

A. Introduction

Introduction: Evolutions Converging? Human Rights Internationalism and the Chinese Political-Economic Model From Reform and Opening Up to New Era Thought

CPE Volume 15(1) Editors (Flora Sapio and Larry Catá Backer)

This volume 15(1) of *Emancipating the Mind* focuses on two areas of work of the Coalition for Peace & Ethics. The first centers on the continuing development of frameworks for law and policy around issues of business and human rights. The second focuses on the continuing and vigorous development of Marxist-Leninist theory with Chinese characteristics, now revolving around the development of the contributions of New Era Thought to that larger project.

At first blush these appear to be two quite distinct legal-political projects. On the one hand, Part B focuses on the great project of human rights internationalism driven by the U.N. human rights apparatus in Geneva and articulated in its most transparent forms in the annual Forum for Business and Human Rights. On the other hand, Part C focuses on the great project of constructing a Marxist-Leninist political-economic model with Chinese characteristics and its possibly most successful expression as Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening Up Initiative.

The two do not appear connected. And yet a closer look reveals potential linkages between these two significant projects. The tie that binds is itself the overarching ideological framework against which they both emerge—the post 1945-global economic order. For the great project of business and human rights, the premises of economic globalization represents the unfinished business of re-adjusting the allocation of authority to manage economic functions among enterprises operating in markets, the ideal forms of which are

to be protected by states, and states operating as both regulators constrained by their territorial borders, and as private actors projecting state power through markets beyond their borders. For both, the development of a coherent set of rules respecting normative expectations tied to the great human rights project of the United Nations system (itself born of the *Zeitgeist* manifested in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) is meant to constrain the discretion that can be exercised by states and private actors respecting their management of or engagement in economic activity.

But that internationalization of constraints on the exercise of discretion in economic behaviors directly and indirectly touches on the power of states (and of private actors) to manage their own affairs within their “jurisdictions.” For states the constraints touch on their exercise of *sovereign authority*, and their freedom to develop and apply their own political-economic model. For enterprises, the constraints touch on their exercise of economic power that is not otherwise within the reach of states and lawfully applicable law. In that sense, the internationalization touches on the quasi sovereign authority of enterprise to develop and apply their own internal orders subject only to the applicable laws of the market and adjusted for the peculiarities of public law in those spaces where they might apply.

Externally, the connection is embodied in the two great projects of the post 2016 emerging economic order—the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative and the Western hub and spoke models built around either aggregated bilateral trade agreements or (in the case of the United States) an ideological model that centers the apex state around its vertical arranged public and private partners. These, in turn, touch on both the development of two of the most influential political-economic models, and their outward projection through distinct projects of internationalization.

These are the themes that explode onto global discourse in the great meetings of the Forum for Business and Human Rights in Geneva, as well as in the Chinese Communist Party leader core’s work to advance and project a version of Marxism-Leninism relevant to contemporary challenges. To discuss one is to necessary affect the other. It is the object of the editors to provide a space in this Volume 15(1) where such collisions may

be usefully examined for the light they may throw on human progress in both areas.

To those ends, Volume 15(1) is organized around the two themes. It starts with three distinct explorations of the foundational ramifications and trajectories of the business and human rights project that can be gleaned from the quite rich 8th Forum. These though on the structures of business and human rights, its contradictions, as well as its likely characteristics and aspirations in the near term. The manifestations of these objectives and their articulation as principle are also explored. It also considers the bridging theme—connecting explicitly the work of human rights internationalization with the economic internationalization framework of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

It ends with a consideration of the development of Chinese Leninism in the ideologically potent New Era. It does so through the lens of the theoretical advances undertaken through the leadership core of the Chinese Communist Party as it reflects on and moves forward from the great era of "Reform and Opening Up." Here Volume 15(1) offers English translations of two key speeches that help non-Chinese readers approach the key primary sources of these projects. It then examines these speeches in the Chinese and international context.

The UN Forum provides the outward face of the external construction of an ideal state of behaviors built around an evolving set of moral principles expressed as specific behavior expectations of institutions (including states) and individuals. It represents the external forms of the ideal state, the ideal economic enterprise, and the ideal individuals who populate both. The movement from Reform and Opening Up to New Era Thought provides the inward expression of the same impulse—of the internal construction of an ideal state of behaviors built around moral principles against which the progress of individual and institutional behaviors may be measured. To understand the impulses of one it is necessary to understand the way these impulses are expressed in the other.

We hope our readers find these of some use.

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