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Justice in Global Development: Reality and Prospects

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The globalized capital "drives people to eliminate capital by the use of capital itself". (Marx & Engels, 1979:394)

With the acceleration of globalization, problems concerning global justice have emerged constantly and appear to get even worse. Though the reality is not good, people never cease to pursue the fairness in global development. The proposing and discussing of the conception of sustainable global development indicates the possibility of fulfilling global justice. The deepening contradictions within capitalism in the process of globalization reveal the root of injustice in global development, that is, capitalism. The notion of eliminating capital by the use of capital itself shows a bright prospect of seeking justice in global development.

Justice is a historical conception. It is specific and relative in any society. The problem of justice emerged when surplus products were produced. It was initially a problem of distribution of profits. With the improvement of human production capacity, the expansion of areas of human activity and the complication of social relations, the problem of justice has expanded into areas of politics, culture, education and health care, getting closely related to human freedom, human rights, human dignity and humanities. The fact that disagreement would always exist on the idea of justice unless profits were distributed according to different needs of people and every individual had an opportunity to put their innate talents to full use implies that the justice in global development can be achieved in communist society.

I. Reality of the problem of justice in global development

Great progress has been achieved in fighting for social justice during the human development: the notion that all men are born *equal* in respect of *rights has already taken hold; the development of mass production and market economy has freed humans from the ancient insular community bound by blood relations and the hierarchy of feudal society. However, the global development is apparently unequal* as the pace of globalization quickens. *On the one hand, economy in capitalist societies prospered with liberalism prevailing all over the world and profit maximization as the sole criteria in market competition; on the other hand, workers lived in a poor and miserable life suffering cold and hunger in the 18th and 19th centuries. The gap between the rich and the poor has been widening still. Problems of global development involve inequality of opportunity, unfair*

rules and therefore unequal outcomes in the end. Without proper redistribution of profits, economic growth has become “aimless development”(Sen, 2000), causing worldwide conflicts.

1. Inequality of opportunity for global development

The cause of inequality of opportunity for global development is the unequal international distribution resulted from globalization, no matter the old form of distribution where less developed countries, known collectively as "the South", were providers of raw materials while developed countries or “the North” were producers of manufactured goods or the new form in which less developed countries produce primary and manufactured products whereas developed countries provide equipment and software. The unequal international distribution deprived the developing countries from the chance to develop autonomously at the very beginning and caused their economic and social disintegration. A direct link with developed countries has broken up the previously-established contact between countries and regions, and fierce competition among developing countries to a certain extent has undermined their own strength for negotiation and opportunities for development as well. As a result, “the market for the capital and commodities in the North would be greatly retrained if the South couldn’t have a chance to develop in a proper way; and eventually the North would have no way to develop if the South remained poor” (Deng, 1993:106).

The problem of unequal chance for global development is now drawing great attention. “Recent estimates suggest that it would take five generations for a family that earned half the national average income to reach the average” (The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The world Bank, 2006:6). But within that period, there is little hope for them to reach the finish line no matter how smart, competent and hard-working they might be. “If unequal opportunities are large within many countries, they are truly staggering on a global scale” (ibid.:6), concludes the 2006 World Development Report. For instance, “while 7 of every 1,000 American babies die in the first year of their lives, 126 of every 1,000 Malian babies do”(ibid.:6).

2. Unequal outcomes of global development

As a result of unequal opportunities, the development of the world is apparently unequal and the disparity between developed countries and less developed is getting larger and larger. According to the 2006 World Development Report, mean annual consumption expenditures range from Purchasing Power Parity (PPT) \$279 in Nigeria to PPP \$17,232 in Luxembourg (The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The world Bank, 2006:6). As the report points out, between-country differences were relatively small early in the nineteenth century, but they came to account for a larger part of total inequality toward the end of the twentieth century. “If China and India are excluded, global

inequalities have continued to rise, owing to the continuing divergence between most other low-income countries and rich countries”(ibid.:7). The consequence of globalization is, to quote a Chinese researcher NI Jiamin, “the rich people shift the burden of competition to the poorest of their country”(Ni, 2003). On a global scale, it is developed countries that shift the burden to developing countries and make them their subordinates. What’s more, the advantages of competition are all gone. Competition has taken on its social Darwinian form—people fight against one another for survival—and become a serious threat to social coherence (Beck and Habermas, 2000:210). Human activities are simplified as economy-oriented behaviors, that is, person-to-person competitions, and competitive spirit is considered the core of human history (The Group of Lisbon, 2000:146).

What is the cause of unequal development across countries? The capitalist-led globalization inevitably leads to developing countries financially disadvantaged and technically insufficient. Thus they have to depend on developed countries for financial and technical assistance to various degrees. This economic dependence often results in the loss of political autonomy of the developing countries and deprives them from enjoying the equal rights and interests that the developed countries do in the international political community. When it comes to the discussion of policies involving global development, the voice of the developing countries is usually unheard, which entails unequal development of countries in the world. As Wallerstein argues in his world system theory, the only purpose of establishing the global economic and social structure today is to build an international system in which countries depend on themselves for the benefits of their own. Similar argument can be found in Amin and Santos’ dependency theory.

3. Unfair rules of global development

Unequal outcomes of global development derive from unfair rules and institutions. As a matter of fact, the prosperity of capitalist countries greatly relies on their early barbaric plunder of less developed countries and the extremely unfair exchange rather than free competition. Colonial rule of the capitalist countries over the less developed countries has exposed the hypocrisy of bourgeois liberal democracy and the false impartiality of free trade. The 19th century witnessed the immoral opium trade imposed by the United Kingdom to China and the colonization of India. To the majority of less developed countries, their disadvantaged position was predetermined at the initial stage of capitalist-led globalization because agricultural countries based on self-sufficient natural economy were too weak compared with industrialized countries featuring manufacturing. Relations and trade between countries were unfair in a colonial system where the bourgeois slogan of freedom, equality and justice was submerged. Consequently the less developed countries are getting more and more marginalized although their insular natural economy has collapsed under the strong impact of capitalism which unconsciously acted as a tool of promotion of society. Even in a post-colonial age, countries which started to develop later

have encountered much restraint owing to the exploitation they had suffered, though they are politically independent. In order to catch the pace of developed countries, they have established mainly externally-oriented economy dependent on foreign markets. As a result, the development of commodity economy is hindered while agriculture falls into stagnation or even recession.

We argue that today's global development is unjust. Nevertheless, we don't deny the necessity of less developed countries joining in globalization and the benefits they may get from it (Dahrendorf, 2000:19). The emergence of manufacturing and modern technology, the promotion of education and integration into the world economy are all the symbols of progress of modern society. However, this progress is unjust and one-sided because it is derived from unjust exchanges soaked with blood, humiliation and agony, and its achievements and benefits are unequally shared. It has caused and exacerbated within-country and cross-country disparities between the rich and poor so that peace and development face serious challenges. That explains why the process of capitalist-led globalization has been accompanied by anti-globalization movements and by objections from many nascent forces such as socialists, social democrats, ecologists and feminists, and even from capitalists themselves. Then we may ask if it is possible to achieve the justice in global development.

II. Possibility of justice in global development

It is true that globalization today is highly unjust in the areas of economy, politics, culture and economy and that it will remain unjust for a long time, but compared with the situation in the first half of the 20th century it "has become less Europe-centered or Atlantic-centered"(Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton, 2001:597). And both developed countries and less developed countries are making effort to shorten their gap and achieve global justice.

Firstly, developed countries have relieved the debt of some developing countries, especially the least developed countries, and have helped to set up agencies like International Fund for Agricultural Development, and Science and Technology Development Fund. Meanwhile many international organizations, such as International Labor Organization, World Health Organization, UN organizations and so on, have been assiduously working for the construction of a just and harmonious world. They have tried to popularize the principles for an interdependent world and the necessity and urgency of global coordination and justice, and have greatly contributed to define and carry out the new international economic order. Agenda 21, revealed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, 1992, is a good example symbolizing the justice of global development. Concerning different needs and potentials

of countries and nations, it attempted to answer questions involving the concept of world happiness and *overall human well-being and proposed suggestions of how to improve the production and distribution on a global scale*. Besides, the establishment of international policies by organizations like International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization represents our pursuit of freedom, equality and justice and plays an important role in the promotion of justice in global development and improvement of overall human well-being.

Secondly, early in the 1950s, developing countries proposed an international economic cooperation based on mutual interests and mutual respect for sovereignty at the Bandung Conference. The 1960s saw the emergence of the first international organization fighting for the economic interests of “the South”—the Group of 77, which initially called for a new international economic order of justice and approved the Lima Declaration in the 1970s. The declaration proclaimed that developing countries should be entitled to full participation in the formulation of all discussions concerning the reform of world trade and monetary policy. The victory of the struggle over oil of countries in the Middle East promoted the fight for a new international economic order of justice to a climax. In April–May 1974, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a *declaration* and program of action *on the establishment of a new international economic order*. The declaration analysed the necessity and urgency of establishing a new international economic order and revealed the root of injustice—the old international system, which was the biggest obstacle to independence and growth of developing countries. It also put emphasis on a close interrelationship and cooperation of all the States members of the international community. What’s more, it put forward significant suggestions involving the reform of international monetary system, regulation and supervision of the activities of transnational corporations, and redress of existing injustices in the trade between the developed and the developing countries (Ni, 2003). Many international celebrities have agreed that there must be a new world contract aiming at common interests, peaceful coexistence and just development.

Thirdly, cooperation among developing countries and the integration process is also conducive to the justice of global development. In the monetary and financial fields, the United Nations has set up a number of multilateral institutions, such as clearing agencies and aid agencies and so on, with a view to solve the serious problems of financing through mutual cooperation. A wide range of exchanges and close cooperation have also been established in the areas of production and trade and fields of science and technology. Owing to regional disparities, varying levels of development, and different tasks and objectives, regional economic cooperation is becoming the main form of cooperation among countries of “the South”. Up to now we have seen strong vitality and fruitful cooperations between member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Economic Community of West African States, the Latin American Integration Association and the South Asian Alliance. However, there has been an increasing gap of economic

development between developing countries due to their large number and wide range of distribution, varying degrees of economic development, different social and cultural background, as well as their different styles and capabilities of coping with the general trend of globalization. Since the promotion of neoliberal policies worldwide in 1970s by the western developed countries, another round of vicious competition has begun, with the result that many countries of “the South” are mired in problems: Latin American countries are facing increasingly serious debt crisis; the development of African countries come to a standstill and even recession because of successive natural disasters and policy failures; the long-term miraculous history of economic growth of many East Asian countries has ended as a result of the 1997 Asian financial crisis; the all-round cooperation among developing countries is becoming increasingly difficult and their efforts to fight for global justice are greatly challenged. Growing gap between rich and poor, global ecological crisis, as well as the plight that capitalism itself can not go beyond, seriously inhibit the process of global justice. Never before have human beings felt so strongly tied together, trapped in the same problems and facing the same fate. Common interests and plight have generated growing consensuses: the world's economic growth must follow the path of sustainable development since there is only one Earth; competition may lead to high efficiency, but unrestrained competition will eventually bring economic chaos and social unrest; the global market economy requires a global monitoring mechanism and a standardized system; market can not become the sole regulator of economic growth and there must be a growth of redistribution of the global community; unjust political and economic order must be changed. These ideas and consensuses make it possible to achieve justice on a global scale.

Finally, with the global public interest and overall well-being of humanity as the primary principle, the UN Global Compact seeks to build a new global order including shared political norms and basic ethical guidelines in the global scope. It urgently requires governments and non-governmental organizations to occupy transnational political space and exert strong and broad political control over the global markets in order to avoid the global market economy converting into market totalitarianism. This is a lesson drawn from the 1997 Asian financial crisis. With the end of Liberalism, "global governance" and "global public policy" has become “a creative diplomacy mission of national leaders in the 21st century ”(Tetzlaff, 2001:248). The UN Global Compact is to achieve two objectives: firstly to reduce the large-scale poverty excluded from the welfare in the global market; secondly to fight for more justice in distribution and income between industrial countries (the winners of globalization)and developing countries (the losers). The task will surely take a long time and must be very difficult, but people’s constant pursuit for the ideal of social justice shows the possibility of achieving global justice in the end.

III. Bright prospects of justice in global development

Only in communism can justice be achieved in the true sense. We have the conviction that socialism and communism have a bright future so does our fight for the justice in global development.

Firstly, worldwide serious polarization is the real factor which determines the demise of capitalism and the victory of socialism. History of the world development today indicates that the bourgeoisie may be able to ease absolute poverty of the proletariat under the premise of increasing their relative poverty, but it can not fundamentally eradicate poverty or eliminate polarization. This goal can only be reached when socialism replaces capitalism. Socialism is to eliminate the polarization and achieve common prosperity because the essence of socialism is to resolutely safeguard the interests of the overwhelming majority of people and social fairness and justice. At present, the internal polarization within capitalist society has reached a historically unprecedented level, and public demands are increasing to expose such polarization and resist neoliberal guideline. No doubt, people's desire for socialism is growing during the process of globalization and today's world urgently needs socialism.

Secondly, the growing global problems are another important factor which determines the demise of capitalism and the victory of socialism. Compared with polarization, global problems have touched the soul of capitalist system to a greater extent. Global environmental problems caused by the capitalist lust of profit make people wonder if human beings can continue to survive. In order to ensure the survival of all humankind and prevent people and environment from becoming an unlimited value-added tool for capital, human beings have to relieve themselves from the endless pursuit of material wealth and change their value orientation of blind pursuit of material wealth and material enjoyment into the pursuit of free and all-round development of human individuals, which is also the basic feature of communism.

Thirdly, today's anarchic world and ever-expanding economic crisis objectively require socialism to displace capitalism because the root of anarchy and crisis lies in the relations of production among all capitalist countries and in private ownership of the means of production. To get rid of the anarchic world economy and ever-increasing economic crisis, people must first eliminate the system of private ownership, and on this basis, displace capitalism with socialism.

Finally, growing contradictions between "the North" and "the South" have provided a broad stage for the socialist movement. After World War II, the North - South contradictions began to spread all over the world. Their relationship of exploiters and exploited, oppressors and the oppressed, in essence, became a kind of class relations. Threatened by new and old colonialism, a vast number of developing countries gathered together and started to fight against the developed capitalist countries for international democracy, the establishment of a just and rational new international economic order and common prosperity. Their struggle for the interests of the majority of countries and the common development of mankind as a whole by restricting the few developed countries is obviously carrying the

nature of socialism because an important aspect of the socialist nature is the "elimination of exploitation and polarization, and realization of common prosperity" (Deng, 1993:373). Each step of the just struggle that developing countries have moved forward makes the people of the world get closer to the realization of socialism and justice in global development.

To sum up, the development and expansion of capitalism in the world today is not a proof of the unlimited vitality of capitalism. On the contrary, it continually accumulates and deepens the basic contradictions inherent in capitalism at the global level. The world financial crisis triggered by the US *subprime crisis* reveals once again that the nature of capital can never be changed, and that it is an irreversible trend for capitalism to be displaced by socialism. Doubtlessly, socialism and communism, as well as the fight for justice in global development, will all have a bright future.

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