

Materialist Outlook on History and Juche Idea

—Universal Significance of Juche Idea—



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1. Criticism of Materialism: Significance of the Juche Idea

(1) General Secretary Kim Jong Il criticized the “preceding theory of socialism based on a materialist outlook on history.”

He said:

“The theory of socialism in the preceding age, based on a materialist outlook on history, was not free from historical limitations. This theory did not regard the social and historical movement as a movement of the motive force, as a movement which begins and develops on the initiative and through the role of the popular masses, its motive force, but as a natural historical process which changes and develops due to material and economic factors. According to the materialist outlook on history, the more the productive forces develop in a capitalist society, the more intensive the incompatible contradictions between the productive forces and relations of production and the antagonism between the exploiter class and the exploited class grow, the more the working class and other revolutionary forces develop in strength and, accordingly, the more the revolution matures. Seeing material and economic factors as fundamental in the revolutionary struggle, the preceding theory of socialism failed to raise the task of strengthening the motive force of the revolution and enhancing its role as the basic way to carry out the

revolution.” (Kim jong Il, 1994, *Socialism Is a Science*)

(2) Human society is not only regulated by nature, the law of nature, but also was formed and has developed independently separated from it.

The historical formation and development of this human society is not achieved in human reality by the will and domination by those who have seized state power but by the objective law that regulates its intention and concept — this was the major method of view of the materialist outlook on history.

What is the basis of the formation of the objective law of this human society? *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engels, 1844) finds it in productivity, or in the means of production to be direct, an element of productivity of material products, and views the development of the means of production, or the “material economic factors” of social development, as the “fundamental means” of the revolution (development of society).

The materialist outlook on history (preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1859) defines, “In the social production that men carry on, they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production.”

However, the “material forces of production,” an element of productivity, do not include only the means of production. Division of labour and cooperation, elements of productivity, cannot be achieved without division of labour and cooperation among the working men. Marx writes in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* that the characteristics of the activities of man as man are that they are free conscious activities and activities of processing and creating nature. This view becomes more evident in the theory of labour process in *Capital*. (This will be discussed later.)

Capital regards this definition of the materialist outlook on history as a prerequisite and mentions it repeatedly. Productivity is viewed to be developing independent of the relations of production (class relations to be direct). But that is viewed in the sense that extensiveness of the means of production, or manufacturing by joint labour (social labour) by a large number of workers, is necessary.

But, in his work *From Utopia to Science* (1883), Engels views the development of productivity as that of the “social character” of the means of production. The “materials,” which are the means of production (natural materials which are outside objects for man),

have a “social character,” and human society (its relations of production to be direct) should correspond to this character. If not, that society (relations of production) cannot be formed and developed.

But do the means of production, or natural materials, have a “social” character? The earth is the foundation of human existence and the main thing in the means of production. But is its “character” different when an individual owns it and uses it for his own interests and when working men own it jointly and use it for their common interests? Its character as a natural power does not change.

Engels views productivity first of all as a means of production (material), that the means of production has a “social character,” and that man and the relations of production are regulated by that “social character.” This is a mode of viewing that man and human relations are regulated by “materials,” natural materials.

(3) But with this mode one cannot clarify that who develops productivity and whose intention of developing productivity. The task ought to have been viewing the characteristics of human society that differs from nature, but it was viewed that society is regulated by the natural materials, natural law. Hence, the understanding comes that this is a materialist approach of the formation of human society (solution of the material relations of the social relations).

Stalin wrote:

The Soviet power could win the state power because the Soviet power held the economic law that the relations of production surely corresponds to the character of productivity. With this view, the Soviet power socialized the means of production, made them property of all people and, by relying on them, eliminated the exploitative system and created socialist forms. (1952, *Socialist Economic Problems in the Soviet Union*)

Stalin (following the concept by Engels) viewed the expansion of production, “socialization,” as the “social character of productivity,” the “social character” of “the means of production.” And he wrote:

The economic laws under socialism are objective laws that reflect the law-governed character of the processes of the economic life that occur independent of our will. Those who negate this proposition are, in actual fact, those who negate science.

Stalin, viewing the development of productivity as being achieved by the “social character” of “the means of production,” said that the relations of production (relations of “ownership” to be direct) must correspond to the “social character” of the means of production. Moreover, he viewed these laws as “laws” occurring independent of our will, laws of natural history. Clearly, Stalin “put emphasis on the material and economic factors.”

But, how did Stalin view the fact that the socialist revolution became a reality in the Soviet Union, in which capitalism and productivity had less developed on the worldwide scale?

General Secretary Kim Jong Il said:

“History shows that socialism first triumphed in relatively backward countries, not in the countries where capitalism had developed.” (1994, *Socialism Is a Science*)

To see from the point of reality, the Soviet socialism cannot be viewed to be socialism based on the development of productivity.

Stalin, in order to rationalize the Soviet socialism, stressed that it conformed to the law that the relations of production correspond to the development of productivity, only exposing by himself his intention to rationalize the Soviet power already established.

He showed that the understanding of the inevitability of socialism based on the materialist outlook on history can never be scientific.

(4) The Juche idea’s criticism of the materialist outlook on history is of decisive significance.

General Secretary Kim Jong Il said:

“Man is distinguished qualitatively from animals, which act instinctively, in that he conducts independent and creative activities with consciousness. The course of man’s activities is the process whereby he expresses his independence, creativity and consciousness. Independent, creative and conscious activities constitute man’s mode of existence. ...

Man’s independence, creativity and consciousness are social attributes which are formed and developed through a socio-historical process, where he acts in social relationships. ...

Man is the master and transformer of the world. He shapes his destiny on his own, by transforming the objective world to meet his needs.” (Ibid.)

It is impossible to understand that men form a separate society if one approaches it with the viewpoint that it is regulated by and subject to the natural law. The Juche idea clearly

sees the social character inherent to man, and clarifies the position (master) man occupies in the world and the role (transformation through Juche-based practice) he plays. This is the decisive significance of this idea.

Then, how could this understanding of man, human society, be formed and established?

2. Formation and Establishment of the Juche Idea

The Juche idea was formed and established based on the revolutionary struggle, the reality, in Korea.

How were the tasks of national liberation from Japan's colonial rule and at the same time the emancipation of the masses of the people from feudal fetters achieved? The Korean revolution had to follow an untrodden path beset with difficulties. Among the leaders of those days there were those who attempted to win their country's liberation by relying on other countries, outside forces, and those who tried to apply socialism, the preceding theories and other countries' experiences in disregard of their country's historical conditions and concrete realities. This was checking the practical advance of the Korean revolution.

General Secretary Kim Jong Il said:

“Drawing on serious lessons derived from such flunkeyism and dogmatism, the leader (President Kim Il Sung) clarified the truth that a revolution should be carried out not by anyone's approval or instruction but by one's own conviction and on one's own responsibility and that all problems arising in the revolution should be solved in an independent and creative way. ...

As stated previously, the leader advanced the Juche idea, a new revolutionary idea, on the basis of practical experience and lessons gained in the revolutionary struggle. ...

The leader has conducted ideological and theoretical activities invariably based on the revolutionary practice, and developed and enriched the revolutionary idea and theories in the course of giving answers to problems arising in the revolutionary practice. ...

The Juche idea has been perfected as the guiding idea of revolution in our age in the practice of the Korean revolution. ...

The Juche idea emerged on the basis of the requirements of a new age when



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the masses of the people appeared as the masters of history and of a rich experience gained in the revolutionary struggle. So it has become the great guiding idea of revolution in our age.” (1982, *On the Juche Idea*)

What underlies the Juche idea is the conviction that the “masses of the people” are the “masters” (subject) of the world and history. This is the conviction that “The people are God.”

General Secretary Kim Jong Il said:

“Although they are the subject of history, the masses of the people do not hold the same position and play the same role in all ages and in all societies. In the class society, unaware of their social status and class relationship and their strength for a long time in the past, the working masses could not unite into a political force. ... Even in the exploiting society they created all material and cultural wealth by their own efforts, but they were unable to shape history in an independent manner, because they could not occupy the position of masters of society. Only by seizing state power and the means of production in their own hands and by establishing a socialist system can the working masses free themselves from exploitation and oppression and create history consciously as true masters of society and their own destiny.” (Ibid.)

In any form of society, the working masses are the subject of that society. They are

creators of the material and cultural wealth indispensable to human life. But in the class society, in the capitalist society, the last form of that society, in particular, the idea that the working masses are the “subject” of society is distorted and is under suppression, and the idea that they can exist only under the domination of capital is being given prominence and propagated. Though “labour” by the workers, the working masses, is the reason (entity) of the maintenance and development of society, they are led not to have the idea that they themselves are the subject of history.

The capitalists are scheming to propagate the bourgeois ideology, gold-almighty ideology, in the socialist countries. For this reason, what is indispensable in awakening the masses to the Juche idea is the ideological leadership by a political party that regards that idea as its invariable and absolute guiding ideology. Under the leadership of such party the workers, the working masses, come to have an understanding through their labour and life that they themselves are the subject. The reality of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, which is developing socialism by dint of the unity of the leader, the ruling party and the masses, their single-hearted unity, based on the conviction in the Juche idea confirms the truthfulness of the Juche idea.

3. The Logic of *Capital* That Confirms the Truthfulness of the Juche Idea

While the truthfulness of the Juche idea is being confirmed by the invariable advance of socialism in the DPRK, how can the people be convinced of it, the people living in the capitalist society where neoliberalism, the last-ditch effort of capitalism, is cutting a wide swath through not only people’s lives but human nature itself? Let us delve into this issue with a theoretical understanding at the centre.

Based on the Juche idea, we can use the logic of Marx’s *Capital* in confirming the idea’s truthfulness, not in criticizing capitalism based on the materialist outlook on history.

At the same time, why the idea of rationalizing the domination by capital, which is given wide publicity in reality, is being spread among workers, the working people, how they can be liberated from the idea and how they can accept the Juche idea as their own can be viewed to be explained by *Capital*.

(1) Reality: Money Equals Human Rights

The idea that distorts and destroys the idea that they are the subject is being spread among the workers, the working masses living in the capitalist society; worse still, it is being spread not only by the compulsory performance by the state power and the machinations by mass media, it is expressed in their everyday life.

The ideological consciousness that money is essential to life, to earning more and to improving their living standards, is widespread among the workers, the working masses. What happens sometimes is that one tries to compete with his colleague and kick him out in the last to earn money.

And as they cannot survive if they are not employed, the existence of businesses, capitalistic businesses, is quite natural for the workers and they think that they have to (cannot but) be employed by these businesses and work according to their orders and intentions (pursuance of selfish profits).

They think they also earn profits by holding stocks and securities and the speculative profits accruing from their sales and purchases — this is their way of thinking. In other words, earning selfish profits is considered to be natural.

It is a right of every individual to spend money freely and act to earn selfish profits; this is an expression of freedom and democracy; that a guiding political party or state suppresses this right, brainwashes the people with the ideology that regulates earning of selfish profits is an infringement upon human freedom and suppression of human rights; it is democracy that the method of earning profits is at every individual's disposal—this is a view of those of intellect, and is given wide publicity by mass media. Freedom and democracy (freedom of earning private profits by every individual and democracy of choice of the method of earning these profits by every individual) is the thought that money equals human rights.

Capital, by giving a theoretical explanation of this reality of the capitalist economy, takes into account the reality which subsumes socialized commodity economy and even the workers' labour and life, and clarifies that money suppresses and destroys human rights.

(2) Logic of *Capital*: Points to Be Confirmed

Let us see the points of the logic of *Capital* that describes the truthfulness of the Juche idea in a theoretical way.

- 1) *Capital* makes it clear that the capitalist economy is the commodity economy and it is not a universal factor, relationship, in human society but a historical form which

is formed and which develops under historical conditions.

The commodity economy is characterized by the fact that a man, or a worker, cannot establish relationship with another but can do so only through exchange of his own commodity with another's. This means the relationship between commodities dominates human relationship. Marx saw it as the "nature of fetish," unique to the commodity economy. Exchange of commodity with commodity is independent of the will and action of the man with a commodity to exchange, and forms a motion that dominates and regulates him, a surplus value, dominating and regulating the exchanger. This is the "nature of fetish."

Money is formed in the course of the development of exchange of commodities; representing the commodity that can be directly exchanged with any other commodity, or its value, it has no meaning when there is no other commodity to be exchanged (including when the commodity produced by a worker is used as it is). Therefore, money itself is neither essential to nor useful in human life.

Capital is formed based on the development of the relationship between commodity and money, the relationship of circulation, and the circulation whereby $G-W-G'$, or the circulation of buying commodity with money and selling it at an expensive price to earn profit, is just capital.

The epochal significance of *Capital* is that it sees capital as a motion of circulation (circulatory form). The motion of capital and its essence has nothing to do with human existence and life. Capital is not necessary in human existence and life. In this sense, it is nothing other than a historical form.

Therefore, if commodity, money and capital are mistaken as perpetual natural forms of social production, one cannot see the nature of their forms as special historical forms.

- 2) Capital, as a circulatory form, does not have any reason for the formation of the profit (reason for the increase of the value). Capital assumes the form of independent motion, but has no reason for such motion. Commodity exchanges do not increase the value. So the commercial capital as a pure circulatory motion can be created only through expropriation of the values from those selling and buying it.

So for the motion of capital to be set, labour by the working men, production process, which is the reason of existence and development inherent to human society,

has to be included in that motion. The absolute condition of that inclusion is the commercialization of labour. The working men, the subject of labour and production, are deprived of their means of production, and they cannot work. In order to ensure their existence and living, they have to sell their labour to capital as a commodity. Such is a social condition. But this condition cannot be created by the development of capital itself, but achieved by expropriation of the means of production from the workers, peasants and artisans by means of the state's violence (this is the initial accumulation of capital).

The social creation of capital can be achieved only by the violent expropriation of the means of production from the workers, the working masses, deprivation of their role as the subject of production. This reveals the special historical nature of capital, its anti-worker essence. At the same time, the workers enter the relationship in which they cannot exist without earning money by selling their labour as a commodity, the relationship of being involved in the commodity economy in spite of themselves. This, of course, is a situation which is created by the special historical condition of the workers, the subject of production, being deprived of that position.

- 3) *Capital* grasps the labouring process as a reason for human existence and development, and clarifies the position of the workers, the subject of that process, and nature inherent to man revealed in the process.
 - a. It views the "labouring process" as a reason (entity) of the existence of human society irrespective of the social form. It views that even if capital subsumes and dominates the labouring process, the fact that the labouring process is the foundation of the existence and development of the motion of capital is immutable.

The labouring process is a process in which man, the worker, as the subject, regulates and controls the metabolism between man and nature (mainly the earth). The Juche idea regards man as the "creator of the material and cultural wealth" indispensable to human life, the subject, whereas *Capital* regards man as an object on which the social existence and development of capital depend.
 - b. *Capital* clarifies the social nature of man based on the displaying by man of his capabilities in the labouring process. Labour is a creative activity conducted by its subject with purpose. And the commonness of workers based on the sharing of the purpose is the characteristic of the "labour that can be done only by man."

- 4) But in the capitalist society the labour, the production activities, of these workers becomes the process of capital, the process of the increase of value. In order to achieve their goal to the maximum, the capitalists try to use and manipulate the workers like they do with the means of production, the commodity. This harasses the rich natural power and conditions, and devastates and destroys the labouring power, the capability of man.

At the same time the capitalists, who try to earn maximum profits individually, cannot achieve their goal, and cannot but submit to the influence of the motion of the commodity economy, the influence of the mandatory law, in the social aspect. In particular, securing labouring power as a commodity cannot be achieved as the capitalists wish. If they attempt to expand employment for greater profits, they will face the shortage of labour power, wage increase and absolutely excess capital. This is the fundamental cause of the economic crisis. In the capitalist society the social relations cannot be regulated purposefully. This is not a natural law but a socio-economic law inherent to the capitalist economy (so it can be eliminated). Capital, whose essence is the earning of selfish profits, can never move society according to its intention.

- 5) The highest (last) form of capital to achieve its selfish profits is stock, securities. Buying a stock and owning it means earning profits. Using workers without any restraint and earning profits by regulating them is an ideal feature of capitalism.

But this can be realized only by means of fiction. A stock is a fictitious capital (Fiktives Kapital). A stock, securities, has no utility for both man and society. Worse still, it does not create anything (value or utility value). This is what is marketed and expanded in the world, harassing the actual economy and destroying the workers' living.

That its essence can be turned into reality only by means of this fiction—this is the essence of capital. Capital has no usefulness in the existence and development of society. The logic of *Capital* clarifies this in a theoretical way.

- 6) Putting an end to the domination of socialized men, combined producers, by a purposeless strength according to nature and its metabolism and regulating it in a rational way, putting it under their joint control and making it be conducted under the most appropriate conditions through expenditure of minimum strength and in

conformity to their human nature—this is the realization of human freedom (however, it still has not escaped from the “kingdom of inevitability”). This is the appearance of socialism as seen by *Capital*.

(3) As confirmed above, the logic of *Capital* confirms the truthfulness of the Juche idea by delving into the capitalist economy.

Being convinced of the truthfulness of the Juche idea by seeing the steady progress of the revolution and construction in the DPRK and with a clear understanding that the truthfulness has been elucidated also by the logic of *Capital*, we should cherish the Juche idea as our own.

The domination by capital is destroying the human nature of the workers, the working masses, who are the subjects of the existence and development of society, and driving their existence into a crisis. For a man to live as a man, it is his task to change the domination by capital. But the realization of this change can only be achieved when the workers, the working people, have the consciousness as befits the master of society and work organizationally. Let us cherish the Juche idea as our own, rally our comrades and follow this road.