

Engels's Contribution in the Formation of Marxism

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Abstract: The author analyzed the relationship between Marx's and Engels's academic thought in the mid-19th century through using the method of literature analysis. In the process of systematization of Marxism, there was division of academic labor between Marx and Engels, they made their own contributions to the development of Marxism from different aspects.

1. Introduction

Marxism is after Marx and Engels went through different mental processes and on the basis of common ideas. In this process, Marx and Engels played an important role. As far as Engels is concerned, in addition to his co authorship, his main functions are as follows: (1) Provide practical basis for Marx's theoretical research.(2) Enlighten Marx to study political economy.(3) Provide new methods for Marx's research.

2. Provide Practical Basis for Marx's Theoretical Research

When Merlin talked about Engels' Critical Outline of Political Economy in the Biography of Marx, he thought that Engels was the pioneer and the giver, while Marx was the receiver[1]. He pointed out that Engels's Critical Outline of Political Economy had inspired Marx, and had helped Marx to understand the abstract meanings of the bourgeois society, proletariat and communism. In addition, Merlin believed that Engels had helped Marx to realize the importance of criticizing the capitalist system from its own contradiction. Marx began to realize the philosophical and political transformation during the work of the Rhine newspaper because of the first difficulty in expressing on material interests for the first time, and he felt that it was necessary to discuss the emergence and nature of communist thought from the perspective of political economy.

In the process of founding Marxism, Marx and Engels came together through different paths. Young Marx concerned about political issues in theory firstly, and then explored the real social problems. So in the early stage, Marx's expositions about society and country, proletariat and proletariat were all abstract. In contrast, Engels took the road from practice to theory, he had a clear understanding of the reality of British society, first devoted himself to the flood of the workers' movement, so he first recognized the proletariat at that time and practiced the combination with the workers' movement earlier. In 1842 Engels came to Manchester, then Britain's textile industry centre, where he went deep into the working class to conduct social research and work together film, collected first-hand practical information. From these practical experiences Engels has a more intuitive understanding of the characteristics of the proletariat, more in-depth thinking, put forward that the proletariat although the social status is low, but full of ideals, because in the capitalist society by the most severe oppression and exploitation, their way to liberate themselves is to overthrow bourgeois rule. Engels completed his own direct observation of the working class and all kinds of materials he had mastered. The book Marx with detailed and objective materials for understanding the proletariat, and had a profound influence on the transformation of Marx's world outlook and later theoretical research.

Marx wrote in the first volume of *Capital*: “During the period from the emergence of great industry to 1845 in England, I only mentioned in some places that readers were asked to read Friedrich Engels’s *The State of the British Working Class*. The factory inspector ’ s report published after 1845, the mine inspector’s report, and so on, all illustrate how deeply Engels understands the spirit of capitalist mode of production; a slight comparison of his works with the official report of the Commission of Inquiry on Child Labor (1863-1867) published after 18-20 years shows his knowledge of the working class situation How amazing the detailed description is. ”[2] In addition, there are nine references in this book to Engels’ *Status of the British Working Class*. These evidences show that the thought of young Engels had an important influence on Marx.

The above-mentioned Engels provided the practical basis for Marx to study the theory of political economy, and from the exchange of academic thoughts between them, it can be concluded that the relationship between Marx and Engels’ academic thoughts has always maintained a high degree of consistency.

3. Enlighten Marx to Study Political Economy

Marx was affected most by young Engels in economic philosophy. Young Engels was the first person who raised the topic about economic philosophy. Marx accepted this topic and began to study it in depth. *Critical Outline of Political Economy* is the important works of Engels in research about Political Economics. In this book, Engels comprehensively analyzed the economic problems and criticized the political economy of the bourgeoisie. These perspectives in Engels’s book laid a theoretical foundation for Marxist Political Economy. After the publication of the *Critical Outline of Political Economy*, it had important effect on Marx. Marx pointed out in the preface of the *Manuscript of economic philosophy* in 1844 that Engels’ *Outline* is a work with rich contents and unique views in the field of economic science. After reading the *Outline*, Marx recorded a summary of all of its views, which Marx called “the genius *Outline of critical economic category* ”. After Marx’s withdrawal from the Rhine, he criticized Hegel ’ s philosophy of law. His theoretical concern was still political, but after seeing the *Outline*, Marx began to pay attention to the study of economics. When talking about the influence of the *Outline* on Marx, Lenin thought “Marx’s interaction with Engels obviously pushed Marx to study political economics, that is the science in which Marx later created a whole revolution with his writings.”[3]

When Marx began to study economics in 1844, he referred to the abstract of Friedrich Engels’ *Critical Outline of National Economics*, which showed the consistency of the two views. In the *Outline*, Engels criticized “Economics did not want to question the rationality of private ownership ”[4], pointing out that bourgeois economists only resort to sophistry in order to cover up their own contradictions and maintain private ownership. This kind of exposition has influenced Marx’s economic thought, and Marx’s relevant views in *Paris Notes* and the manuscript of *Economics and philosophy* in 1844 are inspired by Engels. For example, Marx affirmed Engels’ criticism of Adam Smith; inspired by Engels’ viewpoint to study the relationship between private property and alienated labor, so that Marx can study economics from economic facts and criticize bourgeois economics. Marx was inspired by Engels’ thought to carry on the theory research and the theory elaboration, their thought showed the consistency. Engels once analyzed the non-human nature of private ownership, he believed that the existence of private ownership determined that the interests must be individual interests, the rule of interest finally reflected in the rule of property, property is given a very high status, and as the property of the outsider become the ruler of the world, but the ultimate man It is inhuman to be slaves to things.[5] It can be seen that the ideological trajectory of young Engels is consistent with Marx ’ s thought of commodity fetishism mentioned later in *Capital*. The essence of commodity fetishism is the inversion between people and things, and because of the existence of private ownership, people in capitalist society are more vulnerable to money enslavement, which is the inhuman nature of capitalist system.

In *Manuscript of economics and philosophy* in 1844, Marx thought that in order to maintain the system of private property, bourgeois economics put the material process of private property in the

abstract formula, and did not really understand the law of economy. Marx's analysis of the social and historical consequences of capitalist private property was consistent with Engels's. Questioning the rationality of capitalist private ownership was an analysis of the theory of labor alienation, which inspired by Engels' thought. So in the scope of Marxist research, Engels is only the inspiration of some ideological topics of Marx. Every time young Engels first put forward a topic, then Marx again expressed the research supplement with the same topic with broader and rich ideas, and processed it into a more classical exposition.

To sum up, in the study of Marx's political economy, young Engels' thought of economic philosophy is the starting point and cornerstone of Marx's economic philosophy.

4. Provide New Methods for Marx's Research

In his early days, Marx focused on theoretical research, but did not realize the combination of theory and practice. His thinking and Discussion on the country, society and other issues were mainly completed by the logical deduction of theory. Engels first investigated the social reality and grasped a large number of social reality materials. When he analyzed the social development of Britain, he did not think abstractly from the principle of thought, but mainly based on the economic facts to carry out specific analysis. Engels got the conclusion through these experience facts. In the analysis of economic facts, Engels concluded that the three factors that determined the status of Britain are trade, shipping and industry, which shows that he has jumped out of the limitations of traditional thinking methods and the method was a materialistic thinking method based on economic facts. Marx's early research methods were different. Later, Marx's emphasis on empirical facts led to his changes in methods of social and historical observation.

"It is particularly significant for Germany to describe the typical form of the proletarian state of the British Empire, especially at the present time," Engels said, referring to Germany in *The State of the British Working Class*. Socialism and communism in Germany are more theoretical than in any other country. Our German theorists know so little about the real world that the relationship between reality cannot directly push us to reform this ugly reality. [6] From this expression, we can see that young Engels did not choose to start from the theoretical premise, but attached importance to the facts of reality. After the publication of the *Outline*, Marx's mode of thinking changed. Marx began to analyze alienated labor from the starting point of economic facts in the manuscript of economic philosophy in 1844. This shows that Marx gradually surmounted the limitations of abstraction and speculation in his own thoughts, based on social reality, and deepened his understanding of civil society.

In addition, Engels gave Marx new content in the research object and research vision. At first, Marx always paid attention to the social reality of Germany. Engels paid attention to the British society and the situation of the British proletariat. At that time, Britain was very different from Germany. It had the highest level of capitalist development and the position of the proletariat was more miserable. From the perspective of research, Marx conducted a comparative study between Germany and France, while Engels provided a new research perspective, which was a comparative study between Germany and Britain.

5. Summary

Marx and Engels had common ideals and aspirations, in the early Marx and Engels each through the independent road to complete the transition from idealism to materialism, from revolutionary democracy to communism and finally came together. And it is on the basis of common thought that the two men cooperated in Paris to complete the "Holy Family", "German ideology" and "Communist Manifesto". These works expound their common theoretical conclusions — "material view of history", and proclaimed the birth of Marxist scientific system.

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