

Proudhon criticizes political economy

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Abstract: Proudhon, who was in the same historical period with Marx, has also criticized the political economy. In *The Philosophy of Poverty*, Proudhon clearly shows his reasons for criticizing political economy. Proudhon aims to expose the evil of capitalist private ownership by criticizing political economy, and to reorganize socioeconomics, and then introduce his own anarchist proposition and mutual aid theory.

Keywords: political economy; private ownership; social economics; mutual aid theory

In *The Holy Family*, Marx believes that history is "just the activity of someone who pursues his own purpose"^[1], and it is appropriate to explain Proudhon's critical history of political economy. In fact, Marx and Proudhon were involved in the criticism of political economy almost at the same time, and they both saw the possibility that the same theoretical intention and social reality as the theoretical basis could lay the combination between philosophy and political economy.^[2] In Proudhon's vision, there are a lot of "unreasonable" places in the social reality of France, which leads to the general poverty of the working class. Therefore, it is necessary to criticize the theoretical form of the social reality, namely the political economy.

1. First, to expose the evil of capitalist private ownership

Proudhon wanted to lead to the background of the feudal monarchy and the first industrial revolution, the majority of workers "what is the root cause of poverty", so as to shift people's attention to the social reality, mainly the ownership.

Proudhon saw that the direct cause of poverty is that workers have too little income, which ultimately is the uneven distribution of wealth. As for the root cause of poverty, Proudhon pointed to the ownership. "From the power, human exploitation of people, in other words, slavery, usury or indemnity from the victors, and a wide variety of taxes, salt taxes, Kings' family privileges, servitude, civilian donations, rent, rent, etc., in short, ownership."^[3] Proudhon asserted that in his time, there was only one thought, namely, equality and reform. "To make history meaningful, and to legitimize domestic reforms in the name of science".^[4]

Proudhon believes that the inequality in ownership hinders people's freedom. For most people, ownership is only a latent thing, an unexercised power, and ownership is a right to trade, contrary to the idea of a natural right. In fact, it is not respected by the government, the courts and the law; finally, these institutions spontaneously and in unison regard it as false. Freedom is inviolable, and one can neither sell nor assign his liberty; all contracts or terms designed to grant or stop the exercise of liberty are void. For when a slave once set foot on the free land, he immediately became a free man. This is a matter of justifiable defense when society arrests a bad person and deprives him of his freedom: anyone who destroys the social contract by criminal acts is a public enemy; he forces the victim to deprive him of his freedom. Proudhon concluded that if ownership is a natural right, then this natural right is not social, but antisocial. Ownership and society are two absolutely incompatible things. "Either society must perish, or it must destroy ownership."^[5]

2. Second, restructuring and social economics

As a "prophet" of society, Proudhon knew that he had a difficult task: to keep philosophy out of touch with political economics. Proudhon wanted to dissect the "real society" by criticizing political economy and prepare materials for the construction of its "scientific" — social economics.

Proudhon wanted to assume the responsibility as an "architect" of society to keep philosophy out of touch with political economics. In his opinion, the truth never came because "philosophy has been

disconnected from political economy since ancient times"^[6], Proudhon criticized the bourgeois economists' empirical interpretation of economic phenomena, trying to find the essence behind economic phenomena through the numerous economic phenomena. "In their view, facts are truth, the only reason is because they are facts, are tangible facts."^[7] he said he did not nearly one hundred years people formally called "political economy" that set of contradictory theory as science, because the theory is a ancient inherited about the code of code or convention integration, the phenomenon behind the society itself, political economy has never put forward any question. In this regard, Proudhon argued without reason: "The political economy left by Adam Smith, Ricardo, Malthus, and Jean Ba Say has been denied in some sense, and we have seen it stagnate for half a century. This is an important conclusion drawn in this book's."^[8] disregard for the nature behind the phenomenon makes political economists powerless to solve social problems. He makes a vivid metaphor: he sees political economy as a space filled of building materials waiting for a building. The workers waited enthusiastically for work, but the architect disappeared without no picture. Economists only remember the origin of each material, the cost of processing, and the merits of it, but they know nothing about how to use it. Various efforts were made to find out the general picture of the building, but they all failed. Eventually they are desperate and admit that scientific creativity is limited. The construction of the social building was stranded, people flocked to the site, all the building materials equally or draw lots. As a result, the materials that could have built a magnificent temple were built into thatched cottages by ignorant and barbaric ownership systems. The task proposed to his new economics is to use the existing political economy materials to find out the law after the complicated phenomenon, and reform the society according to this law, so that the human society can truly achieve the "organizational state" of eliminating poverty.

3. Third, introduce the anarchist proposition and mutual assistance theory

Proudhon tried to solve real social problems in a metaphysical way, and on the basis of criticizing classical political economy, he introduced his own political anarchist proposition and economic theory of mutual assistance.

The formula to solve social problems should be a law of exchange, a theory of mutual assistance, a guarantee system that can eliminate all the previous situation of the rule of law and commercial society and meet the conditions of effectiveness, progress and fairness put forward by the critical circle. This is not only agreed but also a real society, To eliminate the servitude of machines and prevent the emergence of new machines, Can change competition into something good, Turn the monopoly into the security of all people, To rely on the power of their own principles, Not begging for credit from capital and requesting protection from the State, But to make capital and the state to labor, Being able to establish true unity among the nations through honest trade, Ability to neither suppress individual initiative, And not the savings of a family, But constantly return the wealth seized by individuals to society, Ability to guarantee the political and industrial equality of citizens through this in and out movement of capital, And relying on the large-scale public education system to continuously improve the level of citizens, To ensure their professional equality and ability balance; Being able to reform human consciousness through fairness, welfare, and morality, Ensure the harmony and balance in reproduction. In short, "This is a society organized and changed, not temporarily once and for all, a social" that can provide everything without any collateral.^[9]

The theory of mutual aid or exchange, the theory of physical exchange, its simplest form is consumer borrowing. From the perspective of collective existence, this theory is the combination of all the two ideas and the same long history as its constituent factors. Because, "it is nothing else than the resurrection of the primitive practice of society after a series of intricate propositions and institutional changes, which is the result of six thousand years of thinking about the basic proposition that A is equal to A."^[10]

4. Conclusions

As mentioned above, Puludong criticizes political economy for complex reasons. He aims to expose the evil of capitalist private ownership by criticizing political economy, reorganize socioeconomics, and then introduce his own anarchist proposition and mutual aid theory.

References

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