conference on the theme "The Concept of Communism" was organized at the School of Humanities, Birkbeck College, London, England, with more than 1,000 participants.

The London conference had two important highlights.

First, the conference was a collective appearance of contemporary philosophers who questioned the capitalist order of domination. There was unanimous agreement that the word "communism" can and must now regain its positive value.

Secondly, the term "communism" was shared with great enthusiasm by philosophers and audience members. The enthusiasm of the participants reflected the great potential and attraction of "communism" itself. Following the conference, a collection of papers from the conference, *The Idea of Communism*, was published in 2010,

bringing together their discussions of the philosophical and political implications of the idea of communism. [2]

Baodieu, Zizek, and others continued this critical discussion, highlighting the philosophical and political importance of the idea of communism in a world of financial and social upheaval, with an international symposium on "Communism: A New Beginning," held at Cooper Union College in New York City on October 14-16, 2011, where they discussed the importance of the concept of communism in the world's financial and social turmoil. The conference proceedings, edited by Zizek, were published in 2013 after the conference, "The Communist Idea. (2)". The volume brings together their discussions of the philosophical and political implications of the idea of communism, highlighting its continuing significance. From September 24 to October 2, 2013, Zizek, Badiou, and Wang Hui (famous new left scholar) of China convened the Fourth Conference on the Concept of Communism at Kyung Hee University in Seoul, South Korea, for nine days. Seoul was chosen for this conference because Asia has always played an important role in global capitalism, and with the development and status of Korea in particular being a major event, there was no better city to discuss the Asian part of the puzzle.

For Zizek and Badiou, Seoul is no longer just an ordinary Korean city, but a place that has attracted the intense interest of the world's most influential thinkers and contemporary left-wing theorists.

In addition to these three large-scale international symposia, there were several smaller symposia on related themes, such as the one organized by Daniel Bensay in Paris in January 2010 on the theme "The power of communism: what is the name of communism today?". This congress was attended by many of the same participants as the London Congress, among whom were Antonio Negri, Jacques Rancière, Alberto Toscano and Zizek, while other speakers included Etienne Balibar, Alex Callinicos and Isabelle Gallo.

Though well-intentioned, each of these men openly criticized Badiou's original ideas. On November 2, 2013, Postill, Jodi Dean, and others organized a mini-symposium on "Communist Currents" at the A.D. White House at Cornell University, hosted by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences and co-sponsored by the Departments of Government, History, and the French Studies Program.

Participants proposed radical interventions on a range of issues, from Venezuelan governance to the BRICs, and the rhetoric caused a stir.

[3]

In addition to the series of academic conferences, a series of representative monographs and academic papers were published before and after the conference, such as Alain Badiou's *The Communist Hypothesis*, Postill's *The Reality of Communism*, Jodi Dean's *Communist Horizons*, Boris Groys's *The Communist Appendix*, and Gavin Walker's book reviews of *The Communist Hypothesis*, Jodi Dean's *The Reality of Communism*, and Joseph G. Ramsey's book review of *Communist Horizons*, etc., which marked the emergence of the "New Communism" trend of thought. *The Realities of Communism* by Gavin Walker, "The Communist Hypothesis" by Jodi Dean, and Joseph G. Ramsey's book review of "Communist Horizons" marked the rise of the "new communist" movement. The "new communism" trend has attracted extensive attention and comments from scholars of China and abroad.

The London Conference on "The Idea of Communism" received widespread attention in the media, with not only major foreign academic portals reporting on it, but even a lengthy review in the *Financial Times*.

Chapter 2 Chinese scholars' research on the "New Communism" trend

The trend of "new communism" has received wide attention from scholars in China since its emergence, as reflected in the following aspects.

(i) Introduction to translation

1. The London Conference demonstrated the tension between theoretical approaches to communism in Europe and North America today, and the role of communism as an ideal in the twenty-first century.

In 2010, Yu Qi translated American scholar Stephen Cervero's book *Is Spring Coming to Communism?*

--Review of the International Symposium "On the Concept of Communism" at the University of London (Marxism and Reality, No. 2, 2010).

This is a review of the 2009 London Concept of Communism, and the author agrees with Zizek's opening statement that the conference was expected to be dedicated not to discussing the political program of the century or to intervening in the increasingly harsh realities of social and political struggles, but to reflecting on the philosophical view of communism or how this ideal could be revitalized and how it could be useful in the 21st century.

The author also comments on the views of Terry Eagleton, Michael Hart, Negri, Peter Howard, Alain Badiou, Judith Balsem, and Zizek, and argues that, overall, the conference demonstrated the major tensions between theoretical approaches to communism in Europe and North America today, with Zizek and Badiou advocating for and fomenting a return to the revolution, Hart and Negri seeing "the masses" as the power of "empire", and Negri seeing the "masses" as the power of the "empire". Hart and Negri saw the "masses" as a force for "empire".

While Zizek and Badiou insisted on a "radical voluntarism" against the global domination of capital, Hart and Negri saw in the results of the globalization of late capitalism the objective conditions for communism. The authors also argue that although the conference was attended by more than a thousand people, the speakers were Europeans and North Americans, and only a few of the speeches dealt with Latin America and China, and thus the internationality of the conference was considered to be in name only. [4]

2. In the present era of the dominance of the capitalist bio-political mode of production, the conditions and weapons for the realization of the communist cause are more ripe and complete than ever before.

Translation of the article "Capital is Producing Its Own Gravediggers - A New Opportunity for Communism" by Mike Hart, a professor in the Department of Literature at Duke University in the United States and a renowned leftist theorist, was introduced in Issue No. 190 of the 2011 issue of the Chinese Journal of Social Sciences.

According to Hart, the dominant mode of production in contemporary capitalism is immaterial or bio-political production (i.e., the production of ideas, information, images, symbols, social relations, and emotions), and the struggle between immaterial and material property, which is a vivid rendition of the deep-seated contradiction between private and common property, has become a characteristic of the times.

According to Hart, private property characterizes capitalism, state property characterizes socialism, and common property characterizes communism.

With the development of the capitalist economy, the importance of communal property has grown, and new ideas, consciousness, social relations and forms of life have emerged.

As a result, the conditions and weapons for realizing the cause of communism are today more mature and complete than ever before.

3. The neo-factoryists attempted to spin off a neo-communist movement from the confrontational nature of the existing system.

In *The New Communism: Recovering the Utopian Fantasy*, British scholar Alan Johnson points out that Badiou reads the presence of communism in human history as a current ongoing struggle for human liberation rather than a series of disastrous detours.

The author argues that neo-communists fantasize about developing a new model for making the "communist hypothesis" viable in the twenty-first century, in the hope that a neo-communist movement will emerge from the confrontation of existing institutions.

They also attempted to rehabilitate communism by treating it as a beautiful Platonic "idea." [5 [5]

## (ii) Research reviews

### 1. Socialism and communism are not opposites.

Wang Hsing Fu's Why Communism?

-- A New Invention in the Political Discourse of the Radical Left is a positive response to the 2009 London Conference.

In Wang Xingfu's view, regarding the legitimacy and necessity of the concept of communism, from a philosophical standpoint, it can be distinguished into transcendentalism and internalism, and on the basis of thesis, it can be divided into culturalism and political economy. Alain Badiou explicitly took a transcendentalist position in defense of communism.

Alain Badiou referred to communism as an eternal, universal truth, a truth that does not depend on specific historical conditions, but, on the contrary, is defined by the structure and character of historical reality.

In Wang Xingfu's view, there is another line of thought, represented by Jacques Rancière, which argues that communism is a revolt against the rationalist tradition of the Enlightenment and the rationalization of capitalism, and that what we need to emphasize today is not the reality of communism but its unreality, i.e., its hyper-utilitarianism and aestheticism. The more central issue in rethinking communism is to return to the question of community. [6]

### 2. It is important to emphasize the existence of the "communist hypothesis".

Wu Guanfeng introduced Zizek's views on communism in "Either Neo-Communism or Berlusconi - Zizek's "Eleventh Thesis". In his

view, Zizek's conception of communism was based on at least two grounds, namely, the concept of "common thing" proposed by Hart and Negri, which provided a theoretical justification for it. The first is that the concept of the "common thing" proposed by Hart and Negri provides the basis for its theoretical legitimacy. The first is that the concept of "common goods", as developed by Hart and Negri, provides a theoretical justification.

Secondly, the term communism has been revived to emphasize the critique of current global capitalism, not just in the pursuit of some small, partial, limited change, but in the pursuit of change in a holistic sense, real, even painful change.

Zizek emphasizes the need for "hipotez of communism" because it is communism that represents an uncompromisingly radical change to the established system. [7]

3. A neo-communist trend is emerging in an era of global capitalist crisis.

According to Chen's "New Communist Momentum - A Brief Discussion of Jodi Dean's 'Communist Horizon'", the new communist moment consists of three dimensions, i.e., the longing for new communism becomes the driving force of the new communism, transactional capitalism is the revolutionary object of the new communism, the new proletariat is formed under the exclusion and distinction of transactional capitalism, and the new communist party as the vanguard of the new proletariat is the main body of the new communism. The new proletariat formed under the exclusion and differentiation of interaction capitalism, and the new communist party as the vanguard of the new proletariat as the main body of the new communism are the three dimensions. [8]

4. While the left has tried to revitalize the term "communism", this new communism has always been located in the distance, which we can never reach.

Fan Chunyan in "A New Kind of Communism?"



--In "Contemporary Western Left Scholars on the Concept of Communism", it is pointed out that contemporary Western left scholars have carried out a "rescue" of "communism", cutting off "the concept of communism" from all the "disreputable" theories and practices of the 20th century, in order to reconstruct "new communism". ", cutting off the "communist concept" from all the "disreputable" theories and practices of the 20th century, with the aim of reconstructing the "new communism". The aim was to reconstruct a "new communism", in order to reverse the melancholy, confusion and even betrayal that had pervaded the Western left after the dramatic changes in Soviet and Eastern Europe.

The second is to propose, in the name of communism, "another alternative", an alternative that is fully radical and revolutionary, different from the current reforms and compromises.

The third is to reconstruct after deconstruction, to rebuild politics in the place of alienation from the state. [9]

### **Chapter 3 Foreign Research on the “New Communism” Trend**

#### **(i) Publication of proceedings and monographs**

##### **1. Pluralistic concepts of communism.**

After the London conference in March 2009, the proceedings of the conference, *The Concept of Communism 1*, were edited and published by Costas Dudzinas and Slavoj Zizek.

The proceedings reflect the energy, dynamism, and pluralism that characterized the conference; not all authors agree on the meaning of communism, that is obvious, but specific common themes emerge, namely: the idea of communism faces a general depoliticization through the induction of new political subjects and the return of popular voluntarism.

"Communism" is a concept of radical philosophy and politics. As a precondition for radical action, before distancing itself from statism and economism, and before becoming the political experience of the 21st century, communism must be contemplated; the goal of communism is to bring about liberty and equality. [10]

2. Repositioning the new circumstances and issues emerging from the series of emancipatory events within the totality of global capitalism.

In 2013 Verso published a collection of conference papers edited by Žižek, *The Communist Idea 2*. The collection of papers was the result of the 2011 New York conference.

From the Arab Spring to the Occupy Wall Street movement, from the Greek revolt to the British riots, the awakening of the movement's participants has shown new signs of fragility, inconsistency and, in many ways, even exhaustion.

So, what should be done at a time like this? According to Žižek, it is important to get to the bottom of the truth and locate these events within the totality of global capitalism, which means showing how they stand up to the center. [11]

3. Communism is the correct assumption.

In 2010, Alain Badiou published his book *The Communist Hypothesis*.

Alain Badiou's assumption that communism is the correct assumption, and that all those who abandon this assumption will move towards the capitalist market economy, parliamentary democracy, and other forms of the state that are appropriate to capitalism, abandons the assumption that the greatest inequality of all, capitalism, is inevitable and "natural".

*The Communist Hypothesis*, a book that in 2008 first articulated how to reconfigure the left through the hypocrisies and compromises of the last 20 years.

This hypothesis was a new demand for universal emancipation, and was so keenly concerned with the future of humanity that the Communist Hypothesis was called the new program of the left after the bankruptcy of neoliberalism.

#### 4. Communism is realistic.

In 2011, Cornell University professor Bruno Bostil published his book *The Phenomenon of Communism*. This book is a new addition to the Communism series published by Verso, following Badiou, Žižek and Groys.

Bostil examines the revival of communist thought through the prism of "speculative leftism," which could not transcend sublime abstractions and radically rethink the concepts of mass, class, and state. Bostil debated the issues with writers including Esposito and Moreiras, and provided insight into the views of Bolivian vice-president and thinker Alvaro García Linera.

#### 5. In the new capitalism of networked information technologies, spontaneity cannot develop into a revolution; it needs to be constructed along party lines.

In 2012, Jodi Dean, a professor of political science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in the United States, published her book, *The Borders of Communism*.

Dean argued that the malfeasance of the international banking industry reminds the exploited that the world has entered an era of unsustainable economic systems, and that it is time to end the left's melancholy rapprochement with capitalism.

In the new capitalism of networked information technology, Dean asserts, our ability to communicate is exploited, but revolution is still possible if we organize on the basis of common and collective desires.

After examining the Occupy movement, Dean argued that this spontaneity could not develop into a revolution, and that it needed to structure itself according to political parties.

(ii) Publication of book reviews and research results

1. The capitalist world is not a given.

In 2011, Gavin Walker published a book review, *The Dignity of Communism: A Review of Badiou's The Communist Hypothesis*.

Gavin Walker argues that Badiou centers on an attempt to bring back the theme of communism to the focus of our politics today, attempting to declare openly and frankly that "the word 'communism' can and must now regain its positive value."

Gavin Walker emphasizes that Badiou reminds us that the existing world is not inevitable, i.e., if we accept the inevitability of the extreme capitalist economy and the parliamentary politics that support it, it is simple that we fail to see other possibilities for the inner reality in which we find ourselves. [12]

2. Communism is precisely the reconfiguration of the political, economic and intellectual spheres.

In 2011, Jodi Dean published a book review of *The Current Situation and Our Task: A Review of Postill's The Reality of Communism*.

According to Dean, the most exciting beginnings of contemporary political theory were the beginnings of communism.

This situation is closely related to the urgency of the anger, occupation and revolution that is currently spreading, and communism is precisely the reconfiguration of the political, economic and intellectual spheres.

*The Reality of Communism* critically incorporates the views of some of the most eminent thinkers in contemporary political theory and goes beyond them, reorienting communism not just as a hypothesis and a struggle, but more importantly as the definitive proof of a

rallying, organized political movement for emancipation and equality.  
[13]

3. We are on the road to communism.

In 2013, Joseph Ramsey published a book review, Focus on the Red Horizon - The Conditions of Communism. Ramsey argues that while the horizon is unreachable, and even in some sense unapproachable, the horizon can help us where we are headed.

Note that the horizon is to determine the general direction we want to go.

Wherever we are - we are on the road to communism.

4. Communism can not only be envisioned, but also has the possibility of being practiced.

In 2010, Swingerdorff of the School of Environment and Development at the University of Manchester, United Kingdom, published "Communist assumptions and revolutionary capitalism: exploring regional conceptions of communism in the 21st century".

The author argues that the name of communism still evokes a sense that a truly different world can be not only envisioned, but also has the possibility of being practiced.

The concept of communism is closely linked to democracy and equality.

5. Communism is not for us a state of affairs that should be established, not an ideal to which reality should be adapted.

In 2012, Hohus, an associate professor at the Faculty of Arts of the Cummins University in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, published "The problem of communism: a dead end or a new dawn?", in which the author agrees with Marx that communism is not a situation that should be established for us, not an ideal to which reality should be adapted. , the author agrees with Marx that communism is not for us a state of affairs that should be established, not an ideal to which reality should be adapted.

What we call communism is that movement which annihilates the reality of existing conditions. The conditions of this movement are produced by the existing premises. [14]

#### **Chaper 4: Ideas and Methods of Research on the "New Communism" Trend**

As the "new communism" is on the rise, we need to think deeply: why is it on the rise? Does it mean the return and revival of communism? Does it herald the coming of the global communist era?

What is "new" about the "new communism" trend? What are its new concepts and ideas? Are there any new ideas in practice?

At the same time, what are the similarities and differences between this ideology and the "new communism" of the French Communist Party that had emerged?

All of these require in-depth discussion and careful analysis of these issues by applying Marxist positions, perspectives and methods.

First, through systematic research and comprehensive analysis, the basic viewpoints of the "new communism" trend can be explained as follows:

Representatives of the concept of "new communism" believe that by exploring the symbols, background, reasons and significance of the emergence of "new communism," by studying the connotation, characteristics and conception of "new communism," and by studying the subject and way of realizing "communism," the basic viewpoints of "new communism" can be sorted out.

By examining the symbols, background, reasons and significance of the rise of "new communism", by studying the connotation, characteristics and conception of "new communism", and by examining the main body and ways of realizing "communism", the basic ideas of "new communism" are sorted out, and the essence of the trend of "new communism" is revealed. Through the study of the subjects and ways of realizing the "new communism", we will sort out the basic ideas of the "new communism" trend, reveal the essence of

the "new communism" trend, draw on its positive achievements, and criticize its irrational ideas.

Secondly, using a holistic approach, the "new communism" trend is recognized and analyzed in the history of the development of left-wing thought in the West and in the history of the development of communist thought as a whole.

The holistic approach, that is, the object of knowledge as an organic whole, that the elements constituting this whole are in a dynamic relationship with each other, without which there would be no whole.

The idea that the whole determines the parts, and that the whole constrains and determines the nature of the elements that make up that whole. [15]

Therefore, the study of the "New Communism" trend must be viewed in the context of the history of the development of left-wing thought in the West.

Only in this way can we recognize the ins and outs of the "new communism" trend and help to accurately grasp the "new communism" trend.

Thirdly, comparative research methods are utilized.

Comparing and contrasting the "new communism" trend with classical Western Marxism, radical socialism, European communism, and especially the "new communism" of the French Communist Party, and clarifying the differences and connections between them, will help us to grasp the essence of the "new communism" trend and its characteristics. The comparative study of "New Communism" with classical Western Marxism, radical socialism, European communism, and especially the "New Communism" of the French Communist Party, and the clarification of the differences and connections between them, will help to grasp the "New Communism" ideology, and the essential characteristics of the "New Communism" ideology.

Fourthly, the "new communism" trend should be examined from a Marxist standpoint.

Using the Marxist worldview and methodology, we should critically analyze the "New Communism" trend to find out whether it is a Marxist, non-Marxist, or even anti-Marxist trend.

In fact, individual representatives of this trend promote the politics of the "Cultural Revolution" and hold views that do not recognize the communist nature of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

To analyze the "New Communism" trend from a Marxist point of view, and to analyze which points of view are Marxist and which are non-Marxist or even anti-Marxist.

Fifthly, the study of the "new communism" trend can be either a systematic and comprehensive study of the trend as a whole, or a thematic study of the views of a representative figure, or a thematic study of a particular issue.

On the one hand, thematic research is the premise and foundation of overall research, without thematic research on the views of representative figures, without thematic research on issues, the overall research will not have depth.

On the other hand, thematic research and overall research are the relationship between points and surfaces, behind each viewpoint and issue, there is vertical theoretical heritage and horizontal viewpoints convergence, and there is a grand background of the times and social environment.

Thus, the conduct of a holistic study can guide the development of thematic studies at a higher level.

Annotation :

[1] Alain Badio, *Communism Hypothesis*, London and New York: Verso, 2010, p. 37.

[2] *Research Report on Foreign Marxism (2013)*, Beijing : People's Publishing House, 2013, pp. 335-336.



[3] Huw Lemmey, "The Idea of Communism in South Korea", <http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/1400-the-idea-of-communism-in-south-korea>.

[4] Stephen Severo: "Has the Spring of Communism Arrived? --A Review of the International Symposium "On the Concept of Communism" at the University of London", *Marxism and Reality*, No. 2, 2010.

[5] Alan Johnson, "The New Communism: Resurrecting a Utopian Fantasy", *Culture*, No. 4, 2012.

[6] Review of Contemporary Foreign Marxism (8), Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2010, pp. 3-27.

[7] Wu Guanchuan: "Zizek's "Eleventh Thesis"", *Marxism and Reality*, No. 5, 2011.

[8] Blue River : "The New Communist Momentum - A Brief Discussion of Jodi Dean's *Communist Horizons*", *Teaching and Research* 2013, Issue No. 9 of the year.

[9] Fan Chunyan, "A New Kind of Communism? --Contemporary Western Left-Wing Scholars on the "Concept of Communism"", *Marxism*

*Research on Righteousness*, No. 5, 2014.

[10] Costas Douzinas & Slavoj Zizek, *The Idea of Communism*, London and New York: Verso.2010, p. ix.

[11] Slavoj Zizek, *The Idea of Communism 2*, London and New York: Verso. 2013, p. vii.

[12] Gavin Walker, "The Dignity of Communism: Badiou's Communist Hypothesis", *Socialism and Democracy*, vol. 25, no. 3 (2011 ), pp. 130-139.

[13] Jodi Dean, "The Current Situation and Our Tasks: Bosteels' The Actuality of Communism", *Theory & Event*, vol. 14. no. 4 (2011), pp. 3-4.

[14] Ladislav Hohos, "The issue of communism: A blind alley or a new dawn?", *International Critical Thought*, Vol. 2, no. 1 ( 2012), pp. 42-49.

[15] Liang Shufa, "Several Methodological Issues in the Study of the History of Marxist Development," *Marxist Studies*, No. 12, 2012.

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