

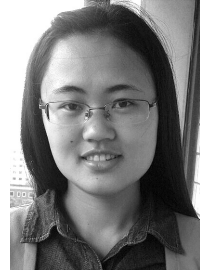
A REVIEW OF THE NINTH FORUM OF WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR POLITICAL ECONOMY

Xiaoqin Ding and Yanqing Guo



Xiaoqin Ding (*left*), PhD in Economics, Research Associate at Harvard University Asia Center, Assistant Director of the Marxism Research Institute and Center for Economics of the Shanghai School, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, Secretary General of the World Association for Political Economy (WAPE), Managing Editor of the *World Review of Political Economy* (WRPE), and Co-editor of the *Journal of Economics of Shanghai School*. Email: wape2006@gmail.com

Yanqing Guo (*right*), doctoral candidate at Marxism Research Institute, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. Email: guoyanqing2010@163.com



Abstract: The traditional outlook on development is based on expanding physical production, which takes for granted that all economic growth is a good thing and ignores social development. It argues that gross domestic product (GDP) is the sole benchmark for evaluating different countries' economic performances. Such an outlook appears as the reflection of overweighed instrumental rationality and absent human values. On the contrary, a scientific outlook on development, based on Marxist economics, could be taken as a positive response to the shortcomings of the traditional outlook. It argues that scientific economic development should serve the people, and as a consequence, economic development should enhance comprehensive human development and elevate the well-being of the people, eventually improving the livelihoods of people worldwide and the fairness of economic development and income distribution. In May 2014, World Association for Political Economy (WAPE) held its Ninth Forum themed "Growth, Development, Social Justice." At the forum, participants put out "A Fair Development" and suggested that all countries should put more emphasis on qualitative not just quantitative changes in the economy and consider the basic purpose of economic growth.

Key words: World Association for Political Economy; growth; development; social justice

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 last

eight WAPE forums were successively held in Shanghai, Shimane (Japan), Beijing, Paris, Suzhou (China), Amherst (USA), Mexico City (Mexico), and Florianopolis (Brazil) during 2006–2013, respectively, focusing on “Economic Globalization,” “Labor-Capital Relationship,” “Sustainable Development,” “Global Democratic Governance,” “21st Century Socialism,” “Capitalism Crisis,” “Human Development in the 21st Century,” and “Inequality and World Capitalism.”

“Growth, Development and Social Justice—The Ninth Forum of the World Association for Political Economy (WAPE)” was held at Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS), Hanoi, Vietnam, on May 23–25, 2014. The forum was attended by more than 150 scholars from more than 20 countries, including China, Japan, America, Korea, Netherlands, Vietnam, India, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Austria. The forum is jointly organized by the VASS and WAPE.

On the morning of May 24, Professor Hiroshi Onishi, Vice Chairman of WAPE, Keio University, gave the opening address and Principal of the VASS, Professor Nguyen Xuan Thang, welcomed the delegates. The names of the recipients of the World Marxian Economics Award 2014, Professor David Kotz, Vice Chairman of WAPE, University of Massachusetts, USA, and Yuanpeng Hong, Fudan University, China, were announced. And, the “Distinguished Achievement Award of World Political Economy of the 21st Century (2014)” was awarded to eight economists: Professor Nobuharu Yokokawa from Musashi University, Japan; Professor Michael Lebowitz from Simon Fraser University, Canada; Professor Dong-Min Rieu from Chungnam National University, Korea; Professor Patrick Bond from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa; Professor Venkatesh Athreya from Bharathidasan University, India; Professor Howard Nicholas from the Institute of Social Studies, the Netherlands; Professor V. K. Ramachandran, Director of the Foundation for Agrarian Studies, India; and Professor Pengfei Yan from Wuhan University, China. After the opening ceremony, seven famous Marxist economists, including Enfu Cheng, Chairman of WAPE, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, delivered keynote speeches. And then, Professor Enfu Cheng, Chairman of WAPE; David Kotz, Jean-Claude Delaunay, Hiroshi Ohnishi, Vice Chairmen of WAPE; Professor Nguyen Xuan Thang, Principal of the VASS; and Professor Pham Van Duc, Director of the Institute of Philosophy, the VASS, participated in the tree planting ceremony, and the unveiling ceremony for Karl Marx bust damascened in the History Exhibition Hall of the university.

During the period of the whole forum, 2 Plenary, 13 Parallel Sessions, and 2 WAPE Council Meetings were held. With focus on the theme “Growth, Development and Social Justice,” participants discussed relevant issues in depth.

Economic Development and Social Justice

Professor Enfu Cheng, Chairman of WAPE, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, states that the economic development should be “fair development.” He pointed out that for a long time each country takes a large toll in the pursuit of economic growth, so he put forward a new index to measure the national welfare in economic growth—“Gross Domestic Product of Welfare” (GDPW). GDPW refers to gross welfare created by the production and operation activities of all standing units at a given time, combining all positive and negative utilities produced by economic, natural, and social systems. It is not a purely economic accounting system, but includes the calculation of natural and social environments, which helps reflect the quantitative relations between production and environmental systems, as well as among social systems. Furthermore, he defined the positive and negative welfare of internal production and negative external welfare. Besides, he talked about the basic framework and principle of GDPW Accounting.

Professor Michael Lebowitz from Simon Fraser University, Canada, held that capitalism begins from two premises—capital and wage labor. In a reproducing system, however, both capital and wage labor are not merely premises but also results. Capital is the result of the exploitation of workers (past and present) and wage laborers are people who have been produced within capitalist relations of production—that is, as alienated producers, alienated from their own labor. That is to say, capitalism produces not one product but two. We clearly distort the results of production if we consider only one product. In view of Marx’s emphasis upon “the simultaneous changing of circumstances and human activity or self-change” (i.e., “revolutionary practice”), socialist accounting must consider not only the production of things (the change in circumstances) but also the joint product (the change in human capacities). Socialist accountancy should support the development of relations which can build a society which, in Marx’s words, can “satisfy the worker’s own need for development” and helps us to avoid barbarism.

Pengfei Yan, Professor at Wuhan University, China, stressed that it is an important theme in today’s world that we consider what development is, how to develop, and develop for whom, by whom, and for the benefit of whom. Theory and practice of the development of China have proven that it is necessary to distinguish between development and growth, scientific development and non-scientific development. Scientific development is innovative development, coordinated development, green development, equitable and harmonious development, and non-associated dependent development. It strives to provide good answers to the questions what development is, how to develop, and development for whom, by whom, and for the benefit of whom.

Dr Xuguo Min, Associate Professor at Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications, China, argues that, in the process of modernization, Latin American countries suffered the transfer from “Latin American Miracles” to “Latin American Trap.” It is the result of the combined action of many factors such as improper economic development model, unreasonable industrial structure, macroeconomic policy deviation, insufficient capacity of independent innovation, insufficient attention paid to the development of fairness, the seriously lagged structural reform, ineffective social governance, etc. As a developing country (DC), China should take this as a lesson, be alert to the erosion of new liberalism, change the economic development mode and insist on scientific development, strengthen independent innovation to enhance the motive force of development, break the dual structure to promote the integration of urban and rural development, realize fair distribution to cultivate the social foundation of sustainable development, and strengthen institutional improvement to safeguard social fairness and justice.

Anton Filipenko, Professor at Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University, Ukraine, pointed out that the modernization in Ukraine has no prospect if the economic system goes on to practice declarative liberal principles as over the last 20 years. First, it lacks inner, immanent sources, factors, and mechanisms of stable and balanced development. It proves the inefficiency of the current economic system. Second, it doesn't put limits on the deepening of social differentiation, growth of inequality, social injustice, and other negative phenomena, which are attributes of the Middle Ages that, as events in the North Africa and Middle East certify, are not supported by wide layers of the population. Third, the national economic system narrows the possibilities of economic interaction with foreign countries and receiving on this basis additional sources to solve economic and social problems. He thinks that Ukraine should build such universal values as development, social justice, economic equality, human dignity, and access to education and security.

Professor V. K. Ramachandran, Director of the Foundation for Agrarian Studies, India, studied the issues on the disparity between the rich and the poor and inequality in Indian villages by field-based study. He found that poor- and middle-class peasants, taken together with manual workers, generally constitute 60% or more of all households in the study villages. The bulk of the “farmers” own such insignificant plots of land that it is impossible to make a living from them; even on the farms of small and medium peasants, the share of family labor expended on the farm was, in many cases, less than the share of hired labor employed on the farm. An important aspect of the differentiation of the peasantry is proletarianization. So he expressed that the agrarian question continues to be the foremost national question before the people of India. Its resolution requires revolutionary change, including radical and thorough agrarian reforms that target

the abolition of landlordism, moneylender-merchant exploitation, and caste and gender oppression in the countryside.

Economic Development and Independence

Professor Ana Maria Rita Milani from the Federal University of Alagoas (UFAL), Brazil, holds that in the last 30 years, in the world economy, there have been great changes that marked a new historical form of dependency, in which DCs have specific ways of insertion. The process of asymmetric insertion of DCs (Latin America vs. East Asia—excluding China) indicates the timeliness of the theory of dependency that is configured in the new historical phase of capitalism.

Zhongwei Xu, Professor at Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications, China, holds that for Ukraine, halting between two opinions of joining the European Union or being close to Russia on the economic development and not building an independent autonomous national economic system as the pinnacle of state governance development is the important reason for its turmoil and the national division. He thinks the country should adhere to the economic construction as the center, choose the good economic development path according with the situation of their country, and deal with the relationship between their own development or relying on foreign aid to form an effective mechanism and the prosperity situation for the independent development of the national economy.

Professor Zhan Shu, Fuzhou University, China, divided countries into four types according to the diagram of four concepts (security, crisis, independence, and dependence): the security independence dominant country, crisis attachment dependent country, crisis independence dominant country in the state of crisis, and security attachment potential dependent country. She argues that the national economy of a security attachment potential dependent country is superficially in the safe status. However, its autonomy of economic development is weak owing to the low level of industrial structure, the inferiority in scientific and technological innovation, the inadequacy of the market economy system, and the insufficient supervision of finance. For its weak ability in facing and resisting crisis, the economic security strategy should attach more importance to strengthening the autonomy in economic development to ensure the long-term security of national economy.

Dr J. Z. Garrod from Carleton University, Canada, said that there has long been a debate over whether Canada should be understood as a dependent formation or semi-peripheral imperial power. However, there exists increasing evidence that global capitalism is less a system of interpenetrating national economies and more a complex of globally integrated networks of production and distribution. Through a firm-specific analysis of the structure, activities, and ownership of

Canada's current five largest transnational corporations, he found that existing models of Canadian development are unable to explain Canada's future within an increasingly global mode of production because they remain stuck within a nation-state-centric epistemology.

Based on the dependency theory, Professor Niemeyer Almeida Filho from the Federal University of Uberlandia, Brazil, analyzed Latin American participation in the international division of labor and international economic activities, especially in the case of Brazil. Then he found that although the degree of specialization increased when Latin America participated in international markets production, the whole of Latin America's dependence on exports of primary products has greatly strengthened, that is to say, their dependence has deepened. Meanwhile, there is a huge heterogeneity in the economic development for each country. Besides, from the reproduction mode of Brazil reflected by finance, investment, and income distribution, he found that the external dependence of the Brazilian economy is also high. There is a big difference between import and export structure, and most of the export industry is low-tech industry. Consumption pattern in Brazil is also not mature.

Professor Jenny Clegg from the University of Central Lancashire, UK, pointed out that the former vice governor of World Bank, Lin, holds that industrial policies should follow an economy's comparative advantage while development economists such as Ha-Joon Chang argue that IPs should be comparative advantage creating. Their debate helps to highlight two distinct trends emerging in the world economy with the USA pursuing a market-oriented approach through its trade partnership initiatives across the Atlantic and the Pacific in order to constrain the activist state-led approach exemplified by China, which meanwhile is working with the BRICS to explore a new mix of "state and market" through industrial policy coordination reinforced by joint-state-owned-enterprise partnerships. He thinks that differences over the appropriate mix between "state and market" in industrial policy and the role of SOEs indicate the opening up of a new frontier in the terrain of struggle within the world political economy between neoliberalism and multipolar developmentalism.

Economic Development and Technology Innovation

Luis Sandoval Ramírez, Professor at the Institute for Economic Research—UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico), México, holds that the techno-economic revolutions (TER) of the end of XIX century till our days have developed on the basis of the laws and requirements of capital accumulation, mainly on the achievement of the maximum rate of benefit of the productive capital. This TER has been mainly due to revolutionary innovations in the fields of energy and others

related. The substitution of the primary energy source by a new, qualitatively superior source of energy, the innovation of a suitable engine and new relations between the owners and the workers are the main part of the TER. Based on these revolutionary innovations, a national state emerged in the form of the new global hegemonic country, within which the TER has mainly developed. The USA is a system of leadership and domination over most of the globe (1892–2014).

Alan Freeman, Professor at the University of Manitoba, Canada, pointed out, although with different scholarly traditions and a wide range of empirical circumstances, different researchers reach the same theoretical conclusions: creative mental labor is not only playing a decisive role but increasing without any evident internal limit in a sector of production and a stage in the evolution of the world economy. He argues that the growth and cultivation of creative human labor is not merely an empirical phenomenon but a historical imperative; that is to say, societies worldwide will not be able to progress without creating the necessary conditions for it to grow. And he suggests that policymakers should understand the relative role of private and public investment in providing the conditions needed to achieve this.

Ryo Kanae, Doctor at Kyoto University, Japan, expanded the Marxian Optimal Growth Model to a three-sector model with two types of capital goods—“capital goods 1” (the traditional capital goods) and “capital goods 2” (the new types of capital goods), so the production function has three factors of production, if labor is included. Meanwhile, there are two production sectors: the consumer goods production sector and the production goods production sector that produces the production goods necessary for producing consumer goods. Thus, the equilibrium in the three sectors can be worked out with the optimal options of consumers. He also analyzed what the route for the accumulation of capital would be before and after the technological revolutions and found that “Developed countries” that have undergone a technological revolution using “capital goods 2” while being in a state of high achievement of the accumulation of “capital goods 1” must go through a longer adjustment period for the accumulation of “capital goods 2.” However, after this adjustment period “developed countries” obtain a higher level of accumulation of “capital goods 2.” In “developing countries” that have undergone a technological revolution using “capital goods 2” while being in a state of low achievement of capital accumulation, it is tougher to accumulate both kinds of capital and this constrains consumption that is tougher than in developed countries.

Hiroshi Izum, Professor at Osaka University of Economics, Japan, compared the total labor productivity (TLP), which is the productivity of Marxian economics, and the total factor productivity (TFP), which is the productivity of neoclassical economics. He puts out a list of the shortcomings of TFP: first,

TFP presupposes perfect competition and cost minimization, but such conditions do not exist, and it often underestimates productivity growth for DCs. Second, because the input factors of TFP are capital service and labor service, we cannot measure improvement of fixed capital as a rise of productivity, in the same way that TFP growth does not include improvement of labor way. TLP is a ratio of output to total of direct labor and indirect labor. Direct labor means labor quantity (not labor service) used in the industry where each product is produced. Indirect labor means labor quantity (not labor service) used for production of intermediate input and (depreciation portion of) fixed capital. Besides, TLP can be calculated by using input–output tables and other data. And it shows productivity not for final production process but for all production process including production process of raw material and fixed capital. It also reflects technique progress embodied in fixed capital and labor. Based on this, he thinks TLP is better than TFP.

The Role of Government and Market in Economy

Professor Roger Seifert from the University of Wolverhampton, UK, argued that generally, the argument from improved efficiency as a reason for privatizing state services is either logically flawed or empirically false. The counter case that only in a planned national system can greater efficiency be achieved is restated. The case study is based on such a move in the UK Land Registry. The political and organizational drivers behind the proposals seem to be a combination of a generalized desire by government to privatize, and they believed that such a move would “free up” management strategies to improve the Land Registry’s operational processes and target achievement and that this would improve services to user customers. But the fact is that this mode did not work better.

Dr. Balwinder Singh Tiwana, Professor at Punjabi University, India, studied the marketization of Social Services and Uncertainty of Livelihood in India based on Inclusive growth, and he found that due to the defective policy measures India has remained unable to match the welfare measure to their gross domestic product (GDP) performance. He also examined the change in the employment structure and workforce market after neoliberal policies being taken and marketization becoming prominent in India and found that in the capital-intensive sector, the capital–labor ratio increases, the reserve army of labor increases, the mismatch between wages workers gets larger, and economic growth becomes grave.

Professor Di Xie, Liaoning University, China, talked about the role of government in the economy with China as example. He pointed out, in the process of “steady growth, structural adjustment, mode transformation, reform promotion,” it’s necessary to get the government to play its economic functions such as regulation as well as inspection. At present, Chinese government is confronted with a series

of contradictory choices for it to play its role and effectively function in the market economy, such as economic development-oriented government or public service-oriented government, macro-control, the structural adjustment or the total adjustment, supply management or demand management, macro-control and micro supervision, the coordination between state-owned economy and non-state economy, ecological civilization, and the stable economic growth of the poor area. Simply speaking, we need to solve the problems of “vacancy” and “offside,” that is, do the addition and subtraction well, so as to get the government to play its role better.

The Crisis of Capitalism and Development of Socialism

Patrick Bond, Professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, talked about the way leading powerbrokers reacted to the crisis through “devalorization” of large parts of the Third World alongside the write down of selected financially volatile and vulnerable markets in the North. Compared with the 1930s, this set of partial write-downs of financial capital (kept in check by slap-dash system-wide repairs in late 2008 and 2009) did not create such generalized panic and crisis contagion as to erode the entire system’s integrity because of intensified extra-economic coercion. But, the result is a world economy that concentrates wealth and poverty in more extreme ways and brings markets and the non-market spheres of society and nature together in a manner adverse to the latter. Social movement from the bottom may change the relationship among the nation, civil society, and financiers, promoting the reform of the financial system.

Ernst Herzog, Richard Corell, and Stephan Buller, Germany, hold that the crisis in the European economy appears as a crisis of the instability of the common currency introduced in some countries of the European Union (EU). The instability prevails because sovereign debt remains far from being under control in the states in question. Underlying the imbalances of European finance is a difference in competitiveness, which results from a difference in production prices per unit. For Germany, on one hand, the analysis of the implementation of “Agenda 2010” shows that Schröder succeeded with austerity by streamlining his Social Democratic Party, the left wing of the party was marginalized and union leaders were appointed to government posts, this further leading to the decrease of unit labor cost in Germany, compared with its main European competitors and the USA. On the other hand, common currency prevents other countries from devaluing. Thus, based on decreasing relative unit labor cost, Germany exports more than it imports, increasing trade imbalances. They worry that a further round of German austerity, if jointly with France, may lead to a lower level of living not only in Germany but more so in other European economies, where growth, social

justice, and eventually the independent development within state's sovereignty are all put in question.

Professor Nobuharu Yokokawa from Musashi University, Japan, examined development of the capitalist world system after the 1980s, using institutional Marxian political economy, incorporating concepts of dynamic comparative advantage and financial instability hypothesis. He argued that capitalist world system after World War II fell into a structural crisis in the 1970s, the center of capital accumulation shifted to East Asia. However, the USA controlled the world economy by fractionalization and globalization and recovered its dynamic comparative advantage in the 1990s. Then, the structural crisis in the 1990s further shifted the center of capital accumulation from Japan and Newly Industrializing Economies to China, increasing international imbalance in the 2000s. The global crisis in advanced economies since 2007 is a systemic crisis which destroys the present capitalist world system.

R.V. Ramana Murthy, Professor at the University of Hyderabad, India, pointed out the capitalist transition in India during the neoliberal phase has managed to retain India in the top four fastest growing economies in the world and attract considerable global capital. But it is not without problems: the incomplete structural transformation is marked with several specific features such as the largest share of workforce locked in agricultural sector, dominance of self-employed workforce and growing informal sector even outside agriculture, large share of petty commodity producers, and unorganized workers being very poor. Besides, it also causes the continued rise in the number of suicides of farmers. He held that it is important to note that such distress of small producers ensues without any general crisis of production and productivity, which needs a deeper analysis of political economy.

Radhika Desai, Professor at the University of Manitoba, Canada, stated that the recent two decades have registered more rapid, sustained, and widely beneficial growth than the "golden age" of capitalism of the 1950s and 1960s. Among the explanations about that, the Regulation School's analysis of "Fordism" has gained the widest currency. She criticized the Regulation School's analysis with USA as the example—their own chosen paradigmatic example, by leading Marxist economic historian, Robert Brenner, from the standpoint of Geopolitical Economy.

Manuel Couret Branco, Professor at the University of Évora, Portugal, holds that according to Adam Smith, economics was basically about the means to reach an end. But, real freedom or what we call substantive democracy has never been an objective of economics. He sustained that economics' discourse has become one of the most substantial contributors to what could be called the erosion of democracy: economics is considered as a neonaturalistic science; economics considers democracy contradictory to the expression of its scientific rationality;

and the third that economics crowds out people from decision-making processes by pushing them into the hands of experts. One of the ways for economics to contribute to substantive democracy is to propose an alternative discourse to mainstream economics.

Terrence McDonough, Professor at Ireland National University, Ireland, said that Social Structure of Accumulation (SSA) is specifically national in character until the 1980s with the advent of the global neoliberal SSA. A key element of the global neoliberal SSA is the emergence of a global capitalist class. This class is inevitably linked to state action for its reproduction but is not linked to any particular national state by virtue of its own citizenship or ethnicity. This emergence of a global capitalist class is accompanied by the emergence of a global working class. While the global capitalist class is increasingly united and homogeneous, the global working class remains nationally divided by location, living standards, national identification, and culture. This asymmetry has profound implications for the relative power of the two major classes and consequently for a range of other institutional arrangements.

Hiroshi Setooka, Professor at Komazawa University, Japan, argued that the depression now going on is a “Great Depression” that has surged after the end of prosperity of post-war recovery, a part of the long-time depression of after the 1950s–1960s’ unprecedented boom in the USA. What is going on to escape this long embarrassing depression is none other than “Globalization.” Not a few so-called “middle-class” people are inclining toward conservatives under this long-term depression and besides are inclining to become supporters for the neoliberals. Many people in the “middle-class” are supporting and cooperating with “Globalization” at this moment, and actually, they might not be able to live long without converting into reformists/revolutionists under this intolerable depression.

Pritam Singh, Professor at Oriel College, University of Oxford, UK, pointed out the entire history of capitalism has been a history of uneven development. This uneven development is in terms of class, region, and gender. This uneven development is not unique to the capitalist mode of production but the one set of the capitalist mode of production has intensified and exacerbated this tendency. He also argues that this recent uneven development is different from all earlier periods of uneven development mainly from the viewpoint of colossal global sustainability implications of this spatial shift in global capitalism. Capitalism is not capable of repeating its path of development in the BRICS and other major developing economies in the so-called Third World, and eco-socialism is the only sustainable answer to the present crisis of global capitalism.

David M. Kotz, Vice Chairman of WAPE, Professor at the University of Massachusetts, USA, talked about two forms of restructuring within capitalism

in response to the economic crisis: a business-regulated form of capitalism and a social-democratic form of capitalism. He points out historical evidence suggests that neither of those two forms of capitalist restructuring can emerge unless a strong progressive movement develops that would put pressure on the capitalist class to make major changes away from the neoliberal form of capitalism. Actually, the above two forms of capitalist restructuring cannot resolve the long-run problems noted above and would potentially threaten the survival of human civilization.

Duncan McFarland, activist, organizer, writer, USA, holds that on one hand communist parties took state power in a number of countries in the 20th century and implemented economic development programs. This vast experience provides persuasive confirmation in practice of the theory of Marxist political economy; consequently, 21st-century socialism must continue to be based on Marxism or scientific socialism, while growing to include new and emerging historical trends. On the other hand, the economic problems, setbacks, and failures of 20th-century socialism also suggested that rapid advancement from capitalism to advanced socialism or communism is impossible. He also points out the Soviet model characterized as over centralized, inefficient, and bureaucratic proved unsustainable. Based on it, China, Vietnam, and Cuba all made major changes. China and Vietnam developed a more appropriate socialist market economy, with capitalistic and socialist features, but led by a communist party guiding the development toward socialism. He suggests that we should portray a society more democratic, participatory, humane, and creative than the Soviet Union when we talk about 21st-century socialism.

Hermann Dworzak, World Social Forum, Austria, taking the example of Greece, proved that the neoliberal course will not produce sustainable growth, not to speak of social justice. Capitalism today is in stagnation and we live—again—in an “epoch of rebellions and beginning revolutions.” Radical changes—in the sense of Marx: going to the roots of the problems—are on the agenda. Taking into consideration the different situations in the different countries, the left have to elaborate a set of far-reaching measures such as canceling debts; socialization of banks and important factories—under democratic/workers control; reduction of labor time—without reduction of the wages; etc..

Jiankang Xu, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China, put forth that Marx’s concerns of historical conditions, permitting Russia’s holistic spanning of the “Caudine Forks” of capitalism during the late 19th century, finally failed to be realized. However, the spanning development or transformation and the shift of geographical distribution in terms of epochal center should be a scene of thematic importance. The relationship between China and the world system is like a complex relation among main system, high-level subsystem, and low-level

subsystem; when there is strong shock in the main system, it is a good chance for China to reinforce its ability to span the “Caudine Forks.”

David S. Pena, Professor at Palm Beach State College, USA, holds that the most commonly accepted definition of sustainable development—“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”—lacks concreteness. If we put the idea of sustainable development under Marxism and specification, capitalist development is necessarily unsustainable, and sustainable development must take the form of socialist development. He thinks that the concrete concept of “sustainable socialism” should contain seven major components: (1) an economic system that builds the productive forces and establishes relations of production that promote common prosperity in a steady, sustainable manner; (2) a political system that upholds a vigorous people’s democracy focused on implementing the people’s political agenda; (3) a strong, united, and fully sovereign socialist homeland; (4) a progressive socialist culture; (5) resource management policies that promote a flourishing natural environment while meeting the people’s economic needs; (6) scientific harmonization appropriate to national conditions; (7) preservation of the leading role of the communist party. In addition, he argued that only a strong communist party accomplishing its work through the instrument of the people’s democratic dictatorship is capable of realizing the goal of sustainable socialism.

In addition, participants also discussed other issues including “Economy and Democracy,” “Welfare System and Social Justice,” “Land Use and Social Justice,” “Marx’s Theory of Money and Capital,” “Marxism and Agrarian Issues,” “Climate Change and Sustainable Development,” and “Vietnamese–Chinese Issues” in depth.

The closing ceremony was presided over by the Vice Chairman of WAPE, Professor David Kotz, University of Massachusetts, USA. Professor Pham Van Duc, Director of the Institute of Philosophy, VASS, delivered the Statement of the Ninth Forum of WAPE. The Statement declares that economic growth is generally measured by the rate of increase in GDP at the national or global level, and that it is still important for DCs but is not equal to economic development. However, the traditional outlook on development is based on expanding physical production, which takes for granted that all economic growth is a good thing and ignores social development. It argues that GDP is the sole benchmark for evaluating different countries’ economic performance. Such an outlook appears as the reflection of overweighed instrumental rationality and absent human values. On the contrary, a scientific outlook on development, based on Marxist economics, could be taken as a positive response to the shortcomings of the traditional outlook. It argues that scientific economic development should serve the people, and as a consequence, economic development should enhance comprehensive human development and

elevate the well-being of the people, eventually improving the livelihoods of people worldwide and the fairness of economic development and income distribution. So, all countries should put more emphasis on qualitative not just quantitative changes in the economy and consider the basic purpose of economic growth, strive to achieve what we put out as “A Fair Development.” We summarize our advice as follows: Public ownership should be dominant, while the role of other forms of ownership should be decided based on the conditions in each country; Distribution according to work should dominate distribution according to ownership and unjust gaps in wealth and income should be opposed; State regulation should be the major mechanism in addressing environmental issues and marketization as a major mechanism should be opposed; New measures of economic well-being should be developed to replace the emphasis on GDP. Finally, the General Secretary of WAPE, Xiaoqin Ding, Research Associate at Harvard University Asia Center and Associate Professor at the Marxism Research Institute of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, announced that the next forum will be held in South Africa in the middle of June 2015.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.