

China's Socialist Free Trade Strategy: A Marxist Analysis

Sadiya S. Silvee*

Since its accession with WTO, China has claimed that free trade agreement makes international trade liberal by reducing trade barriers, establishing a pleasant exchange and flow of goods and services, promoting economic corporation, and enhancing economic growth. As the free trade agreement is inefficacious in gaining mass global consensus, China's constructive approach towards free trade has induced many debates. By discussing Marxist perspective on free trade, this study begins with analyzing the theoretical source of Marx's ideas on free trade and aims to apprehend China's approach towards free trade. The author uses descriptive and critical analysis to understand China's approach towards free trade based on Marx's early writings. Further to analyzes the economic and legal aspects of China's free trade agreement, empirical analysis is used. The paper argues that free trade agreement is a progressive plan and neutral economic policy which can bring economic prosperity in any economy as it holds the potential to be the leading economic concept by offering win-win opportunities to both the Contracting parties.

Keywords: Marxist Approach, Bourgeoisie Economy, Free Trade, Political Economy, China, Das Kapital

* Doctoral Research Fellow at Zhengzhou University School of Law (China). LL.B./LL.M. (Green U.-Bangladesh). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5360-9619>. The author may be contacted at: sadiya.silvee@live.com /Address: No.198 Lotus Street, Yuhua Manyuan, Hi-tech Zone, Zhengzhou, Henan Province, PRC.

All the websites cited in this article were last visited on August 15, 2022.

1. Introduction

Free trade is the most debatable notion in the contemporary global economic system. It can be traced back to the second century BC. Despite the economic growth stimulated by these ancient trade routes as Silk Road, Spice routes and Incense Route for long distance trade, international trade through the routes collapsed in the fifteenth century.¹ Many scholars have reasoned unstableness of regimes,² religious conflicts,³ and discovery of alternative sea routes⁴ for the collapse of these ancient trade routes. Noticeably, the international trades operated through these routes were free and independent. Due to the economic benefits, the neighboring states gradually intervened in such international trade, making these trade routes as the source of revenue. This intervention finally brought mercantilism to international trade from mid-sixteenth century.⁵ Although the ancient trade routes disappeared, its economic benefits are still recognized. For the past decades, a number of countries have tried to revitalize the ancient Silk Road.⁶ Among them, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is the only on-going mega project to reconnect the ancient trade routes between Asia and Europe. As a socialist country, China's interest in developing free trade has brought many debates, mostly by the trade protectionist. Hence, BRI has been debated since its announcement by President Xi Jinping in 2013 whether the initiative is promoting free trade or not. Despite all the debates, today, BRI is linking overland and maritime trade routes along Asia, Europe and Africa which encourages global connectivity as a strategy to bring economic development. Further, the Initiative is bridging the continents for social and cultural exchanges between the peoples there.⁷ Today, 149 countries and 32 international organizations have agreed to be a part BRI.⁸

It is noteworthy to mention debate on free trade and protectionism policy which is originated from colonial legacy such as the Navigation Act of 1660.⁹ Gallagher and Robinson have referred to the era as "the Imperialism of Free Trade."¹⁰ Many scholars contributing in the debate have presented different perspectives in this regard.

As such, Adam Smith stated that the "invisible hand" of the free market directed economic life more effectively and fairly than governmental intervention.¹¹ His argument offered intellectual justification for those who believed that the economy should be left to regulate itself. This indicates that an economy is driven by individual

decision-making through entrepreneurial activity. Conversely, David Ricardo placed his argument based on comparative advantage, which suggests if protection is removed, resources would be expected to move away from high cost to low cost products and as a result productivity would rise.¹² He saw international trade in terms of nations rather than individuals. As international trade occurs between the countries rather than between individuals, national trade policy of the country governs and operates the trade. Finally, the trade policy will contribute to the political nature of the contemporary global economic system.

Karl Marx in his work “a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy”¹³ has shed light on the political nature of the global economy and stated:

The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, upon which the legal and political superstructure is erected and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness [...]. At a certain stage of development of society, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relationships of production or - this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms - with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto.¹⁴

The ongoing US-China, US-Canada and Korea-Japan trade disputes demonstrate the political nature of the contemporary global economic system. Marx further stated: “From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. [...] no social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed.”¹⁵ Marx further stated: “the protective tariff regime is conservative [...], while the free trade regime is destructive. Free trade brought about the disintegration of the nations of the past and brought the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to a climax. All in all, the free trade system accelerated social revolution.”¹⁶ Based on Marx's statement, many argued that Marx has pronounced in favor of free trade and he was neither a free trader nor a protectionist.¹⁷ Notwithstanding in the introductory preface of the published English translation of Marx's speech, Fredrick Engels stated: “40 years ago Marx pronounced, in principle, in favor of Free Trade as the more progressive plan, [...] which would bring capitalist society to that deadlock more quickly.”¹⁸ According to Fredrick Engels, Marx's support for free trade was to bring capitalist society to that deadlock more quickly, as free trade will bring social

revolution. And, Marx in his speech expressed the support towards free trade on the same ground of social revolution. Marx stated: "I am in favour of free trade only in this revolutionary sense."¹⁹

This social revolution is about economical laws, with their most astounding contradictions, which will act upon a larger scale in a greater extent of territory which bring enormous development by increasing productive forces of steam, electricity, and machinery. That will increase international trade liberty by reducing trade barriers, establishing a pleasant exchange and flow of goods and services, promoting economic corporation, and enhancing economic growth.

Against this background, this research aims to apprehend China's approach towards free trade from a Marxists perspective. In this regard, the author will try to answer four fundamental questions: firstly, is free trade is a progressive neutral economic policy? Secondly, can it work efficiently in any economic system? Thirdly, how it works for China's socialist economic system? And fourthly, are China's free trade agreements with other countries with different economic system benefiting both contracting parties?

In this article, Marx's early writings and speeches about the capitalist economy, communism and his perspective towards free trade will be examined to understand free trade. Furthermore, China's free trade agreements with other countries will be analyzed along with the economic benefit. The article is divided into four major parts including Introduction and Conclusion. The article starts the discussion with analyzing Karl Marx's perspective on trade in capitalist economic system which he termed as bourgeoisie economic system and then explores his perspective on free trade. Later, the author discusses how a free trade functions and benefits a socialist economic system by studying China's free trade strategy through Marx's perspectives. In conclusion, the author argues that Karl Marx supported free trade policy with the view that free trade can bring socialist revolution in the capitalist economy. However, free trade policy with socialist nature functions as a progressive plan which not only creates a sustainable economy but also holds the potential to be the leading economic concept, mainly because free trade policy of socialist nature urges for the two way surplus business which is the prerequisite for the Fourth Industrial Revolution Era.

2. The Marxist Approach to Bourgeoisie Economy and Free Trade

A. Karl Marx's Understandings of Bourgeoisie Economy

Karl Marx has evaluated capitalist economic system in terms of value of labour-power and social economic classes. In his argument, capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction.²⁰ Marx referred to economic class division known as the theory of social stratification. He explained the capitalist system as “bourgeoisie economy”:²¹

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed -- a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.²²

Presenting the relation between “proletariat and bourgeoisie,”²³ Marx said the bourgeoisie holds all the power and use it to exploit the proletariat to create more surplus. Addressing the characteristics of proletariat in bourgeoisie economy, he argued: “bourgeoisie has made proletariat’s labour as commodity to create capital,²⁴ [...] “they [proletariats] become the slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine.”²⁵ According to Marx, the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat by forcing the proletariat to sell their labour and create as much surplus as possible for the bourgeoisie. As the bourgeoisie holds the power, they get to decide what to do with the surplus, hence, the proletariat is not benefited. Marx has considered “the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc. machine” as the “other portions of the bourgeoisie.”²⁶ Marx stated:

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors,” and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment.”²⁷

In his work, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (*Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Erstes Heft*), Marx discussed the bourgeoisie role in trade. He writes: “I examine the system of bourgeois economy in the following order: capital, landed property, wage-labour, the State, foreign trade, world market.”²⁸ Marx stated his understanding about trade:

[Franklin] fails to see the intrinsic connection between money and labour which posits exchange-value, but on the contrary regards money as a convenient technical device which has been introduced into the sphere of exchange from outside. Franklin’s analysis of exchange-value had no direct influence on the general course of the science, because he dealt only with special problems of political economy for definite practical purposes.²⁹

Marx has seen trade as the abstract universal social labour brought by the universal alienation of individual labour which creates an intrinsic connection between money and labour that posits exchange-value. *Das Kapital* illustrates his understanding as follows:

In the trade between the markets of the world, the value of commodities is expressed so as to be universally recognized. Hence their independent value-form also, in these cases, confronts them under the shape of universal money. It is only in the markets of the world that money acquires to the full extent the character of the commodity whose bodily form is also the immediate social incarnation of human labour in the abstract.³⁰

Furthermore, he stated:

In the trade in which it is being employed, it must possess the average skill, handiness and quickness prevalent in that trade, and our capitalist took good care to buy labour-power of such normal goodness. [...] So long as trade is good, the capitalist is too much absorbed in money-grubbing to take notice of this gratuitous gift of labour.³¹

Marx stated that the bourgeoisie exploits the labour-power of proletariat in the international trade. He stated:

[Bourgeoisie] It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious favor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible

chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom -- Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.³²

Marx suggests bourgeoisie economy depends on “means of production and exchange.”³³ So, it needs to expand the market for its products and easy flow of its product. International trade gives the bourgeoisie such platform. Consequently, bourgeoisie “chases over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere.”³⁴ Marx stated:

[a]s money develops into international money, so the commodity-owner becomes a cosmopolitan. The cosmopolitan relations of men to one another originally comprise only their relations as commodity-owners. Commodities as such are indifferent to all religious, political, national and linguistic barriers. Their universal language is price and their common bond is money. But together with the development of international money as against national coins, there develops the commodity-owner's cosmopolitanism, a cult of practical reason, in opposition to the traditional religious, national and other prejudices which impede the metabolic process of mankind.³⁵

B. Karl Marx and Free Trade

Marx did not develop a systemic and comprehensive theory on free trade. Rather, the discussion on free trade is scattered in his works. According to Marx, “free-trade” is a bourgeoisie policy of the bourgeoisie economy. Stating “free-trade as trade with adulterated,” Marx mentioned: “the free-trade school was formed in the forties by merchants from the Baltic provinces.”³⁶ He also addressed “trade and free trade” as the element of “political economy.”³⁷ In *CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF LAW*, Marx comments: “[...] the relation of industry, of the world of wealth generally, to the political world is one of the major problems of modern times. In what form is this problem beginning to engage the attention of the Germans? In the form of protective duties, of the prohibitive system, of national economy.”³⁸ Many researchers suggested that Marx was not interested in “free trade vs. protectionism, but his point of view focused on the relation between free trade and working class.”³⁹

Marx's first direct encounter with free trade was found in his speech titled, “The Protectionists, the Free Traders and the Working Class” delivered at the International

Congress of Economists held in Brussels in 1847.⁴⁰ Then, Marx's insightful views on the impacts of free trade was further addressed at his piece, "The Question of Free Trade, The Industrialists of Hanover and Protective Tariffs and The Chartists" coauthored with Frederick Engels and delivered before the Democratic Association of Brussels in 1848.⁴¹ In a number of newspaper articles,⁴² Marx discussed his understanding of free trade and its impact in a bourgeoisie economy. Together with Marx's comments on free trade in his speech, "The Question of Free Trade," many of his writings such as *DAS KAPITAL* and the Communist Manifesto discussed not only the impact of free trade in a bourgeoisie economy but also how the impact could be reduced and how it would work in a communist-socialist economy. Through his writings, Marx established his position on the working class deeply analyzing the role of free trade and protective trade policy in the capitalist history. He stated: "[t]he tariff protection system is a man-made way in which the owners of manufacturing factories deprive independent workers; turn the means of national production and means of living into capital; and shorten the transition from the old mode of production to the modern mode of production by violent means."⁴³

In his speech, Marx quoted economist Ricardo as the "authority than which there is no better."⁴⁴ He further stated under free trade policy "wages [will be] reduced to their minimum, their lowest level."⁴⁵ Marx might attempt to address that in a bourgeoisie economy where man to man shares a self-interest relation, interest to increase capital has a nexus with minimum wages. Low labour cost means increased capital. Take an example of the contemporary RMG sector. Developing economies like China (30.8%), Bangladesh (6.8%), Vietnam (6.2%) and India (3.5%) hold the top position from first to fourth as exporter in this sector, while the EU, the US, Japan, the UK are the top importers.⁴⁶ It is observed that these top exporters hold lower wage-labour markets than the top importer's. Marx wanted to state that as labour is a commodity for bourgeoisie, free trade would have a greater impact on labour as commodity. Illustrating the nexus between free trade and labour as commodity in the bourgeoisie economy, Marx stated:

Doubtless, if the prices of all commodities fall-and this is the necessary consequence of Free Trade-I can buy far more for a franc than before. And the workingman's franc is as good as any other man's. Therefore, the Free Trade must be advantageous to the workingman. There is only one little difficulty in this, namely that the workingman, before he exchanges his franc for other commodities, has first to exchange his labor

for the money of the capitalist. [...] If all commodities are cheaper, labor, which is a commodity too, will also fall in price.⁴⁷

According to Marx, the prices of commodities and labour would fall as a result of free trade. He has analyzed the free trade as the policy of the bourgeoisie economy to get the freedom of capital and surplus. Hence, he said “free trade must be advantageous to the workingman.”⁴⁸ He further remarked:

When you have overthrown the few national barriers which still restrict the progress of capital, you will merely have given it complete freedom of action. So long as you let the relation of wage labor to capital exist, it does not matter how favorable the conditions under which the exchange of commodities takes place, there will always be a class which will exploit and a class which will be exploited.⁴⁹

To apprehend Marx's above statement, it is important to understand: first, what is wage; second, how should wage be determined?; and third, the relation of wage labour to capital. For Marx, wages is a “special name for the price of labour-power, usually called the price of labour; it is the special name for the price of this peculiar commodity, which has no other repository than human flesh and blood.”⁵⁰ Marx said: “Labour-power, then, is a commodity, no more, no less so than is the sugar. The former is measured by the clock, the latter by the scales.”⁵¹ Consequently, capital and surplus will be restricted within one group of class that is bourgeoisie.

Marx has agreed that free trade would allow the free flow of goods and services. He remarked free trade as the “Freedom of Capital” that goes beyond the boundaries.⁵² But, he disagreed with the claim of the free traders that this freedom of capital would abolish the antagonism between industrial capitalists and wage labour. Marx stated:

It is really difficult to understand the claim of the free-traders who imagine that the more advantageous application of capital will abolish the antagonism between industrial capitalists and wage workers. On the contrary, the only result will be that the antagonism of these two classes will stand out still more clearly.⁵³

To abolish antagonism between industrial capitalists and wage labour, it is important to cooperate to support each other's goals and objectives, and collaborate to work

together in support of a shared objective and outcome, Therefore, Marx stated: “if the free-traders cannot understand how one nation can grow rich at the expense of another, we need not wonder, since these same gentlemen also refuse to understand how within one country one class can enrich itself at the expense of another.”⁵⁴ The following statement shows his point of view on free trade:

Is that to say we are against Free Trade? No, we are for Free Trade, because by Free Trade all economic laws, with their most astounding contradictions, will act upon a larger scale, upon a greater extent of territory, upon the territory of the whole earth; and because from the uniting of all these contradictions into a single group, where they stand face to face, will result the struggle which will itself eventuate in the emancipation of the proletariat. [...]But, generally speaking, the Protective system in these days is conservative, while the Free Trade system works destructively. It breaks up old nationalities and carries the antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie to the uttermost point. In a word, the Free Trade system hastens the Social Revolution. In this revolutionary sense alone, gentlemen, I am in favor of Free Trade.⁵⁵

His statement arises a basic question: After calling free trade as a bourgeoisie policy of the bourgeoisie economy, why Marx, being a communist, has supported it? Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels often worked together. In the Marx’s speech at the International Congress of Economists published with Friedrich Engels in 1902,⁵⁶ Engels states:

[...] From this point of view, forty years ago, Marx pronounced, in principle, in favour of free trade as the more progressive plan, and therefore, the plan which would soonest bring capitalist society to that deadlock. But if Marx declared in favour of free trade on that ground, is that not a reason for every supporter of the present order of society to declare against free trade?⁵⁷

According to Engels, free trade would bring development as well as destroy the capitalist system because it enriches itself at the expense of another. Explaining Marx position, Friedrich Engels stated:

The question of free trade or protection moves entirely within the bounds of the present system of capitalist production, and has, therefore, no direct interest for us socialists, who want to do away with that system. Indirectly, however, it interests us, in as much as

we must desire the present system of production to develop and expand as freely and as quickly as possible; because along with it will develop also those economic phenomena which are its necessary consequences, and which must destroy the whole system.⁵⁸

Engels' explanation demonstrates that Marx supported free trade because he wanted to provide the bourgeoisie economy with the platform to develop and expand as freely and as quickly as possible. He believed the development and expansion of trade would ultimately destroy the bourgeoisie economy. However, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" portrays a different view. Marx stated that "the bourgeois is a bourgeois - for the benefit of the working class."⁵⁹ He further stated: "[...] Free trade: for the benefit of the working class. Protective duties: for the benefit of the working class. Prison Reform: for the benefit of the working class. This is the last word and the only seriously meant word of bourgeois socialism."⁶⁰

Analyzing Marx speech on free trade suggests that he launched a fourfold philosophical critique of free trade of capitalist nature or, capitalist free trade at the level of: (1) economic philosophy under which free trade is just freedom of capital that facilitates the proliferation of capital on a larger scale; (2) moral philosophy; (3) legal philosophy where free trade is only the freedom of the strong country to dominate the weak country, thereby establishing the "center-periphery" imperial pattern; and (4) political philosophy where free trade objectively accelerates the occurrence and development of social revolutions. These four-fold philosophical critique of capitalist free trade is not completely separate in Marx's position, but is internally integrated, just as he wrote to Engels on July 31, 1865. In his letter to Engels, Marx stated: "No matter what the shortcomings of my works, they have one advantage, that is, they are an artistic whole."⁶¹ Marx criticized was only the 'pseudo' free trade under capitalism. He never opposed the true free trade of mutual exchange, equality and mutual benefit, and was well versed in the historical dialectics in it, which means: "Trade does not depend on trade. It has been abolished by the abolition of privileges; on the contrary, it can only be truly realized through free trade."⁶²

3. China's Socialist Free Trade Strategy: Case Analyses of China's Free Trade Agreements

China, as a communist country holding “socialist economic system” has a long history of struggle to strike a balance between socialist and capitalist market economy.⁶³ China has been continuously arguing for free trade policy. But the term “Chinese characteristics” is not defined. As a communist country, China's intensive effort to promote free trade is somewhat inconsistent with its “socialist economic system.” However, China considers free trade policy as a progressive plan to bring economic benefit for all as asserted by Marx.⁶⁴

China's free trade zones have achieved great technological advancement. One of the reasons for this success is free trade agreement (FTA). Since its accession, China has concluded fifteen (15) FTAs, nine (9) under negotiation, and seven (7) under consideration.⁶⁵ China has wide range of FTA with such countries like Pakistan, Australia, Singapore, Switzerland, Chile and New Zealand and so forth. Recently, in the last APEC Summit 2020, China managed more than a dozen countries across the Asia Pacific region to sign the world's largest free-trade.⁶⁶

A. China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA)

China is promoting trade liberalization to facilitate the development of the country's southwestern region. One of the noticeable FTAs is the Agreement on Trade in Goods of the China-ASEAN FTA (ACFTA) which entered into force in July 2005. ACFTA brought down the tariff of 90% percent of the trade items to zero, making trade more liberal and facilitated trade with the ASEAN members. China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA) was then drafted⁶⁷ as a legal basis for economic and political cooperation. Under CAFTA, China is recognized as a full market economy and the ASEAN members are obliged not to apply “Sections 15 and 16 of the Protocol of Accession of the People's Republic of China to the WTO and Paragraph 242 of the Report of the Working Party on the Accession of China to WTO.”⁶⁸ Non-application of these have made the exchange of goods and services more liberal, equitable and fair.

B. China-Chile Free Trade Agreement

Chile was the first Latin American country to establish diplomatic relations. Then, both countries signed a free trade agreement in 2005. Bilateral trade between them reached USD42.8 billion in 2018, an increase of 24 percent year-on-year. Chile's biggest trading partner is China forming 33 percent export share with the trade volume of USD 25.3 billion and 23.5 percent import share with the trade volume of USD16.7 billion.

C. China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA)

China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) came into force on December 20, 2015. In 2018, Australia exported a total of USD248 billion, USD 87.9 billion (35.5 %) of which was to China. Meanwhile, in 2018, Australia imported USD 219 billion, USD 52.7 billion (24.1 %) of which was from China.

D. China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA)

China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA) came into force in 2007. Although bilateral trade volume has maintained a rapid growth from USD 6.9 billion (2007) to USD16 billion (2018), there were some ups and down. Hence, CPFTA did not show much growth in the trade volume if comparing to other free trade agreements of China.

Similar to CPFTA, China-Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement, China-Iceland Free Trade Agreement, and China-Switzerland Free Trade Agreement are still struggling to create the win-win strategy. Comparing to Pakistan, Costa Rica and Iceland are importing more than exporting, while Switzerland exports more to China than imports. Although under these free trade agreements tariffs on most of the goods are immediately reduced to zero or eliminated over a certain period of time, a large group of demanding products are not on the list.

Following the analyses of free trade agreements between China and other countries, it is quite visible that a cooperative and collaborative free trade agreement has the potential to create a win-win two ways business for both the sides and work as a progressive plan to bring a sustainable economic growth. China's rapid economic growth, its social living standard, its investment ratio and the ratio of its product in the global market would portray the successful combination of socialist

economy and free trade. As a result, it is probable to consider China as the leading economic concept for many developing and least developing countries.

4. Conclusion

An in-depth analysis of the Karl Marx's speeches and writings on free trade and his understandings of the relation between bourgeoisie and working class in the bourgeoisie economy suggests few things:

Firstly, Marx was not a capitalist supporter because he thought capitalist economic system enriches itself by exploiting the working class. Secondly, he agreed that free trade has the essence to bring development and thus could be called as a progressive plan. Thirdly, he believed that free trade in bourgeoisie economy would ultimately destroy the system because of its capitalist nature. And lastly, a free trade of socialist nature could bring mutual exchange, equality and benefit.

Adhering to Marx's socialist free trade China, has developed its free trade strategy by being an active partner and engaging in continuous negotiation for developing win-win free trade agreement. The analysis of China's free trade agreement with other countries substantiates that Marx's socialist free trade as a progressive plan brings mutual exchange, equality and mutual benefit.

Received: May 15, 2022

Modified: July 15, 2022

Accepted: Aug. 15, 2022

REFERENCES

1. Suraiya Faroghi et al., *AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE* 1300-1914, 505-24 (1994).
2. Jianxiong Ge, *The Silk Road: Historical Geographic Background and Outlooks, in* CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVES ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY REFORMATION 1-14 (Wei Liu ed., 2018).
3. Jingkui Jiang, *Silk Road Cultures and the Silk Road Economic Belt, in* CHINA'S GLOBAL REBALANCING AND THE NEW SILK ROAD 15-22 (B. Deepak ed., 2018).
4. *See generally* LUCETTE BOULNOIS, *THE SILK ROAD* (D. Chamberlin trans. into English, 1966).
5. *See generally* J. HORROCKS, *A SHORT HISTORY OF MERCANTILISM* (1925); D. COLEMAN, *REVISIONS IN MERCANTILISM* (1969).
6. Yiwei Wang, *Belt and Road Initiative: Mutual Connectivity of the World*, 1(4) CHINA & THE WORLD 1-15 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1142/S2591729318500232>.
7. Jingkui Jiang, *Silk Road Cultures and the Silk Road Economic Belt, in* CHINA'S GLOBAL REBALANCING AND THE NEW SILK ROAD 18 (B. Deepak ed., 2018).
8. Liu Meng, *List of countries that have signed cooperation documents with China to jointly build the Belt and Road*, Belt and Road Portal- yidaiylu.gov.cn (Mar. 23, 2022), <https://www.yidaiylu.gov.cn/xwzx/roll/77298.htm>.
9. *See generally* OLIVER DICKERSON, *THE NAVIGATION ACTS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION* (1951).
10. John Gallagher & Ronald Robinson, *The Imperialism of Free Trade*, 6:1 ECON. HIST. REV. 1-15 (1953).
11. ADAM SMITH, *THE WEALTH OF NATIONS* 7-16 (1776).
12. Kalim Siddiqui, *David Ricardo's Comparative Advantage and Developing Countries: Myth and Reality*, 8 INT'L CRITICAL THOUGHT 426-52 (2018).
13. KARL MARX, *A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY* 6 (Progress Publishers. 1859).
14. *Id.* at 6-7.
15. *Id.*
16. KARL MARX & FREIDRICH ENGELS, *FREE TRADE: AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE DEMOCRATIC ASSOCIATION OF BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, JANUARY 9, 1848*, 56-8 (F. Kelley trans., 1921).
17. *See generally*, R. GHORASHI, *MARX ON FREE TRADE* (1995); T. Hutchinson & M. Blaug, *Economic Theory in Retrospect*, ECON. J. 36 (1960): 168; W. BARBER, *A HISTORY OF ECONOMIC THOUGHT* (1968).
18. KARL MARX & FREIDRICH ENGELS, *FREE TRADE: AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE DEMOCRATIC ASSOCIATION OF BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, JANUARY 9, 1848*, 5-6 (F. Kelley trans., 1921).
19. *Id.*
20. KARL MARX, *CAPITAL: VOLUME 1: A CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY* (B. Fowkes trans.,

- Penguin Classics 1992) 145-534 (1867).
21. KARL MARX, A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY (M. Dobb trans., 1977) 1-18 (Progress Publishers, 1859).
 22. KARL MARX & FRIEDRICH ENGELS, MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY 40 (1848).
 23. In this context, ‘bourgeoisie’ means the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour. Meanwhile, ‘proletariat’ is the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live. *See* Note by Engels to the English edition of KARL MARX & FRIEDRICH ENGELS, MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN 1888.
 24. MARX, *supra* note 20.
 25. *Id.* at 41.
 26. *Id.* at 40.
 27. *Id.*
 28. MARX, *supra* note 19.
 29. *Id.*
 30. MARX, *supra* note 18.
 31. *Id.*
 32. MARX, *supra* note 20, at 35.
 33. *Id.* at 38.
 34. *Id.* at 35.
 35. MARX, *supra* note 19.
 36. KARL MARX, *The Protectionists, the Free Traders and the Working Class*, Militant Archives, https://wikirouge.net/texts/en/The_Protectionists,_the_Free_Traders_and_the_Working_Class.
 37. MARX, *supra* note 16.
 38. MARX, *supra* note 19.
 39. MARX, *supra* note 34.
 40. *Id.*
 41. KARL MARX & FREDERICK ENGELS, COLLECTED WORKS (vols.1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 15, 23, 26 & 29) (International Publishers 1975-87).
 42. *Id.*
 43. MARX, *supra* note 16.
 44. *Id.*
 45. KARL MARX & FREDERICK ENGELS, COLLECTED WORKS (vol. 6) 463 (International Publishers 1975-1987).
 46. World Trade Statistical Review 2020, https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/wts2020_e/wts2020_e.pdf.
 47. MARX, *supra* note 45, at 463-67
 48. *Id.* at 458.

49. *Id.*
50. James Granell, *Karl Marx; Wage Labour and Capital*, SOCIALIST WORKER (Jan. 28, 2016), <http://www.socialistworkeronline.net/karl-marx-wage-labour-and-capital>.
51. MARX, *supra* note 45, at 260.
52. MARX, *supra* note 16.
53. MARX, *supra* note 45, at 458.
54. MARX, *supra* note 16.
55. MARX, *supra* note 45, at. 290 & 465.
56. MARX, *supra* note 16.
57. *Id.*
58. *Id.*
59. Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marxist.Org 1, 32 (2010), <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>.
60. MARX, *supra* note 22, at 70.
61. KARL MARX & FRIEDRICH ENGELS, COLLECTED WORKS OF MARKS AND ENGELS (vol. 10) 231 (2009).
62. KARL MARX & FRIEDRICH ENGELS, COLLECTED WORKS OF MARKS AND ENGELS (vol. 1) 316 (2009).
63. Ximei Wu & Sadiya Silvee, *China's Evolving Role in Developing the WTO Dispute Settlement Rules*, 6 CHINA & WTO REV. 167-90 (2020).
64. MARX, *supra* note 16.
65. PRC Ministry of Commerce, China FTA Network, <http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/english>.
66. Elaine Kurtenbach, *ASEAN, China, other partners sign world's biggest trade pact*, ABC NEWS, Nov. 15, 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/asean-china-partners-set-worlds-biggest-trade-pact-74214375>.
67. Wang Jiang Yu, *The Legal and Policy Considerations of China-ASEAN FTA: The Impact on the Multilateral Trading System*, in CHINA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA: GLOBAL CHANGES AND REGIONAL CHALLENGES 42-79 (Khai Leong Ho & Samuel Ku eds., 2005). *See also* Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-Operation between the Association of South East Asian Nations and the People's Republic of China, arts. 1-3, 7-9, 11-12 & 14, https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Framework-Agreement-on-Comprehensive-Economic-Co-Operation_ASEAN-Rep-of-China.pdf.
68. Agreement on Trade in Goods of the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-operation between the People's Republic of China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, art. 14, <http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/dongmeng/annex/xieyi2004en.pdf>.

