

Knowledge and Imagination of Taiwan's Socio-economic History: Taiwan's Social History Debate (1920-1930s) Reexamined

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ABSTRACT

Between 1920s and 1930s, East Asia saw extensive scholarly discussion on Social History Debate. During the same era, there was an influx of Western modern social theories including liberalism, anarchism, and Marxism, thus contributing to a climate of influential Social History Debate. Among these social theories, Marxist ideology had the most profound impact on the modern concept of knowledge and imagination among Taiwanese intellectuals. Different theoretical concepts on Taiwan and China's economic history were developed and different opposing programs of social revolution and social reform were formulated. Since the late 1980s, democratization led to freedom of speech and discussion. Hence, Taiwanese scholars on literary history and political history re-examined the essence of the Debate and its impact on Taiwan history, and used it as a weapon to get involved in Taiwan's political and social issues at that time. Of note is the significant change in knowledge on Taiwan and China's socio-economic history among socio-economic historians since the 1990s and the total transformation of socialist movements and ideas in western societies and Japan. Nevertheless, the analysis of Social History Debate by Taiwanese scholars was still made on basis of prior and outdated knowledge, making these analyses fragmented and far from complete. This paper re-examines the historical features of the Debate and its meaning in Taiwan history in the light of new knowledge on Taiwan and China's socio-economic history and global socialist history.

Keywords: Taiwan Intellectual History, Taiwan Literary History, Chinese Reform Debate, Taiwan Socio-economic History, Global Socialist History