

The Practical Significance of Marx's "Human Liberation" in the Background of New Era of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*

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Abstract—The thought of "human liberation" is a major historical and practical issue that Marxist, Engels and Marxist successors pay close attention to. Marxism human liberation theory contains rich content. From the perspective of the logical process of Marx constructing human liberation theory, "human liberation" is an organic whole of proletarian political liberation, economic liberation, social liberation, spiritual liberation and human self-liberation. It expounds the high degree of consistency between proletarian liberation and human liberation, indicates the nature, content conditions and historical progress of human liberation and points out that human liberation can only be achieved through the liberation of the proletariat, and that the proletariat can eventually liberate itself only by liberating all humankind. After a long period of hard work, China has entered the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is still of important guiding significance for the development of contemporary China and the world at large to interpret the thought of "human liberation".

Keywords—human liberation; political liberation; communism

I. INTRODUCTION

The thought of "human liberation" is a major historical issue that Marxist, Engels and Marxist successors pay attention to. Concerning the fate of the proletariat and all mankind is also the theoretical realm and revolutionary practice pursued by Marx and Engels for the rest of their lives. Fighting for the liberation of the proletariat and all mankind, the historical materialism and the surplus value theory are called the three great contributions made by

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Marxism to the development of human society, and the cause of struggle for the liberation of proletariat and "human" is the core and destiny of all the Marxist theory and practice, as well as the essence and the fundamental ideas formed in the "The Communist Manifesto", which is the major theme running through the entire theoretical building and revolutionary practice of Marxism. In the second half of the 19th century, along with the rapid spread of Marxism and the growth and expansion of the proletariat, the beautiful vision designed by Marxism for the future of mankind became the ideological weapon for the oppressed classes to strive for freedom and liberation. As a result, human society entered a magnificent process of struggle for freedom and liberation and Marxism political party was built in many countries. In the first half of the 20th century, the proletariat seized power in many countries, won the political liberation, and changed the face of more than half of the world. However, at the end of the 20th century, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, drastic changes in Eastern Europe and the international communist movement going toward a low ebb, the entire theoretical system and social practice of Marxism suffered a setback in the world. However, after a long period of endeavor, "thriving" socialism with Chinese characteristics broke the so-called "end of history" once proposed by the West and returned to the central stage of the world stage. The report of the 19th NPC pointed out: "After a long period of endeavor, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. The major social contradictions in China have been transformed into the contradictions between the growing needs for a better life of people and unbalanced and inadequate development." Standing on the new starting point of history, how should we understand the significance of Marx's "human liberation" thought and its contemporary value implied is of great significance to scientifically treating Marxism, correctly recognizing the fate of Marx's thought and correctly understanding the current development of primary stage of socialism in China.

II. THE OVERALL VISION OF MARX'S "HUMAN LIBERATION"

To understand deeply the nature of "human liberation", we must first understand "human liberation". Liberation in

modern Chinese refers to relieving of bondage and getting freedom or development, especially overturning reactionary rule. [1] However, to relieve the oppression of the reactionary rule and to break free from oppression to realize self-development is essentially only a passive freedom, namely freedom from being subjected to external objective conditions instead of the active freedom to actively behave in accordance with one's own determination and decision. In philosophy, "liberation" refers to relieving bondage and imprisonment and acquiring free and unfettered development. The freedom mentioned here is mainly the freedom in the epistemological sense, referring to the transformation of necessary understanding and the world". [2] In the view of Marxists, human liberation is consistent with active freedom, which is not only the freedom that relieves the constraint of backward and decadent exploiting class to people, but also the active freedom that emphasizes the subjective self-determination. [3]

In essence, the idea of "human liberation" refers specifically to the liberation of the proletariat. Marx believes that the emancipation of the proletariat is highly consistent with the "human liberation". On the one hand, the proletariat represents the fundamental interests of the majority of people. In the middle of the 19th century, the proletariat that occupied the largest number of human groups has used labor to create the civilization and wealth of human society, but is in the most tragic and the poorest social situation. In the Introduction to Critical Critique of Hegel's Philosophy, Marx states: "The liberation of the Germans is the liberation of man. This brain of liberation is philosophy, and its heart is the proletariat. [4] "Therefore, Marx placed the fate of "the liberation of mankind "on the liberation of the proletariat considering the fate of the greatest number of all mankind. On the other hand, only by liberating all human can the proletariat eventually liberate them. As Engels points out, the ideological core of the "Communist Manifesto" is "that the exploited and oppressed classes (the proletariat) cannot be emancipated from the enslavement of the class (bourgeoisie) that exploit and rule them if they can't make the entire society break away from the all exploitation, oppression, class differences and class struggles once and for all." [5] The liberation of mankind is the most comprehensive and thorough liberation, which requires the elimination of classes and states, as well as the elimination of labor disparity and the proletariat itself to ultimately liberate all mankind. It is in this sense that the liberation of the proletariat is not like the classes that used the masses to liberate themselves in history. Only the proletariat can represent the fundamental interests of the majority of the people and realize the liberation of all mankind. This is also the inevitable historical mission of the proletariat. Engels wrote in Karl Marx: "The leadership of history has been transferred to the hands of the proletariat, and the proletariat, because of its entire social status, can liberate itself only by completely eliminating all class rules, all slavery and all exploitation" [6].

"Human liberation" is a historical process with rich content. It contains the organic whole and the historical process of the proletarian political liberation, economic liberation, social liberation, spiritual liberation and the

liberation of human. Marx believes that human history is free from the starting point. In history, human beings are animals as part of nature, so the behavior of human beings transforming nature, society and the human spiritual world will eventually change people into the rule of things, human and spirit. Therefore, the mission of mankind's liberation and development "need not only to defeat the material world it has created, but also to defeat the spiritual world it has created", and "the liberation and development of human is the process of interaction between man and nature, man and society, man and man, and man and himself", so the ultimate goal of "human liberation" is the free and comprehensive development of human.

Specifically, political liberation means that the proletariat is freed from being oppressed and exploited to make itself the ruling class and establish the state system of dictatorship of the proletariat ruling by the proletariat where the people are the masters. Only such state power can represent the general interests of society and state public officials are public servants who safeguard people's rights. Economic liberation means that after the proletariat masters the system of state power, it establishes an economic system of public ownership, implements the distribution system of distribution according to work, develops social productive forces, increases labor productivity, carries out large-scale national economic construction and continuously enriches and satisfies the material needs of all people. Social liberation is the realization of social fairness and justice. After the proletariat masters state power, it fully develops social public utilities, social security and social management so as to safeguard the fundamental interests of all people and all social parties and realize social fairness and justice. The essence of spiritual liberation is to make people free and fully develop. Spiritual liberation is not a mere spiritual activity of simple consciousness and concept, but premised on the elimination of the soil or material foundation that generates consciousness, ideas and spirit. Its purpose is to get people out of the entanglement of material conditions such as productivity, social division of labor and ownership to human; make people get rid of the enslavement of relatively individual and independent false communities including the state and the law to the people; get rid of the control of ideological consciousness such as idealism and religious belief over people, and liberate themselves from ideological poverty, ignorance and various old ideologies, so that people are no longer bound and suppressed by people, gods, things and the wrong ideas and the social system that enslave people. "The emergence of capitalist private ownership has not only materially alienated people, but also has been mentally alienated them." [7] This shows that human beings cannot be liberated without breaking the ideological and spiritual bondage. With regard to the liberation of mankind, Marx proposed in the "Communist Manifesto" that "the union that replaces the bourgeois old society in which class antagonism exists will be such one where the free development of everyone is condition of free development for all people." [8] Communism means to establish such a union of free people. On the basis of dialectical materialism and historical materialism, Marx established the theoretical

building for the liberation of the proletariat and all mankind, which became the fate and soul of Marxist theory.

According to Marx's point of view, the connotation of Marx's human liberation theory can be summed up in several aspects: First, the inevitable perish of capitalism is ultimately inevitable, but the ultimate realization of human liberation is based on the full development of capitalism; secondly, the proletariat can finally liberate itself only by liberating all human. The realization of such liberation has different forms of realization in different social conditions in different countries. Third, human liberation is a long historical process, so we must go through three stages of development that are both connected and differentiated: political liberation, social liberation of economy, and self-liberation of man. Fourth, communist society will also be a historical process that constantly develops from a necessary kingdom to a free kingdom. It will never stop on a certain level forever. It is these four basic points that constitute the great vision of the Marxist theory of human liberation.

III. THE INTRINSIC LOGIC OF MARX'S "HUMAN LIBERATION" THOUGHT

Marx and Engels's idea of "human liberation" was gradually formed in exposing the ills of capitalist society and the struggle of bourgeois scholars. The social ills of capitalist society include the proletariat serving as a tool for profit-making of the bourgeoisie, the opposition of proletariat and bourgeoisie and labor becoming the means by which the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat. Marxists think that "human liberation" is a movement that eliminates the ills of capitalist society.

The condition of "human liberation" is to eliminate all classes, thereby eliminating the conditions for the opposition and existence of classes and giving people access to a social environment for free development. Marx and Engels' understanding of the conditions of "human liberation" originated from the profound understanding and thorough criticism of the bourgeoisie and capitalist society. The realization of "human liberation" needs to go through three stages in theory: the first stage is the dependency relationships of human, the second stage is the dependency relationships of things, and the third stage is the free and all-round development of human beings. [9]In revolutionary practice, first it is shown as the proletariat rising to the ruling class through revolutionary practice to realize the dictatorship of the proletariat and implement the people's democracy and the liberation of politics; the second is through the dictatorship of the proletariat, public ownership of the means of production and the economic system of distribution according to work are established, productive force is vigorously developed, the material wealth of the people is enriched and economic liberation is realized. Third, through the accumulation of productive forces in the socialist stage and the tremendous progress in economy, politics, culture, society and ecological civilization, human beings enter the communist society where they work according to their ability and distribute according to their needs, and then realize their own liberation.

The theory of "human liberation" constructed by Marx is a long-term historical process. From the political liberation of the proletariat to the social liberation of the economy and finally to the liberation of mankind, it is the historical destination for the ultimate realization of the all-round free development of mankind. These three stages of development are linked with each other, reflecting the dialectical unity of the historical logic of Marx's "human liberation" system. Political liberation is the political preparation for economic liberation, and economic liberation is the material condition of "human liberation." The realization of the idea of "human liberation" will enable laborers to properly handle the relationship between man and nature, man and society, and man and man and the change in the mode of mankind's production to resolve the contradictions existing between man, nature and society and realize the all-round and free development of human in the union of free human, which is the philosophical idea and goal of struggle of Marxism as well as the ultimate political conclusion of Marxist philosophy and a reasonable arrangement for the future destiny of mankind.

It is noteworthy that Marx does not regard communism as "human liberation" itself. In communist society, the political authority of the country will eventually disappear, mankind becomes the owner of society, nature and mankind, and mankind becomes a free and conscious man, realizing the return of people themselves. Communism is the condition for the realization of human liberation. Human liberation is the goal of realizing communism. Communism is the historical process of human liberation while human liberation is an important part of the communist social form.

IV. THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MARXIST "HUMAN LIBERATION" IN THE NEW ERA

The theory of "human liberation" of Marx reveals the law of development of human liberation, which is the theoretical summary based on the practice of development of human history. Although twists and turns in practice will occur, it still has important guiding significance for the development of contemporary China and the world at large. Although socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, China, standing on a new historical starting point must clearly recognize the changes in the major social contradictions in China and do not change our judgment on the historical stage in which China's socialism is located. The basic national condition that China is still at the primary stage of socialism for long has not changed and the international status of China as the largest developing country in the world has not changed. The "two no changes" and the "changes" in the major social conflicts are the new judgments made by the Party on the historic position of development of China based on the new era conditions and practical requirements. We must scientifically understand the historical position of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the unification of "change" and "unchangeableness." The fundamental contradictions of socialism have not changed, which means that we are still in the primary stage of socialism. Therefore, we must firmly uphold the basic line of the party, the lifeline of the party and the country, and the

people's happiness line, lead and unify the people of all ethnic groups in China to adhere to the four cardinal principles, persist in carrying out the policy of reform and opening up with economic construction as the center, unswervingly regard development as the most important task for the party in governing and rejuvenating the country, persist in liberating and developing social productive forces, strive to solve the problem of inadequate and imbalanced development, and drive and promote the solution of other contradictions and non-central work by solving the major contradictions.

Under the guidance of Marxism, Chinese Communist Party has overthrown the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism in old China through protracted and arduous revolutionary struggles and established the People's Republic of China to implement the people's democracy and realize the state system of dictatorship of the proletariat and the ownership form of socialist public ownership, as well as the political liberation and partial economic liberation of Chinese proletariat. The thought of "human liberation" essentially means to carry forward the essential forces of man and advocate people to get rid of the constraint to survive and develop, thus achieving the state of mankind's freedom and conscience. It not only includes the liberation from the control of the nature and relations in human society, but also includes the all-round development and progress of civilizations such as politics, economy, culture, society and ecology. The current practice of China's reform and opening up, modernization construction and the scientific concept of development are just the concrete practice of upholding Marx's theory of "human liberation". The idea of "human liberation" requires that after the political liberation, mankind should vigorously develop productive forces to promote human economic liberation, and enrich the materialistic life of working people, which is the goal of the current reform and opening up and modernization construction. The comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable scientific outlook on development based on "people-oriented" embodies the development requirements for human liberation. The fundamental purpose of proposition of overall strategic layout of "four comprehensives" and the Chinese dream of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is also to popularize the achievements of social development to all the people. Fundamentally, the development concept of "people-oriented" is a return to Marx's "real-life generation of human essence" and a pursuit for the "individual and free" development of everyone. Carrying out the "people-oriented" value principle and development concept in historical practice is essentially a way of realizing Marx's theory of human liberation. At the same time, we should realize that China is still in the primary stage of socialism and socialism is the primary stage of communism. Although China has achieved the political liberation of the proletariat and part of economic liberation, there is still a long way before realizing the communism where all-round and free development of people can be achieved. The socialist road with Chinese characteristics not only upholds the highest value goal of human liberation of the communist movement and treats it as the fundamental measure for reforming the social reality, but also

dialectically regards the gap between the highest ideal and the present reality and steadfastly takes the rational and purposive construction strategy to continuously achieve "the reality generation of human nature" through concrete practical activities. [10] Marx's "human liberation" thought still has important guiding significance for the current development of China and indicates the goals and directions for the future social development.

V. CONCLUSION

The era requires Marx's theory of human liberation to reflect and answer the survival crisis of human and find a way out for the survival and development of mankind. Summarizing and concluding the new situation, new situations and new laws in the contemporary world, and the profound analysis and judgment on global politics, economy and ideology have always permeated the development of Marx's theory of "human liberation". The practice of human liberation is mainly carried out from two aspects. First is to liberate human from the enslavement of blind necessity of nature through the development of productive forces, especially science and technology to realize the effective control over the exchange of matter between human and nature in order to make human "the master of nature." Second is to make people "the masters of their own social bond by letting them get rid of the slavery and oppression of the classes in society through revolutionary practice, to let the people share the fruits of reform and development and realize the all-round development of the individual. These two kinds of liberation interlink and interweave with each other and finally unite into the socialist movement and communist practice. This requires that socialism with Chinese characteristics insist on the unification of the standards of productive forces and the standards of people's interests, the unification of the scales of things and people, and the unification of laws and purposes. That is, to let the broad masses of people share the result of development on the basis of developing productive forces. Under the leadership of the Chinese Communists, socialism with Chinese characteristics stands at the commanding height of the common value of "benefiting the people", carrying out great historical practices. It is the original will and mission of the Chinese Communists to seek happiness for the Chinese people and seek rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The globalization process driven by the wave of new technologies has led the human world to increasingly break through many natural and social constraints. The political democratization process in the world is developing rapidly, the global economic progress continues to be made, the life of the people in the world is gradually improved and the culture achieves diversified development. The concept of "building a human destiny community" put forward by Xi Jinping was written into the UN resolution, and recognized by the international community. The essence of these developments is the continuous modernization of mankind, which promotes the world to develop into a freer and liberated international community and provided a guarantee for the ultimate liberation of human beings. The development of human society will neither end because of the establishment of capitalism in world history nor

announce the "end of history." As a natural historical process, the development and progress of human society will certainly follow the direction of the development of world history and resolutely move toward a new realm of human liberation.

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