

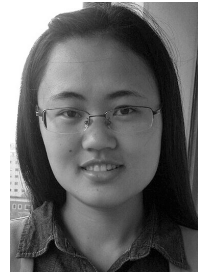
A REVIEW OF THE EIGHTH FORUM OF THE WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR POLITICAL ECONOMY

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Abstract: There are many kinds of inequalities such as inequalities between nations, gender inequalities, racial inequalities, and especially income and wealth inequalities, which are emerging as the most important ones in the current global crisis of capitalism. Also, the latest historic crisis of capitalism has led to a decline in the levels of growth in the world, especially in Europe, with enormous social consequences. The response of the dominant classes in these countries to these problems has been the imposition of austerity policies. These policies instead of reducing unemployment and improving living standards have increased the reach of private capitalist activities. In May of 2013, WAPE held its Eighth Forum themed "Inequalities and World Capitalism: Analysis, Policy and Action." The aim is to analyze the reasons for world inequality and counter measures against it, find the conditions of the world development from the radical perspective through renewed study of the finished and unfinished writings of Marx and of the plural realities of our time.

Key words: World Association for Political Economy; inequality; world capitalist

The World Association for Political Economy (WAPE) is an international academic organization founded by Marxian economists and related groups around the world. The mission of WAPE is to utilize modern Marxian economics to analyze and study the world economy, reveal its laws of development, and offer policies to promote economic and social progress on the national and global levels. The previous seven WAPE forums were successively held in Shanghai, Shimane (Japan), Beijing, Paris,

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Suzhou (China), Amherst (USA), and Mexico City (Mexico) during 2006–2012, respectively focusing on “economic globalization,” “labor–capital relationship,” “sustainable development,” “global democratic governance,” “21st-century socialism,” “capitalism crisis,” and “human development in the 21st century.”

“Inequality and World Capitalism: Analysis, Policy and Action—The Eighth Forum of the World Association for Political Economy (WAPE)” was held at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), Florianópolis, Brazil, on 25–26 May 2013. The forum was attended by more than 150 scholars from over 20 countries, including China, Japan, USA, South Korea, Vietnam, India, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Mexico, UK, France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Austria. The forum was co-organized by WAPE, Brazilian Society of Political Economy and the Institute of Latin American Studies at UFSC, Brazil.

On the morning of May 25, Professor Enfu Cheng, Chairman of WAPE and President of the Academy of Marxism of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences gave the opening speech and Professor Roselane Neckel, Principal of UFSC gave a welcome speech. Two world-renowned Marxist economists Professor Theotônio Dos Santos, Federal Fluminense University, Brazil and Professor Xinghua Wei, Renmin University of China were granted the *World Marxist Economics Award*. The *Distinguished Achievement Award of World Political Economy of the 21st Century* was awarded to nine Marxist economists: Professor Jennifer Rebecca Clegg from the University of Central Lancashire, UK; Professor Yao Ouyang from Hunan University of Commerce, China; Professor Hiroshi Setooka from Komazawa University, Japan; Professor Erwin Marquit from the University of Minnesota, USA; Professor Mingsheng Zhou from Jiangsu Administration Institute, China; Professor Niemeyer Almeida Filho from the Federal University of Uberlândia, Brazil; Professor Xinhua Jian from Wuhan University, China; Professor Pham Van Duc from the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences; and Professor Jean-Claude Delaunay from Marne Valley University, France. After the opening ceremony, Makoto Itoh, Professor at University of Tokyo and five other famous Marxist economists delivered the keynote speeches in the plenary meeting. Then Professor Enfu Cheng, Chairman of WAPE, Professor Jean-Claude Delaunay and Professor Hiroshi Ohnishi, vice Chairmen of WAPE, Larau Mattei, Vice Principal of the UFSC, and Nildo Ouriques, Director at the Institute of Latin American Studies of UFSC participated in the tree planting ceremony and the unveiling ceremony for Karl Marx’s damascened bust in the campus of the university.

In the following agenda, participants discussed various topics including “inequality of production and distribution of world wealth and its causes,” “the global occupation movement and the struggle against inequality,” “inequality in Latin America,” “policies and actions against social inequality,” “the current world financial and economic crisis,” “falling profit rate in capitalist countries,”

“the evolution of North–South relationship in the 21st century,” “comparison between the Latin American model and China, Vietnam and Belarus patterns,” “contemporary world multi-mode and its superiority,” “labor theory of value and modern exploitation,” “eco-socialism and the world anti-nuclear movement,” and other related topics.

The Phenomena, Causes and Countermeasures of World Inequality

The Phenomena of World Inequality

After studying the distribution of world wealth and income, Professor Enfu Cheng discovered that inter-country difference in the level of household wealth is big. In poor countries the gap of wealth is greater than that of income compared with rich countries and global wealth holding is highly concentrated. The share of the world wealth of the top 10 percent in 2000 is estimated to be 71.2 percent and the Gini coefficient to be 0.804. The share of the bottom half is just 1.6 percent. Measured wealth inequality is even higher if international comparisons are based on official exchange rates. Besides, estimated wealth concentration varies significantly across countries and is generally very high. According to the report on 11 countries in the past 10 years, the wealth of the top 1 percent ranges from 10.4 percent in Ireland to 34.8 percent in Switzerland, with the USA at 32.7 percent.

Professor Setooka Hiroshi at Komazawa University of Japan talked about the poverty on three levels, that is, individual, society and worldwide. He agrees with Marx’s beliefs that low wages, long working hours, labor intensification, unemployment, restriction of fundamental rights, deterioration of dwelling conditions, problems of nutrition, injuring healthy life, children’s over competition on education, aggravation of cultural life etc.—all of such problems—are the expression of poverty in capitalist system. Increasing misery is the absolute and general law of capitalist accumulation. He stressed that the common people’s living situation in capitalist society is getting worse and worse day by day if we focus on every dimension of society today.

Niemeyer Almeida Filho, Vice Chair of WAPE, professor at the Federal University of Uberlândia of Brazil, talked about the dependent economies of Latin America. He summarized that according to Marxist Dependency Theory, the fundamental and decisive characteristic of the dependent economies of Latin America is the dominance of super-exploitation of the labor force. In the sphere of circulation of capital, the existence of super-exploitation of the labor force will require a greater relative scale of productive and unproductive expenses of the capitalists for each level of growth. In the Latin American economies, this greater demand of capitalist expenses is supplied to a significant extent by resources and

actions of the state. Meanwhile, the state transfers public resources into the private sector by tax, monetary policy, public debt, etc., leading to the exploitation of public resources and intensifying inequality in society.

Atenagoras Oliveira Duarte, Professor at the Federal University of Pernambuco of Brazil, analyzed the role of the state for economic growth in Northeast Brazil between 1960 and 1999, in terms of the indicators of inequality and economic sectors privileged; and the class interests from the orientation of public policy, in terms of public spending, tax breaks, cheaper credit or even of legislation. He pointed out that, if we treat state as a social institution that manages the hegemony of the ruling class, which means establishing a hierarchized policy agenda in the policy-setting and resource allocation, the hegemonic class defines the most important policies that establish the essence and nature of economic and social models.

Ana Maria Milani, Professor at Universidade Federal de Alagoas of Brazil, mainly studied the inequality in Latin America. She thought, for Latin America, after the implementation of the structural adjustment model in the region since the 1990s, a recovery cycle occurred between the years 2004–08 and a positive trend in reduction of inequality also appeared, however, the results in terms of economic growth and social equity were just mediocre.

Qin He, Research Associate at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences of China, also talked about the inequality in Latin America. She pointed out that Latin America and the Caribbean have abundant natural resources, but these do not belong to the people. A history of dependence, inequality and underdevelopment urged the progressive forces in Latin America to realize that a true regional independence, impartiality and development can only be achieved through regional integration and unity. In the process of economic integration in Latin America, imperialism, transnational capital and regional bourgeois oligarchy determines its natural deficiencies, while the uneven development of regional geopolitical interests among countries and neoliberal globalization made the Latin American integration face a more severe test.

Andrei Gritsenko and Elena Gritsenko, Researchers at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, analyzed the inequality in the inversion economy of Ukraine. They argued that Ukraine's economy, in contrast to the advanced countries, is developing in inversion type, meaning reforms occur in the reverse order. Unfair redistribution of wealth has occurred in the privatization, which has led to the exclusion of the major part of the population from the ownership of resources. This is particularly noticeable in the labor market. Market transformation led to dramatic changes in the area of unemployment. The state was not able to bear the social burden. The inversion type of market transformation combined with globalization. As a result, the Ukrainian economy as a raw materials provider, was in dependent status in

world structure, did not create a developed market in the country. This has been accompanied by a significant deterioration in the economic structure, excessive social stratification, and failure of the state to generate adequate economic policy.

Juan E. Santarcángelo, Researcher at the Political Economy Department of the Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, analyzed the level of concentration, foreign capital participation and its relationship, dependence on external markets, the evolution of income inequality and exploitation in Argentina in the process of industrialization by import substitution. While Indian scholars V. K. Ramachandran, Biplab Sarkar and Madhura Swaminathan talked about the income inequality in the Indian countryside and countermeasures taken by the government.

The Cause of World Inequality

Professor Enfu Cheng pointed out that in the past 40 years or so, liberalism promoted globally by Reagan and Thatcher, along with frequent financial and economic crises, have increased global and inter-country inequality and the gap between the rich and the poor. The so-called “American Dream” or “Japanese Dream” are all nightmares of crises and terror, rather than of stability and security; nightmares of violent deprivation, rather than of peaceful development. This is essentially different from the socialist “Dream of China,” characterized by public ownership and common prosperity of the people.

Theotonio Dos Santos, Emeritus Professor at Federal Fluminense University of Brazil, explained the physical and economic backwardness in Latin America with its structural dependence on the world economy, and showed how this dependence had historically evolved into increasingly complex forms, from a commercial and financial dependence to industrial dependence, and to nowadays a scientific and technological dependence. What led to its dependence on various social formations was based on different class structures, different classes, and dominant and dominated groups.

The Countermeasures against World Inequality

Erwin Marquit, Professor at the University of Minnesota, USA, argued that the slogan “We are the 99%” used by the Occupy Movement which erupted in New York in October 2011 focused on the inequality produced by the capitalist system. The Occupy Movement made a major contribution to the struggle against the economic inequality produced by corporate control over the economic and political life of the country. Unfortunately, its lack of staying power requires careful analysis in order to maximize any potential benefit remaining to progressive movements.

Zhongren Zhang, Professor in the Comprehensive Policy Department of the University of Shimane in Japan, believes that the nature of the allocation is a manifestation of power. The result of allocation is decided mainly by the initial distribution. International unequal exchange reflects the imbalance of their rights.

Equality is the right which asks for fairness. Opportunity equality is aimed at with the means and implementation of market economy. Only equal production ownership leads to equal distribution, i.e., the equal allocation of production conditions should be put before equal income distribution. So he emphasizes that the government should be committed to making as many as people stand on the same starting line before they come to compete in market economy.

Professor Enfu Cheng held that 21st-century socialism in Latin America is an important movement towards the elimination of inequality. The newly emerged ALBA-TCP constitutes the first regional cooperative organization in Latin America that calls for prioritizing people's interests over those of transnational capital, and the only organization for unification that clearly set as its goal the elimination of poverty and social exclusion. Ever since its establishment, ALBA-TCP has proposed ALBA Bank, Bank of the South, SUCRE the regional currency, regional oil plan, food security plan, social movement committee, TV of the South, etc., which all promote the balanced growth of welfare and easing of inequality in its member countries.

About the inversion economy of Ukraine, Andrei Gritsenko and Elena Gritsenko thought that to overcome this situation, it is necessary to change the strategy of global development, abandon the idea that market is a major global regulator and start socializing on national and international levels of economic development. That requires governments, international economic and financial organizations to focus on using national economic potentials for the development of domestic markets, to satisfy the basic needs of the population.

Roger Seifert, a Professor at the University of Wolverhampton, UK, believes that culture more than any other aspect of human life seeks to combine an understanding of the deeply tense relationship at all levels between individuals and their social worlds. To instil in people an accurate understanding about the real socio-economic relations, especially relations of equality, promoting cultural development is the best choice. So, we need to rescue cultural institutions from budget cuts and inappropriate business.

The Analysis about Capitalist Crisis

Marco Bulhões Cecilio, a Professor at the University of Manitoba, Canada, argued that the 2007/2008 crisis prompted several studies and investigations that revealed the inner workings of the financial sector and rarely found details of its operation. He studied the cause of the crisis from contemporary wealth-accumulation patterns and strategies, along with the ones crafted at the formation of our world-system, and found, operations that deliberately hold market forces—Braudel's counter-market—remain at the center of the wealth-accumulation

process and as critical elements in the power struggle between nations. Moreover, such operations persist as a privilege of a few well-connected groups that enjoy unparalleled economic freedom.

Ramaa Vasudevan, Assistant Professor at Colorado State University, USA, held that (a) the widely discussed phenomena of the growing polarization of the US economy and (b) declining capital productivity are the two features of the neoliberal capitalism that was in place in the run up to the crisis. The current crisis was preceded by about eight years of declining capital productivity in a context of stagnant real wages and growing inequality. The twin phenomena can be understood by an analysis of the contradictions engendered by the crisis to dominance of finance and the managerial class.

David Matters, Australian Marxist theorist, said that it is wrong to ascribe the reason for the current crisis simply to overproduction; this is simplistic and underestimates the very real developments and decay in the capitalist system. The prolonged development of “Globalization” extended the currency crisis that has emerged since the Second World War and was accelerated after the American conflict in Vietnam. Also, it is wrong to think that the Imperialists can control their impulses to this crisis. They are being compelled to seek to reverse the flow of wealth out of the hands of imperialism and are issuing worthless credits in the form of U.S. dollars, thus placing increased financial pressure on all other nations who find their labor power devalued by the US.

Luis Sandoval Ramirez, researcher at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, gave a descriptive statistical analysis of GDP growth, unemployment rate, net public debt and OTC derivatives notional value of developed countries and emerging economies, and found that the manufacturing sector in the developed countries reached saturation point in the 1970s, a lot of money transferred from the production sector into the financial sector, and the state began accumulating huge debts. As the financial sector expanded, financial derivatives grew substantially, toxic assets were traded at a global level, until finally, in 2008–09, global credit was paralyzed. Now, the current crisis of capitalism has become a crisis of the whole civilized system, so he advocated that it is necessary for the people to take the reins of government into its hands so that, through a powerful non-capitalist, cooperative, solidarity-based movement, it can rationalize and plan the production of basic goods for the population, create productive and service cooperatives, particularly based on new energy sources and new materials. Societies should also seek to once again regulate the banks and all the other financial subsectors so that the fractionalization of our countries does not occur again.

German Marxist scholars Richard Corell and Ernst Herzog analyzed the role of the private ownership of land in the initiation and deepening of economic crisis based on Marx’s Land Rent Theory. The existence of monopolistic ownership

made the crisis in agriculture and the real estate sector more serious and lasting. In private ownership of land, industrial capital cooperated with bank capital to be a rent whirlpool through mortgages and securities, but transferred the risk to the whole economy. Then American banks transferred the risk to the world through asset securitization and virtualization, not only affecting the economy of other countries, but also their sovereignty, making it more difficult to get out of the crisis. So, they advocated the nationalization of assets especially for land. For their part, the nationalization of private property would not only clear obstacles for the development of productivity, but would also establish the foundation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Henri Houben, a Professor at the Institute of Marxist Studies of Belgium, studied the crisis in the euro area. He criticized European governments for not recognizing the fact and the seriousness of the crisis. After the U.S. subprime mortgage crisis hit European banks and began to affect other areas of the economy, they also believed that the existence of the euro would help to alleviate the crisis, but now, when the euro has lost credit, they begin to claim they are in the most difficult period. Besides, his analysis shows that the crisis is still expanding and taking a new turn. Inequalities keep increasing, causing more and more social and political tension; the problems of an optimal monetary area as described by Robert Mundell remain. The differences between countries and regions are not compensated. For the Mediterranean countries as well for the East, a currency is needed which could be devalued to allow countries to export the relatively less sophisticated products they make. But for Berlin and other governments, the euro must be stable, strong to serve as a reserve currency preventing the inflationary tendencies. In addition, the EU lacks solidarity among countries and regions, so it is likely that the strongest or the weakest countries will exit and re-form their union.

Leonardo Fernando Cruz Basso, a Professor at Brazil Mackenzie University of elders, proposed the creation of regional currencies, also called social currencies, that could be used to finance minimum income programs and microfinance programs in Europe to solve the euro crisis. That would be based on the creation of taxes on regional financial transactions; the tax rate can be set to collect enough money needed. The money can be used to buy government bonds of countries with severe funding problems.

Pritam Singh, a Professor at Oxford Brookes University, proposed that the currently offered solutions (such as Keynesian policies) to the crisis in advanced capitalism revealed the deep problem in its development pattern. And he concluded by articulating an eco-socialist perspective on the historical choices open to BRICS and other developing economies.

Carlos Eduardo Martins, a Professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, proposed that the contemporary world economy must be understood by

the articulation of three major movements of long duration. The civilization crisis of capitalism highlighted by Radovan Richta and Theotonio Dos Santos; the crisis of U.S. hegemony discussed by Giovanni Arrighi and Immanuel Wallerstein; and the Kondratiev expansive long cycle. According to the Kondratiev expansive long cycle, we have experienced three phases: recovery (1994–2000), prosperity (2002–08) and maturity (2011–). They assume that we entered the last phase of its expansion in the 2010s. During this period, some phenomena and tendencies are developing: the financialization of the capital accumulation in the core countries and the crisis of the international division of labor; the decline of U.S. hegemony and Western Europe; the displacement of the axis of economic growth for East Asia and the hinterlands; and the projection of regional integration processes against the hegemonic standard, leveraging the construction of a new multipolar global geopolitics.

The Critique about Capitalism and Neoliberalism

David Matters pointed out that capitalism and the international bourgeoisie have continued to fetter the development of humanity. A series of crises may lead to the possible extinction of humanity as the outcome of the class struggle of this phase. A possible nuclear war and an environmental catastrophe could be caused by global warming or catastrophic weather patterns. Food crisis may be brought about by the introduction of monopolized control of DNA and seed products by global corporations. Political crises are uncontrollable even by people's governments. Though capitalism is bankrupt ideologically, it has been able to pollute and control the workers' movement through petty-bourgeois corruption of the revolutionary science of Marxism. It is our task to assist the liberation movement to correctly grasp its historic tasks.

Koycho Petrov, Researcher at the Institute of Economics of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences of Australia, put forward that for post-Soviet capitalism, there appears a sociological type of contradiction between the economic base and superstructure, in particular a contradiction between economic and political systems as expression of the crisis in the political and state system, and national relations. Socialism is the only radical path for the solution of the main contradiction. So he advocated that we should unite to build a great union "China-South America - Trade Unions". Lets stand up for a New International now: 'Advance academic professionals; Advance Unions of the working class; Marxism is our mighty sunrise which shines on the soul; Lets push down the ignorant betrayers and raise the knowledge to the sky to build a society of professional socialism.

Tiago Camarinha Lopes and Niemeyer Almeida Filho, Professors at the Federal University of Uberlândia of Brazil, studied the economic planning of capitalism.

They found that it is necessary for conscious production and distribution to be created as an imposition of late capitalism. They also found that from the practice of Brazil, the economic planning imposed on Latin America, through various forces of the world political arena in relation to the ascendancy of U.S. imperialism, always had the goal of capital accumulation.

Zhihong Nie, a Professor at Peking University, China, analyzed the internal logic of the opium trade, opium war and unequal treaties, proved Marx's theory about capital appreciation and the formation of capitalism: External expansion is the nature of capital, the process of formation and development of capitalism was also the generation and expansion process of foreign trade and the world market. Foreign trade, violent war and unequal treaties, were the "trinity" for capital appreciation and expansion of the world.

Juan Cervantes, a Professor at The Technical University of Berlin, gave a historical review from the post-war agreements, revealed the real target to build the international organizations, such as IMF; the rules to regulate the international monetary and financial order and the Bretton Woods Institutions should be mainly held responsible for the economic chaos. He concluded that the reason behind the pursuit of an economic development at all costs, is a clear example of how the "sustainable development" is used as a tool towards allowing the expansion of neoliberal policies.

Marcelo Milan and Mathias Seibel Luce, Professors at Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul of Brazil held that the reform of the pension system was dominated by neoliberalism in recent decades, resulting in policies such as extending the minimum retirement age, reduced pension payments and the repeal of the public pension system, extended working hours, which thus intensified the exploitation and also constituted a violation of workers' lifestyles. In addition, they cited the ILO statistical data and specific data of several countries, proved the extension of working hours and the intension of excessive exploitation. Finally, they criticized the view supporting the privatization of pension funds and account deficit of social security, as well as the manner of forcing workers rather than capitalists to pay for the crisis in the capital structure.

Nicholas Jepson, a Professor at the University of Bristol, UK, proposed that a still growing hunger for industrial raw material imports into China have brought about a reversal of the terms of trade trend between manufactures and hard commodities over the past ten years. It is likely that this tendency will continue in the next decade or more given massive projected urbanization in China and elsewhere. This represents a highly positive shift in external macroeconomic conditions for natural resource exporters, which is opening fiscal and policy space for medium- to long-term experimentation and change in their political economic directions of

travel. Besides, a range of cases in Africa, Latin America and Asia demonstrated that many natural resource-rich states are turning away from neoliberalisation.

Zhongwei Xu, a Professor at Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications, China, compared the policies of China and America, and then concluded: the cause of the United States “fiscal cliff” is the essential attribute of capitalism. The essence of pursuing the profits of capitalism makes the U.S. economy show periodic recession. The inter-party dispute of the multi-party systems leads to their different opinions about the management of economy. An economic system based on free enterprise leads to disorder and chaos. The greed of the monopoly group causes vicious economic competition. The “big country” mentality makes it impossible for the United States to find the reasons within itself.

The Theory and Practice of Socialism

Jean-Claude Delaunay, Vice Chairman of WAPE, Professor at Marne Valley University of France, argued that with its contemporary features of globalization and of deregulated finance, capitalism is not going to die soon but it is certainly going to decline severely. There is one big reason for this deep change of capitalism if the social movement of people and class struggles are in favor of this social and political direction. Then the crisis of globalized capitalism will stimulate this kind of world structure to explode, we can assume that all around the world, post-capitalist regimes (socialist) are going to be experimented. Then he compared several models of socialism, and put forward six factors necessary for socialist countries: national independence, material resources, level of techniques and of knowledge, a leading political force for socialism, a strong state and a definite political will for socialism, a culture of socialism, a peaceful behavior among nations.

Eike Kopf, German expert at Central Compilation & Translation Bureau in Beijing insisted that since Marx and Engels, there has been no more rational description of the function of the essential relations and production of the capitalist, and no more solid basic theory to guide the socialist countries to develop their economy. Socialism is not just a state which is to be established or an ideal to be realized, it is a transition period for capitalist society to enter into communism, a real movement changing existing state, and a continuous reform.

David S. Pena, Professor at Palm Beach State College of USA, set forth six essential components that a sustainable socialist society must have; they are: an economic system that builds the productive forces and promotes common prosperity in a steady, sustainable manner; a political system that supports a vigorous people’s democracy; a strong, united, and fully sovereign socialist homeland; a progressive socialist culture; resource management policies that preserve non-renewable resources, promote a flourishing natural environment, and

mitigate the climate crisis; and, successful resistance to bourgeois liberalization. He believed that the construction, organization, protection and maintenance for these six sides are the base of a prosperous and sustainable socialist society.

Makoto Itoh, a Professor at the University of Tokyo, Japan, analyzed a capitalism crisis triggered by excessive accumulation of capital and a shortage of labor. He further pointed out that the subprime crisis of capitalism, the sovereign debt crisis and the global inflation crisis forced us to reconsider communism, socialism, anarchism, social democracy and other alternative modes. He put forth four promising strategic plans for democracy and socialism:

1. Keynesianism: Many Marxian political economists in the USA and Europe seem in favor of Keynesianism unconditionally against neoliberalism.
2. Green recovery: A low-carbon economy, stressing local production for local consumption.
3. Basic income: a regular income to be supplied equally to all individual social members without means.
4. Local currencies: He advocated that Marxian political economists should rethink the four plans to build the model of social democracy and socialism in the 21st century.

Tran Tuan Phong, a Professor at the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences, emphasized that the comprehensive development of human nature is the ultimate target of human endeavor. Human development, as the process of unfolding of human nature, is mediated through different stages, in different historical and cultural contexts. Ideal society must meet the requirement of a meaningful human life, in accordance with human nature. So, socialism is the place in which all human potentials and essential powers are used for the satisfaction of human needs and to serve the all-round development of human nature.

Shinan Fang, a Professor at Suzhou University, China, proposed that though many different voices have arisen from ecological socialism, such as ecological humanism, democratic socialism, Marxism mingled with the green view, and the radical ecological socialism, however, social justice is the common value of ecological socialism in different periods and different genres. The essence of the ecological problem is social justice. As the ecological socialism value, social justice is a kind of methodology to solve ecological problems. It reveals the injustice of capitalist system is the source of the global ecological crisis. He advocated us to build a just socialist society with harmony between man and nature, man and man by combining social justice and ecological justice from the perspective of political justice, economic justice and cultural justice.

Pham Van Duc, a Researcher at the Vietnam Academy of Social Science, studied the development of Vietnamese socialism. He put forward that the socialist model of the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries once were the ideal model for Vietnam. Since the collapse of the former Soviet Union, after a series of reform, Vietnamese socialism gradually becomes new socialist pattern with specific targets and ways to achieve. Its target is to build a Vietnam with “wealthy people, strong, democratic, just and civilized country,” to be specific, that contains: the people as masters; a highly developed economy based on modern productive forces and adequate and progressive production relations; an advanced culture imbued deeply with national identity; man has a happy, free and well-off life and can have chance to develop comprehensively; nationalities of Vietnamese community are equal, unified, respectful and helpful to one another to co-develop; a socialist rule-of-law state under the leadership of the Communist Party; have relationship and cooperation with countries in the world. However, generally speaking, Vietnamese socialism has as yet been lacking a gradual solution to achieve its target, which requires more endeavor of socialist scholars.

Hermann Dworcza, an Austrian Marxist scholar carried out deep research on the China model. He held that the present “model”—based on (exploitation of) cheap labor force and export—has led to enormous social tensions, conflicts, ecological disasters and serious income gap, which is a shame for a country which calls itself socialist. So he thought that China needs to reflect on its development and reform.

Professor Enfu Cheng also researched the China model, especially its huge income gap. He insisted that wealth concentration and income gap both have their roots in the private ownership of the means of production and weak state adjustment and control. The present situation requires at least four measures for changes:

1. Reform the ownership structure to reflect a stronger state, collective, and cooperative economy, with attention specially paid to solving the problems of inequality and contradiction between the rich and the poor through measures related to enterprise ownership, micro-levels, and first distribution.
2. National governments around the world should set up policies that regulate income fluctuations, and link employee salary to four factors, i.e., productive efficiency, profit rate, increase in manager’s income, and rise of local living expenses.
3. Strengthen the role of national governments in income redistribution, so as to keep raising the level of public welfare such as social security, education, housing, etc. of urban and rural residents.
4. Come up with global policies of unified taxation to respond to billionaires around the world who manage to avoid legal taxation within their own countries by emigration to other countries with lower taxes.

Fuqian Fang, a Professor at Renmin University, China, insisted that current reform of China should pay special attention to wealth possession injustice. Deep reform is needed to focus on three transitions:

1. development orientation from the beginning of reform and opening up, “Let some people get rich first” transitions to “most people get rich”;
2. the low-wage and low-prices development strategy “changes to” rely more on technology and management innovation, and, in the process, step by step, improve workers’ compensation, the prices of some agricultural products and resource products;
3. distribution reforms shift the focus from the redistribution of income to the initial distribution of income and wealth redistribution.

Development and Cooperation in Developing Countries

Nanping Jiang, a Professor at the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, and Haixi Jiang, a Doctor at Sichuan University, argued that any period of economic development and the overall global economic operation are in the economic order. But the establishment and maintenance of the global economic order has always been accomplished in a “competition–cooperation” framework. The competition and cooperation among economic powers are the dominant forces in the new global economic order. Only if economic powers eliminate economic and security threats with each other, can they prompt good results in the “competition–cooperation” relationship. In today’s world, the “competition–cooperation” relationship between China and the United States is crucial to the formation of the new global economic order. According to the estimation of some scholars, America has a great influence on China’s economic security. Under this circumstance, China needs to eliminate the threat of America through various means and build a “competition–cooperation” relationship between them to set up and maintain a new healthy global economic order.

Jenny Clegg, a Professor at the University of Central Lancashire, UK, first reviewed the various views on China–Africa cooperation. She then examined the issue of dependency and advised exploring the dimensions of the evolving China–Africa relation within the wider context of South–South international cooperation, while also considering new opportunities for trilateral South–South–North arrangements to break the US hegemonic grip.

Caio Graco Valle Coberio, a Professor at the University of São Paulo, Brazil, reviewed the development history of rural productive forces and production relations in Brazil and Mexico since the 1960s, and analyzed the social class powers which have emerged in the State of Mexico and Brazil, along some main past and present periods, and the resulting social-economic impacts. Combined with the

Marxist theory of political economics, he proposed that distinct agrarian reform experiences and movements of Mexican natives or Brazilian landless workers were both products of this discussion, as important points for a humanitarian and progressive agenda in the 21st century.

Mariano Féliz, Professor at the National University of La Plata, Argentina, analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of Argentina's neo-developmentalism in the current downturn caused by the financial crisis, and how the combination of structural characteristics of the economy, policy changes and the composition of social classes, have particular implications in the actual process of growth and distribution of value and income.

Ana Maria Rita Milani, Associate Professor of the Federal University of Alagoas, analyzed the impact of social policies in the last decade, as compared to the change in the economic structure, and found that for ECLA, transformation of the productive structure is important to development. However, although the region showed improvement with regard to inequality, poverty levels and other changes, an economic structure that is more dynamic and closer to the international technological border has not yet been achieved.

The closing ceremony was presided over by the Vice Chairman of WAPE, Chairman of Brazil Association of Political Economy, Professor Niemeyer Almeida Filho. Director at Institute of Latin American of UFSC, Professor Nildo Ouriques delivered the Statement of the Eighth Forum of WAPE. The Statement declares that the capitalist economic and political system is the main source of global and national inequality. Although capitalism still has great capacity to adjust itself in the face of various adverse environments, it does not have the ability to match human potential, which is treated as the basis of its infinite desire for capital value. And this is imposed by financial capitalist class hegemony to safeguard the interests of the imperialist countries. Inequalities among social classes in the national countries and worldwide are inherent, and must be overcome through the political reconstruction based on the alternative ideas and practices of transformation. It is necessary for Marxists all over the world to unite. WAPE provides an important platform, making possible the exchange of ideas and implementation of proposals. But the replacement for capitalism cannot be achieved without global political actions. Finally, Professor Xiaoqin Ding, Secretary General of WAPE, Research Associate at Harvard University Asia Center and Associate Professor at the Marxism Research Institute, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, announced that the next WAPE forum will be held in the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences on May 23–25, 2014, and the theme will be “Growth, Development and Social Justice.”

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