

Feng Wangzhou: Analysis of Alan Wood's "Political Marxism's" Totalist Criticism of Capitalism——Textual Interpretation of "The Communist Manifesto"

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" Political Marxism" is an important academic school of contemporary foreign Marxism, which has an important influence in the British and American academic circles. Its main representatives include Robert Brenner (Robert Brenner) , Ellen Meiksins Wood , hereinafter referred to as Wood) , George Comninel , Hannes Lacher , Benno Teschke , etc. Wood and Brenner are collectively known as the standard-bearers of "political Marxism" and are world-recognized Marxist theorists and political scientists. Wood believes that the "Communist Manifesto" is a unique text, which has been regarded as the bible of communism and the symbol of the birth of scientific socialism. A manifesto for a unique analysis of the present and the future. Wood reveals the total criticism of capitalism in the Communist Manifesto from four aspects: the bourgeoisie, historical materialism, nation-state, and socialism. Important revelation .

1. What is "Political Marxism"

"Political Marxism" was formed in the 1970s . After more than 40 years of development, three generations of academic communities have been formed . The first generation included Robert Brenner, Ellen Meiksins Wood , Neal Wood, George Corminaire, Charles Post , Harvey Kaye and others. The second generation included Hannes Rachel, Benoit Taska, Michael A. Zmolek, Samuel Knafo , Geoff Kennedy) . The third generation includes Xavier Lafrance , Eren Duzgun and others.

The international academic community has conducted in-depth discussions on the "political Marxism" represented by Wood and Brenner, and recognized Wood and Brenner as the main founders of this school, emphasizing the significance of this school in the history of the development of Marxism. The famous British left-wing scholar Alex Callinicos (Alex Callinicos) believes that Wood adopted Brenner's views and methods to carry out an alternative interpretation of historical materialism, and Wood rejected Guy Boyce's interpretation of Brenner's accusations of voluntarism, but accepts the label of "political Marxism" it constructs. Paul Blackridge specializes in "political Marxism," of which he sees Wood and Brenner as the leading standard-bearers of a "political Marxism" that understands capitalism as a powerful system of violence, more so than any other production competition model is more effective. Georges Cornin et al. note that "Brenner's account sparked a heated debate in which Guy Boyce dubbed Brenner's analysis 'political Marxism', a term that began as Brenner's, Wood, and others accepted (perhaps initially reluctantly)". Ken Hirschkopp emphasizes that Wood is a political Marxist, along with Robert Brenner, Paul Sweezy, and Harry Magdoff in the United States, and Edward Thompson and Ralph Miliband who had close academic ties, and the "political Marxism" pioneered by Wood and Brenner emphasized the historical specificity of capitalism and the possibility of transcending it.

"Political Marxism" is based on a critique of multiple Marxist teleologies and formalisms, focusing on the analysis of pre-capitalism, contemporary capitalism, and the history of Western political thought, stimulating research across history, political theory, Research in the fields of political economy, sociology, international relations, and international political economy, and quickly exerted an important influence in the Anglo-American Marxist academic circles. It mainly revolves around the concept of social property relations (ownership) on historical class society, especially non- (former) Research on the development mode and form of capitalist society.

"Political Marxism" has formed its distinctive research methods and research topics on the basis of inheriting the dialectics and analytical methods of Marx's historical materialism, which are mainly manifested in four aspects. First, it emphasizes the reconstruction of the theoretical system of historical materialism through the clarification and precise demonstration of the basic concepts of historical materialism, mainly manifested in the basis and superstructure, productivity and production relations, social property relations, civil society, , the precise definit

ion of concepts such as the country. Second, it emphasizes the unique role of the political community in social transformation, highlights the role of political relations in social development, especially the role of social property relations, and points out that any society has a definite and unified social property relation. They highlight social property relations from complex social relations, and use them as symbols to distinguish various social forms, and analyze different types of class relations. The purpose of highlighting social property relations is not to construct abstract and static theoretical models of modes of production or of various structural levels, such as base and superstructure, but to understand and explain processes, including the history from one social formation to another. The process of change also includes the specific dynamics and practices of each social formation. Thirdly, it emphasizes the particularity of capitalism and its final demise. "Political Marxism" believes that capitalism was born in Britain by accident, with historical specificity and limitations; capitalism has a very different logic than other economic systems, that is, capitalism follows social property relations. The specific form of capital logic: the compulsion of competition, unlimited accumulation, the maximization of profits and the requirement to increase labor productivity. The logic of capitalism cannot be equated with the logic of the market, because markets existed in pre-capitalist societies, but capitalist forms of production had not yet taken shape at that time. Under the conditions of capitalism, capitalists and workers can only compete effectively in the market and carry out means of production and self-reproduction activities. Capitalism will die out due to the logic of capital and will be replaced by socialism. Fourth, it emphasizes the complex relationship between "economy" and "politics" of capitalism, arguing that in capitalist society, "economy" is a unique field with its own operating rules, power and forms of domination. The "political" field is separated from the "economic" field, supporting the logical expansion of capital. On the basis of the separation of "politics" and "economy", unique class relations and social relations have been formed, enabling capitalism to form a total social system and a new configuration of social power.

2. Four Dimensions of Wood's Criticism of Capitalism

As the main founder and standard-bearer of "Political Marxism", Wood made full use of the analytical methods and basic viewpoints of "Political Marxism" to make a general analysis

of capitalism from four aspects: bourgeoisie, historical materialism, nation-state, and socialism. criticism.

1. Capitalism and the bourgeoisie

Wood believes that capitalism and the bourgeoisie cannot be equated, but have significant differences. British capitalism is not caused by the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is both revolutionary and destructive. It is not a truly revolutionary class. Capitalism was born It is the separation of politics and economics.

First, the bourgeoisie has two faces and is not a real revolutionary class.

Wood pointed out that Marx and Engels believed that the bourgeoisie had played a very progressive role in history, and this progressive role had greatly changed the trajectory of human historical development. "The rule of the bourgeoisie impacts and disintegrates the feudal system from all aspects, and destroys the feudal hierarchy and moral concepts....The development of the capitalist economy requires a unified domestic market. Therefore, the bourgeoisie eliminated the feudal separatism and established a centralized bourgeois nation-state. The bourgeoisie has continuously adopted new technologies and machines, greatly increasing labor productivity and creating huge social productive forces." Independence has developed cities, promoted exchanges between various nations, opened up the world market, made the world a closely connected whole, created a miracle in human history, and thus opened the prelude to globalization, allowing human beings to be separated from individual individuals. To a united community, and ultimately to world history. "The productive forces created by the bourgeoisie in less than a hundred years of class rule are greater and greater than all the productive forces created by all previous generations." The bourgeoisie was originally an oppressed class, and after several The class struggle against the feudal aristocracy ended in the modern representative state. "In all these struggles it is necessary to win the support of the working class, and finally drag the modern proletariat into the political arena, arm the working class and wage its own struggle against the bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie also takes the most progressive aspects of its thinking Leave it to the working class: critical, anti-clerical, anti-superstitious, liberal, equal to a certain extent, in other words, enlightenment culture." From this perspective, the bourgeoisie has undoubtedly promoted the development of human society. Development promotes the progress

s of human civilization and is a revolutionary class. Wood pointed out that although the bourgeoisie is revolutionary, once the bourgeoisie destroys the feudal production relations and social relations, establishes the capitalist system, capitalist production relations and social relations, and realizes the total rule over capitalist society, then it must also face the reality that it cannot solve the system and relations created by itself that hinder the further development of productivity. This is because the bourgeoisie directly turns all relations into relations of economic interests. In this process, the bourgeoisie not only creates a weapon to kill itself, but also produces the proletariat that wields this weapon. "Capitalism will become an eliminated system in history due to its own laws of motion, and the bourgeoisie, regardless of the revolutionary role it once produced in history, will become an eliminated class." Judging from the high social productivity and relatively perfect social system, the bourgeoisie has a certain degree of advancement, but its historical limitations are still very prominent. It always aims at maximizing profits, exploits the broad working class, and destroys socialized large-scale production. It will damage social stability and harmony and create more and more complex social contradictions. Therefore, it will inevitably go to the end.

Second, the bourgeoisie cannot be confused with capitalists, bourgeois revolution and capitalism.

The French Revolution of 1789 is traditionally considered to be a revolution of the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy and liberalism, but according to Wood's understanding, in fact this revolution had little to do with capitalism. In this so-called bourgeois revolution, the heart of the revolution is not capitalists, or even the pre-capitalist business class, but public officials and professionals. The revolutionary purpose of these people is not to liberate capitalism, but to pursue citizen equality and a suitable occupation. They do not take capitalist wealth as the highest goal, but obtain a large amount of economic resources through public office, which is also the highest bourgeois occupation. As Wood points out, the purpose of the Continental Revolutions of 1848 was not to overthrow the capitalist system, but to establish a unified liberal or constitutional state with a degree of equality among its citizens. In some cases, such as Hungary or Italy, the struggle for a more democratic state was linked to the struggle for national autonomy. "However, if the Revolution of 1848 was not a socialist revolution or an anti-capitalist revolution, neither was it a definitive 'bourgeois revolution' as it is now generally understood: a revolution to liberate capitalism from feudal yoke." Thus, a bourgeois revolution It is no

t necessarily associated with the bourgeoisie, and the initiators of the bourgeois revolution can even be civil servants, professionals and intellectuals.

Wood pointed out that the emergence of British capitalism was not brought about by the "bourgeoisie", but by the peasants under competitive coercion. Both the landed aristocracy and the urban class in England belonged to the bourgeoisie. Nor was capitalism established in England through the struggle of a politically progressive "bourgeoisie" against a reactionary aristocracy. During the English Revolution of the seventeenth century, many land and city landowners fought against the king when their partnership threatened to give way to an "absolute" monarch; Absolutist goals. In this struggle they embraced certain principles of parliamentary rule and "limited" government, and the popular power they unleashed (and soon suppressed) produced some of the most radical democratic ideas the world had ever seen. But the revolution was never a class struggle .

Wood points out that if British capitalists were ever forced into a class struggle to secure their own class interests, it was not a revolutionary struggle against the ruling class. "In a sense, the capitalists—at least the agricultural capitalists—are inherently the ruling class in England. Even in the nineteenth century, the conflict that broke out between the landed and the industrial classes was essentially a conflict between two types of capital. 10 If British capitalism required a class struggle to escape political and economic constraints, it was directed primarily at subordinate classes, such as small proprietors, whose property rights (and sometimes dangerously radical ideas) interfered with capitalist accumulation. Therefore, the progressive bourgeoisie in the sense of Marx are not real capitalists. This politically progressive image of the bourgeoisie pushed the proletariat onto the political stage, promoted political development, and made Marx and Engels full of hope for the proletarian revolution. However, capitalism, as a progressive force, has been defeated by the French bourgeois revolution tarnish. Therefore, the so-called bourgeois revolution has no direct and inevitable connection with the emergence of capitalism, because capitalism already exists in the cracks of feudalism, and the formation of the bourgeoisie also heralds its ultimate fate. "It produces above all its own gravediggers. The fall of the bourgeoisie is as inevitable as the victory of the proletariat."

According to Wood's analysis, Marx and Engels have actually explained the difference between "bourgeoisie" and "capitalist", but some scholars confuse "bourgeoisie" and "capitalist"

and describe them as a single story of "modernity" and progress. The tendency to cover up the many contradictions of capitalism undermines the analysis of this aspect by Marx and Engels. Marx analyzed capitalism in more detail in his later writings, especially *Capital*. But in *The Communist Manifesto*, in poetic and impassioned prose, Marx described the nature of capitalism with clarity and depth as no one else has ever done. As Marx pointed out, the dual nature of the bourgeoisie inevitably determines that capitalism is both dynamic and destructive.

2. Capitalism and historical materialism

Wood adheres to the basic viewpoint and method of historical materialism, and believes that by exploring the class relations, production relations and social relations within capitalism, the exploitation mode of capitalism and the reality of the separation of the capitalist economic and political fields can be revealed more comprehensively. Highlight the duality of capitalism.

First, the nature and mode of exploitation of capitalism.

Wood pointed out that Marx and Engels had already revealed in *The Communist Manifesto* that continuous production reforms and the continuous dissolution of existing production relations and social relations are important signs that distinguish capitalism from any previous era. "All fixed and rigid relations and The old and venerable notions and opinions to which it was as to suit are swept away, all new forms of relations become antiquated before they can become fixed. All that is hierarchical and fixed melts into air, all that is sacred is profaned. In this case, what the bourgeoisie is pursuing is to constantly break through the old production relations and social relations and rebuild capitalist relations so as to realize the proliferation and expansion of capital. "Unlike all other earlier forms of society, capitalism requires constant change, a constant increase in productivity to increase labor efficiency, and a constant pursuit of profit. The need for profit and endless accumulation is imposed on capital by the very nature of the capitalist system: it We must accumulate and maximize profits in order to survive. The previous system has never been under such pressure." Capitalism has a unique mode of social production, and this is based on the understanding of historical materialism. Historical materialism emphasizes the changeable and specific historical relationship between man and nature, man and man, and man and society. People form human social organizations while obtaining th

e material conditions for survival. In human history, the material life Forms of social organization create class divisions, divisions between workers and those who exploit the labor of others, thus producing exploiters and exploited, "But our age, the age of the bourgeoisie, has one characteristic: it makes class Antagonisms are simplified. The whole of society is increasingly split into two hostile camps, into two classes directly opposed to each other: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat." This split inevitably leads to contradictions and conflicts between the two classes, so that class struggle becomes the driving force for the development of human society. In class struggle, opposing classes tend to dissolve, and provide a basis for the reshaping of new social relations. "However, class struggle has been a moving force in history since the beginning of class society, but it has taken different forms in different societies. Every particular mode of production, every system of class relations, has its own It has its own internal logic, its own requirements, its own conditions of survival and success, its own dynamics, its own forms of conflict and struggle. Capitalism has very special conditions, which are different from any previous mode of production. It requires constant transforming productive forces." In this respect, Marx's emphasis is not on the historical process of technological progress, but on the historically specific influence of specific social relations. Marx believed that capitalism is unique, this unique characteristic is that the contradictory movement between the bourgeoisie and the working class constitutes the driving force to promote the development of history, and the contradictory movement between them also promotes the transformation of social relations. This is exactly the manifestation of "political Marxism" going deep into social practice activities to investigate the development of human society, especially capitalist society.

Wood argues that the pressure to accumulate and change the means of production is rooted in the capitalist mode of exploitation, the means by which capital extracts labor power from workers. In the market, capitalists and workers constitute a unique exploitative relationship. Capitalists sell goods and services through the market, while workers sell their labor power in the market to make a living. Capitalists rely on obtaining the maximum output at the minimum cost within a limited time. out. "To be sure, the proletarian worker has little leeway when the sale of his labor power for wages becomes the only means of subsistence, or even the opportunity for labour. But this coercion is impersonal. Coercion is enforced here, Or what appears to be so is not people, but the market." Therefore, in order to adapt to market competition, capital is constantly seeking new technologies, new means, new organizational and control models t

to increase labor productivity. In this sense, in order to create "competitiveness" in the market, it must mean that capital is constantly pursuing accumulation and profit maximization, and it also means that new technologies, new commodities, new services, new demands, new organizational forms and new Constant changes in social arrangements. "As Marx pointed out, capitalism is the highest form of exploitation, the last stage in which producers are separated from the means of production, beyond which all classes are abolished, and because capitalism for the first time created a genuine A universal history that incorporates the entire world into its unique expansion drive."

Second, capitalism has a dual character.

From the perspective of negative effects, Wood believes that under the capitalist system, all production is to realize profits, expand capital accumulation and proliferation, under this condition, the distribution of resources and labor is of course not controlled by people as many people as possible. It is not determined by the contribution of people to their well-being, but by people's contribution to profitability. So a society like the US has the ability to provide food, clothing, housing, education and healthcare for all its members, but there is widespread poverty, homelessness, malnutrition, unaffordable healthcare, education system, etc. In American society, there are also deep-rooted social divisions, such as the mutual reinforcement of class exploitation and racism. Wood argues that under capitalism, almost all human needs are organized in unprecedented ways, and that everything, even the most basic needs like food and housing, are produced for profit. The impact of the capitalist system on human life and social relations, as well as on nature, is severe and far-reaching. In summary, under capitalism, everything becomes a commodity bought and sold on the market, the disguise of capitalism is unmasked, and full-scale and open exploitation is practiced for the purpose of capital accumulation, proliferation and profit maximization. As Wood points out, on the eve of the 21st century, the commodification of life has reached unimaginable proportions, with everything from food to culture to health care distorted by the coercion of the market. "The commercialization, accumulation, profit maximization and competition logic of capitalism affect the entire social order." The logic of the capitalist market is the logic of capital, with the pursuit of profit maximization as the fundamental purpose. Therefore, the spatial expansion of the capitalist market will inevitably cause serious damage to social structures and the natural environment. This is evident in the costs of poverty, crime, environmental pollution, waste of natural resources and lives. Although the

commodification process of capitalism was not as deep in Marx's time, its presciently was remarkable. "Wood argued in an article in the June 1997 Review Monthly entitled "Return to Marx" that today's globalization or generalization of capitalism is the result of what Marx and Engels called the logical development of capital, this logic is the logic of accumulation, commodification, profit maximization, and competition."

Wood argues that although Marx has pointed out that capitalists force workers to work, workers are forced to work not only to support themselves and their families, but also to maximize profits for their employers. But there is also this question: "What happens to human labor when it is transformed from the exercise of human creativity to merely a profitable activity or a commodity? Its value is not in its satisfaction to the worker or its benefit to the community, Rather, it lies in the returns it can realize on the market and its contribution to the accumulation of capital." Clearly, under the capitalist system and its mode of production, work must be organized in a different way as required by the logic of capital, and must be done at the lowest cost to maximize output, which inevitably has a major impact on human well-being. Under capitalism, the sole purpose of work is to maximize profit for the capitalist. The effects are most pronounced when workers are merely "appendages" to machines on an assembly line, but they can have similar effects when profit maximization is the primary motivation for managing work. Work is supposed to be a creative, fulfilling activity, but is more likely to be a pointless chore.

In terms of positive impact, Wood pointed out that capitalism has created more wealth and enormous productivity than previous generations combined. The revolution in productivity has created unprecedented ability to create material conditions for the well-being of everyone. "But here's another paradox: If capitalism creates unprecedented material wealth, then the ability to maximize everyone's material wealth remains a capability, not a reality. In fact, capitalism prevents it from being a reality ...one of the most fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system is the vast gap between its 'huge' productive capacity and the quality of life it provides." It is clear that today the contradiction between the productive capacity of capitalism and the quality of life is manifested in the growing polarization between the rich North and the poor South. But the same contradictions are evident within advanced capitalist economies. "Political Marxism thus understands capitalism as a powerful system of violence that is more effective

tive than any other mode of production competition hitherto.” But at the same time “creative destruction” occurs that gradually cancels out its positive effects.

Third, the separation of capitalist politics and economics.

Wood notes that a distinction must be made between those political, cultural, and intellectual developments that are clearly linked to capitalist economic development, and those that are not. Marx's interpretation of this aspect is multi-faceted and easily confused, so the nature and development of capitalism can be better understood only by revealing the unique parts of Marx's interpretation. Capitalism requires a "rational" (that is, "efficient" or profitable) organization of production, not "rationalism" in the best Enlightenment sense. "Capitalism requires a disciplined and docile workforce, not a critical citizen at all. In fact, a 'rational' organization of production (not to mention the power and property) are more dangerous and probably more negligent of Enlightenment principles than workers who embrace certain irrational superstitions or certain types of religious fundamentalism."

For capitalism, the establishment of a modern representative state shows the maturity of capitalist development, but at the same time, contemporary capitalist democracy also means the disadvantages of this representative state, such as the continuous "retirement" of the Trump administration in the United States and anti-globalism. Globalization policy, Brexit, France's "yellow vest" movement, etc. The bourgeoisie is not now a literal "ruling class": its class dominance does not depend on exclusive rights to political rights, nor on a clear, legal division between capitalist rulers and the proletariat. Workers are citizens with full voting rights, and capitalism has proven itself capable of tolerating universal adult suffrage in a way no other form of class rule can. But the realization of capitalist democracy remains ambiguous, and in capitalist "democracy" wealth still means the privilege of access to political power, or, as Marx and Engels insisted, the state is usually for the bourgeoisie. act for the benefit. "Modern state power is nothing but a committee for the management of the common affairs of the entire bourgeoisie."

There is an even more fundamental contradiction in capitalist "democracy". Capitalism tolerates "democracy" because capitalists control the labor of others not through exclusive political rights, but through exclusive property. While capital needs state support, workers are force

d to sell their labor for purely "economic" reasons. Since they do not own the means of production, selling labor power for wages is the only way for them to obtain living conditions, even their own means of labor. And they can be made to work for capital without direct political coercion. "The basic aim of the capitalist system is the production and self-expansion of capital. " Generally speaking, purely "economic" coercion is sufficient. This means that, even in its best and most "democratic" form, capitalism can and must confine equality to a separate "political" sphere which does not and must not intrude on the economic areas or undermine economic inequality. Workers are subject to the direct control of others not only in the workplace but in all spheres of life as well. Capitalism thus creates a political sphere governed by "democracy," but at the same time, by the same means, it places large swaths of human life outside the confines of democracy. In other words, capitalism gives a lot and takes a lot away. "In a sense, the separation of economics and politics in capitalism is, more precisely, the differentiation of political functions themselves, with the distribution of the differentiated functions between the private economic sphere and the public sphere of the state. This distribution separates the political functions directly associated with the extraction and appropriation of surplus labor from those with more general and communal ends." As Wood points out, the separation of capitalist politics from economics reflects the division of labor and its labor-capital relations, and this separation made democracy an ideology of capitalism, which in turn became synonymous with socialism, and necessitated a unified struggle in the economic and political spheres.

3. Capitalism and the Nation State

Wood believes that the globalization of capitalism is a vivid embodiment of capital expansion. In the process of globalization, capitalism breaks the geographical space boundaries of nation-states, creates a global market, and in the process of its expansion, forces all countries in the world to take the capitalist way of life and production, capitalism actually creates a world that develops "in its own image". "The Manifesto describes a capitalist system that is about to devour everything: through the intermediary of commodities, capital begins to fully control the world of people and the world of things; The progressive process of infinite rationalization eliminates all factors of traditional society; relying on the mechanism of the nation-state, capital not only fully controls social life, but also drags the entire world into the capitalist system." It should be said that in the era when Marx and Engels lived, capitalist globalization had not yet unfolded, but today, with the global expansion of capital logic, globalization has become th

e most spectacular picture today. "In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels made an astonishing and prophetic vision of the expansion of capitalism around the world, describing it as unstoppable as a force capable of destroying the Great Wall." Globalization has become a capitalism The synonym has become a huge destructive force, no one or any country can stop its footsteps, as if capitalism has become the final social form of mankind, it is irreversible, and it has won a completely overwhelming victory in the world.

However, in the face of the financial crisis in Southeast Asia and the West, the rhetoric of these so-called capitalist triumphalists is somewhat hollow, which actually reveals that, on the one hand, the logic of capital (capital accumulation, competition and profit maximization) is global It realizes penetration and expansion; on the other hand, it points out that it is in the global expansion that the uniqueness and limitations of capitalism gradually emerge. Against this background, the Communist Manifesto describes capitalist expansion as a very contradictory process, which is more convincing than the triumphalism of capitalism: "A society has created so vast means of production and exchange, as Just as the sorcerer can no longer control the forces of the underworld conjured by his spells, commercial crises return periodically enough to put the very existence of an entire bourgeois society to the test. In these crises an epidemic breaks out which, in earlier epochs, This epidemic—overproduction—seems like an absurd phenomenon." The methods capital uses to overcome these crises are themselves the means by which it paves the way for, and prevents, even more destructive crises. Capitalism, for example, escapes and deflects its internal crises by moving outward, into new markets and colonies . Today, capitalism has become an almost universal system that no longer has the leeway and space for external expansion that rescued it from internal contradictions as it did in the past, so it has been affected by these contradictions in completely new ways. Today, capital is no longer able to maintain maximum profitability through corresponding economic growth, but increasingly relies on the help of the "neoliberal" state to redistribute wealth in favor of the rich and to redistribute wealth within and within the state. Increased inequality between countries. Thus capitalism has been proving correct not only in its occasional dramatic crises, but also in its "normal" and long-term development, in Marx's predictions of its paradoxical expansion. It is also in the process of capital globalization that the inherent contradictions and problems of capitalism are further expanded, and its injustice is further exposed, which will inevitably lead

to self-destruction and provide favorable conditions for mankind to eventually move towards communism.

Wood pointed out that among the prevailing theories on the demise of nation-states, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's "Empire" discusses the dissolution of national sovereignty most famously. They believe that globalization has weakened the role of nation-states, capital has broken through the geographical space constraints of nation-states, and the sovereignty of nation-states has been destroyed. "Indeed, nation - state sovereignty, while still valid, has steadily declined in parallel with the process of globalization." But contrary to these notions, Wood argues that globalization has made the nation-state less important to capital than it has been. Instead it increased. Capital requires nation-states to maintain the conditions of accumulation and "competitiveness" in various ways, including direct subsidies borne by taxpayers; maintaining labor discipline and social order in the face of austerity and "resilience" to enhance the mobility of capital sex while blocking labor mobility; managing massive rescue operations for capitalist economies in crisis (Mexico yesterday, "Asian tigers" today) organized often by international agencies but always by National taxes are paid and are enforced by national governments . "Global capitalism increasingly relies on a territorially based system of nation-states. Global capital is more interested in linking itself to local nation-states exercising sovereignty than in dissolving nation-states or pursuing the unrealistic pursuit of a single-world state "Global capital relies on nation-states to maintain their property rights, ensure monetary and financial stability, and achieve effective supply of labor and social stability.

Even super-powerful imperialist countries need the cooperation of subordinate countries to serve as transmission belts and executive agencies. "Capital is by no means less dependent on geographical states than it was before. In a sense, it is more dependent, and the world is more of a world of nation-states than before." Thus, from the perspective of global governance From this perspective, the nation-state is still the main tool of global governance. The vast majority of nation-states in the world are developing countries, in an underdeveloped state, and the state itself acts as an exploitative function, exploiting farmers, workers and other broad masses of the people. Capital's need for the state made the nation-state once again the focus of class struggle. The state is clearly linked to class exploitation, with implications for both class organization and class consciousness. This helps to overcome the divisions of the working class and build a new unity against the common enemy - capitalism, which may also help to turn the c

lass struggle into a political struggle. "If the state is increasingly the target of anti-capitalist struggles, it can also become the focal point of local or national class struggle. The state not only acts as a force for working class unity and prevents internal divisions, but also as a labor movement and its regional allies 33 The nation-state plays a dual role in the process of globalization. On the one hand, it acts as a diverter for capital export and import ; energy field.

4. Capitalism and Socialism

According to Wood, capitalism produces the ability to maximize material wealth and spiritual wealth, laying a solid foundation for higher stages of society. Socialism will build upon the productive forces created by capitalism, but it will eliminate the accumulation, profit-maximizing logic of capital that creates a gap between productive capacity and quality of life.

Firstly, capitalism creates a working class capable of overthrowing capitalism and putting socialism on top of it. According to Wood, capitalism creates a mass working class of "blue collar" and "white collar" who share common characteristics in terms of capital exploitation. "These workers are strategically located at the heart of the labor system that depends on them, and this strategic location gives them a social force that no other social force can transform capitalism into socialism." The Worker Classes themselves are undergoing major transformations in structure, interests, ideology, and class consciousness under the general rule of capitalism, so that the working class must be effectively mobilized if it is to be transformed into an effective anti-capitalist political force. Organize and educate them to form a community of class revolution, so as to realize the self-liberation of the working class and the liberation of mankind as a whole. "The specific interests of the working class coincide with the general interests of mankind; the self-emancipation of the working class includes the liberation of all mankind from class exploitation in general; the working class not only has fundamental class interests in socialism, but also Has a special capacity for collectivization to achieve it." The working class movement has fought historic struggles in many parts of the world, won many important victories, and is a revolutionary force. And with the development of the proletarian movement, more and more other classes and groups joined the ranks of the proletariat, and the ranks of the proletariat gradually grew stronger.

Second, capitalism creates two forces that divide and unite the working class. Wood pointed out that Marx and Engels held a relatively optimistic attitude towards the revolutionary struggle of the working class, and believed that the development of capitalism would inevitably lead to the total outbreak and total collapse of its internal contradictions, but they also very clearly recognized that in the capitalist system and its Under the mode of production, there are two forces, one that divides the working class and the other that unites the working class.

One is the forces that divide the working class. Wood points out that the working class is divided by race, gender, and many other "identities," not to mention resurgent nationalisms that run counter to Marx's belief that the global economy created by capitalism will be accompanied by a new internationalism. That's not the only factor that's dividing the working class. Paradoxically, the very organization of capitalist production often fragments it. Capitalist production tends to focus workers' grievances and struggles in their individual workplaces and against their own particular employers. Marx believed that "every class struggle is a political struggle", which undoubtedly means that every class struggle, even in the workplace, even on purely "economic" issues, is about class power and resistance ruling. In a sense, capitalism separates economic and political struggle simply because the "economic" sphere has its own life and power structures. "The capitalist market has its own 'economic' coercion; the capitalist workplace has its own hierarchy, authority, and rules; unlike any class before it, the bourgeoisie, as a ruling class, has economic power that is not directly dependent on political power, even if it ultimately depends on the state to maintain the property system on which its class power rests." Thus, a struggle over economic interests is often seen in labor conflicts between workers and capital, but their class struggle does not extend to political field.

The second is to unite the strength of the working class. Wood argued that as industrial capitalism improved the organization of production, transportation, and communications, the working class would increasingly unite as a cohesive force, which in some quarters had become a reality. The struggle of the working class has achieved major results, such as shortened working days, unemployment insurance, basic security, and improved quality of life. In fact, if the working class wants to form a real "class", it must change from the split stage of being dispersed to the stage of building an anti-bourgeois alliance and even a revolutionary party. "The organization of the proletarians into classes, and thus into parties, is constantly being undermined by the self-competition of the workers. But this organization is always reborn, each time stron

ger, stronger, and more powerful. It Utilize the divisions within the bourgeoisie to force them to recognize the individual interests of the workers in the form of law." The continuous struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, allows the working class to gradually mature its class consciousness and understand its own class more deeply. attributes a nd social status; on the other hand, the working class has gradually transformed from a spontaneous power struggle in pursuit of economic interests and identity to a self-made class struggle in order to realize the liberation of itself and all mankind. In this process, the capitalist private ownership of the means of production will be abolished, the anti-capitalist alliance of the whole world will be realized, the struggle of the vast majority of working people will be promoted, and the interests of the overwhelming majority will be realized. The proletarian revolution is thus characterized by: "the worldwide character of the struggle; the abolition of all existing modes of appropriation; the movement of the vast majority."

Thirdly, socialism is based on the persistence and development of "true" Marxism and socialism. Wood pointed out that in the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels had already pointed out that socialism would be realized with the collapse of capitalism. But very unfortunately, socialism did not come true as quickly as they predicted, and there were even serious twists and turns. This is manifested in: one is the beginning of the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, when socialism changed from theory to reality, from one country to many countries, and socialism experienced a climax of development; the other is the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the drastic changes in Eastern Europe and the end of the world socialist system, socialism went from a high tide to a low tide. Wood believes that the root cause of the tragedy of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the drastic changes in Eastern Europe is that the Soviet Union and Eastern European socialist countries not only did not really understand the fundamental issues of what is Marxism and what is socialism theoretically, but also in socialism. In his practical activities, he gradually deviated from the road of Marxism and socialism, fell into the predicament of historical nihilism, oligarchism, pessimism, and formalism, and moved towards self-destruction.

Fourthly, we should go beyond the false democracy of capitalism and realize real socialist democracy. Wood profoundly pointed out that capitalism has spent centuries creating the proletarian masses through very brutal and coercive means, and even achieved the development of productive forces that could not be achieved in the Marx era.

Of course, this is not to deny that countries such as the Soviet Union have indeed successfully developed productive forces, and their extraordinary development speed has far exceeded Marx's predictions. The point is that it is very difficult to achieve such rapid development through the democratic organization of production (which Marx considered to be the essence of socialism). Capitalism has achieved these achievements not through democratic means but through the exploitation of the broad working class over the centuries. Although Marx and Engels could not foresee the development of the proletarian revolution and the socialist movement later, they attached great importance to the assumption that the socialist revolution was most likely to succeed under the more advanced conditions of capitalism. In this sense, the eventual failure of the Russian Revolution occurred without these prerequisites, fulfilling his prophecy. Therefore, the development of socialism must be combined with the democratic management of the people, so that the people can participate in the management of the country and become the practitioners and supervisors of the operation of state power. To this extent, democracy is synonymous with socialism, without democracy there is no socialism.

3. Evaluation and Enlightenment

Based on the reality of contemporary capitalist society, Wood made a general criticism of capitalism with the Communist Manifesto as the center, and clarified a series of important theoretical and practical issues.

First, Wood correctly revealed the fallacy of the "bourgeois paradigm". By analyzing the relationship between capitalism and the bourgeoisie, she believes that the traditional "bourgeois paradigm" is actually a circular argument that confuses the difference between the bourgeoisie and capitalism. It is an ideological Western historical development model. "It presents capitalism as the natural articulation of commercialization, urban growth, and trade expansion." 3

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On the one hand, this kind of argument exaggerates the differences between rural areas and cities, agriculture and industry, feudalism and capitalism; But in fact, whether it is rural, agricultural, urban, or industrial, whether it is landlords or bourgeoisie, there is no standard among

g them that can be measured by capitalism, because agriculture and landlords can be both non-capitalist and capitalistic. of a socialist nature.

Capitalism is actually a system with unique laws of motion. Through technological renewal, competition and profit maximization are realized. This has nothing to do with the above distinctions between agriculture, industry or commerce, or between rural and urban areas. The so-called modernity created by the bourgeoisie is closely related to the Western Enlightenment, but not necessarily related to capitalism. As Wood points out " the bourgeoisie of eighteenth-century France was not a capitalist class, or, to a large degree, not even a merchant class of any kind" . It is even more officials and experts who launched the revolution, and they paid attention to real interests such as citizen equality and opposition to privileges. Therefore, these so-called revolutionaries in France do not belong to the category of capitalism.

Second, Wood uses the basic views and methods of historical materialism to reveal the exploitative nature of capitalism, revealing the separation and duality of the political and economic fields of capitalism. Based on the analytical framework of historical materialism constructed by Marx, Wood proceeded from the contradiction between economic base and superstructure, productivity and production relations, went deep into the interior of capitalist society, and explored the logic of pursuing profit maximization due to its infinite accumulation and proliferation. Conflicts and contradictions between man and nature, man and man, man and society . Under the guidance of this logic, capitalism will inevitably bring about dual attributes. The negative side is the commercialization of capitalist society brought about by the logic of capital . Commodity fetishism came into being, which makes capitalism strengthen the exploitation of ordinary laborers. The positive side is that the wealth and productivity created by capitalism laid the foundation for the development of a higher stage of human society—socialist society, but at the same time fell into the vicious circle of "creative destruction". It is precisely through the separation of politics and economy that capitalism conceals its ambition to dissolve popular power and seek ideological hegemony and more comprehensive rule.

Third, Wood correctly pointed out the historical conditions for the realization of socialism. Wood based her approach on "political Marxism," emphasizing the role of political community and social property relations. Wood argues that although capitalism has a strong influence on dispelling the consciousness and collective power of the working class, it cannot change

the natural attributes of the working class as the subject of revolution, and the global expansion of capitalism's operating rules will inevitably bring about the expansion of global contradictions. It makes possible the reshaping of the class consciousness of the global working class and the restructuring of class power. To rebuild socialism in the 21st century, we must break through from within capitalism, and the premise is to correctly understand the essence of Marxism and socialism, so as to transcend capitalist ideology, political hegemony, and cultural hegemony. This requires future socialism. The first goal is to build a completely real democracy, so as to dispel the falseness brought about by capitalist democracy and realize the return of real democracy.

Wood's total critique of capitalism is comprehensive and profound, but it must be pointed out that Wood's total critique of capitalism still has several theoretical issues that need to be further improved and clarified.

First, the transformation of capitalism from the era of large-scale machine industrial production to the era of automated production (post-industrial era)The profound implications are unclear. The impact of changes in the capitalist mode of production on the entire economy and society is significant, especially the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism, which has brought capitalist society into a consumer society, neoliberalism, financialization, virtual economy, etc. However, these changes are profound and comprehensive. In a sense, they have basically rebuilt the class structure and social structure of capitalist society, and deeply influenced the mainstream thoughts and values of capitalist society. Although Wood saw some changes in capitalism and believed that it was brought about by the generalization of the logic of capitalism pointed out by Marx, he still stuck to the traditional way of thinking and did not deeply realize that the fundamental impact of these changes directly led to capitalist society.

Deradicalization, derevolutionization, desocialization.

Second, in the current wave of mutual agitation between globalization and “anti-globalization,” the profound impact of capitalist globalization is still unclear. It should be said that globalization was originally vigorously promoted by capitalist countries in order to realize their capital expansion and profit maximization, and they themselves are the biggest beneficiaries of

globalization. However, with the development of globalization, the industrial hollowing out of capitalist countries. In the face of the rapid development of the vast number of developing countries, capitalist countries, especially some new imperialist countries, feel pressure. In order to maintain their so-called competitiveness and hegemony, they implement anti-globalization policies. This not only severely damages the international political and economic order, but also hinders the process of globalization. On the one hand, the economic development of developing countries is restricted, and on the other hand, developed countries also face the problem of economic weakness, which eventually leads to the weakness of the entire world economy. Can't get out of the financial crisis. Developing countries represented by China vigorously advocate the integration of world trade and economic globalization, and build an open, mutually beneficial and win-win new international political and economic order. "Political Marxism" has not conducted an effective analysis of this contradiction and development trend, nor has it conducted research on the status and changes of the vast number of developing countries in globalization, thus weakening the persuasiveness of its theory.

Thirdly, the interpretation of the status and development trends of the nation-state in global political and economic relations remains unclear. With the advent of the era of new imperialism, the global expansion of the logic of capital has become more obvious. As the main body of contemporary international relations, the nation-state must face the infiltration and manipulation of the logic of capital. It has become a difficult problem to use foreign capital to develop the domestic economy while maintaining national security and sovereign independence. At the same time, in contemporary times, nation-states continue to strengthen their internal and external functions, but according to Marx, nation-states should constantly

Wood profoundly revealed the essence and future development trend of capitalism, which has important enlightenment for the revival of socialism in China and even in the 21st century.

First, it helps to have a deeper understanding of the role of the working class as the main revolutionary force. Some Western scholars have pointed out that when there were many large-scale incidents of working-class activism in Western Europe and North America, these Western European countries may have even been brought to the brink of revolution, but the working class never brought socialism in advanced capitalist countries, while These countries seemed t

he most likely candidates for revolution for Marx and Engels. It is precisely because these developed capitalist countries have not realized the proletarian revolution that even many socialists have doubts about the prospects of the new society. Therefore, in the era of globalization, many people, including some leftist scholars, believe that class politics has given way to discourse politics, socialism has no market, and the working class is no longer the driving force for social change, nor can it become the main body of the socialist liberation project.

“The working class cannot realize the expectations of traditional Marxism, and this has become the main reason why leftist intellectuals abandon socialism or at least seek other agents.” Both post-Marxism and post-modernism believe that the working class has lost its revolutionary subjectivity. Because they have been fragmented and cannot form a collective revolutionary force in the sense of Marx, they can only be atomized existences subject to the capitalist system and its production relations. Therefore, they pay more attention to intellectuals, students, women, social marginalized groups, the People's League, and the New Socialist Movement, and regard them as the main body and historical agent of social change. But, “to displace the working class from the socialist struggle is either a general strategic error or a challenge to the analysis of social relations and forces, and at least redefines the The essence of liberation endowed by it.” But in fact, the above-mentioned so-called revolutionary subjects are either on the margins of society without any right to speak, or keep a certain distance from direct labor-capital conflicts, and cannot truly feel the helplessness brought about by labor-capital conflicts. Reconciled class antagonisms cannot understand the serious exploitation imposed on the working class, so they cannot touch the capitalist system and production relations and change the actual state of alienation. As Wood points out, “The influence of capitalism on the political development of the working class will ultimately vindicate Marx. The conditions for working-class consciousness and organization to form the conclusions remain, and the working class at the heart of capitalism remains the only one capable of transforming Its social forces. At the same time, the capitalist mode of development may overcome the various factors that have so far played a role in those class formation processes.” Measures to enhance “flexibility”, the relationship between the state and “globalized” capital The complicity between them is becoming more and more transparent. As predicted in the Manifesto, capitalism has spread to a large extent around the world, and capitalism has broken through the boundaries of national and national geographic spaces, extending its logic of unlimited accumulation, competition, and profit maxi

mization to every corner of the world; thus , the economic class struggle will truly enter the political dimension, and the working class will truly be united in new and unprecedented ways . In many countries, the labor movement, which has been dormant for a period of time, shows signs of reawakening, manifested as resistance to neoliberalism and neo-imperialism. This resistance fully reflects that the political nature of the working class has not faded, but has been further strengthened in the global anti-capitalist movement. The purpose of the political struggle of the working class is to overthrow the rule of capitalism, establish a proletarian regime, and realize political rule, which also provides a solid foundation for the further elimination of classes and the realization of political, ideological and human emancipation. "We want to abolish classes. By what means can this be achieved?"? This is the political rule of the proletariat. "

Second, it helps to reveal the essence and development trend of capitalism. By analyzing the "Communist Manifesto", Wood reveals the essence, characteristics and development trend of capitalism in general, which is of great practical significance for a better understanding of capitalism's hegemonic behavior and its final demise. It should be said that the separation between the political field and the economic field of contemporary capitalism is even more serious. The so-called liberal democracy of capitalism has completely become an ideology and tool to cover up its class rule. Not only have a series of inherent contradictions in capitalism not been resolved in globalization , but further increased and intensified. In order to achieve its hegemony, capitalism will comprehensively use economic means and super-economic means (administrative, judicial, military) for total manipulation, and even use infinite war to achieve its political goals. In the contemporary world, the expansion of capitalism clearly reflects the characteristics of neo-liberalism and neo-imperialism, and also presents the transformation of contemporary capitalism. From an internal point of view, the transformation of contemporary capitalism is a certain reconstruction of labor-capital relations and social relations, which stabilizes the internal governance system of capitalism. This endless expansion will inevitably bring about endless plunder at the global level and the exposure of its weaknesses, which provides an important impetus for the integration of revolutionary forces at the global level and the formation of an anti-capitalist revolutionary community effect.

It is precisely because of the exploitative nature of capitalism and the practical significance of socialism revealed by the "Communist Manifesto" that its theoretical power has influenced the development of capitalism, which is manifested in: In developed capitalist countries, the

phenomenon of child labor in factories has been generally abolished and to a certain extent free education for all. Communications, banking, transportation, and other areas of capitalist society were once publicly owned, and all of this happened without undermining the capitalist system. In fact, capitalism should undertake the functions of public services and social security, but it has not been realized, and it is precisely because of the long-term resistance movement of the working class that forced capitalism to promote a relatively complete social security system, thereby realizing the protection of itself to a certain extent. "safety net" and save it from destructive tendencies. The goal of today's neoliberal politics is to "privatize" anything imaginable that operates in the interests of capitalism—from prisons to the postal service to pensions. But it also ensures that every unprofitable public enterprise, every social service sector, remains subject to market coercion. It should be said that the contradictions of capitalism in today's era are even more serious. In its struggle to remain "competitive," capitalism is destroying the services and institutions that so often saved it from self-destruction. But even if neoliberalism is not entirely successful in its destructive actions, the capitalist system will always limit any efforts to limit the damage it does to people and nature. "It seems as though the logic of the system has reached the point where capitalism's destructive power has outstripped its ability to repair or compensate for the damage it has caused." 45

Capitalism, too, will always limit the scope of democracy. It will never allow for a truly democratic society free of class oppression; one in which labor is not transformed into an instrument of capital for profit; childcare and relations between the sexes are not distorted by the demands of capitalism; One country oppresses another; culture is not distorted by the market; and so on. So as long as we live under capitalism, we will live in a society of undemocratic and irresponsible capitalist corporate needs and actions, both through the direct exercise of class power and through the "market", shaping our social and natural environments. as Marx and Engels said, it is now more evident than ever that a society driven by the compulsion of capital accumulation must give way to a more humane and democratic society. To bring about such a transformation, the main driving force must be class struggle. To replace this inhumane and undemocratic society, to realize real economic democracy and political democracy, and to realize the harmony between man and nature, man and man, and man and society, we must realize the political revolution of the proletariat and move toward socialism. This socialist society that transcends the current capitalist system completely eliminates the contradiction between labor

and capital, transcends capitalist ideology, transcends capitalist false democracy, changes the existing unequal class relations and social structure, and strives for human freedom. Comprehensive development provides the necessary conditions. Socialism, the antithesis of capitalism, therefore has eternal value from the point of view of bringing about change.

Socialism in the contemporary world has shown a new development trend after the tortuous development after the Cold War, especially marked by the great achievements of China, Vietnam and other socialist countries. For China, socialism with Chinese characteristics is the latest development of scientific socialism, and with the vigorous development of China's socialist modernization, it has shown infinite vigor and vitality, highlighting the development direction of contemporary socialism, which is conducive to strengthening the realization of Confidence in the revival of socialism in the 21st century.

In short, based on the "Communist Manifesto", Wood comprehensively and profoundly explained the total criticism of capitalism. On the one hand, it reflects the determination to adhere to Marx's "two inevitabilities" thesis, and on the other hand, it highlights Marx's historical materialism as the most powerful weapon against capitalism. The value of the weapon of Marxist criticism further embodies the characteristics and theoretical demands of the "Political Marxism" school. In the eyes of Wood, contemporary capitalism has entered the period of new imperialism or post-capitalism. The contradictions in this period have not been resolved, but have shown the characteristics of expansion and intensification. This is highlighted in the continuous division of contemporary capitalist society. and instability, which in turn hastens the development drive from capitalism to socialism.