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Young Marx's argument on communism in *Paris manuscript*

Yushan Wang*

School of Marxism, Central University of Finance and Economics, Beijing, China.

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Abstract

In *Paris Manuscript*, Marx gradually broke away from his previous criticism and vigilance towards communism through further research on political economy and deep exploration of Feuerbach's philosophy. At that time, Marx proposed that communism is a scientific theory opposite to political economics, regarded actual communist action as a positive transcendence of human self-estrangement. Furthermore, communist theory was endowed with deep attribute of new materialism.

Keywords: *Paris Manuscript*; Marx; Critique of political economics; Alien; New materialism

1. Introduction

The young Marx's perception of communism was not static. During the debate with Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1842, Marx publicly announced that "the *Rheinische Zeitung*, which does not admit that communist ideas in their present form possess even theoretical reality, and therefore can still less desire their practical realisation, or even consider it possible." [1:220] One year later, although Marx drew ideas such as "emancipation of human" and "material forces" in "copy" critique of German philosophy, in a letter to Lugar at the same time, Marx wrote that, communism is a dogmatic abstraction and by communism I do not refer to some imagined, possible communism, but to communism as it actually exists in the teachings of Cabet, Dezamy, and Weitling, etc. [2:6] But then during the period in Paris, some changes seemed to happen. In Paris which Marx called it the new capital of the new world, Marx didn't only get in touch with leaders of organizations such as the "London Alliance of Justice" and French workers' secret groups exiled in Paris, he also closely experienced the operation of modern society, and understood the real civil society through studying on political and economic writings. In another words, Marx turned to "original" critique on the real world compared with "copy" critique in the period from Krotznacher to *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. Starting from March 1844 in Paris, Marx pored over 19 economic works written by 15 authors, including P Pierre Le Pesant, Friedrich Wilhelm Schulz, John Ramsay McCulloch, Frederick Engels, David Ricardo and Adam Smith, etc. He extracted their viewpoints to be the "Paris Notes". At the same time, he wrote *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* and *Comments on James Mill, Éléments D'économie Politique*. These three texts mentioned above made up the *Paris Manuscript*. From September to November in 1844, Marx collaborated with Engels to write *The Holy Family*, which was a critique of Powell and his five companions around the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*. Both in *Paris Manuscript* and *The Holy Family*, Marx conducted a preliminary in-depth study of political economy, deepened his understanding of real civil society, further continued his previous criticism of Hegel and the Young Hegelianism, and presented a different evaluation of "communism" from ever before.

Although not published during his lifetime, the *Paris Manuscript* was Marx's first research achievement on political economy. In the first manuscript, Marx excerpted the narratives of national economists on wages, capital, land rent, and other categories, criticized the methods and viewpoints of political economists, and gradually proposed many key concepts such as private property and alienated labor. In *Comments on James Mill, Éléments D'économie Politique*, Marx

* Corresponding author: Yushan Wang

excerpted relevant content from the four links of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption in the Mill's economic theory, and focused on discussing issues such as currency as an intermediary, alienated labor, and social interaction in the exchange and consumption links. The second manuscript is relatively short in length, Marx focused on discussing the opposition between labor and capital from the perspective of private property. As for the third manuscript as a whole, apart from critique of Hegelian philosophy in the latter half (Parts IV and VI), the "Preface" (Part VIII), and the analysis of monetary attributes (Part IX), which are all relatively independent, the remaining parts (Parts II and III) are basically supplementary to the "XXXIX" of the second manuscript, and it is in this part that Marx wrote 7 parts of the "Communism" thematic discourse from (1) to (7). A simple list is as follows:

By embracing this relation as a whole, communism is: (1) In its first form only a generalisation and consummation of this relation. (2) Communism (α) still political in nature – democratic or despotic; (β) with the abolition of the state, yet still incomplete, and being still affected by private property, i.e., by the estrangement of man. (3) Communism as the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man. (4) Man appropriates his comprehensive essence in a comprehensive manner, that is to say, as a whole man. Each of his human relations to the world, like those organs which are directly social in their form, are in their objective orientation, or in their orientation to the object, the appropriation of the object, the appropriation of human reality. Their orientation to the object is the manifestation of the human reality. (5) Communism is the position as the negation of the negation, and is hence the actual phase necessary for the next stage of historical development in the process of human emancipation and rehabilitation. Communism is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism as such is not the goal of human development, the form of human society. (6) Feuerbach is the only one who has a serious, critical attitude to the Hegelian dialectic and who has made genuine discoveries in this field. He is in fact the true conqueror of the old philosophy. The extent of his achievement, and the unpretentious simplicity with which he, Feuerbach, gives it to the world, stand in striking contrast to the opposite attitude. (7) We have seen what significance, given socialism, the wealth of human needs acquires, and what significance, therefore, both a new mode of production and a new object of production obtain: a new manifestation of the forces of human nature and a new enrichment of human nature. [3:294-306]

After discussing the alienation of human needs within the scope of private ownership and the so-called "morality" in political economics, Marx's seven arguments on communism came to a sudden halt. Overall, just like the overall style of *Paris Manuscript*, the completed connotations and internal logical connections of the seven arguments are not obvious. For example, Article (1), (2), and (3) clearly discusses the three forms and stages of communist development, but why did Marx choose to use the relationship with "private property" as the dividing and narrative latitude? While Article (4) (7) discussed the liberation of human perception, while Article (6) discussed the critique of Hegelian dialectics, but what is the relationship between communism and these topics? What are the similarities and differences between communism as a necessary intermediary stage and socialism in Article (5)? To solve these problems, it is necessary to go back to the original text and delve deeper step by step according to Marx's narrative order.

2. Communism as a diametrical theory to political economics

As is well known, the Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844 is written with the critique of political economics as the beginning. Marx proudly stated in the *Preface* that, "it is hardly necessary to assure the reader conversant with political economy that my results have been attained by means of a wholly empirical analysis based on a conscientious critical study of political economy. It goes without saying that besides the French and English socialists I have also used German socialist works." [3:231] But few people raise the question of why it is necessary to cite the works of socialists and communists when studying political economy? As Marx said in his manuscript, "This new formulation of the question already contains its solution." [3:281] This is also true for the above-mentioned problem, and the internal relationship between communism and political economy can be clarified accordingly.

Although Marx's involvement in the study of political economy was not long, he quickly discovered the contradictions and problems of political economy with his keen sense of problems and excellent ability to dissect.

On the one hand, the national economic system is full of contradictions. In the perspective of national economists, the richness of land often magically becomes a characteristic of land owners. "To the economist, production, consumption and, as the mediator of both, exchange or distribution, are separate.[3:221] According to the political economists, it is solely through labour that man enhances the value of the products of nature, whilst labour is man's active possession. [3:240] However, in real life, the working class directly engaged in labor has become increasingly destitute, and only poverty emerges from the essence of modern labor according to labor value theory. The ultimate conclusion of modern political economy is actually "social misfortune" while it claimed to be committed to national prosperity and strength, which. The system of national economy is filled with unresolved contradictions, and the biggest one is to accept the

relationships of private property as human and rational, political economy operates in permanent contradiction to its basic premise, private property.[4:32]

On the other hand, political economics cannot explain its theoretical premise. "All treatises on political economy take private property for granted. But this basic premise is for them an incontestable fact to which they devote no further investigation. It expresses in general, abstract formulas the material process through which private property actually passes, and these formulas it then takes for laws. It does not comprehend these laws. [4:31-32] Moreover, Marx reminded us not go back to a fictitious primordial condition as the political economist does, when he tries to explain. Such a primordial condition explains nothing; it merely pushes the question away into a grey nebulous distance. The economist assumes in the form of a fact, of an event, what he is supposed to deduce – namely, the necessary relationship between two things – between, for example, division of labor and exchange. [3:271] The laziness and incompetence of theory make it difficult for itself to understand its own premise and can only see it as self-evident.

Facing with the problems of political economics, Marx diametrically pointed out in *Paris Manuscript* that, "we proceed from an actual economic fact,"[3:271] and take this fact as the starting point for exploring the relationship with communism. In *The Holy Family*, Marx clearly pointed out that all communist and socialist writers proceeded from the observation that, on the one hand, even the most favourably brilliant deeds seemed to remain without brilliant results, to end in trivialities, and, on the other, all progress of the Spirit had so far been progress against the mass of mankind, driving it into an ever more dehumanised situation.[4:84] In fact, Engels' account in another part of the same book can serve as a footnote to Marx's statement. Engels said, "the French Socialists maintain that the worker makes everything, produces everything and yet has no rights, no possessions, in short, nothing at all. [4:19] In other words, communism and socialism are exploring the historical formation and laws of modern economic life from the reality ignored by political economics, and the empirical path completely opposite to the abstract and one-sided methods of political economics. Communism or socialism is the direct opposite of political economics.

Although Marx just then had not yet explicitly stated the similar views that "the development of a science such as political economy is connected with the real movement of society, or is only its theoretical" [4:267]in *Draft of an Article on Friedrich List's Book Das nationale System der politischen Oekonomie*, he still clearly realized in *Paris Manuscripts* that national economists were no more than economic spokespersons for "civil society". "In general it is always empirical businessmen we are talking about when we refer to political economists, (who represent) their scientific creed and form of existence."[3:308]

National economists are theorists of capitalists and theoretical manifestations of the private property movement. It goes without saying that communism, on the other hand, is a theoretical awareness of the movement to abolish private property in reality and a spokesperson for the proletariat.

On the basis of the above, the analysis of communism immediately presents two contents that need to be elaborated on - the essence of private property and the formation of sensuous reality. In fact, it is precisely in the description of these two aspects that Marx fully expressed his understanding of communism and the reasons for it.

3. Actual communist action: positive transcendence of private property

Modern communism is a movement to abolish private property rather than a simple cancellation of private property. Marx took communism as the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man. [3:297] This statement implies at least three reflections of Marx on this issue: (1) Marx, as well as communism, examine real movement from the true origin of private property and national economic reality, which are treated as political economists' own premise but not actually understood by themselves. (2) Marx transformed the issue of the origin of private property into the issue of the origin of labor alienation, which is directly related to human labor, and proposed a "new formulation" different from political economists. (3)The alienation of human beings is directly the alienation of labor, and the essence of human beings must be directly embedded in labor.

In analysis on the contradiction system of political economics, Marx started from its various premises and used the language and laws of political economics itself to draw the inevitable conclusion of social polarization. Actually speaking, political economists always intentionally ignored this conclusion and fact, but Marx continued to trace the meaning behind this reality, and lead the arguments to the concept of "alienated labor": "This fact expresses merely that the object which labor produces – labor's product – confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object, which has become material: it is the objectification of labor. Labor's realization is its objectification. Under these economic conditions this realization of labor appears as

loss of realization for the worker; objectification as loss of the object and bondage to it; appropriation as estrangement, as alienation.[3:272] After analyzing the four forms or consequences of labor alienation, Marx reached an important conclusion in the manuscript - "Private property is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of alienated labor, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself.[3:279] In this way, we have already gone a long way to the solution of this problem by transforming the question of the origin of private property into the question of the relation of alienated labor to the course of humanity's development.[3:281] And alienated (externalized) labor has become the most critical dimension and perspective for Marx to analyze private property.

From the perspective of alienated labor, division of labor and exchange are only different forms of private property, while categories such as buying, selling, competition, and currency are only specific and unfolding manifestations of alienated labor and private property. In modern society, the separation of capital, land, and labor is also an inevitable result of the inherent nature of alienated labor, The national economic facts that cannot be explained by political economics and the unresolved contradictions within them are immediately gotten understood. In the movement of alienated labor, "private property, as the material, summary expression of alienated labor, embraces both relations – the relation of the worker to work and to the product of his labor and to the non-worker, and the relation of the non-worker to the worker and to the product of his labor. [3:281] Clash of mutual contradictions Inevitably appeared before worker and capital. From the perspective of the subject of private property, it can be seen that "the subjective essence of private property – private property as activity for itself, as subject, as person – is labour." [3:290] However, labor products, as the object of private property, are the manifestation of the alienated life of workers. At this point in the analysis, the next natural question is the origin of alienated labor, that is, "how, we now ask, does man come to alienate, to estrange, his labor? How is this estrangement rooted in the nature of human development?[3:281] Due to the "manuscript" nature of the text, although Marx raised this question near the end of the first manuscript, it seemed that he did not directly answer it, leading some scholars to believe that this was a "unsolved question" left by Marx, and it was not until Marx replaced the concept of "alienated labor" with the concept of "surplus value" in *Capital* that this problem was truly solved. But the author believes that Marx actually provided a direct answer in *Paris Manuscript*, and the key word lies in the concept of "labor" (or "practice") that contains the concept of "objectivity" in the manuscript. It is precisely in the description of the concept of labor that Marx found the way to transcendent alienated labor.

The concept of "objectiveness" is an important category used by Feuerbach to support "sensuous contemplation", and it is an important tool for him to give the reality and priority status of the sensuous world (humans and nature), and to criticize Hegel's speculative philosophy. If young Marx during the "copy critique" period did not fully realize the utility of this concept, it would be greatly different in *Paris Manuscript*. Feuerbach mentioned in *The Essence of Christianity* that without an object, a person becomes nothing, the object with which the subject inevitably has an essential relationship is nothing more than the inherent and objective essence of this subject. In other words, the object is the most important means by which the subject expresses and confirms its essence. "Objectivity" has also become an important attribute of human beings as subjects. Marx strongly agreed with that, "Any relationship between humans and themselves can only be realized and manifested through their relationship with others, furthermore, it is only when the objective world becomes everywhere for man in society the world of man's essential powers – human reality, and for that reason the reality of his own essential powers – that all objects become for him the objectification of himself, become objects which confirm and realize his individuality, become his objects. Thus man is affirmed in the objective world not only in the act of thinking, but with all his senses. [3:301] And the object oriented activities used to affirm oneself are nothing but labor: on the one hand, as far as the individual worker is concerned. "It is true that labour was his immediate source of subsistence, but it was at the same time also the manifestation of his individual existence." [3:220] On the other hand, from the perspective of human history, "all human activity hitherto has been labour – that is, industry – activity estranged from itself. [3:303]

Labor, as a self-generated action of human beings, is an important way to confirm human essence through the externalization of labor. Man's self-estrangement, the alienation of man's essence, man's loss of objectivity and his loss of realness is exactly man's self-discovery, manifestation of his nature, objectification and realisation. [3:342] Although private property was shaped due to the combination of various historical factors, at the same time, it has continuously accelerated and strengthened alienated labor in turn, and finally exacerbates the alienation, separation, and distortion of human nature. Therefore, in order to abolish alienated labor, it is necessary to start by abolishing private property. From the perspective of labor, "just as private property is only the perceptible expression of the fact that man becomes objective for himself and at the same time becomes to himself a strange and inhuman object; just as it expresses the fact that the manifestation of his life is the alienation of his life, that his realisation is his loss of reality, is an alien reality.[3:299] It is the estranged insight into the real objectification of man, into the real appropriation of his objective essence through the annihilation of the estranged character of the objective world, through the supersession of the objective world in its estranged mode of being. [3:341] Just as the realization of human essence requires objects, the abolish of alienation also requires objects. Human essence is precisely reflected in the objective labor practice and the

sensuous contemplation of externalization (alienation). Therefore, logically speaking, only through the positive transcendence of human self-estrangement- communism - can one achieve a return to their essence. This is precisely as what Marx said, the transcendence of self-estrangement follows the same course as self-estrangement. This kind of actual communism is not a return to a simple state of poverty nor is it a generalization of private property through equal distribution of wealth. It serves as a negation of negation and is consciously realized and within the scope of all wealth previously developed, directly focusing on labor itself, the free production and enjoyment that people engage in as human beings. Eliminating the alienated nature of private property and achieving the restoration and affirmation of human essence just started to become real. In such way, communism is the position as the negation of the negation, and is hence the actual phase necessary for the next stage of historical development in the process of human emancipation and rehabilitation. Communism is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future. [3:306]

4. Communist as new mass-type materialist

When Marx regarded labor as an objective activity of human beings and believed that the entire so-called history of the world is nothing but the creation of man through human labour, nothing but the emergence of nature for man." [3:305] Marx actually established two important starting points based on the arguments of national economists and speculative idealism. First, it is not the absolute spirit of nihilism, but the true sensuous human-being are real entities. Both spirit and philosophy are based on experience. Secondly, both humans and nature are a generative process mediated by human objective labor practices. They are not in a constant and static situation, nor the product of so-called spiritual activities. The significance of establishing these two arguments is enormous. It indicates that Marx has to some extent opened up a historical materialist narrative and standpoint in *Paris Manuscript*. It thus also showed the initial expression of the relationship between communism and materialism at another level.

Marx believed that "sense-perception (see Feuerbach) must be the basis of all science. Only when it proceeds from sense-perception in the two-fold form of sensuous consciousness and sensuous need – is it true science. [3:303] Marx pointed out that the existence of nature and human beings through their own existence is incomprehensible to the consciousness of the people. However, if the history of the formation of nature is combined with the history of industry, if industry is conceived as the exoteric revelation of man's essential powers, we can also gain an understanding of the human essence of nature or the natural essence of man. And not only in the natural world, the formation of the five senses comes to be by virtue of its object, by virtue of humanised nature. In this way, for the answer of the so-called antitheses between such as subjectivism and objectivism, spiritualism and materialism, activity and passivity, it is only possible in a practical way, by virtue of the practical energy of man. Their resolution is therefore by no means merely a problem of understanding, but a real problem of life, which philosophy could not solve precisely because it conceived this problem as merely a theoretical one. [3:302] On this basis, Marx excitedly believed that complete naturalism or humanitarianism is different from both idealism and materialism, and at the same time, it is the truth that combines the two, and communism is the completed naturalism or humanitarianism. It is from this standpoint that Marx and Engels later explicitly pointed out in the preface of *The Holy Family* that "Real humanism has no more dangerous enemy in Germany than spiritualism or speculative idealism." [4:7] And in the specific process of criticism, they sorted out the materialistic origin and practical propositions of communist thought.

Specifically, in terms of practical origins, the revolutionary movement which began in 1789 in the Cercle Social, gave rise to the communist idea which Babeuf's friend Buonarroti re-introduced in France after the Revolution of 1830. This idea, consistently developed, is the idea of the new world order. In terms of theoretical development schools, the school of French materialism originating from Locke has a clear "socialist tendency", it leads directly to socialism and communism. There is no need for any great penetration to see from the teaching of materialism on the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, and the influence of environment on man, the great significance of industry, the justification of enjoyment, etc., how necessarily materialism is connected with communism and socialism. In short, materialism is the teaching of real humanism and the logical basis of communism. [4:131] Communism in France and Britain embodies this materialism in practice with practical and concrete measures, while Feuerbach in Germany embodies materialism that is in line with humanism in theory. Correspondingly, the bipolar opposition and worker suffering in reality cannot only rely on critical criticism, which is a "pure theoretical liberation", but also requires fully tangible material conditions.

5. Conclusion

Compared to the period before, Marx's perception of communism during the *Paris Manuscripts* had a significant change. Marx did not oppose communism and social ideology as early media debates in 1842, nor did he relatively promote socialism and belittle communism as in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. Compared to ideal socialism,

communism is only a medium leading to the return of human essence, but it has become an essential link, an inevitable form and effective principle of the near future, the last form before human liberation. Marx began to take communism and socialism as important themes into his theoretical vision and framework, he also started trying to understand the necessity of modern communism through a dialectical perspective of practice and labor generation. The hostile opposition between worker and capital is not only a natural result of Marx's exploration of civil society, but also a starting point for Marx to criticize the real world by using "alienation" as a tool. Although Marx didn't treat "human liberation" with "actual communism" as the same in *Paris Manuscripts* and *The Holy Family*, but the inherent connection between two concepts is already rather clear. Marx refused to discuss human liberation from a purely theoretical perspective, he turned to emphasize the transformation of material forces and practical actions more than ever before. This change is not only a further development and extension of the "criticism of weapons" advocated in Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, it is also a reaffirmation of the complete naturalism and humanitarianism of communism. Marx clearly demonstrated his exploration of living and emotional individuals (who have pain, emotions, thoughts, and actions, his conscious rejection of abstract and otherworldly personalities), showed his emphasis on the self-generating of humans and nature through labor. All above indicates that Marx is increasingly distant from the philosophical base of dialectical philosophy and Hegel, and the horizon of the new worldview also vaguely reveals its initial appearance.

Overall, although Marx's communist views at this time had the characteristic of "new" materialism, dialectically, it was precisely due to the obvious Feuerbach characteristic that communism in *Paris Manuscripts* and *Holy Family* also presented a different temperament from later scientific communism—a strong philosophical temperament. This is not only reflected in Marx's belief that German communism mainly started from philosophy, it is also reflected in Marx's wish for the "completed communism" to become the "answer to the mystery of history", as well as in his non-historical division of the development stages of communism based on the concepts of "private property" and "alienation". Even though when Marx proposed that the entire movement of history, just as its actual act of genesis, is also for its thinking consciousness, [3:297] Marx's major logic was actually the philosophical principle of "negation of negation" rather than the material power of history. When Feuerbach thought his new philosophy makes man, together with nature as the basis of man, the exclusive, universal, and highest object of philosophy; it makes anthropology, together with physiology, the universal science; [5:184] Marx also placed a similar position on his communism, believing that this communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism. Communist theory has been fully regarded as a future philosophical principle. And talking about the clearing up and critique of such philosophical attribute, it still needs appropriate opportunity until later philosophical revolution.

Compliance with ethical standards

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