Interpretation of the Communist Manifesto from the Perspective of Accelerated Critical Theory

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Abstract: In order to seek the permanence of its existence, capitalist society tries to save itself by innovative technology. However, technological renewal has only accelerated the process of social development, and has not fundamentally improved the living condition of human beings. In the situation of accelerating society, people not only do not feel the arrival of happiness and happiness, on the contrary, they are full of pain and hardship. The Communist Manifesto opened a critique of the modernity of capitalist society and analyzed the problems of capitalist society from pathology. To indicate that society as an organic whole, if we can't innovate ourselves, we can't fundamentally eliminate the root causes of disease, and we are destined to collapse.

1. Introduction

The Communist Manifesto is "the most widely spread and most international work in the entire socialist literature" [1]. It is the most far-reaching and representative work in the classic works of Marxism. However, there is a current "Marxist final conclusion", which is that "in today's post-industrial western society where class differences are gradually melting and social mobility is increasing, Marxism has absolutely no use of it" [2]. The main reason for making this judgment is that compared with the era of Marx, the capitalist society has undergone tremendous changes. This point of view shows that, on the one hand, people not only have insufficient understanding of Marxism and the charm of the Declaration, but also have a great misunderstanding. On the other hand, people lack in-depth understanding and grasp of the current social situation. Therefore, it is necessary for us to re-read the Declaration and clarify its scientific, truthful and epochal nature in light of the current reality.

2. Why to Interpret the Declaration from the Perspective of "Accelerated Criticism of Society"

Today, when we study and interpret the "Declaration", we must combine text research with the issues of the times, combine theoretical principles with social reality, and form the interaction between theory and practice, principles and problems. Then realize the theoretical innovation and solve the real problem[1]. "No matter how much the situation has changed in the last 25 years, the general principles described in this "Declaration" have been completely correct until now." The "Declaration" analyzes the basic contradictions of society and reveals The contradiction between productivity and production relations, economic foundation and superstructure summarizes the basic laws of human social development. Thus, it fully demonstrates the scientificity of historical materialism in interpreting reality. Therefore, the principles revealed in the declaration must be adhered to and followed all the time[1]. Of course, we can not deny the tremendous changes that have taken place since the Declaration was issued, as well as a series of problems that have arisen in social development. "The practical application of these principles, as stated in the Declaration, should be transferred at any time and anywhere according to the historical conditions at that time [1]. This is another criterion put forward by Marx and Engels for interpreting the Declaration. It can be seen that only by keeping abreast of the problems of the times, grasping the history and reality from the dialectical relationship between "unchanged" and "changed", can we make better use of the norms and principles of understanding put forward in the Declaration.
If we can prove that the Declaration is still explanatory to the current theoretical concerns and critical to people's real life, then the outdated remarks on the Declaration will not break through. Therefore, we need to choose a new perspective to interpret the Declaration. At present, in view of various problems existing in the social reality, there are many theories about social criticism in the western theoretical circles, among which the "social accelerated criticism theory" has a greater impact. This theory, represented by German sociologist Rosa, criticizes the current problem of social acceleration. It discusses three types of social acceleration, namely, the acceleration of science and technology, the acceleration of social change and the acceleration of the pace of life. The theory analyzes the dynamics of social acceleration from the three aspects of social dynamics: competition, cultural power, eternal promise, and accelerated circulation [3]. The reason why "social accelerated critical theory" can attract people's extensive attention and cause great repercussions in the theoretical circle is because it has a strong sense of problem and critical consciousness. It pays attention to one of the most important problems in the current human society, the "social acceleration" problem, and criticizes this issue and its consequences. This is an important inspiration for people to understand and reflect on current social life. For Marxist theoretical researchers, "social accelerated critical theory" undoubtedly provides a new and important perspective to interpret the "Declaration." A closer examination reveals that the Declaration has been in-depth discussions on social acceleration issues more than 170 years ago, and that the Declaration's critique of social acceleration is more powerful and thorough. "The constant change of production, the turbulence of all social conditions, the eternal instability and change, this is the place where the bourgeois era is different from all the past eras" [1]. People living in today's era are trapped in the wave of social acceleration, and they can feel the problems and pressures brought about by "social acceleration" more than people of any other era. In this sense, "acceleration" is one of the most distinctive features of today's society, so "acceleration" is also a perspective with the characteristics of the times. From this perspective, using the basic principles of the Declaration, we can better grasp the pulse of current social development, better understand the current social symptoms, and more effectively find the root causes of these problems.

3. Declaration from the Perspective of "Accelerated Criticism of Society"

Since we choose to interpret the Declaration from the perspective of "social acceleration", a comparative discussion on the Declaration and Western "critical theory of social acceleration" is inevitable. This is not to confine the Declaration to the Accelerated Critical Theory of Society, but to find a framework for discussion that can be followed. Thus, the transcendence of Marx's and Engels' theories to the "social acceleration critical theory" and the current western social theory is highlighted more clearly. The "social acceleration critical theory" divides the social acceleration theory into three aspects: the acceleration of science and technology, the acceleration of social change, and the acceleration of life's pace, and a detailed analysis of social acceleration from these three aspects. What is valuable is that although the "Declaration" was created 170 years ago, the "Declaration" on these three aspects is not inferior to "social acceleration of critical theory."

First, technology is accelerating. The Declaration first emphasized the rapid improvement of production tools, including the use of modern machines such as steam engines, the use of chemistry in industry and agriculture, etc. The accelerated changes in these technologies have greatly increased productivity and rapidly increased material wealth. Secondly, the rapid improvement of transportation. The "Declaration" pointed out that the great development of navigation and land transportation has greatly expanded the scope of human communication and increased the frequency of communication. The whole world has become the raw material supply base and commodity sales market of capitalism. Thirdly, the rapid development of information dissemination methods, the Declaration listed the use of telegraphs, the improvement of these information and communication equipment has greatly accelerated the speed of information dissemination, increasing the number of information dissemination. In a word, the acceleration of science and technology has made "the productivity created by the bourgeoisie under its class rule for less than a
hundred years is more than the total productivity created by all generations in the past, and even greater [1]. "Social Acceleration Criticism Theory" mainly explains the acceleration of science and technology from the acceleration of the speed caused by the progress of science and technology, where the speed mainly refers to the speed in the sense of physics that can be observed and measured. It is precisely because of the increase of speed that time has realized the compression of space, and the importance of space has gradually decreased. "Space seems to be reduced by the speed of transportation and communication [3].

Second, the acceleration of social change. The first aspect of social change is the accelerated change of production relations. At the beginning of the Declaration, it was written that "the history of all societies up to now is the history of class struggle" [1]. Class struggle brought about the change of social form. Before capitalism, human society realized the slow transformation from primitive society to slave society and feudal society. However, the era of capitalism has accelerated this transformation. First, capitalism simplifies the class antagonism into the antagonism between the two classes, that is, the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Secondly, capitalism must constantly adjust class relations to ease the constraints of productive relations on productivity. The accelerated development of productive forces requires the accelerated transformation of production relations, otherwise production relations will become the resistance to the progress of productive forces. Therefore, "all the newly formed relationships will not be fixed until they are fixed, and all fixed things will disappear." The accelerating change in the production relationship is reflected in the relationship between people in a specific life, which shows that the emotions between people have undergone dramatic changes. "The bourgeoisie destroyed all feudal, patriarchal, and pastoral poetry in places where it had already ruled"[1]. Capitalism replaces human pursuits and aspirations for the best emotions with cold, ruthless transactions. In this cold, ruthless transaction, what other things can be nostalgic besides the interests? The second aspect of accelerating social change is the accelerated realization of globalization. The "Declaration" pointed out that "the bourgeoisie has opened up the world market and made the production and consumption of all countries world-wide." [1]." In the past, the state of isolation, self-sufficiency and isolation of various countries and nationalities was replaced, and the unilaterality and limitations of nationalities were widely exchanged and eliminated by the worldwide division of labor. Whether it is willing or not, every country and nation is involved in the torrent of globalization, and the ultimate result is to make "uncivilized and semi-civilized countries subordinate to civilized countries". To subordinate the peasant nation to the bourgeoisie nation and the east to the West. Since then, the real world history has begun. The critical theory of social acceleration holds that the main manifestations of social acceleration are "social affairs, social structure, and the increasingly unstable and fleeting modes and principles of action" [3]. It uses the term "current shrinkage" to describe the acceleration of social change, that is, it becomes fleeting and difficult to grasp, that is, the loss of stability caused by the acceleration of social change.

Third, the pace of life is accelerating. The Manifesto points out that "the more machines are popularized, the more detailed the division of labor is, the more the workload will increase, either because of the extension of working hours, or because of the increase of labor required in a certain period of time, the acceleration of machine operation, etc. [1]. There are two manifestations of this increase in labor, one is the extension of working hours, and the other is the increase in labor intensity, and both of these methods will accelerate the pace of life. The extension of labor time will inevitably reduce the living time, and the time for the individual to use leisure and self-development will be shortened, which will accelerate the pace of life. The increase in the speed of the machine will lead to an increase in labor intensity. Workers will produce more products and process more information in the same time, and the pace of work of the workers will accelerate. Therefore, no matter which of the above forms, the laborer will either speed up the pace of life or speed up the pace of production. In short, people are chasing the pace of the machine. The “social acceleration critical theory” defines the acceleration of life pace as “the increase in the amount of action events or experience events in a certain unit of time [3].” People have to do more things in less time, or people want to Doing more things takes more time, which makes people feel extremely lack of time,
and time becomes the scarcest resource.

From the above three aspects, the "Declaration" and "Social Acceleration Critical Theory" have different emphasis on the issue of social acceleration. The "Declaration" is more macroscopic, focusing on the changes in the whole world. The "social acceleration of critical theory" is more microscopic. It starts from the alienation of real people's lives and analyzes the state of social change. From the perspective of phenomenology, Marx is more focused on explaining the logic of the occurrence and development of the whole world from the essence. Although Rosa et al. clarified the logic of the generation and development of social life from the perspective of phenomenology, the different methods used to demonstrate and explain their respective problems, but they insisted on a criticality. The difference between Rosa's "Social Acceleration Criticism" and Marx's is that he himself is in capitalist society and has a deep understanding of capitalism. The criticism of his theory is limited to improvement, not against capitalism fundamentally. He hopes to improve capitalism through criticism. Through the analysis of "social acceleration", Marx pointed out that its inherent essence was scientific and technological innovation, which promoted social acceleration, but this social acceleration brought not happiness and happiness, but pain and hardship, anxiety and endless pressure. Therefore, people in this society can not really get a sense of happiness and happiness, the intensification of human materialization, only by eliminating the root causes of this unpleasant, can people really be free.

4. Criticism of "Social Acceleration" in the Declaration

The critical theory of social acceleration holds that the internal motivation leading to social acceleration is mainly social motivation - competition, cultural motivation - eternal promise and accelerated cycle. It also emphasizes that these three aspects are parallel relations, and to solve the problem of social acceleration, we should start with cultural adjustment and self-adjustment. This is actually a summary of the phenomenon of social acceleration, without exploring the underlying reasons behind the phenomenon. The depth that theory can reach is closely related to its starting point, position and value pursuit. To some extent, the theory of social accelerated criticism lacks a lofty pursuit of value from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie. At the same time, because this theory lacks a strong criticism of the analysis of the problem, it is only a sort of combing and reproduction. They mentioned that the programs such as cultural adjustment and self-adjustment are weak and pale for the solution of social acceleration. In contrast, the Declaration's critique of social acceleration is more thorough, more intense and more comprehensive. In this sense, the "Declaration"s critique of social acceleration transcends the "social accelerating critical theory". This transcendence is not only the transcendence of the position, but also the transcendence of the method and the transcendence of the theory.

The "Declaration" believes that the acceleration of society is the inevitable result of the development of capitalist society. Because of this, the issue of social acceleration has not been highlighted in the former capitalist society. “The bourgeoisie cannot survive unless it is a production tool, and thus a production relationship, and thus a revolution in all social relations.” [1] It can be seen that constant change is an inherent requirement for capitalism to survive. Why do other social forms need to be maintained in all aspects, but capitalist society must survive by accelerating change? This is because the essence of capitalism is the pursuit of the proliferation of capital. The "Declaration" points out that "the fundamental condition for the survival and rule of the bourgeoisie is the accumulation of wealth in private hands, the formation and appreciation of capital, and the condition of capital is wage labor" [1]. In order to survive, the bourgeoisie must constantly increase the value of capital, which must constantly squeeze the surplus value of wage labor. Only by accelerating the cycle of capital can it obtain more surplus value. Therefore, the acceleration of technology, social change and pace of life are just different forms of the bourgeoisie squeezing more surplus value. To fundamentally solve the problem of social acceleration, we can only achieve it by thoroughly dismantling the "private ownership" which is the basis of the existence of capitalism. The plan given in the Declaration is to "abolish private ownership". Only by eliminating private ownership can the bourgeoisie lose its "class nature", eliminate the exploitation of human
beings, and completely break the logic of capital appreciation, so that the wealth created by labor can be used by all. Only in this way can human liberation be realized and everyone can develop freely. It can be seen that the discussion of the acceleration of the Declaration is not a phenomenon discussion, but runs through the core values pursuit of the Declaration, that is, to realize the free and comprehensive development of everyone. Because of this value goal, the discussion of the acceleration problem has a deeper meaning. The "Declaration" discussion on the acceleration of society has never left the discussion about the logic of capital. Therefore, the "Declaration" can grasp the symptoms of the acceleration of capitalist society. Capitalism can only relieve symptoms by constantly accelerating. But capitalism can only be alleviated by accelerating and cannot eradicate its inherent ills.

It can be seen that the more fully capitalism develops, the more scientific and effective the judgment of the Declaration on the development of capitalist society can be proved. As long as people objectively and fully analyze the current problem of social acceleration, and as long as people have a profound insight into the underlying driving force behind social acceleration, they can draw the following conclusions: the fundamental law of human social development revealed in the Declaration has been true for a long time, and the fundamental contradictions of capitalist society revealed in the Declaration can not be overcome by themselves; the Declaration has not only failed to do so. On the contrary, it radiates stronger vitality.

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