**Politics: What is Marxist Political Philosophy?; Formation, Connotation and Characteristics of Marx and Engels’ Political Philosophy**

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**Summary**

**The political philosophy of Marx and Engels is not the political philosophy of Marx alone, but a political philosophy system jointly created and perfected by Marx and Engels. The political philosophy of Marx and Engels critically inherited the Western utopian socialist thought, but it was mainly established on the basis of reflection and criticism of the reality of Western capitalist society and its theoretical basis, which is liberal thought.**

**The political philosophy of Marx and Engels is a political philosophical system with the materialist conception of history as the main ontological foundation, the complete liberation of all mankind as its realistic goal, the transition from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom as its social ideal, the comprehensive and free development of each person as the ultimate goal of social development, the proletarian revolution and the proletariat as the main means and main force to achieve the above realistic goal, and its basic way to achieve an ideal society is to make labor the first necessity of life and contributing to society to the best of one's ability. The political philosophy of Marx and Engels has the main characteristics of the organic unity of idealism and practicality, humanity and class, revolution and construction, systematicity and profundity.**

The emergence of Marx and Engels' political philosophy was marked by the publication of the Communist Manifesto, but its argumentation was basically completed only when the draft of Capital was completed (1865). Therefore, the period before the completion of the draft of Capital can be regarded as the formation process of Marx and Engels' political philosophy, and the period from that time to the death of Engels can be regarded as its perfection process.

Marx and Engels' political philosophy was formed against the background of the Western modernization movement and it is the product of reflection and criticism of Western modernization. Although the fundamental position and basic propositions of Marx and Engels' political philosophy come from utopian socialism, the essence of its thoughts comes from the Enlightenment thought, and the theoretical basis mainly comes from British classical political economy and German classical philosophy, it is a system of thought and theory formed on the basis of revolutionary changes in all these ideological theories, and it has uniqueness which is different from all previous political philosophies. Although Marx and Engels' political philosophy belongs to the category of Western political philosophy, it has a wide and far-reaching impact on modern world political philosophy, especially modern Chinese political philosophy, and is the main theoretical basis for the construction of contemporary political philosophy with Chinese characteristics.

**Chapter One: The Origin and Perfection of Marx and Engels' Political Philosophy**

The political philosophy of Marx and Engels was conceived and produced against the historical background of the Western modernization movement. Although the Western modernization movement originated from the Renaissance movement that was produced in response to the needs of the development of the Western market economy, the capitalist society that resulted from it was consciously constructed in accordance with the "kingdom of reason" designed by the Enlightenment thinkers. The purpose of the Enlightenment thinkers in designing the "kingdom of reason" was to liberate people from all constraints and enable them to win freedom, equality and happiness. However, this initial design, due to its theoretical defects, led to serious consequences of social polarization and the capitalization of the entire society. On the one hand, in capitalist society, people are divided into rich and poor in competition. The rich occupy a large amount of social wealth and resources, while the poor cannot even obtain the minimum living securities. On the other hand, people are driven by economic interests and live to obtain more benefits. As a result, human freedom, happiness and all-round development are lost. Social life and the personal lives of all people are actually capitalized, and the entire society is completely alienated. The political philosophy of Marx and Engels was established on the basis of reflection and criticism of the reality of Western capitalist society and its theoretical basis - Enlightenment thought (especially the liberal thought therein).

Marx and Engels' criticism was comprehensive, including both theoretical and practical criticism, but the most criticized were the bourgeoisie and capitalism. They fully affirmed the very revolutionary role played by the bourgeoisie in history, but they argued that the capitalist society built by the bourgeoisie was a fully alienated society. In Marx's view, in capitalist society, the labor of workers becomes a commodity, and the cheapest commodity. "The more wealth the worker produces, the greater the impact and scale of his production, the poorer he is." Marx later revealed the formation process of capital relations from the perspective of political economy, believing that this is a process of separation of ownership between the laborer and his labor conditions. On the one hand, it transforms the means of subsistence and production of society into capital, and on the other hand, it transforms the direct producers into hired workers and is ruled by capital. In Marx and Engels' view, the root cause of the malpractices and evils in capitalist society lies in private ownership. Although the bourgeoisie eliminated feudal ownership, it did not deny private ownership. On the contrary, it established a new private ownership on the basis of the old private ownership.

It is on the basis of the criticism of the reality of capitalist society that Marx profoundly exposed the hypocrisy of freedom, equality and freedom of ownership advocated by the bourgeoisie. Engels argued that everything was subjected to the most ruthless criticism in the Enlightenment, and all previous social forms, state forms, and traditional concepts were thrown into the garbage heap as irrational things. Everything in the past was only worthy of pity and contempt, and only now has the sun shone out and the kingdom of reason began to appear. From now on, superstition, injustice, privilege and oppression will be replaced by eternal truth, eternal justice, equality based on nature and inalienable human rights. However, all this is only for the bourgeoisie and does not include the proletariat. Engels argued that when the French Revolution realized the society and the rational state of this kingdom of reason, the new system showed that no matter how reasonable it was compared with the old system, it was by no means absolutely rational, and the rational state was completely bankrupt.

The creation of Marx and Engels' political philosophy was also a continuation and transformation of the previous Western utopian socialist thought. In the history of the West from the 16th to the 19th century, a group of utopian communists emerged. Their common feature was that they exposed the various drawbacks of the emerging and developing market economy and the social reality at that time from different perspectives, and took a critical or negative attitude towards them. They proposed and described a society of equality for all based on public ownership of property, so they were called "socialists" or "communists". The ideal society they envisioned was called "utopian communism" or "utopian socialism" because it did not have the conditions for realization. These political philosophical thoughts provided the basic position and direct source for Marx and Engels to create a political philosophy with scientific socialism as the core content, but Marx and Engels made creative transformations to their thoughts.

The most important manifestation of Marx and Engels' inheritance of utopian socialism was to adhere to its people's standpoint and sympathize with the vast proletariat who are exploited and oppressed, and to expand this fundamental standpoint from the social or national scope to all mankind, proposing that "the proletariat can only liberate itself in the end by liberating all mankind".

From this basic proposition, Marx and Engels supported the elimination of private ownership, but not the elimination of private property ownership, but the elimination of private ownership of means of production and advocated the implementation of public ownership of means of production; they supported the equality of all members of society and the implementation of distribution according to needs, but emphasized that members of society should do their best, and believe that only distribution according to work can be implemented in the primary stage of communism.

Only in the advanced stage of communism, when "all sources of collective wealth are fully flowing", "can society write on its own banner 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'"; they support "everyone has nothing, and everyone is rich", but are not limited to this, and further require "the comprehensive and free development of every individual".

More importantly, Marx and Engels established the materialist view of history (i.e., historical materialism), and used materialist view of history to examine the history of human society, revealing the historical inevitability of socialism replacing capitalism; established the theory of surplus value, and provided a strong argument for this historical inevitability from the perspective of the decisive force that determines social development, namely the economic base; found the gravedigger of capitalist society, the proletariat, and emphasized that the proletariat needs the leadership of the Communist Party, and its historical mission is to "form the proletariat into a class, overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie, and seize power by the proletariat." It is precisely because of the above theoretical critical transformation that socialism has changed from a fantasy to a science, and established the people's standpoint and basic principles for their political philosophy.

The most important substantive connotation of Marx and Engels' transformation of utopian socialism is to endow all social members with the nature or inherent essence of freedom, which is due to the admiration and pursuit of freedom by Enlightenment thinkers. Although utopian socialist thinkers attach great importance to equality, they do not pay enough attention to freedom. Marx and Engels, who lived in the 19th century, were fully baptized by the free thoughts of Enlightenment thinkers, and deeply saw the vital importance of freedom to people. They integrated the pursuit of freedom into their political philosophy, making it connected with the theme of the times, thus surpassing the previous and contemporary socialists.

Marx and Engels fully agreed with the Enlightenment thinkers' view that freedom is the nature of human beings, but through in-depth investigation of the reality of capitalist society, they found that the freedom advocated by Enlightenment thinkers, like equality and ownership, is hypocritical to the vast working class. Marx and Engels established their own political philosophy and devoted themselves to the communist movement in order to overcome the hypocrisy of freedom in capitalist society and truly realize the free nature of everyone.

As great political philosophers, Marx and Engels did not just put forward their own ideas, but used the materialist conception of history to provide arguments for their political philosophy. The materialist conception of history itself mainly originated from German classical philosophy and British political economy. In order to provide arguments for the historical inevitability of their socialism replacing capitalism, Marx and Engels explored the power hidden behind historical figures and the real final power of history, and the result was the creation of the materialist conception of history. The German Ideology co-authored by Marx and Engels is a symbol of the basic formation of the materialist conception of history, while the Preface to the Critique of Political Economy published by Marx in 1859 shows that the materialist conception of history has matured. Through the investigation of human history, Marx found that "the bourgeois production relations are the last antagonistic form of the social production process, but the productive forces developed in the womb of bourgeois society at the same time create the material conditions for resolving this antagonism."

In this way, the materialist conception of history provides arguments for Marx and Engels's argument that socialism will inevitably replace capitalism. However, Marx found that according to the principle of the materialist conception of history that productive forces determine production relations, it is also necessary to deeply explore the generation, development and internal contradictions of capitalist production relations from an economic perspective to provide more realistic and targeted arguments for his own ideas. His research started with the study of British classical political economics, which became an important source of Marx and Engels' political philosophy. On the basis of criticizing and reforming the labor value theory of classical political economics, Marx established the theory of surplus value, and through analyzing the production, circulation and distribution of surplus value, he revealed the general foundation of capitalism, namely the commodity economy and the secret of surplus value, the nature of capital, the basic contradictions of capitalism and its historical trend of development, thus providing a deeper argument for historical materialism and their political philosophy and further enriching and developing it.

The political philosophy of Marx and Engels has gone through a long process of formation and perfection, which is the same process as the formation of Marx and Engels' philosophy. There are differences of opinion in the domestic academic community about this process. The author believes that from the logic of its internal formation and development, the political philosophy of Marx and Engels can be generally divided into a completion period and a perfection period with 1865 as the boundary. The completion period is roughly from 1842 when Marx became the editor of the "Rheinische Zeitung" newspaper; to 1865 when he completed the draft of "Capital", while the perfection period is from 1865 to 1895 when Engels died.

The main reason for this division is that the completion of the draft of "Capital" marks that Marx has completed the economic argumentation of the principles of political philosophy, thus basically completing the construction of the entire political philosophy system of Marx and Engels. The process of the formation and perfection of Marx and Engels' political philosophy is very familiar to the academic community, and there is no need to elaborate on this.

**But, there are two points that need to be emphasized here:**

First, Marxist-Engels scientific socialism is the main part or the principle part of Marxist-Engels political philosophy, and its formation process is also the formation process of Marxist-Engels political philosophy.

In recent years, there have been many works on Marx and Marxism in the domestic academic circles, but there has been no discussion on the relationship between Marx-Engels’ scientific socialism and Marx-Engels’ political philosophy, as if Marx-Engels’ political philosophy is an independent ideological system outside of their scientific socialism.

In fact, Marx-Engels’ scientific socialism is the principle part of Marx-Engels’ political philosophy, and Marx-Engels’ political philosophy is the core content of Marx-Engels’ philosophy and the core content of Marxism as a whole.

**Scientific socialism mainly answers four major questions**

As a theory of the proletarian liberation movement, scientific socialism mainly answers four major questions: first, the historical inevitability, theoretical rationality and moral legitimacy of proletarian liberation; second, the ultimate goal of the proletarian liberation movement - communism; third, the force that the proletariat relies on for liberation - the proletariat; fourth, the relationship between proletarian liberation and human liberation.

Only by liberating all mankind can the proletariat finally liberate itself. Obviously, scientific socialism, which studies and answers all these questions, does not belong to political science or other social sciences, but can only belong to political philosophy or political philosophy. This doctrine, together with historical materialism, which is its ontological basis, constitutes the complete political philosophy system of Marx and Engels. If we agree with this, then the formation process of Marx and Engels' political philosophy and scientific socialism is exactly the same. We can regard the publication of the Communist Manifesto as the symbol of the birth of Marx and Engels' political philosophy, and the completion of the draft of Capital realizes the demonstration of the basic propositions of Marx and Engels' political philosophy, thus finally completing its basic theoretical construction.

**Second, the political philosophy of Marx and Engels is not the political philosophy of Marx alone, but the political philosophy jointly created and perfected by Marx and Engels.**

Judging from the domestic research situation, many scholars only study Marx's political philosophy and leave Engels aside, which is worth discussing. The Communist Manifesto, which most clearly proposes and most comprehensively outlines a new political philosophy, was jointly created by Marx and Engels. The German Ideology, which expounds the materialist conception of history as the basis of this political philosophy, was also co-authored by them. Therefore, the common theoretical creation of the two of them cannot be attributed to Marx alone. Of course, researchers can ignore the Communist Manifesto and the German Ideology when studying Marx's political philosophy, but is this still Marx's complete political philosophy? In fact, before the publication of these two works, some of the contents of a series of works published by Engels were directly absorbed into these two works, and some contributed to the formation of these works. For example, Marx praised Engels's Outlines of a Critique of National Economics as a "genius outline of the category of critical economics" and pointed out that "he came to the same result as me from another path."

More importantly, Engels made indelible contributions to the clarification, enrichment and perfection of their philosophies after 1865. The most important of these are: "Dialectics of Nature", written between 1873 and 1883, which expanded dialectics from the social and historical fields to the natural field, providing a broader philosophical ontological foundation for Marx and Engels' political philosophy; "Anti-Dühring", published in 1878, systematically expounded the basic theories of Marxist political philosophy on the basis of criticizing the erroneous views advocated by Eugen Dühring in the fields of philosophy, economics and socialism; "The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science", published in 1880, systematically expounded the relationship between scientific socialism and utopian socialism as the core content of Marx and Engels' political philosophy system; "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State", published in 1884, systematically expounded the materialist conception of history, especially the view of social development and the view of the state; "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy", published in 1886, systematically expounded the revolutionary changes of the materialist conception of history, which is the foundation of Marx and Engels' political philosophy, to German classical philosophy. It goes without saying that Engels' contribution to the completion of Marx and Engels' political philosophy is of vital importance to the perfection of this philosophical system. Without these outstanding contributions, Marx and Engels' political philosophy would at least be incomplete and unsystematic, and it would not have had such a huge impact on the time and later generations.

It should be pointed out that although Marx and Engels jointly founded the political philosophy of Marxism, their contributions were different. It should be affirmed that Marx made a greater contribution to Marxist theory (including to Marx and Engels' political philosophy) and Marx’s ideas were more original. Regarding this point, Engels repeatedly stated that he only played the role of "second violinist" for Marx, and the basic ideas of Marxism, especially the final clear expression of those guiding ideas, belonged to Marx. Engels once pointed out: "Without Marx, our theory would be far from what it is now. Therefore, it is reasonable to name this theory after him." However, Engels's significant contribution to the creation of Marxist theory is undeniable. As some scholars have pointed out: "His contribution to Marxist theory is more than he admits, especially in the solo after Marx's death, he was faithful to the theme song composed by Marx, and played variations adapted to the new era, which was involved and reflected in many of his works and prefaces in his later years."

**Chapter Two: The general implications and ontological foundations of Marx and Engels' political philosophy**

Although Marx and Engels did not have a single work titled political philosophy, they did have a great number of works that expounded on political philosophy. Here, the author intends to give a brief exposition of the general implications of Marx and Engels’ political philosophy and its ontological foundations, based on some of their major works.

In summary, the political philosophy of Marx and Engels is a political philosophy system that takes the materialist conception of history as its main ontological foundation, the complete liberation of all mankind as its realistic goal, the transition from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom as its social ideal, the all-round and free development of every individual as its ultimate goal of social development, the proletarian revolution and the proletariat as its main means of achieving its realistic goals, and labor as the first necessity of life and everyone contributing to society to the best of their ability as the basic way to achieve an ideal society. This definition can be further elaborated as follows.

First, the political philosophy of Marx and Engels regards the complete liberation of mankind as the realistic goal of the communist movement. In order to develop capitalism, the modern bourgeoisie, under the banner of "freedom" and "equality", waged a resolute struggle against the feudal autocratic system and launched a wide range of ideological revolutions, political revolutions and economic revolutions (including industrial revolutions and scientific and technological revolutions). Through a series of fruitful revolutionary struggles, the bourgeoisie finally defeated feudalism and greatly developed productive forces and capitalism. Therefore, the bourgeoisie has played a very revolutionary role in history. However, the proletariat, who fought shoulder to shoulder with the bourgeoisie, was still in a state of enslavement and oppression. The situation and struggle of the proletariat at that time made Marx and Engels see the irrationality of capitalism and the inevitable trend of social development to liberate the proletariat and thus liberate all mankind. Therefore, they argued that as long as the proletariat was liberated, all mankind would be completely liberated, so they took the liberation of mankind as the need of the times and devoted themselves to theoretical exploration.

As early as in the Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Marx proposed that "thorough revolution and universal human liberation are not utopian dreams" and advocated that philosophy should regard the proletariat as its material weapon, and the proletariat should also regard philosophy as its spiritual weapon. In the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Marx first systematically studied the issue of human liberation with communism as the starting point and purpose, pointing out that "communism is the positive transcendence of private property, that is, the self-alienation of man, and therefore the real possession of the essence of man by man and for man", and "is the real solution to the contradiction between man and nature, and between man and man". The Communist Manifesto further clearly declared that "the Communists can summarize their theory in one sentence: the abolition of private property", and proposed that the proletariat can only finally liberate itself by liberating all mankind. Later, Engels pointed out in "The Development of Socialism: Utopian and Scientific": **"To accomplish this cause of world liberation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To deeply examine the historical conditions of this cause and the nature of this cause itself, so that the oppressed class today, which is tasked with accomplishing this cause, can recognize the conditions and nature of its own actions. This is the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, that is, the task of scientific socialism."** Obviously, establishing the complete liberation of mankind as the realistic goal of the communist movement is a consistent theoretical proposition of Marx and Engels' political philosophy.

Second, communism, that is, the kingdom of freedom, is the social ideal of Marx and Engels’ political philosophy. The complete liberation of all mankind is the realistic pursuit of Marx and Engels’ political philosophy, and the social ideal of Marx and Engels’ political philosophy is that mankind will enter the kingdom of freedom from the kingdom of necessity after liberation. This kingdom of freedom is the communist society, or the “association of free men.”

In the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Marx has linked the liberation of man with the realization of communism, and believes that the process of human liberation is the process of the realization of communism. "This communism, as a completed naturalism, is equal to humanism, and as a completed humanism, it is equal to naturalism. It is the real solution to the contradiction between man and nature, between man and man, and the real solution to the struggle between existence and essence, objectification and self-affirmation, freedom and necessity, and between the individual and the class. It is the answer to the mystery of history, and it knows that it is this answer." In The German Ideology, Marx and Engels further elaborated on communism from the perspective of overcoming the alienation caused by the division of labor, and understood communism as a movement to eliminate the existing alienated situation. In Marx and Engels' view, as long as people are still in a naturally formed society, as long as there is a division between special interests and common interests, that is, as long as the division of labor is not voluntary but naturally formed, then the activities of people themselves become a kind of alien and opposing force for people. This force oppresses people, rather than people controlling this force. Although Marx and Engels emphasized that communism is a real movement to eliminate the existing situation, they do not deny everything created by their predecessors, but rather regard them as the premise of transformation. They pointed out: **"The difference between communism and all previous movements is that it overthrows the foundation of all old production relations and intercourse relations, and for the first time consciously regards all spontaneously formed premises as the creation of predecessors, eliminates the spontaneity of these premises, and makes these premises subject to the control of united individuals."** In a series of subsequent works, Marx and Engels' picture of the ideal society of the future became increasingly clear.

In the view of Marx and Engels, in the advanced stage of communism, there will be no national division and confrontation, public power will lose its political nature, and with the disappearance of the anarchy of social production, the political authority of the state will disappear, and the struggle for individual survival will also stop. In a certain sense, people will finally break away from the animal world and enter the living conditions of real people from the living conditions of animals. That is, "people finally become the masters of their own social associations, and thus the masters of nature and themselves - free people." In the view of Engels, completing this cause of liberating the world is the historical mission of the modern proletariat.

Marx analyzed that in fact, the kingdom of freedom only begins where the labor required by necessity and external purpose ends, so according to the nature of things, it exists on the other side of the real material production field, "this field is always a kingdom of necessity. On the other side of this kingdom of necessity, the development of human ability as an end in itself, the real kingdom of freedom, begins. However, this kingdom of freedom can only prosper if it is built on the basis of the kingdom of necessity." In the view of Marx and Engels, in a society without classes and class antagonism, all people are free. "The old bourgeois society with its classes and class antagonisms will be replaced by a society where the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all," and society is a society of free people "based on the comprehensive and free development of every individual." In communist society, the free development of people is not one-sided, but comprehensive, especially after overcoming the alienation and deformed development caused by the division of labor.

Third, the political philosophy of Marx and Engels mainly appeals to the proletarian revolution and the realization of realistic goals by the proletariat. Marx and Engels fully and powerfully proved that capitalism will inevitably perish and communism will inevitably win, but they argued that this inevitable process is not spontaneous, but requires the representatives of advanced productive forces, the proletariat, to achieve through proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship. Marx and Engels argued that if the proletariat wants to liberate itself, it must carry out a proletarian revolution, and through the continuous revolution of the proletariat, it will achieve the goal of abolishing all private ownership and realize communism. Engels pointed out that the modern workers' movement has been regarded as the movement of the modern oppressed class, the proletariat, and as a more or less developed form of their historically inevitable struggle against the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, and as a form of class struggle. Marx and Engels warned German workers that in order to achieve their ultimate victory, they must first work hard on their own: they should recognize their class interests and take the position of their own independent party as soon as possible, and their battle slogan should be "continuous revolution". The proletariat has nothing of its own that must be protected, and they must destroy everything that has protected and guaranteed private property so far. "The proletariat will lose only chains in this revolution. What they will gain will be the whole world." Marx and Engels argued that the proletarian revolution was the socialist revolution. **“This socialism means the declaration of permanent revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the inevitable transitional stage for the elimination of all class differences, of all production relations resulting from these differences, of all social relations corresponding to these production relations, and of all ideas resulting from these social relations.”** Marx and Engels argued that the proletariat had to establish its own regime through revolution, but they did not deny the possibility of other ways, such as striving for universal suffrage.

Fourth, Marx and Engels' political philosophy believes that the driving force for the realization of an ideal society comes from labor becoming the first necessity of life. In the advanced stage of communism, the social division of labor disappears, people consciously regard labor as the first necessity of life, and contribute to society to the best of their ability. As a result, the productive forces of society is highly developed and material life is abundant. Under such conditions, society can distribute the products of labor according to people's needs.

Marx argued that in order to improve the level of social production and to create fully developed people, it is necessary to combine productive labor with intellectual education and physical education. "Future education for all children who have reached a certain age is the combination of productive labor with intellectual education and physical education. It is not only a way to improve social production, but also the only way to create fully developed people." In Engels' view, the abolition of private ownership will produce the following main results: "A common association composed of all members of society will jointly and systematically utilize productive forces; develop production to a scale that can meet the needs of all people; end the situation of sacrificing the interests of some people to meet the needs of others; completely eliminate classes and class antagonisms; through the elimination of the old division of labor, through industrial education, changing types of work, all people share the welfare created by everyone, and through the integration of urban and rural areas, the talents of all members of society will be fully developed."

**Fifth, the materialist conception of history based on practice is the ontological foundation of Marx and Engels’ political philosophy**.

 Marx revolutionized the basic spirit of German classical philosophy, which was culminated from Kant to Hegel. He criticized and abandoned the idealist form of this spirit, absorbed its reasonable ideological core, and critically inherited and developed this basic spirit on the basis of materialism. Marx argued that practice is not an idea, nor is it the embodiment of absolute spirit, but the sensual material activity of people to transform the objective world (including nature and society). It is in this practical activity that people can actively understand nature, society, and themselves, realize the unity of practice and cognition, and realize the transformation of thinking and existence. For Marx and Engels, practice is the basic concept of their philosophical thoughts, and Marx called himself a "practical materialist." Marx's understanding of practice is different from that of German classical philosophers. He believes that practice is not a spiritual concept, nor is it just a moral practice, but a sensual material activity of human beings to transform the world. This material activity is different from the survival instinct of animals. It is a free and conscious activity. It is precisely this free and conscious activity that distinguishes humans from animals. It is the activity of practice that differentiates man as the subject of transforming the environment and the environment as the object of transformation. The subject "creates the objective world and transforms the inorganic world through practice", humanizes nature, and thus achieves unity between subject and object. That is to say, only the objective activity of people transforming the world is the basis for the unity of subject and object. In order to transform the environment and meet human needs, people must understand nature, so thoughts and consciousness arise. People's thoughts and consciousness are the reflection of the subject of practice on the object. Therefore, "this view of history (that is, the materialist view of history - the author) is different from the idealist view of history. It does not look for a certain category in each era, but always stands on the basis of real history. It does not explain practice from the perspective of ideas, but explains various forms of ideas from the perspective of material practice."

 In Marx and Engels’ view, human practice is not an individual activity, but a social and historical activity. This activity is always carried out under certain historical conditions and in a certain mode of production. The mode of production (including productive forces and production relations) is the social condition of practical activities on the one hand, and it constrains the entire process of social life, political life and spiritual life on the other hand. In the process of social production in a certain mode of production, people will inevitably have inevitable relations that are not subject to their will. "The sum of these production relations constitutes the economic structure of society, that is, the real foundation on which the legal and political superstructure is erected and to which certain forms of social consciousness correspond."

In Marx and Engels’ view, the contradictions within the mode of production and the contradictions between production relations and superstructure that occur on the basis of practice are the driving force for the development of social movement. "With the change of the economic base, the entire huge superstructure will also change slowly or quickly." In this way, Marx and Engels explained the structure of the entire society based on practice and revealed the laws of social development, thus overcoming the defects of German classical philosophy in explaining the development of social movement with spiritual mysterious concepts; from their practice-based materialist historical view, they came to the conclusion that in order for people to gain freedom and liberation, that is, to gain their own essence, they must change the existing social relations.

**Chapter Three: The basic characteristics of Marx and Engels' political philosophy**

From the above explanation, we can see that the political philosophy of Marx and Engels has four basic characteristics: the organic unity of idealism and practice, the organic unity of humanity and class, the organic unity of revolution and construction, and the organic unity of system and profundity. These characteristics fully demonstrate the integrity, correctness and advancement of the political philosophy of Marx and Engels, and are the main marks and individual characteristics of the political philosophy of Marx and Engels that are different from any other political philosophy in history.

1. Organic unity of idealism and practicality

Proposing an ideal social model and providing arguments for it, thereby establishing an ultimate value pursuit for society, is an important feature of political philosophy. Before Marx and Engels, thinkers in Chinese and Western history had proposed a variety of influential ideal social models, such as Plato's "Republic", the Stoic "World City", Christianity's "New Heaven and New Earth" and "Millennium Kingdom", Thomas More's "Utopia", Enlightenment thinkers' "Reason Kingdom", etc. In China, there are Confucius' "Great Harmony", Laozi's "Small State (Country) with Few People" or "Peace and Peace", Zhuangzi's "World of Supreme Virtue", etc. Like many political philosophers in history, Marx and Engels regarded the conception of an ideal society as the primary task of political philosophy research, but they were different from them in two aspects.

First, the ideal society of Marx and Engels is incomparably advanced compared to all other ideal social models. From a chronological perspective, the ideal society conceived by Marx and Engels, namely the communist society, is the last ideal social model to appear in human history. Since then, there has been almost no influential ideal social model in either the West or China. The last appearance does not mean the best, but the ideal society of Marx and Engels is indeed the most advanced in terms of its content. This is first reflected in the fact that it absorbs the reasonable content of historical social ideals. For example, it absorbs the Stoic idea of ​​the world city-state, that is, in a communist society, the state no longer exists, and "the national divisions and conflicts between peoples of various countries are gradually disappearing", which coincides with the great harmony society of Confucius in China; its idea of ​​advocating the implementation of public ownership of the means of production and distribution according to needs comes from Thomas More's Utopia; it transforms the freedom, equality, democracy, and rule of law of the Enlightenment thinkers' rational kingdom from virtual to real, and finally implements it in the comprehensive and free development of every individual in society. The advancement of Marx and Engels' ideal society is also reflected in the fact that it is rooted in modernization based on the mode of production of large-scale industrial production. It is a prediction of the future society based on the inevitable laws of human social development, especially the insurmountable contradictions between the productive forces and production relations in capitalist society and between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It stands at the forefront of the times and history, reflecting and representing the general trend of human social development, which is incomparable to any other ideal social model in history.

Second, Marx and Engels' ideal society overcomes the utopianism and hypocrisy of all other ideal social models. The various ideal societies provided by traditional Chinese and Western social thinkers are almost all utopian. Whether it is Confucius' "Great Harmony", Laozi's "small country with few people" and "peace and peace", or Plato's "Republic", Stoicism's "world city-state", Christianity's "new heaven and new earth" and "millennial kingdom", none of them has become a reality in history.

Facts have proved that these ideals are unfeasible fantasies or dreams. Although the thought of Confucianism in the pre-Qin period of China was later regarded as the dominant official thought, its ideal of Great Harmony did not become the ultimate goal of social pursuit in the era of autocracy, and was even completely forgotten. It was not until the end of the Qing Dynasty that it was promoted again by Kang Youwei and Sun Yat-sen. The "kingdom of reason" proposed by modern Western Enlightenment thinkers was put into practice by the Western bourgeoisie and became the social reality of the Western world, but the freedom and equality they pursued were rights that the vast proletariat could not enjoy, so they were illusory and ethereal. Different from all the above-mentioned ideal social models, the ideal society proposed and demonstrated by Marx and Engels is becoming a reality in contemporary China. Today, Chinese people are no longer talking about whether Marxism works, but why Marxism works. More noteworthy is that China has proposed and is committed to promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind and seeking world peace, which has been endorsed by the United Nations and more and more countries. It can be predicted that the ideal communist society outlined by Marx and Engels' political philosophy will increasingly become the common pursuit of mankind.

2. The organic unity of humanity and class

There is a standpoint problematic in political philosophy, that is, the question of what standpoint to stand on and for whom to study and construct political philosophy. In the history of Chinese and Western political philosophy, there are four basic standpoints: one is to stand on the standpoint of all people in society and study political philosophy in order to safeguard the interests of all people in the basic community (mainly the country), such as the Taoist political philosophy in ancient China (for the social members of the "small country") and the liberal political philosophy in modern Western countries (for all people in a certain Western country); the second is to stand on the standpoint of social members and study political philosophy in order to safeguard the interests of those who are regarded as formal members of the basic community rather than all social members, such as Aristotle's political philosophy (for the free people of the city-state) and Christian political philosophy (for Christian believers); the third is to stand on the standpoint of social governance and study political philosophy in order to safeguard the interests of rulers, such as Dong Zhongshu's political philosophy (for the imperial autocratic rulers) and Rawls' political philosophy (for the American rulers); the fourth is to stand on the standpoint of all mankind and study political philosophy in order to safeguard the interests of all mankind, such as Marx and Engels' political philosophy. Among these four positions, only the position of all mankind truly reflects or embodies the nature of politics and its practical requirements, because the nature of politics is people-oriented and pursues the happiness of all people in the basic community.

The position of Marx and Engels' political philosophy belongs to the fourth type, but it has two important differences from the Confucian political philosophy and Taoist political philosophy of the pre-Qin period in China: on the one hand, Marx and Engels' political philosophy has a clearer sense of the position of all mankind, and its purpose is directly aimed at the liberation and happiness of all mankind; on the other hand, based on the materialist conception of history and the method of class analysis, Marx and Engels' political philosophy found the power to achieve human liberation and happiness - the proletariat, and argued that the communist society must rely on the construction of the proletariat, emphasizing that the proletariat can only liberate itself in the end by liberating all mankind. In this way, Marx and Engels' political philosophy has achieved the organic unity of universal humanity and class nature, thus overcoming the limitations and biases of all other political philosophies in history and achieving a revolutionary change in the academic position of political philosophy.

The Confucianists of the pre-Qin period in China had a clear concept of the world, and the purpose of their political philosophy research was to free the people of the world from suffering and lead a happy life. Confucius clearly pointed out that the scope of the purpose of self-cultivation is constantly expanding: from "cultivating oneself with respect" to "cultivating oneself to comfort others" and then to "cultivating oneself to comfort the people". (The Analects of Confucius, Xianwen)

The "people" here can be understood as the people of the world, or as the people of the vassal states where he is, and its scope is not very clear. Mencius talked about "loving relatives and benevolent to the people, benevolent to the people and love things" (Mencius, Jinxin Shang), which clearly expanded the scope of benevolence to all mankind and even all things. The Great Learning clearly proposed "cultivating oneself, regulating the family, governing the country, and pacifying the world" in order to "manifest virtue in the world", and more clearly expanded the scope of politics to the whole world. However, the "world" in the minds of Confucius, Mencius, and even all Chinese at that time roughly referred to the world of the Zhou Dynasty, and there was no concept of different countries or nations on the earth, let alone the concept of the entire world.

Unlike the pre-Qin Confucianists, Marx and Engels lived in an era when the Western bourgeoisie "opened up the world market and made the production and consumption of all countries global." They already had a clear concept of the world composed of various countries and nations, and the concept of humanity composed of the people of various countries and nations, which is the world and humanity in the true sense. Compared with the "world" that the pre-Qin Confucian political philosophy focused on, the "all mankind" that Marx and Engels' political philosophy focused on established the ultimate object that political philosophy should truly focus on. Of course, we can also regard Marx and Engels' "all mankind" as a modern version of the pre-Qin Confucian "world", but we must affirm that Marx and Engels' political philosophy not only overcame the historical limitations of the pre-Qin Confucianists, but also broke through the class narrowness of all other political philosophies in their positions, and finally anchored the ultimate scope of political philosophy.

In terms of what power to rely on to achieve the happiness of the people of the world or all mankind, there is also a fundamental difference between the political philosophy of Marx and Engels and the pre-Qin Confucianism. The pre-Qin Confucianism argued that the only way to achieve "harmony under heaven" or "manifesting virtue throughout the world" is through continuous self-cultivation and eventually becoming a sage. However, it is extremely difficult for an ordinary person to become a sage through self-cultivation.

According to the "Book of Rites·Li Yun", since Yao and Shun, no king has been a sage. The six most outstanding kings, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Cheng Wang, and Zhou Gong, were at best virtuous kings (that is, kings with morality). The society they built was only a "well-off" society where "the world is a family", not a "great harmony" society where "the world is for the public". From the Xia Dynasty to the Western Zhou Dynasty, there was no sage king for more than 1,200 years. Is it possible for the world to achieve "great harmony"? Mencius said, "There must be a king who rises every five hundred years" ("Mencius·Gongsun Chou Xia"). Even if a sage king can appear in five hundred years, there will be no "great harmony" society during the five hundred years when the sage king is not in power. Therefore, Confucian political philosophy, in terms of the power to realize ideals, is clearly the heroic view of history criticized by Marx and Engels. Different from this sage view of history, Marx and Engels’ political philosophy established the mass view of history and used it to solve the problem of the power to rely on for the liberation of all mankind and the realization of communism.

3. Organic unity of revolutionary and constructive elements

Although Marx and Engels argued that the inevitable demise of capitalism was an immutable law of nature, and that these laws themselves had a "trend of operating with iron necessity and being realized", they did not believe that this process was spontaneous, but that it required the representatives of advanced productive forces - the proletariat - to achieve it through proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship.

In Marx and Engels' view, among all the classes that were opposed to the bourgeoisie, only the proletariat was a truly revolutionary class, while the rest of the classes were declining and perishing with the development of large-scale industry, and the proletariat was the product of large-scale industry itself. Marx and Engels argued that if the proletariat wanted to liberate itself, it must carry out a proletarian revolution, and through the continuous revolution of the proletariat, it would achieve the goal of abolishing all private ownership and realize communism.

In the "Communist League Central Committee's Letter to the League", Marx and Engels warned German workers that in order to achieve their final victory, they must first work hard on their own: they should recognize their class interests, take the position of their own independent party as soon as possible, and never waver in their belief in the independent organization of the proletarian party because of the rhetoric of the democratic petty bourgeoisie; their battle slogan should be continuous revolution. Marx and Engels argued that the proletarian revolution is the socialist revolution, "this socialism is the declaration of continuous revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat, this dictatorship is the inevitable transitional stage to achieve the elimination of all class differences, to achieve the elimination of all production relations arising from these differences, to achieve the elimination of all social relations corresponding to these production relations, and to achieve the change of all concepts arising from these social relations." Marx and Engels pointed out that the first step of the working class revolution is to make the proletariat rise to the ruling class and win democracy, but "the working class cannot simply seize the ready-made state machinery and use it to achieve its own goals", but must establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Marx and Engels argued that the proletariat still needed the leadership of the Communist Party to carry out the revolution. In their view, the Communist Party was not a special party opposed to other workers' parties, and they had no interests different from the interests of the entire proletariat. The historical mission of the Communists was to unite the proletariat, overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie, and seize power by the proletariat, and the ultimate goal was to eliminate private ownership. "In this sense, the Communists can summarize their theory in one sentence: eliminate private ownership." The abolition of previously existing ownership relations is not a unique feature of communism.

The characteristic of communism is not to abolish general ownership, but to abolish bourgeois ownership. The Communist Party advocates the use of violent means to achieve its goals. "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and intentions. They openly declare that their goals can only be achieved by violently overthrowing all existing social systems." At the same time, the Communists support all revolutionary movements against the existing social and political systems, and strive for unity and coordination among democratic parties around the world. To this end, Marx and Engels called: "Proletarians of the world, unite!"

The proletariat wants to destroy an old world and build a new world. The purpose of destroying the old world is to build a new world. According to Marx and Engels' conception, after the proletariat gains political dominance, it must first establish a democratic state system, thereby directly or indirectly establishing the rule of the proletariat. At the same time, the proletariat must use its political rule to gradually seize all the capital of the bourgeoisie, concentrate all means of production in the hands of the state, that is, the proletariat organized as the ruling class, and increase the total amount of productive forces as quickly as possible.

In the view of Marx and Engels, to achieve this, it is first necessary to implement compulsory interference in ownership and bourgeois production relations. These measures seem to be insufficient and unsustainable in economics, but in the course of the movement they will go beyond themselves and are indispensable as a means of changing the entire mode of production. Marx advocated the nationalization of land. Land nationalization will completely change the relationship between labor and capital and ultimately eliminate the capitalist mode of production in industry and agriculture. He argued that only then would class differences and various privileges disappear along with the economic basis on which they depend, and all production sectors would be gradually organized in the most reasonable way. The national concentration of the means of production will become the national foundation of a society composed of associations of free and equal producers, who will carry out social labor according to a common and rational plan. When summarizing the experience of the French "Paris Commune", Marx and Engels proposed a series of measures that the proletariat should take after taking power, mainly including:

First, once the proletariat gains power, it cannot continue to use the old state machinery for management. Secondly, after the proletariat takes power, it must take measures to prevent the state and state organs from becoming social masters from social servants. Finally, it is necessary to transform organized labor and the means of production concentrated in the hands of monopolists into free forms of joint labor and social means of production. Marx and Engels argued that the French "Paris Commune" was a model of this.

Here, Marx and Engels specifically discussed how the proletariat should treat the state after it comes to power. They argued that for the proletariat after it comes to power, the state is only something that has to be temporarily retained, and it will eventually be eliminated, and the state's management functions will be performed by public servants who bear social responsibilities. In Engels' view, no matter how good the state is, it is only a scourge inherited by the proletariat that has won the struggle for class rule; the victorious proletariat will also have to immediately try to eliminate the worst aspects of this scourge, just like the commune, until the generation that grows up under the new free social conditions is able to throw away all the waste of the state.

Marx pointed out: **"The government's oppressive power and the authority to rule society are destroyed with the abolition of its purely oppressive institutions, and the reasonable functions that the government should perform are not performed by institutions that are above society, but by the responsible servants of society itself."**

Therefore, Marx and Engels regarded the state as something that the proletariat needs to use temporarily after seizing power, but it will eventually withdraw from the stage of history and be replaced by a "cheap government" that serves as a public servant of society, similar to the Paris Commune.

4. Organic unity of systematicity and profundity

Before Marx and Engels, there were many political philosophy systems in Western history. The most influential political philosophies include those of Plato, Aristotle, liberals, Hegel and other people or schools.

After Engels' death, the most influential political philosophies in the West include those of John Rawls and Micheal Sandel. These six most influential political philosophies all have obvious theoretical limitations or defects. They are either not systematic but incomplete, such as Rawls' political philosophy which only focuses on the issue of justice; or they are systematic but not profound, such as the political philosophy of liberals which lacks the fundamental ontology; or they are systematic and profound but lack the standpoint of all mankind, such as Plato's political philosophy which stands on the standpoint of free people. Compared with all these political philosophy systems, Marx and Engels' political philosophy has achieved an organic unity of systematicity and profundity from the standpoint of all mankind, fully reflecting the true nature of politics and its practical requirements, thus achieving a revolutionary change and historic leap in political philosophy.

As mentioned above, political philosophy is responsible for studying and answering questions such as the nature of politics and its practical requirements, how to realize an ideal society where everyone in society lives a good life, what are the fundamental concepts and basic principles for building a social governance system and its operating mechanism, and where is the legitimacy of political power, and providing countermeasures for solving various major practical problems in the real society. Although the political philosophies of Plato and Aristotle discussed the issue of political system a lot and designed the picture of an ideal society very specifically, they both stood on the standpoint of free people (slave owners), not only ignoring the slave class, but also excluding women and children from social members.

Moreover, they regarded rationality as human nature, but ignored the social aspect of human nature. The rational kingdom planned by liberal political philosophy with freedom, equality, democracy and rule of law as the main provisions seems to be very perfect, but the result of practice is that there are many serious social problems such as polarization between the rich and the poor, the materialization of social life, and the atomization of individuals. Facts show that this kind of political philosophy has many serious defects in theoretical design, and the root cause is that it is impossible to provide a rational argument for the social contract theory as its theoretical basis.

The biggest flaw of Hegel's political philosophy is what Engels criticized, that it is "only a kind of materialism that is idealistically inverted in terms of method and content", over-emphasizing the significance of knowledge to freedom, while completely ignoring the decisive role of political subject practice. Rawls' political philosophy only focuses on the issue of justice, and does not pay attention to many other major political philosophical issues, such as the issue of the universal happiness of social members. Rawls' political philosophy is not a political philosophy in the strict sense, but a philosophy of justice; more importantly, his social contract theory is not a social ontology, so his theory of justice lacks a solid foundation. Sandel's political philosophy has similar problems to Rawls in terms of theme, except that he does not emphasize justice, but virtue, or understands justice from the perspective of virtue.

Compared with the above-mentioned political philosophy theories, the greatest advantage of Marx and Engels' political philosophy is that it studies and answers a series of major political philosophical issues on the basis of revealing the nature of politics and its practical requirements, and is systematic and profound.

Marx and Engels' political philosophy stands on the standpoint of all mankind, and according to the nature of politics and its practical requirements, it proposes that "communism is the real generation of human nature and the true realization of human nature for man", and takes "the comprehensive and free development of every individual" as the ultimate political goal; with the liberation of all mankind as the goal of struggle, it proves the historical inevitability of replacing the state with a "union of free men", and advocates that "all people, or at least all citizens of a country, or all members of a society, should have equal political and social status"; regards the law as the "Bible of people's freedom", and emphasizes the use of law to protect people's freedom and rights; He argued that "only at the stage of social development when class antagonisms have not only been eliminated but also forgotten in real life, can a truly human morality that transcends class antagonisms and the memory of such antagonisms become possible"; he regarded "cheap government" as the governing body of the new type of society and required that "all officials should be accountable to every citizen in ordinary courts in accordance with general laws for all their official activities"; he pointed out that "equality is a manifestation of justice and a principle of a perfect political or social system" and that "true freedom and true equality can only be realized under the communal system... Such a system is required by justice."

The direct theoretical basis of these propositions of Marx and Engels' political philosophy is historical materialism, and its foundation is the nature of human beings seeking a better life. On the one hand, Marx and Engels' political philosophy fully affirms the self-determination of human beings, understands human activities as the practice of human beings with initiative, and believes that the environment in which human beings live is changed by human beings, and the change of the environment is consistent with the change of human beings themselves and human activities. This consistency "can only be regarded as and reasonably understood as revolutionary practice"; on the other hand, it profoundly expounds on the social nature of human beings and puts forward the famous proposition that "the essence of human beings is not an abstract thing inherent in a single individual, but in its reality, it is the sum of all social relations." In this way, from the perspective of theoretical construction, Marx and Engels' political philosophy truly realizes the organic unity of systematicity and profundity, truth and practicality.