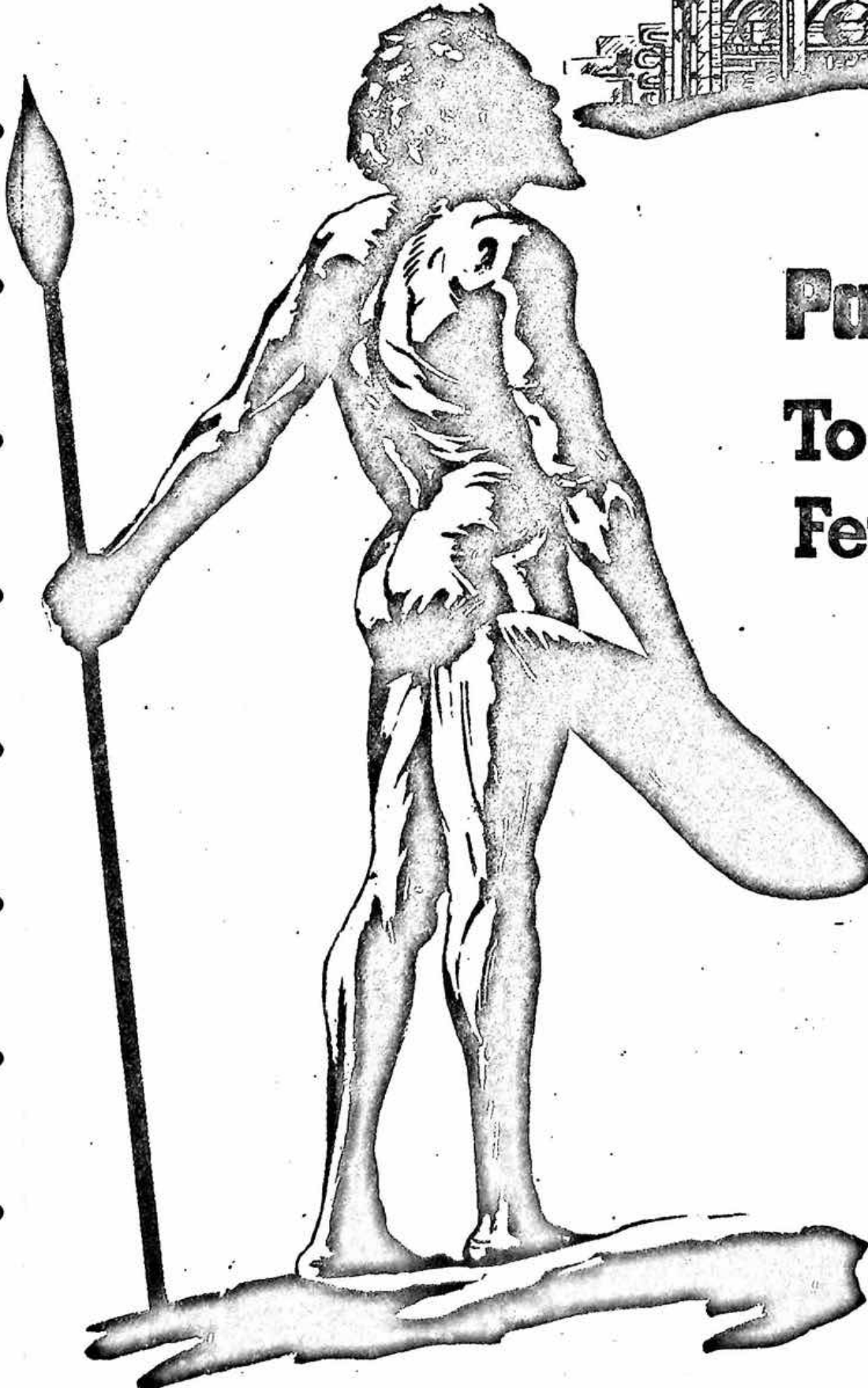
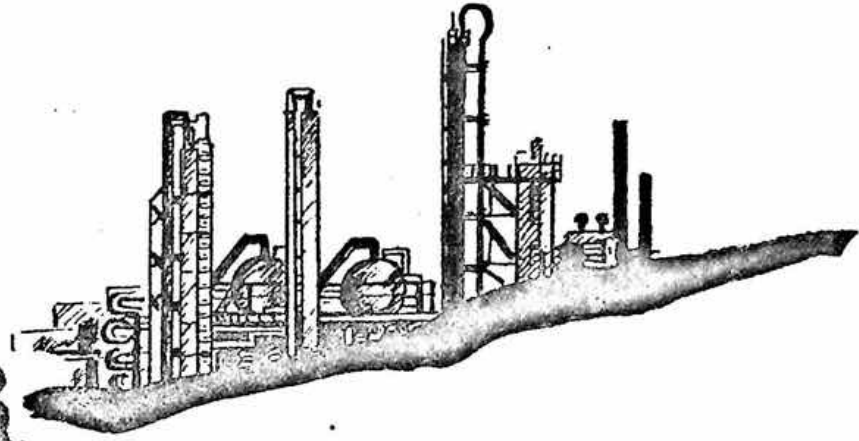


# THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY



## Part one: To Feudalism

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50 p.

## INTRODUCTION

The modern revisionists in the leadership of the international communist movement have not only abandoned the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the state to preach the social-democratic illusion of "peaceful, parliamentary transition to socialism".

They have repudiated — as recent publications in Britain demonstrate — the whole scientific, materialist conception of history of which Marx laid the foundations.

It is for this reason that we have felt it desirable to summarise the main features of the Marxist-Leninist conception of history, of social development, adding to the text the main passages from the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on which each point of the summary is based.

The report which follows covers the development of society from the most primitive human social formation to feudalism. A second report will cover this development from feudalism to socialism, and a third the principal new discoveries in social anthropology which have been made since the time of Marx and Engels.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY

THE LAWS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY

The Marxist-Leninist, materialist conception of history holds that the development of society, like the development of all other processes of the material universe, proceeds according to objective laws:

"The development of all human societies for thousands of years, in all countries without exception, reveals a general conformity to law, regularity and consistency in this development".  
(V. I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p. 644).

"The connection and interdependence of the phenomena of social life are laws of the development of society, and not something accidental. Hence social life, the history of society, ceases to be an agglomeration of 'accidents', and becomes the history of the development of society according to regular laws, and the study of the history of society becomes a science.

Hence the practical activity of the party of the proletariat must . . . be based on the laws of development of society and on the study of these laws".

(J. V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 114).

It is true that historical processes differ from the processes which occur in inanimate nature in that the former are the result of conscious, willed action by individual human beings:

"In one point, however, the history of the development of society proves to be essentially different from that of nature. . . . In the history of society . . . the actors are all endowed with consciousness, are men acting with deliberation and passion, working towards definite goals; nothing happens without a conscious purpose, without an intended aim".  
(F. Engels: "Ludwig Feuerbach", in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 456-7).

This distinction does not, however, alter the fact that historical processes are governed by objective laws:

"But this distinction, important as it is for historical investigation, particularly of single epochs and events, cannot alter the fact that the course of history is governed by inner general laws".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 457).

For individual wills and actions frequently conflict with one another, so that their total end-result, the historical process, is different from what was intended:

"That which is willed happens but rarely; in the majority of instances the numerous desired ends cross and conflict with one another, or these ends themselves are from the outset incapable of realisation or the means of attaining them are insufficient. Thus the conflict of innumerable wills and individual actions in the domain of history produces a state of affairs entirely analagous to that in the realm of unconscious nature. . . .

Men make their own history, whatever its outcome may be, in that each person follows his own consciously desired end, and it is precisely the resultant of these many wills operating in different directions and of their manifold effects upon the outer world that constitutes history".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 457-8).



Thus, significant historical changes are brought about only when masses of people take action in a common direction, as a result of conscious motives held in common:

"When, therefore, it is a question of investigating the driving forces which -- consciously or unconsciously, and indeed very often unconsciously -- lie behind the motives of men in their historical actions and which constitute the real ultimate driving forces of history, then it is not a question so much of the motives of single individuals, however eminent, as of those motives which set in motion great masses, whole peoples, and again whole classes of the people in each people".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 459).

These conscious motives, even when held in common by masses of people, are of secondary significance:

"Motives therefore in relation to the total result are . . . of only secondary significance".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 458).

They are of secondary significance because, like all ideas, they do not arise spontaneously but are brought into the minds of men by external reality, by the material universe:

"Matter is that which, acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation. . . .

Matter, nature, being, the physical -- is primary, and spirit, consciousness, sensation, the psychical -- is secondary".

(V. I. Lenin: "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1946; p. 207, 208).

The conscious motives which, held in common by masses of people, give rise to significant historical changes are social ideas, which have their origin in the material life of society:

"The source of formation of the spiritual life of society, the origin of social ideas, social theories, political views and political institutions, should not be sought for in the ideas, theories, views and political institutions themselves, but in the conditions of the material life of society, in social being, of which these ideas, theories, views, etc. are the reflection".

(J. V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 115).

The determining cause of the development of society -- that which gives rise to social motives in the minds of masses of people and so leads to significant historical change -- lies, therefore, in the material life of society:

"It . . . is . . . the 'conditions of material life of society' which in the final analysis determine the physiognomy of society, its ideas, views, political institutions, etc."

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 118).

The material life of society includes geographical environment and growth of population -- factors which influence the development of society:

"Geographical environment is unquestionably one of the constant and indispensable conditions of development of society and, of course, influences the development of society. . . .

The concept 'conditions of material life of society' also includes growth of population. . . .

Of course, growth of population does influence the development of society".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 118, 119).

But these factors do not determine the development of society:



"Geographical environment cannot be the chief cause, the determining cause of social development. . .

Growth of population . . cannot be the chief force of development of society, and its influence on the development of society cannot be the determining influence".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 118, 119).

The chief force in the material life of society, the determining factor in the development of society, is the development of the mode of production, that is, the development of the method of procuring the means of life:

"The mode of production in material life determines the social, political and intellectual life processes in general".

(K. Marx: Preface to: "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", in: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 356).

"The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life . . is the basis of all social structure. . . From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought . . in changes in the modes of production".

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 367).

"The chief force in the complex of conditions of material life of society which determines the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system, the development of society from one system to another . . is the method of procuring the means of life necessary for human existence, the mode of production of material values -- food, clothing, footwear, houses, fuel, instruments of production, etc. -- which are indispensable for the life and development of society".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 119).

The mode of production embraces both the forces of production and the relations of production of society:

"The mode of production embraces both the productive forces of society and men's relations of production, and is thus the embodiment of their unity in the process of production of material values".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 120).

The forces of production consist of the instruments of production or means of production (that is, the tools, simple and complex, used in the process of production) and the people who operate them:

"The instruments of production wherewith material values are produced, the people who operate the instruments of production and carry on the production of material values thanks to a certain production experience and labour skill -- all these elements jointly constitute the productive forces of society".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 120).

The relations of production are the social relations into which men have entered in order to carry on production:

"Men . . produce only by cooperating in a certain way. . . In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production, take place".

(K. Marx: "Wage-Labour and Capital", in: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 264).

"Men carry on a struggle against nature and utilise nature for the production of material values not in isolation from each other, not as separate individuals, but in common, in groups, in societies. Production, therefore, is at all times and under all conditions social production. In the production of material values men enter into mutual relations of one kind or another within production, into relations of production of one kind or another".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 120).



Men do not choose the relations of production into which they are born; they "inherit" these relations of production from previous generations:

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will".

(K. Marx: Preface to: "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", in: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 356).

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past".

(K. Marx: "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte"; Moscow; 1948; p. 16).

Within the framework of the mode of production, the ultimate determining factor in the development of society is the development of the forces of production, and in the first place of the instruments of production:

"A second feature of production is that its changes and development always begin with changes and development of the productive forces, and in the first place with changes and development of the instruments of production. . .

The productive forces are not only the most mobile and revolutionary element in production, but are also the determining element in the development of production",

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 121, 122).

The development of the productive forces takes place within particular relations of production:

"The rise of new productive forces . . . does not take place separately from the old system, after the disappearance of the old system, but within the old system",

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 128).

But forces of production of a particular level of development can only be adequately used and further developed within appropriate relations of production. Consequently, development of the forces of production within particular relations of production gives rise, at a certain stage, to such mass feelings of social frustration that a change is brought about in the relations of production:

"At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production. . . From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution".

(K. Marx: Preface to: "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", in: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 356).

"New social ideas and theories arise only after the development of the material life of society has set new tasks before society. But once they have arisen they become a most potent force which facilitates the carrying out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, a force which facilitates the progress of society. It is precisely here that the tremendous organising, mobilising and transforming value of new ideas, new theories, new political views and new political institutions manifests itself. New social ideas and theories arise precisely because they are necessary to society, because it is impossible to carry out the urgent tasks of development of the material life of society without their organising, mobilising and transforming action. Arising out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, the new social ideas and theories force their way through, become the possession of the masses, mobilise and organise them against the moribund forces of society, and thus facilitate the overthrow of these forces which hamper the development of the material life of society. . .

First the productive forces of society change and develop, and then, depending on these changes and in conformity with them, men's relations of production, their



economic relations, change. . .

5.

The relations of production cannot for too long lag behind and be in a state of contradiction to the growth of the productive forces, inasmuch as the productive forces can develop in full measure only when the relations of production correspond to the character, the state of the productive forces and allow full scope for their development".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 116-7, 122).

In improving their instruments of production, men are not aiming at the social changes which arise as a result of these improvements, but merely at lightening their labour and increasing their productivity:

"When improving one instrument of production or another, . . . men do not realise, do not understand or stop to reflect what social results these improvements will lead to, but only think of their everyday interests, of lightening their labour and of securing some direct and tangible advantage for themselves".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 128).

Thus, the development of new forces of production and of new relations of production may be said to occur spontaneously, independently of the will of man:

"The rise of new productive forces and of the relations of production corresponding to them . . . takes place not as a result of the deliberate and conscious activity of man, but spontaneously, unconsciously, independently of the will of man".

(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 128).

As a result of the development of society according to objective laws, a particular society -- except in so far as its development may be interfered with by another society or societies at a different stage of evolution -- evolves through a number of successive modes of production, namely:

- 1) the primitive communal mode of production;  
(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 123).
- 2) the Asiatic or oriental mode of production;  
(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 79, 83, 95, 97).
- 3) the Germanic mode of production;  
(K. Marx: *ibid.*; p. 75, 77, 78, 95, 97).
- 4) the ancient mode of production;  
(K. Marx: *ibid.*; p. 88, 114).
- 5) the feudal mode of production;  
(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 123).
- 6) the capitalist mode of production; and  
(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 123).
- 7) the socialist mode of production.  
(J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 123).

Each of these social formations has its own specific objective laws of social development:

"The various social formations are governed in their economic development . . . by their own specific economic laws".

(J. V. Stalin: "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR"; Moscow; 1952; p. 79).

Thus, each social formation -- except in so far as its development may be interfered with by another society or societies at a different stage of social evolution -- is succeeded precisely by the next higher social formation:

"A given social system is replaced precisely by such and such a new system and not by another".

(J. V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 119).



### THE ECONOMIC EPOCHS

Corresponding to the level of the productive forces, three economic epochs may be distinguished in the development of human society, namely:

" . . savagery, barbarism and civilisation".

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 87).

#### Savagery

The lower stage of savagery represents a transitional stage between non-human and human society. Instruments of production are virtually absent:

"Man . . opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature".

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p. 197-8).

The principal way of satisfying material needs is, therefore, by means of gathering natural products:

"Man still lived in his original habitat, in tropical or sub-tropical forests, and was partially at least a tree-dweller. . . . Fruit, nuts and roots served him for food".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 87).

The middle stage of savagery

". . begins with the utilisation of fish for food . . and with the use of fire. The two are complementary, since fish becomes fully available only by the use of fire. With this new source of nourishment men now became independent of climate and locality; even as savages they could, by following the rivers and coasts, spread over most of the earth. Proof of these migrations is the distribution over every continent of the crudely worked, unsharpened flint tools of the earlier Stone Age, known as 'palaeoliths', all or most of which date from this period. . . With the invention of the first weapons, club and spear, game could sometimes be added to the fare".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 88).

The upper stage of savagery

". . begins with the invention of the bow and arrow, whereby game became a regular source of food and hunting a normal form of work. . . The peoples . . are already making some beginnings towards settlement in villages . . ; we find wooden vessels and utensils, finger-weaving (without looms) with filaments of bark; plaited baskets of bast or osier; sharpened (neolithic) stone tools. With the discovery of fire and the stone axe, dug-out canoes now become common; beams and planks are also sometimes used for building houses".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 88, 89).

#### Barbarism

The lower stage of barbarism

". . dates from the introduction of pottery".

(F. Engels *ibid.*; p. 89).

The middle stage of barbarism begins, according to geographical environment, either with the domestication of animals or with the development of small-scale horticulture:

"The Eastern Hemisphere, the so-called Old World, possessed nearly all the animals adaptable to domestication, and all the varieties of cultivable cereals except one; the Western Hemisphere, America, had no mammals that could be domesticated except the llama, which, moreover, was only found in one part of South America, and of all the cultivable cereals only one, though that was the best, namely, maize. . .



Middle Stage. Begins in the . . . Western (Hemisphere — Ed.) with the cultivation, by means of irrigation, of plants for food, and with the use of adobe (sun-dried) bricks and stone for building. . .

The so-called Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, . . . and the Mexicans, Central Americans and Peruvians at the time of their conquest, were at the middle stage of barbarism. They lived in houses like fortresses, made of adobe brick or of stone, and cultivated maize and other plants, varying according to locality and climate, in artificially irrigated plots of ground, which supplied their main source of food; some animals, even, had also been domesticated — the turkey and other birds by the Mexicans, the llama by the Peruvians. They could also work metals, but not iron; hence they were still unable to dispense with stone weapons and tools. . .

In the Eastern Hemisphere the middle stage of barbarism began with the domestication of animals providing milk and meat, but horticulture seems to have remained unknown far into this period. . .

It is more than probable that among these tribes the cultivation of grain originated from the need for cattle fodder and only later became important as a human food supply".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 89, 90-1).

In the Western Hemisphere, the American continent,

". . . this stage was never superseded before the European conquest".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 90).

The middle stage of barbarism is associated with the first great social division of labour between livestock-raising and non-livestock-raising tribes and the consequent first regular exchange of products:

"Pastoral tribes separated themselves out from the mass of the other barbarians: the first great social division of labour. The pastoral tribes produced not only more necessities of life than the other barbarians, but different ones. They possessed the advantage: over them of having not only milk, milk products and greater supplies of meat, but also skins, wool, goat-hair, and spun and woven fabrics, which became more common as the amount of raw material increased. Thus for the first time regular exchange became possible. . . Now, with the differentiation of pastoral tribes we find all the conditions ripe for exchange between branches of different tribes and its development into a regular established institution".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 218-9).

The upper stage of barbarism

". . . begins with the smelting of iron ore. . .

We now meet the iron ploughshare drawn by cattle, which made large-scale agriculture, the cultivation of fields, possible, and thus created a practically unrestricted food supply in comparison with previous conditions. This led to the clearance of forest land for tillage and pasture, which in turn was impossible on a large scale without the iron axe and the iron spade. Population rapidly increased in number, and in small areas became dense. . .

We find the upper stage of barbarism at its highest in the Homeric poems. . . Fully developed iron tools, the bellows, the hand-mill, the potter's wheel, the making of oil and wine, metal working developing into a fine art, the wagon and the war-chariot, shipbuilding with beams and planks, the beginnings of architecture as art, walled cities with towers and battlements. . .

The upper stage of barbarism (is) the period when all civilised peoples have their heroic age: the age of the iron sword, but also of the iron ploughshare and axe. Iron was now at the service of man. . . Iron gave to the handicraftsman tools so hard and sharp that no stone, no other known metal, could resist them. All this came gradually. . . Hence stone weapons only disappeared slowly".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 92, 221, 222).



The upper stage of barbarism is associated with the second great social division of labour: the separation of handicraft from agriculture:

"The products of weaving, metal-work and the other handicrafts, which were becoming more and more differentiated, displayed growing variety and skill. In addition to corn, leguminous plants and fruit, agriculture now provided wine and oil. . . Such manifold activities were no longer within the scope of one and the same individual: the second great division of labour took place: handicraft separated from agriculture. . .

The upper stage of barbarism brings us the further division of labour between agriculture and handicrafts".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 222, 224).

The separation of handicraft from agriculture gives rise to the development of production specifically for exchange instead of, as previously, for the use of the producer — that is, to organised commodity production, and so to commerce:

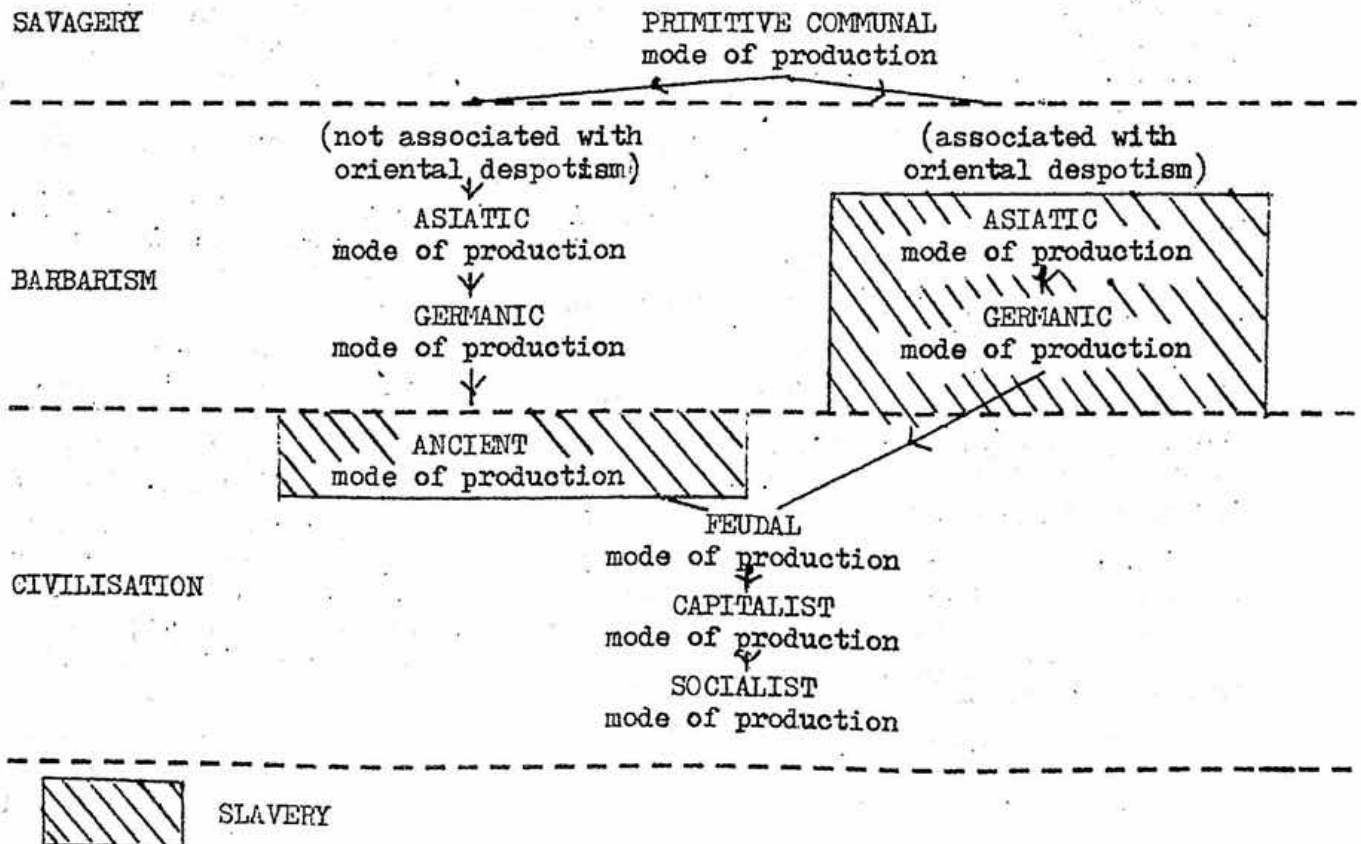
"With the splitting up of production into the two great main branches, agriculture and handicrafts, arises production directly for exchange, commodity production; with it came commerce".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 222).

Civilisation

The characteristic features which distinguish civilisation from earlier economic epochs will be discussed in a later section.

Modes of Production in relation to Economic Epochs

The relation between the successive modes of production and the successive economic epochs is shown in the diagram below:





## THE PRIMITIVE COMMUNAL MODE OF PRODUCTION

### Classless Society

At the earliest stage of the development of human society, man's productivity of labour is sufficient only for the bare subsistence of himself and his dependents; he produces no surplus that can be appropriated by another person or social group. In other words, the exploitation of man by man, of one social group by another, is not possible; under the primitive communal mode of production, society is classless:

"As men originally made their exit from the animal world -- in the narrower sense of the term -- so they made their entry into history, still half animal, brutal, still helpless in face of the forces of nature, still ignorant of their own strength; and consequently as poor as the animals and hardly more productive than they. There prevailed a certain equality in the conditions of existence . . . -- at least an absence of social classes".  
(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 247).

"There were no classes in society when . . . people laboured in primitive conditions . . . when productivity of labour was still at its lowest, and when primitive man could hardly procure the wherewithal for the crudest and most primitive existence".

(V. I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p. 647).

"Under the primitive communal system . . . there was no exploitation, no classes".  
(J. V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 123-4).

### The Development of the Punuluan Family

In the earliest human society, sexual intercourse is unrestricted within a particular community. Engels speaks of

". . . the circle, originally embracing the whole tribe, within which the two sexes have a common conjugal relation".

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 112).

The family, that is, a household of related persons distinct from the community as a whole, evolves by means of

". . . the progressive narrowing of the circle . . . within which the two sexes have a common conjugal relation".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 112).

The primary cause of this narrowing of the range within which sexual intercourse is socially permissible is man's discovery that the "inbreeding" of those known to be close relatives increases the possibility of the inheritance of undesirable biological traits. Engels quotes with approval the words of the American anthropologist Lewis Morgan:

"The influence of the new practice, which brought unrelated persons into the marriage relation, tended to create a more vigorous stock physically and mentally",

(L. H. Morgan: "Ancient Society"; London; 1963; cited in: F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 111).

and himself remarks:

"In this ever extending exclusion of blood relatives from the bond of marriage, natural selection continues its work. . . .

Tribes with gentile constitution (to be described in the next section -- Ed.) were thus bound to gain supremacy over more backward tribes, or else to carry them along by example".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 111).



Thus, the family evolves by means of a process in which sexual intercourse is socially prohibited, first between close relatives, later between more remote relatives (relationship at this stage being necessarily based on relationship with the mother, since it could rarely be known who was the father of a child). In this connection Engels speaks of

"... the continuous exclusion (from sexual intercourse -- Ed.) first of nearer, then of more and more remote relatives".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 112).

In the first form of the family, the consanguine family, sexual intercourse has become socially prohibited between different generations of maternal relatives:

"THE CONSANGUINE FAMILY, THE FIRST STAGE OF THE FAMILY.

Here the marriage groups are separated according to generations: all the grandfathers and grandmothers within the limits of the family are all husbands and wives of one another; so are also their children, the fathers and mothers. . .

In this form of marriage . . . only ancestors and progeny, and parents and children, are excluded from the rights and duties . . . of marriage with one another".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 102).

In the second form of the family, the patrilian family, sexual intercourse has become socially prohibited between brothers and sisters (of the same mother), later between maternal cousins:

"If the first advance in organisation consisted in the exclusion of parents and children from sexual intercourse with one another, the second was the exclusion of sister and brother. . . It was effected gradually, . . . ending with the prohibition of marriage even between . . . first, second and third cousins".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 103).

#### The Social Equality of the Sexes

That social group which plays the principal role in production becomes, in the course of time, the dominant social group in society:

"That class or social group which plays the principal role in social production and performs the main functions in production must, in the course of time, inevitably take control of that production".

(J. V. Stalin: "Anarchism or Socialism?", in: "Works", Volume 1; Moscow; 1952; p. 341-2).

During the lower and middle stages of savagery, when men obtain their means of subsistence predominantly by food-gathering, this work is shared equally by both sexes. Consequently, there is a state of social equality between the sexes:

"Among all savages . . . the position of women is not only free but honourable".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 113).

"In primitive society, . . . the position of women then was not like the unfranchised and oppressed condition of women today".

(V. I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p. 643).

#### The Kin

At this stage of the development of society, each social group forms a communistic household community:

"The practice of living together in a primitive communistic household . . . prevailed without exception till late in the middle stage of barbarism".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 103).

After the passing of a few generations, increase of population forces each communistic household to split into (generally) two daughter household communities:

"After a few generations at most, every original family was bound to split up. The practice of living together in a primitive communistic household . . . set a limit, varying with the conditions but fairly definite in each locality, to the maximum size of the family community".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 103-4).



With the social prohibition of sexual intercourse between close relatives of the mother, i.e., with the development of the punuluan family, the new household communities formed by division . . . this way comprise those maternal relatives between whom sexual intercourse is socially prohibited. A daughter household community of this form is called a kin (Greek: genos; Latin: gens):

"As soon as the conception arose that sexual intercourse between children of the same mother was wrong, it was bound to exert its influence when the household split up and new ones were founded. . .

As soon as the ban had been established on sexual intercourse between . . . the most remote collateral relatives on the mother's side, this group transformed itself into a gens".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 104, 107).

In the original form of the kin under group marriage, where the father of a child was generally unknown, descent has to be reckoned through the mother, i.e., is matrilinear:

"In so far as group marriage prevails, descent can only be proved on the mother's side and . . . therefore only the female line is recognised".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 106).

A kin is thus, in its original matrilinear form, a group of all the living descendants of a particular female ancestor, a group among the members of which sexual intercourse is socially prohibited:

"Members of a gens, in the original form of that institution, . . . all have a common ancestral mother. . .

This . . . gens . . . constituted itself as a firm circle of blood relations in the female line, between whom marriage was prohibited".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 106, 107).

The latter factor means that the husbands of the female members of a kin are drawn from some other kin:

"The husbands of these sisters . . . can no longer be their brothers and . . . consequently do not belong to the same . . . gens".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 106-7).

Thus, a community can enjoy an independence existence only if it consists of at least two kins:

"Since marriage was prohibited within the gens, there had to be at least two gentes in any tribe to enable it to exist independently".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 152).

Having established itself, a kin consolidates itself and differentiates itself from other kins by the development of kin institutions of a social and religious character:

"Henceforward by other common institutions of a social and religious character it (i.e., the kin -- Ed.) increasingly consolidated and differentiated itself from the other gentes of the same tribe".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 107).

The development of the kin follows naturally and necessarily from the development of the punuluan family:

"The development of the gens follows not only necessarily, but also perfectly naturally, from the punuluan family",  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 107).

so that the kin as a social institution is common to all peoples at a certain stage of the development of society:

"The gens is an institution common to all barbarians until their entry into civilisation and even afterwards".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 147).



### Tribal Society

A society the basic social organisation of which is the kin is called a kinship, gentile or tribal society.

As with increase of population each kin divides into daughter kins, and each of these later into further daughter kins, the number of kins in a community increases. Those kins which regard themselves as most closely related to one another by common descent form a clan or phratry (Greek: phratria; Latin: curia):

"Phratries generally represent the original gens into which the tribe first split up. . . In the measure in which the tribe increased, each gens divided again into two or more gentes, each of which now appears as a separate gens, while the original gens, which includes all the daughter gentes, continues as the phratry. . .

The gentes within one phratry are brother gentes to one another, while those in the other phratry are their cousin gentes".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 152).

All the clans of a particular community together form the tribe (Greek: phyle; Latin: tribus). The developed tribe thus represents the descendants of a particular original undifferentiated horde:

"As several gentes make up a phratry, so in the classic form several phratries make up a tribe".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 153).

A tribe is distinguished by:

- 1) Its own territory and name. . . .
- 2) A distinct dialect, peculiar to this tribe alone. . . .
- 4) The possession of common religious conceptions (mythology) and ceremonies".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 153-4).

From time to time a tribe comes into conflict with another tribe or tribes over the resources available for food-gathering (and, later, over those available for hunting), and so normally considers itself in a state of war with other tribes:

"In principle, every tribe was considered to be in a state of war with every other tribe with which it had not expressly concluded a treaty of peace".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 155).

In order to maintain the tribal cohesion necessary to meet this state of affairs, i.e., in order to prevent conflict between the various kins within a tribe over these resources, it becomes usual for each kin to specialise in the gathering of a particular article of food (later, in the hunting of a particular species of animal). From this arises the system of totemism, the association of each kin with (originally) a particular species of edible plant or animal. With the passage of time, the kin builds its mythology around its particular totem.

Should a stranger from another tribe come to live in the area occupied by a kin (a circumstance which is comparatively rare up to the stage of the Germanic mode of production), he may be adopted by the kin and so admitted to membership of a new tribe:

"The gens can adopt strangers and thereby admit them into the whole tribe, . . . receiving full gentile and tribal rights".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 150).

Tribes occupying adjacent territories and speaking dialects derived from a common mother tongue (indicating common descent from the same original primitive horde) may in time come together to form a league or confederacy of tribes, the forerunner of a pre-nation or nationality which is in turn the forerunner of a nation. Often such confederacies grow out of a temporary military alliance:

"Here and there alliances between related tribes came into being in the emergency of the moment and broke up when the emergency had passed. But in certain districts tribes which were originally related and had then been dis-



persed joined together again in permanent federations, thus taking the first step towards the formation of nations. . .

Their common language, in which there were only variations of dialect, was the expression and the proof of their common descent".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 156, 157).

Such a confederacy comes into being:

". . . on the basis of complete equality and independence in all internal matters of the tribe".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 157).

#### Tribal Democracy

From the very beginning of tribal society, a certain division of labour takes place between the rank-and-file members of the tribe and those members entrusted with tasks of leadership and direction:

"In each such community there were from the beginning certain common interests the safeguarding of which had to be handed over to individuals. . . Such offices are found in aboriginal communities of every period".

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 247).

In general, such tasks of leadership and direction are entrusted to the older members of the tribe (the "elders"), by virtue both of the greater wisdom presumed to arise from age and experience and of their reduced ability to perform arduous manual work.

Under the primitive communal mode of production, such tribal officers are democratically elected by the adults of both sexes and are

". . . under the control of the community as a whole".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 247).

The authority possessed by these tribal officers is the product of social utility, custom and respect; they possess no coercive powers corresponding to those of the later state:

"In primitive society . . . there were yet no signs of the existence of a state. We find the predominance of custom, authority, respect, the power enjoyed by the elders of the tribe . . . -- but nowhere do we find a special category of people who are set apart to rule others and who . . . systematically and permanently command a certain apparatus of coercion . . . -- all that which constitutes the essence of the state".

(V. I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p. 643).

"There was as yet no public power separate from the people which could have been used against the people. Primitive democracy was still in its full strength".

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 167).

There is, in particular, no standing army which might be used by the leaders for their own purposes -- warfare being generally carried on by bands of volunteers:

"If war broke out, it was generally carried on by volunteers. . . Military expeditions against . . . enemies were generally organised by prominent individual warriors; they held a war-dance, and whoever joined in announced thereby his participation in the expedition. The column was at once formed and started off. The defence of the tribal territory when attacked was also generally carried out by volunteers. . . These war-parties are seldom large".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 155).

Each kin elects, and can remove, its chief, chieftain or headman (Greek: archon; Latin: princeps):

"The gens . . . has . . . the right to elect chieftains and to depose them. . .

All offices were elective".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 163, 168).



Each tribe has a tribal council (Greek: boule; Latin: senatus), composed of the chiefs of all the kins comprising the tribe. A tribe has

"3) The right to instal into office the . . . chiefs elected by the gentes and to depose them, even against the will of their gens. . .

5) A tribal council for the common affairs of the tribe. It was composed of all the . . . chiefs of the different gentes, who were genuinely representative because they could be deposed at any time. It held its deliberations in public, surrounded by the other members of the tribe, who had the right to join freely in the discussion and to make their views heard. The decision rested with the council. . . The tribal council was responsible, specially for the handling of relations with other tribes; it received and sent embassies, declared war and made peace".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 154-5).

The tribal council elects a tribal chief or king (Greek: basileus; Latin: rex) — sometimes two

". . . with equal powers and equal authority".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 158).

The tribal chief was military commander, judge and priest:

"In addition to his military functions, the basileus also held those of priest and judge, the latter not clearly defined, the former exercised in his capacity of supreme representative of the tribe".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 169).

In the case of a confederacy of tribes, the powers of the tribal council are transferred to a confederate council, composed of the chiefs of all the kins of all the tribes united in the confederacy:

"The organ of the confederacy was a federal council. . .

All decisions of the federal council had to be unanimous. . .

The meetings of the federal council were held in the presence of the assembled people".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 157).

Similarly, in the case of a confederacy of tribes, the powers of the tribal chiefs are transferred to the paramount chief, or king of kings, of the confederation, elected by the confederate council.

#### Communal Labour

At the earliest stage of the development of society, the low level of the productivity of labour makes it necessary for men to labour communally, collectively:

"Stone tools and, later, the bow and arrow, precluded the possibility of men individually combatting the forces of nature and beasts of prey. In order to gather the fruits of the forest, to catch fish, to build some sort of habitation, men were obliged to work in common if they did not want to die of starvation, or fall victim to beasts of prey or to neighbouring societies."

(J. V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow, 1941; p. 124).

Even with the development of agriculture, at the upper stage of barbarism, the land is at first cultivated communally:

"Among almost all peoples the cultivated land was (at first — Ed.) tilled collectively by the gens".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*, p. 200).

#### Communal Property

... A community, social group or individual may be said to own a material thing when it/he has the power to use it more or less as it/he wishes and to dispose of that power to another community, social group or individual. A thing which is owned in this way is said to be the property of its owner, and the owner of a thing is called its proprietor.



Property involves more than a relation between owner and property; it involves social relations, relations between n — between owners and non-owners of the property concerned.

A material thing which is owned by the community is said to be common, communal or social property. In this case an individual family or person has proprietary rights in this communal property only in so far as it/he forms part of the community:

"They (i.e., primitive men — Ed.) . . . regard themselves as its (i.e., the earth's — Ed.) communal proprietors. . . Only in so far as the individual is a member — in the literal and figurative sense — of such a community, does he regard himself as an owner or possessor".

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 69).

A material thing which is owned by an individual is said to be private property.

The development of property relations within a society is determined by the development of the forms of production:

"The form of property is directly determined by the form of production and, as a consequence, a change in the form of production is sooner or later inevitably followed by a change in the form of property".

(J. V. Stalin: "Anarchism or Socialism?", in: "Works", Volume 1; Moscow; 1952; p. 340).

Under the primitive communal mode of production, because the form of production is based on communal labour, property is also essentially communal:

"The basis of the relations of production under the primitive communal system is that the means of production are socially owned. . .

Labour in common led to the common ownership of the means of production, as well as of the fruits of production. Here the conception of private ownership of the means of production did not yet exist, except for the personal ownership of certain implements of production".

(J. V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 123, 124).

"There was a time, under primitive communism, when men did not recognise private property. . .

There was a time when property bore a communistic character, when the forests and fields in which primitive men roamed belonged to all and not to individuals. Why did communist property exist at that time? Because production was communistic, labour was performed in common, collectively — all worked together and could not dispense with each other".

(J. V. Stalin: "Anarchism or Socialism?", in: "Works", Volume 1; Moscow; 1952; p. 340).

Even with the development of pastoral and agricultural farming, the herd and the land is at first the communal property of the kin, clan or tribe:

"Now, with their herds of horses, camels, asses, cattle, sheep, goats and pigs, the advancing pastoral peoples . . . had acquired property. . .

To whom did this new wealth belong? Originally to the gens, without a doubt. . .

In primitive times the gens had always owned common land".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 118, 183).

"All civilised peoples begin with the common ownership of the land. . .

We find in the early history of all civilised peoples . . . tribal and village communities with common ownership of the land".

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 190, 243).

\* or by a corporate group of individuals



"Once men finally settle down, . . . the earth is . . . the basis of the community. Men's relation to it is naive: they regard themselves as its communal proprietors . . .

The original form of this (i.e., landed -- Ed.) property is direct communal property".

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 68-9, 97).

Haxthausen (i.e., August von Haxthausen, German economist, 1792-1866 -- Ed.) discovered common ownership of land in Russia. Maurer (i.e., Georg Ludwig von Maurer, German historian, 1790-1872 -- Ed.) proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and, by and by, village communities were found to be, or to have been, the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland".

(F. Engels: Note to: K. Marx & F. Engels: "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 205).

#### The Principal Features of the Primitive Communal Mode of Production

The principal features of the primitive communal mode of production are:

1. Labour is predominantly communal in character;
2. The means of production are predominantly communally owned;
3. Social organisation is based on the kin, the clan and the tribe;
4. There is social equality between the sexes;
5. There is full democracy, the directing leaders being elected and subject to the control of the community;
6. There is no state machinery of force; and
7. Society is classless; there is no exploitation of man by man.



THE TRANSITION TO THE ASIATIC MODE OF PRODUCTION

The Formation of Primitive Aristocracy

As society increases in complexity, and with it the degree of technical skill required to perform effectively the functions of leadership and direction, the transmission of this skill to the close relatives of a chieftain (in the manner of all primitive crafts) creates a tendency for the election of such a close relative to succeed a chieftain in office:

"In the course of time, preference when filling vacancies was given to the nearest gentile relation .... — unless there were reasons for passing him over."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; P.168)

With the passage of time this utilitarian custom acquires the firmness of principle:

"Hereditary of functions .... comes about almost as a matter of course."

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; P.247).

In consequence, certain families within tribal society come to be socially recognised as forming a primitive tribal aristocracy, from which vacancies to offices of leadership and direction are almost invariably filled:

"Here is the first beginnings .... of distinct noble families within the gentes .....

the formation of the first rudiments of hereditary nobility."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; P.168, 169).

that is, the first rudiments of

".... a ruling class."

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; P.248).

The division of society into classes thus arises as a consequence of the division of labour and the low stage of development of the forces of production:

"The separation of society into .... a ruling and an oppressed class was the necessary consequence of the deficient and restricted development of production in former times. So long as .... labour engages all or almost all the time of the great majority of the members of society — so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with the great majority, exclusively bond slaves to labour, arises a class freed from directly productive labour, which looks after the general affairs of society. .... It is, therefore, the law of division of labour that lies at the basis of the division into classes."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.388).

The initial formation of this primitive tribal aristocracy takes place on the basis of the common ownership of the land:



"The formation of a primitive aristocracy .... took place on the basis of the common ownership of the land, and at first was not based in any way on force, but on voluntariness and custom."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.224)

This primitive aristocracy is supported, in a manner befitting its position in society, by gifts of produce, at first quite voluntary, from the rank-and-file tribal families:

"The chiefs .... subsist partially on gifts of cattle, corn, etc., from the members of the tribe."  
(F. Engels: *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*"; London; 1972; P.203-204).

In addition, however, a portion of the communally owned land is usually set aside as demesne or mensal land, and the produce from this is allotted to the support of the tribal aristocracy:

"For his maintenance the chief was supplied with sufficient food for his support on a scale befitting his rank and dignity, and a certain amount of land was set aside for this purpose which was called the demesne or mensal land."  
(F.A. Brooke: *"The Science of Social Development"*; London; 1936; P.122).

At first the demesne land is cultivated voluntarily by the rank-and-file members of the tribe:

"This land might be cultivated by the clansmen in common."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; P.122).

This primitive aristocracy is in control of the organs of leadership and direction of tribal society, organs which possess a certain measure of authority:

"Such offices .... are naturally endowed with a certain measure of authority .... These organs ..... if only because they represent the common interests of the whole group, hold a special position in relation to each individual community."  
(F. Engels: *"Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"*; Moscow; 1959; P.247).

These organs of leadership and direction constitute an embryonic state power:

"Such offices .... are the beginnings of state power."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.247).

Inevitably, therefore, the primitive aristocracy begins to use these organs of authority which it controls to further its own class interests, that is, to initiate a primitive exploitation of the rest of the people:

"This class never failed, for its own advantage, to impose a greater and greater burden of labour on the working masses."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.251).

Thus, the primitive aristocracy becomes a primitive exploiting class; there arises, in embryonic form,

".... the separation of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a ruling and an oppressed class."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.388).



and the tribal organs of leadership and direction, originally established for the common good, acquire, in the hands of this embryonic exploiting class, a certain independence of society as a whole:

"These organs .... soon make themselves still more independent".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.247).

Thus,

"The exercise of a social function was everywhere the basis of political supremacy."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.248).

### The Development of Matriarchy

Under the primitive communal mode of production, as has been said, the social status of the two sexes is equal within society as a whole. Even here, however, the woman is supreme within the communistic household:

"Communistic housekeeping .... means the supremacy of women in the house. ..."

The communistic household, in which most or all of the women belong to one and the same gens, while the men come from various gentes, is the material foundation of that supremacy of the women which was general (i.e. within the communistic household -- Ed.) in primitive times."  
(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; P.113).

With the social introduction of hunting and horticulture, however, a social division of labour develops between the sexes:

"Within a family .... there springs up naturally a division of labour, caused by differences of sex and age, a division that is consequently based on a purely physiological foundation."

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; P.386).

Under this sexual division of labour, the women tend the plots while the men continue to hunt. Since the former provide a more secure source of food than the latter, women acquire the dominant role in production and so in society as a whole. The social equality between the sexes which is characteristic of the primitive communal mode of production gives way to the social supremacy of women, to matriarchy:

"There came a time when primitive communism was superseded by the matriarchate. ...."

Under the matriarchate, .... women were regarded as the masters of production .... because under the kind of production then prevailing, primitive agriculture, women played the principal role in production ... while the men roamed the forests in quest of game."

(J.V. Stalin: "Anarchism or Socialism?", in: "Works", Volume 1; Moscow; 1952; P. 313, 342).

### The Development of Patriarchy

With the introduction of the domestication of animals -- which derives from hunting, a male occupation -- this work and the consequent tending of the livestock falls to the man:



"The taming of the animals in the first instance and their later tending were the man's work."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.* P.220-221).

But, with this development, livestock-raising comes to provide the major part of the food of the family as compared with the horticulture carried on by the women. Consequently, the man takes over from the woman the principal role in production and so becomes the dominant sex in society as a whole. Matriarchy is superseded by patriarchy:

"The matriarchate was superseded by the patriarchate, under which men gained their livelihood mainly by cattle breeding.....

Under the patriarchate, .... the predominant position in production passed to men .... because, under the kind of production prevailing at that time, stock raising,.... the principal role was played by men."  
(J.V. Stalin: *ibid.*; P.314, 342).

This male supremacy extends into the communistic household:

"The men took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude. ...

With the patriarchal family, .... household management lost its public character. It no longer concerned society. It became a private service. ....

The 'savage' warrior and hunter had been content to take second place in the house, after the woman; the 'gentler' shepherd .... pushed himself forward into the first place and the woman down into the second."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.120-1, 137, 221).

The patriarchal communistic household represents an intermediate form between the matriarchal communistic household and the later male-dominated single family:

"The patriarchal household community .... assumes significance .... as a transitional form between the matriarchal family and the single family."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.124).

#### The Development of Exchange of Products

With the introduction of stock-raising comes the first great social division of labour — between pastoral tribes and non-pastoral tribes:

"Pastoral tribes separated themselves from the mass of the rest of the barbarians: The first great social division of labour. The pastoral tribes produced not only more necessities of life than other barbarians, but different ones. They possessed the advantage over them of having not only milk, milk products and greater supplies of meat, but also skins, wool, goat-hairs, and spun and woven fabrics, which became more common as the amount of raw material increased."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.218-19).

Prior to this the exchange of products has been only an exceptional event:

"At the earlier stages only occasional exchanges can take place."

(F. Engels: *ibid.* P.219).



Now the exchange of products between the tribes becomes a regular, established institution and is at first conducted by the chieftains on behalf of their tribes:

" Now with the differentiation of pastoral tribes, we find all the conditions ripe for exchange between branches of different tribes and its development into a regular established institution. Originally tribe exchanged with tribe through the respective chiefs". (F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.219).

The principal article exchanged between tribes at this time is cattle:

"The chief article which the pastoral tribes exchanged with their neighbours was cattle." (F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.219).

### The Development of Slavery

A slave is a worker whose body, together with his capacity to work, his labour power, is the property of another person or social group; his social status is that of a working animal:

"In the relationship of slavery .... one part of society is treated by another as the mere inorganic and natural condition of its own reproduction. .... Labour itself .... in the form of the slave .... is placed among the other living things as inorganic condition of production, alongside the cattle or as appendage of the soil.....

The labourers themselves, the living units of labour power are .... a direct part of the objective conditions of production and are appropriated as such — and are therefore slaves."

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations": London: 1964; P.87, 98-99).

"The slave owner .... owns the worker in production, the slave."

(J.V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in:

"History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; P. 124).

The exploitation of the slave differs from more socially advanced forms of exploitation (such as that of the serf under the feudal mode of production and that of the wage-worker under the capitalist mode of production) not only in the fact that the slave is himself the property of his exploiter, but also in the fact that he apparently receives no "pay", i.e., he apparently receives no part of the product of his labour; the whole of the labour of a slave appears to be unpaid. In fact, however, the slave receives his means of subsistence from his owner, just as does a working animal from its owner, and this in fact represents the equivalent of part of the produce of his labour:

"In slave labour, even that part of the working-day in which the slave is only replacing the value of his own means of existence, in which, therefore, in fact, he works for himself alone, appears as labour for his master. All the slave's labour appears as unpaid labour." (K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; P.591).



"With the slave .... even that part of his labour which is paid appears to be unpaid. Of course, in order to work the slave must live, and one part of his working day goes to replace the value of his own maintenance."

(K. Marx: "Value, Price and Profit", in: "Selected Works", Volume 1 London; 1943; P.318).

The first slaves are prisoners of war captured, during an inter-tribal conflict, from another tribe:

"We see .... slavery, at first only of prisoners of war."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.169).

Enslavement becomes economically practicable, however, only — firstly, when productivity of labour has risen to that point where a worker can produce more than is required for the bare subsistence of himself and his dependents, leaving a surplus which can be appropriated by another person or social group:

"Before slavery becomes possible, a certain level of production must already have been reached. ....  
Production had developed so far that the labour-power of a man could now produce more than was necessary for its own mere maintenance .... Up to that time one had not known what to do with prisoners of war, and had therefore simply killed them; at an even earlier stage, eaten them. But at the stage of the 'economic situation' which had now been attained the prisoners acquired a value; one therefore let them live and made use of their labour. .... Force .... was .... pressed into the service of the economic situation. ....  
Slavery had been invented."

(F. Engels; "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; P.222, 249).

"To the barbarian of the lower stage, a slave was valueless. ....  
At this stage human labour power still does not produce any considerable surplus over and above its maintenance costs. That was no longer the case after the introduction of cattle-breeding, metal-working, weaving and, lastly, agriculture. .... The family did not multiply so rapidly as the cattle. More people were needed to look after them; for this purpose use could be made of the enemies captured in war, who could also be bred just as easily as the cattle themselves."

(F. Engels; "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; P.118).

secondly, when social inequality has developed to the point where potential slave-owners have acquired a sufficient amount of property above the average of the community to enable them to provide the slave with instruments of production and the means of his subsistence:

"Before slavery becomes possible, .... a certain inequality of distribution must already have appeared. ....  
The subjugation of a man to make him do servile work .... presupposes that the subjugator has at his disposal the instruments of labour with the help of which alone he is able to employ the person placed in bondage, and .... in addition, the means of subsistence which enable him to keep his slave alive. In all cases, therefore, it presupposes the possession of a certain amount of property, in excess of the average."

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1972; P. 222, 223).



When both these preconditions are satisfied, the enslavement of prisoners-of-war makes its appearance.

At the first stage of its development, slavery is sporadic and generally takes the form of domestic slavery -- the ownership and use of slave-labour within the framework of the communistic household by families belonging to the primitive aristocracy:

"Slavery .... was still in its beginnings and sporadic; slaves ... merely help with production."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; P.222).

"Domestic slavery .... does not form the basis of production directly, but indirectly, as a constituent part of the family and passes imperceptibly into the family."

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; P.480).

With the development of domestic slavery, work on the demesne land falls increasingly to slaves:

"This (i.e., demesne -- Ed.) land might be cultivated by the clansmen in common, but more probably it was done by slave labour."

(E. A. Brooke: "The Science of Social Development"; London; 1936; P.122).

Thus, with the introduction of domestic slavery, the inequality of wealth between the primitive tribal aristocracy and the mass of the people increases considerably:

"The differences in wealth thus became more pronounced and with them the aristocratic element within the old primitive democracy .... The use of prisoners of war as slaves was already a recognised institution."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; P.166).

#### The Development of the Pairing Family

The third stage in the evolution of the family, which arises about this stage of social development, is that of the pairing family, in which one man and one woman have sexual intercourse more or less exclusively:

"In this stage, one man lives with one woman."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.111).

The relationship involved in the pairing family can, however, be easily dissolved by either party, in which case the children of the relationship remain with the mother:

"The marriage tie can, however, be easily dissolved by either partner; after separation, the children still belong, as before, to the mother alone."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.111).

The pairing family evolves from the punuluan family

firstly, because the increasingly complex prohibitions involved in that form of the family eventually make it unworkable:



"At the lower stage of barbarism we find that marriage is prohibited between .... several hundred degrees of kinship. The increasing complication of these prohibitions made group marriages more and more impossible; they were displaced by the pairing family." (F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.111).

secondly, because women find group marriage under conditions of male supremacy increasingly oppressive, humiliating and objectionable, and come to prefer domination by one man to that of a male group:

"The more the traditional sexual relations lost the naive primitive character of forest life, .... the more oppressive and humiliating must the women have felt them to be, and the greater their longing for the right of .... temporary or permanent marriage with one man only, as a way of release..... The women .... brought about the transition to pairing marriage." (F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.117).

The dominant position of the man within pairing marriage is evidenced from the fact that

".... the relationship is such that polygamy and occasional infidelity remain the right of the men, even though for economic reasons polygamy is rare, while from the woman the strictest fidelity is generally demanded throughout the time she lives with the man, and adultery on her part is cruelly punished." (F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.111).

The pairing family

"...brought a new element into the family. By the side of the natural mother of the child it placed its natural and attested father." (F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.119).

The pairing family

" .... is the form characteristic of barbarism." (F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.117).

It develops within the framework of the patriarchal communistic household, which it is too weak and unstable to displace:

"The pairing family, itself too weak and unstable to make an independent household necessary or even desirable, in no wise destroys the communistic household inherited from earlier times." (F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.112).

#### The Development of Private Property in Livestock

By this time the authority of the chieftains, the heads of the kins, has grown to the point where they are able to secure recognition of the livestock under the care of their respective kins as their private property:

"Private property in herds must have already started at an early period. .... At the threshold of authentic history we already find the herds everywhere separately owned by heads of families. ....

The herds passed out of the common possession of the tribe or the gens into the ownership of individual heads of families. ....



To him (i.e., the male head of the kin — Ed.) belonged the cattle."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.118, 220-221).

Thus, the exchange of products between chiefs as agents for the kin or tribe is transformed into the exchange of commodities between chiefs as individual property owners:

"At the threshold of authentic history we already find .... everywhere separately owned by heads of families .... also the artistic products of barbarism. (metal implements, luxury articles and, finally, the human cattle — the slaves.) ....

As the herds began to pass into private ownership, exchange between individuals became more common, and, finally, the only form. ....

To him (i.e., the male head of the kin — Ed.), therefore, belonged .... the commodities and the slaves received in exchange for cattle."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.118, 219, 221).

The development of private property in and exchange of livestock further increases the inequality of wealth between the primitive aristocracy and the mass of the people:

"With the increase of the herds .... the differences in wealth thus became more pronounced, and with them the aristocratic element within the old primitive democracy."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.166).

#### The Overthrow of Matrilineal Succession

With the development of patriarchy and the accumulation of private property in livestock and commodities in the hands of the male chiefs, the latter find the principle of matrilineal succession within the kin increasingly irksome, since on their death this property does not pass to their children (who belong to the mother's kin) but has to be retained within his own kin:

"According to the social custom of the time, ... his children could not inherit from him. ....

According to mother-right — so long, therefore, as descent was reckoned only in the female line — and according to the original custom of inheritance within the gens, the gentile relatives inherited from a deceased fellow-member of their gens. His property had to remain within the gens. .... The children of the dead man .... could not inherit from their father, because they did not belong to his gens, within which his property had to remain .... His own children were disinherited."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; P.119).

In proportion as wealth increases in the hands of male heads of kins, therefore, it creates the desire on the part of these male property-owners to overthrow the matrilineal system of inheritance in favour of a patrilineal system, in which descent is reckoned through the father:



"In proportion as wealth increased, it .... created an impulse to exploit this (i.e., the man's .. Ed.) strengthened position in order to overthrow in favour of his children the traditional order of inheritance. .... Mother-right, therefore, had to be overthrown, and overthrown it was. .... A simple decree sufficed. .... The reckoning of descent in the female line and the matriarchal law of inheritance were thereby overthrown, and the male line of descent and the paternal law of inheritance were substituted for them."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 119-120)

This step further increases the dominance of the male within the primitive family:

"The overthrow of mother-right was the world historical defeat of the female sex. .... The woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his (i.e., the man's -- Ed.) lust and a mere instrument for the production of children."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 120-121).

It also furthers the accumulation of wealth within the families of the primitive aristocracy:

"We see .... father-right, with transmission of property to the children, by which accumulation of wealth within the family was favoured."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.169).

#### The Development of Monogamy

The overthrow of matrilineal succession is followed by a further change in the form of the family: the pairing family gives way to the monogamous family:

"Monogamy .... developed rapidly with the overthrow of mother-right."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.124).

The monogamous family develops out of the pairing family, from which it is distinguished principally by its greater stability; in the early stages of its development it can, as a rule, be dissolved only by the man:

"The monogamous family .... develops out of the pairing family. .... It is distinguished from pairing marriage by the much greater strength of the marriage tie, which can no longer be dissolved at either party's wish. As a rule it is now only the man who can dissolve it, and put away his wife."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.125)

The transition from pairing marriage to monogamous marriage is brought about by the men:

"Only when the women had brought about the transition to pairing marriage were the men able to introduce strict monogamy."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.117)

Their motive was to institutionalise male supremacy and to be able to beget children of undisputed paternity to inherit their property:



"The monogamous family .... is based on the supremacy of the man, the express purpose being to produce children of undisputed paternity; such paternity is demanded because these children are later to come into their father's property as his natural heirs. ...

The sole exclusive aims of monogamous marriage were to make the man supreme in the family, and to propagate, as the future heirs to his wealth, children indisputably his own."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.125, 128).

These aims are reflected in the fact that, traditionally, sexual fidelity is expected in monogamous marriage only of the wife, since the husband's infidelity does not place in doubt the paternity of his children:

"What for the woman is a crime, entailing grave legal and social consequences, is considered honourable in a man, or at the worst, a slight moral blemish. ....

Monogamy arose from the concentration of considerable wealth in the hands of a single individual -- a man -- and from the need to bequeath this wealth to the children of that man and of no other. For this purpose the monogamy of the woman was required, not that of the man, so this monogamy of the woman did not in any way interfere with open or concealed polygamy on the part of the man."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.138).

Nevertheless, for economic reasons organised polygyny is a luxury available only to the males of the wealthy primitive aristocracy; once monogamy has become established as a social institution, the mass of the people live in monogamy:

"Polygyny on the part of one individual man was, in fact, obviously a product of slavery and confined to a few people in exceptional positions. .... Polygyny is the privilege of the wealthy and of the nobility, the women being recruited chiefly through purchase as slaves; the mass of the people live in monogamy."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.124).

Monogamy is the first form of the family to be based, not on natural conditions, but on economic conditions -- on private property:

"Monogamy .... was the first form of the family to be based not on natural, but on economic conditions -- on the victory of private property over primitive, natural communal property."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.128).

Among the property-owning classes, the typical monogamous marriage is based on a contract for the redistribution of property, a marriage-contract; it is a marriage of economic convenience arranged by parents:

"Among all ruling classes matrimony remained .... a matter of convenience which was arranged by the parents."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.133).

Because monogamy reflects the subjugation of one sex by the other, it reflects a struggle between the sexes:

"Monogamous marriage comes on the scene as the subjugation of one sex by the other; it announces a struggle between the sexes."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.128).



Nevertheless, the establishment of monogamous marriage lays the basis for a great moral advance: the development of sexual love:

"Through monogamy .... the greatest moral advance .... could be achieved: modern individual sex-love. ....

Monogamy was the only one of all the known forms of marriage through which modern sex-love could develop".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.132, 133).

Nevertheless, because of the economic basis of monogamous marriage among the propertied classes, sexual love can be realised, in general, within marriage only among the propertyless classes:

"Sex-love .... can only become the real rule among the oppressed classes. .... Here there is no property, for the preservation and inheritance of which monogamy and male supremacy were established." (F. Engels.: *ibid.*; p.135).

Among the propertied classes sexual love can be realised, in general, only outside marriage:

"Among all ruling classes .... sexual love .... was by no means conjugal. Quite the contrary, in its classic form .... it heads straight for adultery."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.133).

Socially, the establishment of the monogamous family brings about the transformation of the communistic household into the individual patriarchal household, based on a single husband and his wife:

"The original meaning of the word 'family' (*familia*) is not that compound of sentimentality and domestic strife which forms the ideal of the present-day philistine. .... *Famulus* means domestic slave, and *familia* is the total number of slaves belonging to one man. .... The term was invented by the Romans to denote a new social organism, whose head ruled over wife and children and a number of slaves and was invested under Roman paternal power with rights of life and death over them all. ....

Monogamous marriage .... is the cellular form of civilised society."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 121, 129).

#### The Separation of Handicraft

The introduction of iron revolutionises warfare, agriculture and handicraft; it brings about

" .... the age of the iron sword, but also the iron plough-share and axe, .... Iron brought about the tillage of large areas, the clearing of wide tracts of virgin forest; iron gave the handicraft-man tools so hard and sharp that no stone, no other known metal could resist them. All this came gradually."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.222).

It also brings about a considerable increase in the quantity and variety of production, and so the necessity for a further division of labour — the second great social division of labour: handicraft separates itself off from agriculture:



"Wealth increased rapidly ..... The products of weaving, metal-work, and the other handicrafts, which were becoming more and more differentiated, displayed growing variety and skill. In addition to corn, leguminous plants and fruits, agriculture now provided wine and oil. .... Such manifold activities were no longer within the scope of one and the same individual; the second great division of labour took place: handicraft separated off from agriculture."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.222).

Within the continuing framework of the communal ownership of the land, however, this new division of labour does not as yet result in any considerable development of commodity production, that is, the production of articles specially for exchange; it takes place within the largely self-contained village communities still based on the kin, where peasant and handicraftsman each produce for the community:

"Division of labour is a necessary condition for the production of commodities, but it does not follow, conversely, that the production of commodities is a necessary condition for the division of labour. In the primitive Indian community there is social division of labour, without production of commodities.

.....  
In the ancient Asiatic .. mode of production, we find that the conversion of products into commodities, and therefore the conversion of men into producers of commodities, holds a subordinate place. ....

These small and extremely ancient Indian communities, some of which have continued down to this day, are based on possession in common of the land, on the blending of agriculture and handicrafts, and on an unalterable division of labour which serves, whenever a new community is started, as a plan and scheme ready cut and dried. Occupying areas of from 100 up to several thousand acres, each forms a compact whole producing all it requires. The chief part of the products is destined for direct use by the community itself, and does not take the form of a commodity. .... The constitution of these communities varies in different parts of India. In those of the simplest form, the land is tilled in common, and the produce divided among the members. At the same time, spinning and weaving are carried on in each family as subsidiary industries. Side by side with the masses thus occupied with one and the same work, we find the 'chief-inhabitant', who is judge, police and tax-gatherer in one; the book-keeper, who keeps the accounts of the tillage and registers everything relating thereto; another official, who prosecutes criminals, protects strangers travelling through, and escorts them to the next village; the boundary man, who guards the boundaries against neighbouring communities; the water-overseer, who distributes the water from the common tanks for irrigation; the Brahmin, who conducts the religious services; the schoolmaster, who on the sand teaches the children reading and writing; the calender-Brahmin, or astrologer, who makes known the lucky or unlucky days for seed-time and harvest, and for every other kind of agricultural work; a smith and a carpenter, who make and repair all the agricultural implements; the potter, who makes all the pottery of the villiage; the barber, the washerman who washes clothes, the silversmith, here and there the poet. .... This dozen of individuals is maintained at the expense of the whole community. If the population increases, a new community is formed on the pattern of the old one, on unoccupied land."

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago, 1932; p. 49, 91, 392-93).



"(In) the Asiatic form (of production -- Ed.) .... the circle of production is self-sustaining, unity of agriculture and craft manufacture, etc."

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p.83)

"The whole (Indian -- Ed.) empire, not counting the few larger towns, was resolved into villages, which possessed a completely separate organisation and formed a little world in themselves."

(K. Marx: Letter to F. Engels, June 14th., 1853, in: K. Marx & F. Engels: "Correspondence: 1846-1895"; London; 1936; p.70).

"In the ancient Indian communities and in the family communities of the southern Slavs, products are not transformed into commodities. The members of the community are directly associated for production; the work is distributed according to tradition and requirements, and likewise the products to the extent that they are destined for consumption. Direct social production and direct distribution preclude all exchange of commodities, therefore also the transformation of the products into commodities (at any rate within the community)".

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p.425-26).

#### The Limited Growth of Commodity Production, Commerce and Towns

Nevertheless, even at this stage of social development, the splitting off of handicraft from agriculture gives rise, outside the rural communes, to a limited growth of commodity production:

"With the splitting up of production into the two great main branches, agriculture and handicrafts, arises production directly for exchange, commodity production."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p.222).

Alongside the limited growth of commodity production, there develops the limited growth of commodity exchange -- commerce:

"With the splitting up of production into the two great main branches, agriculture and handicrafts, arises production directly for exchange, commodity production; with it came commerce!"

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.222).

The limited growth of commerce gives rise to the beginnings of a third great social division of labour in the shape of the formation, at least in embryo, of a class of merchants engaged solely in the exchange of commodities:

"A third division of labour, peculiar to itself and of decisive importance .... creates a class which no longer concerns itself with production, but only with the exchange of the products -- the merchants."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.224-225).

With the formation of this embryonic merchant class comes the introduction of metallic money as a medium of exchange:

"With the formation of the merchant class came also the development of metallic money, the minted coin."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.225).



The introduction of metallic money is followed by the introduction of money loans, and so of interest:

"After commodities had begun to sell for money, loans and advances in money came also, and with them interest and usury."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 225-226).

The growth of population, together with the limited growth of commodity production and commerce, leads to the limited development of towns, usually by the fusion of several villages into a town:

"The town, with its houses of stone or brick, encircled by stone walls, towers and ramparts, became the central seat of the tribe or the confederacy of tribes — an enormous architectural advance."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.222).

At this stage of development, such towns develop at locations which are particularly favourable to external trade:

"Cities in the proper sense arise .. only where the location is particularly favourable to external trade."  
(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p.71)

With the development of towns as commercial centres, many handicraftsmen detach themselves from the rural communes and set up workshops in these towns:

"These craftsmen would have naturally concentrated round the .... growing towns and seaports, there to ply their trade, supplying the requirements of the community which was assembled there."  
(F.A. Brooke: "The Science of Social Development"; London; 1936; p.197-98).

Bringing with them to the towns the kinship social organisation of the countryside, these urban artisans organise themselves at first in craft kins, each specialising in a particular craft and its members passing on the specialised skills of this craft from one generation to another:

"Various trades were often specialised in by the members of certain kins, so that the craft became hereditary within those kins."  
(F.A. Brooks: *ibid.*; p.30).

In a town each craft kin tends to occupy a particular quarter of the town:

"In a village .... members of the same kin lived together in a street. So now in a town .... the members of the same craft lived next to each other, inhabiting a certain quarter of the town. .... In this way certain quarters of the town were identified with certain trades. .... These quarters were called wards."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p.198).

The relatively shifting character of a large part of the urban population, as compared with that in the countryside, soon brings about a modification of these craft kins. As "alien" craftsmen, i.e., craftsmen not members of a particular craft kin, come to be permitted to carry on their trade in a town, the craft kins are transformed into guilds, based no longer on kinship but merely on the particular trade carried on:



"A guild .... embraced all persons of the same craft irrespective of relationship, as it included aliens as well. Originally it included only kinsmen, but aliens coming from elsewhere and practising a craft were taken into the local guild."

(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 198).

### The Principal Features of the Asiatic Mode of Production

At this stage of social development, the Asiatic mode of production may be said to be fully developed.

The Asiatic mode of production represents a stage of social development through which all societies pass, except in so far as their development may be interfered with by another society or societies at a different stage of evolution. The term "Asiatic" merely reflects the fact that it remained until modern times the dominant mode of production over most of the continent of Asia — with the notable exceptions of China and Japan:

"The Asian or Indian forms of property constitute the initial ones everywhere in Europe."

(K. Marx: Letter to F. Engels, March 14th., 1868, in: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p.139).

"Primitive communities are not all cut to a single pattern. On the contrary, taken together they form a series of social groupings, differing both in type and in age, and marking successive phases of development. One of these types, now by general agreement called 'the agricultural community', is the type of the Russian community. Its counterpart in the West is the Germanic community. ....

The 'village community' also occurs in Asia. ....

As the last phase of the primitive formation of society, the agricultural community is at the same time a transitional phase to the secondary formation, i.e., transition from society based on common property to society based on private property. The secondary formation comprises, as you must understand, the series of societies based on slavery and serfdom."

(K. Marx: Third Draft of Letter to V. Zasulich, March 8th., 1881, in: *ibid.*; p. 144, 145).

The principal features of the Asiatic mode of production are as follows:

1. Society is still based on the kin, the clan and the tribe, but is no longer completely classless: a primitive tribal aristocracy has arisen which is able to exploit the mass of the people to a limited extent through embryonic state organs; as a result a certain inequality of wealth has developed within society;

2. The evolution of the family has, for the most part, passed to the stage of the male-dominated monogamous family;

3. A limited degree of domestic and demesne slavery of prisoners-of-war has come into being;

4. The livestock herds have passed into the private ownership of the primitive tribal aristocracy;

5. Handicraft has separated off from agriculture;

6. The land is communally owned, and the largely self-contained



rural communes embrace both agriculture and handicraft as a unity, with a minimum of commodity production;

7. Outside the commune a limited degree of commodity production and commerce has developed;

8. An embryonic merchant class has come into being;

9. Metallic money has come into limited use; and

10. There has been a limited development of towns as centres of commerce and handicraft, and here the social organisation based on kin is already in process of dissolution.

### THE TRANSITION TO THE GERMANIC MODE OF PRODUCTION

#### The Development of Private Property in Land

To the extent that commodity production develops under the Asiatic mode of production, it creates the desire on the part of each family in a rural commune to appropriate for itself a part of these commodities. In response to this general desire, the practice arises of allotting portions of the communally owned land to individual families for their individual cultivation, together with the produce from their allotted portions. At first this allotment is temporary, and associated with periodical repartitions so that the size of the allotments might remain proportional to the changing numbers in each family:

"With the coming of commodity production, individuals began to cultivate the soil on their own account. ....

The land was allotted to individual families with periodical repartitions."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 175, 201).

After a certain period of time, however, repartition ceases and the allotment becomes permanent: private property in land has come into existence:

"As far back as written history goes we find the land (i.e., in Greece — Ed.) already divided up and privately owned, which is in accordance with the relatively advanced commodity production and the corresponding trade in commodities developed towards the end of the upper stage of barbarism. ....

With the coming of commodity production, individuals began to cultivate the soil on their own account, which soon led to individual ownership of land. ....

The cultivated land is allotted for use to single families, at first temporarily, later permanently."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 171, 175, 223).

"Direct communal property (the oriental form .... developed to the point of contradiction in .... Germanic property)."

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 97).

"Private property in land is of later (i.e., than communal property — Ed.) origin."

(K. Marx: Letter to F. Engels, March 14th., 1868, in: *ibid.*; p. 139).



"The more the products of the commune assumed the commodity form, .... the more deeply was the ancient common ownership of the land undermined, and the more rapidly did the commune develop towards its dissolution and transformation into a village of small-holding peasants. .... Force was .... little involved in this process ....; the peasants simply find it to their advantage that the private ownership of land should take the place of common ownership."

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 223-24).

That part of the communally owned land which cannot be divided up among individual peasant families if it is to perform its function (that is, hunting grounds, pasture land, woodland and waste land) is retained as the common property, the common land, of the individual peasant families of the locality:

"The ager publicus, the common land or people's land, occurs among the Germans (i.e., under the Germanic mode of production — Ed.) also, as distinct from the property of individuals. It consists of hunting grounds, common pastures or woodlands, etc., as that part of the land which cannot be partitioned if it is to serve as a means of production in this specific form."

(K. Marx: "Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 78-79).

"The new community, in which the cultivable soil belongs to the peasants as private property, whereas woodlands, pastures and waste still remain common land, was .... introduced by the Germans into all conquered countries".

(K. Marx: Third Draft of Letter to V. Zasulich, March 8th., 1881, in: *ibid.*; p. 144)

This common land is now, however, regarded as a mere supplement to what is now the principal form of land tenure — individual private property in the cultivable land:

"The ager publicus appears rather as a mere supplement to individual property among the Germans, and figures as property only in so far as it is defended against hostile tribes as the common property of one tribe. ....

Communal property as such appears only as a communal accessory to the individual kin settlements and land appropriations."

(K. Marx: *ibid.*; p. 79, 80).

Thus, at this stage of social development the community has become basically a loose, atomised, rural association of individual, independent peasant families:

"The property of the individual does not appear mediated through the community, but the existence of the community and of communal property as mediated through — i.e., as a mutual relation of — the independent subjects. ....

The economic whole in the Germanic world (is) the individual home, which itself appears merely as a point in the land belonging to it. ....

In the Germanic form the agriculturalist is not a citizen i.e., not an inhabitant of cities, but its foundation is the isolated, independent family settlement, guaranteed by means of its association with other such settlements by men of the same tribe, and their occasional assembly for purposes of war, religion, the settlement of legal disputes, etc. .... The community exists only in the mutual relation of the individual landowners as such.



.... The community is.... on the one hand, the common element in language, blood, etc., which is the premise of the individual proprietor; but on the other hand it has real being only in its actual assembly for communal purposes; and, in so far as it has a separate existence in the communally used hunting grounds, pastures, etc., it is thus used by every individual proprietor as such. .... It is genuinely the common property of the individual owners, and not of the union of owners."  
(K. Marx: *ibid.*; p. 79, 80).

Each household functions, to a great extent, as an independent, self-sufficient economic unit:

"At bottom every individual household contains an entire economy, forming as it does an independent centre of production (manufacture merely the domestic subsidiary labour of the women, etc.)"  
(K. Marx: *ibid.*; p. 79).

#### Tenant-farmers and Farm Labourers

As a part of this process of the transformation of communally owned land into privately owned land, the demesne or mensal land originally set aside for the support of a chieftain comes to be recognised as his private property.

The practice then begins of allowing "aliens", i.e., strangers from other tribes, to hold and work strips of this demesne land as tenants of the chieftain; such tenant farmers are known as clients, soke-men or yeomen (Latin: clientes):

"Aliens .... were forced to seek the protection of the chief of the village to which they had come. The chief .... was able to secure for them the necessary means of subsistence .... by settling them on his own demesne as tenants. ....

The chief thus came to be looked upon as the landlord and the aliens as his tenants or clients."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 165-66, 167).

Under such tenancies, the landlord leases to the tenant not only the land, but also cattle, buildings, tools, etc., which remain the property of the landlord:

"To these aliens a chief would give everything they needed for their support -- cattle, buildings, implements and household utensils, which were theirs as long as they remained with him."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 166).

In return, the tenant pays rent, partly in produce, partly in labour service on the unleased part of the chief's demesne, partly by temporary military service for the chieftain when called upon:

"The aliens, on their part, .... paid the chief as rent each year a certain stipulated quantity of their produce, .... performing various kinds of services, such as repairing buildings, doing necessary agricultural work on his demesne, as well as fighting for him when called upon."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 166).



Although they may work on the chief's demesne alongside slaves, these tenant-farmers are freemen, who can terminate the tenancy at any time:

"These aliens were free to leave their chief at any time, and to seek the protection of another chief elsewhere. But on leaving they had to return all cattle, implements, etc., that had been placed at their disposal."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 166).

Alternatively, such aliens may be given direct employment on the demesne land by the chieftain, when they are known as bordars or cottars:

"Some of (these aliens) the chief might employ on his mensal lands as labourers."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 168).

The exploitation of the labour of these tenant-farmers and farm labourers further increases the wealth of the tribal aristocracy in relation to that of the rest of the people:

"Aliens .... were, of course, of the utmost advantage to any chief as they helped .... to enrich his private resources."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 167-68).

#### Wars, Militias and War-bands

The growth of wealth excites the greed of neighbouring tribes, and wars for plunder become a regular feature:

"We see .... the old wars between tribe and tribe already degenerating into systematic pillage by land and sea for the acquisition of cattle, slaves and treasure, and becoming a regular source of wealth. ....

War and organisation for war have now become regular functions of national life. Their neighbours' wealth excites the greed of peoples who already see in the acquisition of wealth one of the main aims of life. They are barbarians: they think it easier and in fact more honourable to get riches by pillage than by work. War .... is now waged simply for plunder and becomes a regular industry."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 169, 170, 223).

The temporary spontaneous war-bands of the earlier period are transformed into a systematically organised tribal militia, based on the furnishing of a certain number of warriors by each kin:

"This organisation .... was used for military purposes as well, each kin having to supply one man for the army, or perhaps three, one for active service, one for garrison duty, and one for the reserve, the rest being left to engage in husbandry."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 213).

As has been said, the chief's tenant farmers are also liable to be called up for service in the militia.

This militia is, however, still levied on a temporary basis and for defence only:



"The chief of the tribe could at all times call his tribesmen to war for the protection of their country, if this had been sanctioned by the council of the tribe, but only for a short period, generally about forty days, so as not to interfere with the cultivation of the land, and then only for defence of the tribal territories; they were not subject to be sent to fight out of their boundaries."

(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 246).

As a result of these restrictions, each chieftain builds up a permanent private army primarily for external plunder -- a war-band or retinue of his personal retainers:

"In view of these restrictions, it was necessary for each chief to keep a small army of retainers whom he could call upon, at any time and for any length of time, to fight for him."

(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 246).

"Private associations were formed to carry on wars independently. Among the Germans these private associations had already become permanent."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 205).

Such retinues are composed, in the main, of ambitious alien adventurers:

"A military leader who had made himself a name gathered around him a band of young men eager for booty, whom he pledged to personal loyalty, giving the same pledge to them. The leader provided their keep, gave them gifts, and organised them on a hierarchic basis."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 205).

"These alien adventurers would more especially seek the courts of chiefs who were of great renown, as there they were more certain of acquiring wealth, for after helping their chief to obtain plunder they were given a generous share in it as their reward, so that the chiefs renowned for prowess in war always attracted to their court great numbers of these aliens who took service in their body-guards, all sworn to do their chief's bidding at any time. ....

This body-guard of retainers .... formed the nucleus of a standing army."

(F.A. Brooke; *ibid.*; p. 168, 169).

The mere existence of these permanent war-bands of retainers gives them a vested interest in raids and wars of plunder:

"These retinues .... could only be kept together by continual wars and plundering expeditions. Plunder became an end in itself. If the leader of the retinue found nothing to do in the neighbourhood, he set out with his men to other peoples where there was war and the prospect of booty."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 205).

These wars of plunder increase the wealth and power of the primitive aristocracy in relation to that of the mass of the people:

"The wars of plunder increase the power of the supreme military leader and the subordinate commanders."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 223).

In fact, the mere existence of these war-bands of retainers greatly



increases the power of this primitive aristocracy:

"The chief .... had these strangers to protect him, as well as to help him assert his authority. .... They greatly augmented a chief's power.

This also helped to make the chieftainship hereditary, and to prevent the chief from being deposed by his clansmen, if he proved unsuitable. In this way powerful chiefs were enabled to assume and establish autocratic power."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 168).

As a result, the embryonic state apparatus is greatly strengthened, and the tribal organisation is increasingly transformed into an organisation for the plundering and oppression of neighbouring tribes:

"Thus the organs of the gentile constitution gradually tear themselves loose from their roots in the people, in gens, phratry, tribe, and the whole gentile constitution changes into its opposite: from an organisation of tribes for the free ordering of their own affairs it becomes an organisation for the plundering and oppression of their neighbours."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 223-224).

#### The Principal Features of the Germanic Mode of Production

At this stage of social development, the Germanic mode of production may be said to be fully developed.

The Germanic mode of production represents a stage of social development through which all societies pass, except in so far as their development may be interfered with by another society or societies at a different stage of evolution. The term "Germanic" merely reflects the fact that the Germanic tribes lived under this mode of production at the time of their conquest of the Roman Empire in the 5th century A.D.:

"Another form of the property of working individuals, self-sustaining members of the community, in the natural conditions of their labour, is the Germanic. Here the member of the community is not, as in the specifically oriental form, co-owner of the communal property. ....

In the Germanic form .... its (i.e., society's — Ed.) foundation is the isolated, independent family settlement."  
(K. Marx: "Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 74-75, 80).

The principal features of the Germanic mode of production are as follows:

1. The cultivable land has been transformed into the private property of individual peasant families; only the supplementary non-cultivable land remains loosely communal;
2. Each peasant household constitutes, to a great extent, an independent, self-sufficient economic unit;
3. The demesne land has been transformed into the private property of the primitive aristocracy; it is worked partly by slaves, partly by alien tenant-farmers and partly by alien labourers — all of whose labour is exploited for the material benefit of the primitive aristocracy;



4. Raids and wars for plunder of neighbouring tribes and peoples have become a prominent feature of social life, these being conducted by war-bands composed of the personal retainers of the primitive aristocracy; and

5. As a result of these developments, there has been a considerable further development of the wealth and power of the primitive aristocracy and a considerable strengthening of the organs of the embryonic state.

## THE TRANSITION TO THE ANCIENT MODE OF PRODUCTION

### The Development of Mass Slavery

Reflecting the rise of commodity production and exchange, slaves have now become commodities which can be bought and sold:

"The slave-owner buys his labourer as he buys his horse."  
(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p.292).

"The purchase and sale of slaves is formally .... a purchase and sale of commodities."

(K. Marx: "Capital" Volume 2; Moscow; 1974; p.32).

"The slave, together with his labour-power, is sold once and for all to his owner. He is a commodity which can pass from the hand of one owner to that of another."

(K. Marx: "Wage-labour and Capital", in: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 256).

"The slave-owner .... owns the worker in production -- the slave, whom he can sell, purchase, or kill as though he were an animal."

(J.V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 124).

With this development, the number of slaves in society can be increased, not only by raids and wars, but also by commerce:

"We see .... the old wars between tribe and tribe already degenerating into systematic pillage by land and sea for the acquisition of .... slaves .... and becoming a regular source of wealth."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 169-170).

"Slavery .... develops gradually with the increase of population, the growth of wants, and with the extension of external relations, of war or of trade."

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 123).

And with the transformation of land into the private property of individuals, it too becomes a commodity:

"Land could now become a commodity; it could be sold."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 226).

This development, along with the introduction of the money loan, quickly leads to the introduction of the mortgage:



"Land could now .... be ... pledged. Scarcely had private property in land been introduced than the mortgage was already invented. .... From now onward mortgage dogs the heels of private land ownership."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 226).

Meanwhile, the development of commodity production and commerce has led to the merchant class becoming the richest class in society, at least in terms of money wealth:

"Who had more of it (i.e., money — Ed.) than anybody else? — the merchant."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.225).

The increasing exploitation of the peasants by the primitive aristocracy forces growing numbers of these peasants into irredeemable mortgage debt to the primitive aristocracy and, in particular, to the merchants in their capacity as moneylenders:

"All the fields .... were thick with mortgage columns bearing inscriptions stating that the land on which they stood was mortgaged to such and such for so and so much. The fields not so marked had for the most part already been sold on account of unpaid mortgages or interest and had passed into the ownership of the noble usurer."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 173).

Thus, the introduction of private property in land leads, for the mass of small-holding peasants, to the loss of the land — a process hardly possible under the former system of communal land ownership:

"Recently they (i.e., the peasants — Ed.) had striven above all to secure their freedom against the rights of the gentile community over these lands, since these rights had become for them a fetter. They got rid of the fetter — but soon afterwards of their new landed property also. Full, free ownership of the land meant not only power, uncurtailed and unlimited, to possess the land; it meant also the power to alienate it. As long as the land belonged to the gens, no such power could exist."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.226).

To meet the situation where the value of land is insufficient to meet an unpaid mortgage debt, or where a debt is unsecured, slavery is now extended to members of the tribe, even of the kin, inhabiting a particular locality:

"We see .... the enslavement of fellow-members of the tribe and even of the gens. ....

If the sale of the land did not cover the debt, or if the debt had been contracted without any security, the debtor, in order to meet his creditor's claims, had to sell his children into slavery. .... And if the blood-sucker was still not satisfied, he could sell the debtor himself as a slave."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 169, 173-174).

This process leads to the gradual expropriation of most of the small-holding peasants, and the concentration of the land concerned into large landed estates — latifundia — in the hands of a wealthy landowning class composed of members of the primitive aristocracy (but now no longer primitive) and rich merchants:



"The class struggles of the ancient world (i.e., in the period of transition from the Germanic to the ancient mode of production — Ed.) took the form chiefly of a contest between debtors and creditors, which in Rome ended in the ruin of the plebeian debtors."

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p.152).

"The plebeians of ancient Rome .... were originally free peasants, each cultivating his own piece of land on his own account. In the course of Roman history they were expropriated. The same movement which divorced them from their means of production and subsistence involved the formation not only of big landed property but also of big money capital."

(K. Marx: Letter to the Editor of the "Otyecestvenniye Zapisky" (Notes on the Fatherland), 1877, in: K. Marx & F. Engels:

"Correspondence": 1846-1895; London; 1936; p.354).

Those dispossessed peasants who are not enslaved degenerate into an unoccupied proletarian mob:

"The Roman proletarians became, not wage-labourers but a mob of do-nothings."

(K. Marx: *ibid.*; p.354-355).

The dispossessed peasants are replaced, on the latifundia, either by livestock or, where agricultural farming is continued, by slaves:

"The plebeian debtors .... were displaced by slaves."

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p. 152).

"When Rome became a 'world city' and Italic landownership came more and more into the hands of a numerically small class of enormously rich proprietors, the peasant population was supplanted by a population of slaves. ....

When, in the final period of the Roman Republic, the great complexes of estates, the latifundia, displaced the small peasants and replaced them with slaves, they also replaced tillage with stock-raising. ....

In antiquity .. the transformation of tilled land into pastures was a concomitant feature of the latifundia. ....

The Roman Empire (was founded) on the latifundia."

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p.222, 244, 482, 486).

"In Italy the enormous estates (latifundia) which, since the end of the Republic, occupied almost the whole country, had been exploited in two different ways. They had been used either as pastures, the population being displaced by sheep and cattle which could be tended by a few slaves, or as country estates (villae), where large-scale horticulture was carried on with masses of slaves, partly as a luxury for the owner, partly for sale in the town markets."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p.209).

Slavery is extended into handicraft, shipping and commerce:

"Commerce and handicrafts, including artistic handicrafts, .... were being increasingly developed on a large scale by the use of slave labour. ....

Slaves no longer merely help with production — they are driven by dozens to work in the fields and the workshops."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.178, 222).



Eventually the number of slaves far exceeds the number of free citizens:

"There were .... at least 18 slaves .... to every adult male citizen."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 181).

Slave labour becomes the foundation of society:

"There was an enormous increase .... in the number of slaves, whose forced labour was the foundation on which the superstructure of the entire society was reared."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 226-227).

"Alongside of them (i.e., the dispossessed peasants -- Ed.) there developed a mode of production which was .... dependent upon slavery."

(K. Marx: Letter to the Editor of the "Otyecestvenniye Zapisky" (Notes on the Fatherland), 1877, in: K. Marx & F. Engels: "Correspondence : 1846-1895"; London; 1936; p.355).

"Slavery .... soon became the dominant form of production among all peoples who were developing beyond the old community."  
(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p.249).

#### The Fully-developed Class Division of Society

A class is a social group which has a certain property relationship to -- that is, which either owns or does not own -- means of production of a particular form and, in the former case, which obtains its share of social production either on the basis of its own labour or on the basis of the exploitation of the labour of another class:

"The fundamental criterion by which classes are distinguished is the place they occupy in social production, and, consequently, the relation in which they stand to the means of production."  
(V.I. Lenin: "Vulgar Socialism and Narodism as Resurrected by the Socialist-Revolutionaries", in: "Collected Works", Volume 6; Moscow; 1961; p.264-65).

"Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other .. by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in laws) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions and method of acquiring the share of social wealth that they obtain. Classes are groups of people one of which may appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in the definite system of social economy."

(V.I. Lenin: "A Great Beginning", in: "Selected Works", Volume 9; London; 1946; p.432-33).

At this stage of social development we find society -- for the first time outside societies associated with oriental despotism, to be discussed in the next section -- fully divided into a class which owns the means of production and is an exploiting class and a class which does not own the means of production and is an exploited class. These classes are the slaveowning (the "citizens") and the slave class:

"The class relation between citizens and slaves is now completely developed."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p.10).



"Here was a society which by all its economic conditions of life had been forced to split itself into freemen and slaves, into the exploiting rich and the exploited poor. ....

With slavery .... came the first great cleavage of society into an exploiting and an exploited class."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 234).

"The basis of the relations of production under the slave system is that the slave owner owns the means of production; he also owns the worker in production — the slave. .... Here there prevails the forced labour of slaves, who are exploited by the non-labouring slave owners. ....

Rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, people with full rights and people with no rights, .... — such is the picture of the slave system."

(J.V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 124).

In a society divided into an exploiting and an exploited class, there is an antagonism of economic interest between the two classes, since the striving of each class to increase its share of total social production can only be attained at the expense of the other class:

"In any given society the strivings of some of the members conflict with the strivings of others, .... The conflict of strivings arises from differences in the situation and modes of life of the classes into which society is divided."

(V.I. Lenin: "Karl Marx" in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p.31).

This leads inevitably to class struggle:

"The collisions .... between these classes are in turn conditioned by the degree of development of their economic position, by the mode of their production and of their exchange determined by it."

(F. Engels: Preface to the 1885 (Third) German Edition of: K. Marx: "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte"; Moscow; 1948; p.12-13)

"These warring classes of society are always the products of the conditions of production and exchange, in a word, of the economic conditions of their time."

(F. Engels: "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific", in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London: 1943; p. 163).

"The whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes."

(F. Engels: Preface to the 1888 English edition of: K. Marx & F. Engels: "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 202).

"The history of all hitherto existing society (that is, all written history — F. Engels) is the history of class struggles."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 204).

In a class-divided society, the long-term, ultimate contradictions within the society manifest themselves in the class struggle, as Engels points out specifically in relation to class-divided capitalist society:

"The contradiction between social production and capitalist



appropriation becomes manifest as the antagonism between proletariat and bourgeoisie."

(F. Engels: "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific", in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p.170).

Thus, in a class-divided society, the immediate driving force of social development is the class struggle:

"For almost forty years we have stressed the class struggle as the immediate driving force of history."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: Draft Letter to A. Bebel, K. Liebknecht, W. Bracke and others, September 1879, in: "Correspondence: 1846-1895"; London; 1936; p.376).

Class struggle is a prominent feature of society at this stage of social development, that is, of society which has become divided into an exploiting class of slaveowners ("citizens") and an exploited class of slaves:

"Rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, people with full rights and people with no rights, and a fierce class struggle between them — such is the picture of the slave system."

(J.V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 12).

In addition to the primary class struggle between slaveowners and slaves, there are also secondary class struggles between the aristocracy and the newly risen merchant class, and between both these classes on the one hand and the "common" citizens on the other:

"The old power of the aristocracy now had to contend with successful competition from the new class of rich industrialists and merchants. ....

The whole history of the Roman Republic runs its course, with all the struggles between patricians and plebeians. ....

The new aristocracy of wealth, in so far as it had not been identical from the outset with the old hereditary aristocracy, pushed it permanently into the background."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p.178, 191, 226.)

"Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, .... stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p.205).

The final result of these secondary class struggles is a merging of elements of the old aristocracy with the newly risen merchant class to form a single wealthy landowning and slaveowning exploiting class. Speaking of the Roman Empire, Engels describes:

".... the final merging of the patrician nobility in the new class of the great land and money owners, who, gradually swallowing up all the land of the peasants ...., employed slave labour to cultivate the enormous estates thus formed."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p.191).



## The Dissolution of Tribal Society

These developments bring about the dissolution of tribal society:

"The end of the gentile constitution was approaching. ....  
The gentile constitution was finished."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 176, 228).

The principal factors bringing about its dissolution are:  
firstly, the development of a money economy:

"The gentile constitution is absolutely irreconcilable with money economy. ....

The old gentile constitution had not only shown itself powerless before the triumphal march of money; it was absolutely incapable of finding any place within its framework for such things as money, creditors, debtors and forcible collection of debts."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 173, 175).

Secondly, the development of antagonistic classes within each tribe:

"This conflict of interests was at work within every gentile body, appearing in its most extreme form in the association of rich and poor, usurers and debtors, in the same gens and the same tribe. ....

The gentile constitution was .... shattered by .... the cleavage of society into classes."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 227, 228).

Thirdly, the social intermixing in each locality of people from different kins and different tribes:

"Through the sale and purchase of land, and the progressive division of labour between agriculture and handicraft, trade and shipping, it was inevitable that the members of the different gentes, phratries and tribes very soon became intermixed. Into the districts of the phratry and tribe moved inhabitants who, although fellow countrymen, did not belong to these bodies and were therefore strangers in their own place of domicile. ....

The necessary condition for its (i.e., tribal society's — Ed.)—existence was that the members of a gens or at least of a tribe were settled together in the same territory and were its sole inhabitants. That had long ceased to be the case. Every territory now had a heterogeneous population belonging to the most varied gentes and tribes; everywhere slaves, protected persons and aliens lived side by side with citizens. The settled conditions of life which had only been achieved towards the end of the middle stage of barbarism were broken up by the repeated shifting and changing of residence under the pressure of trade, alteration of occupation and changes in the ownership of the land. .... Each of these groups (i.e., of artisans — Ed.) was composed of people of the most diverse gentes, phratries and tribes, and even included aliens."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 171, 227).

New organs of social organisation have to be formed to replace those of tribal society:

"New organs .... had therefore to be formed outside the gentile constitution, alongside of it, and hence in opposition to it."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 227).



These new organs of social organisation are the local tribe and its sub-divisions, based on place of residence and not kinship:

"This institution .... for the first time .... divided by the people for public purposes, not by groups of kinship, but by common place of residence. ....

Only domicile was now decisive, not membership of a kinship group.

....  
A tribe .... is now known as a local tribe to distinguish it from the old tribe of kinship."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 176, 179).

"Kinship tribes historically precede locality tribes, and are almost everywhere displaced by them."  
(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p.76).

### The Development of the State

On the ruins of tribal society, and superimposed on the social organisation of the new local tribes, a new social organ comes into being at this stage of social development: an apparatus of force, of coercion, necessary to the slaveowning, exploiting minority class to compel the exploited slave majority to work for its benefit:  
the state:

"It is impossible to compel the greater part of society to work systematically for the other part of society without a permanent apparatus of coercion .... — the state. ....

Under slavery .... the small minority of people could not dominate over the vast majority without coercion."  
(V.I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London: 1943: p.648, 650).

The state, which is brought into being at this stage of development is always essentially, whatever its form, an instrument of force by means of which one social class maintains its rule over the rest of the people:

"An essential characteristic of the state is the existence of a public force differentiated from the mass of the people.

....  
The organs of the gentile constitution .... change from instruments of the will of the people into independent organs for the domination and oppression of the people. ....

The gentile constitution .... was replaced by the state.

....  
The state .... is a product of society at a particular stage of development; it is the admission that this society has involved itself in insoluble self-contradiction ....

The state is distinguished firstly by the grouping of its members on a territorial basis. .... This organisation of the citizens of the state according to domicile is common to all states.

....  
The second distinguishing characteristic is the institution of a public force which is no longer immediately identical with the people's own organisation of themselves. .... This public force exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men, but also of material appendages, prisons and coercive institutions of all kinds. ....



In order to maintain this public power, contributions from the citizens are necessary — taxes. ....

In possession of the public power and the right of taxation, the officials now present themselves as organs of society standing above society."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 180, 223-224, 228, 229-230).

"The state is a machine for maintaining the rule of one class over another. ....

Only when the first form of the division of society into classes appeared, .... then .... it was essential that a state should appear.

And this state did appear. ....

The state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for keeping in subjugation to one class other, subordinated classes."

(V.I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p. 647, 649).

"Society .... based on class antagonism had need of the state, that is, of an organisation of the particular class which was pro tempore the exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production and, therefore, especially for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production."

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 386).

"According to Marx, the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another. ....

Every state is a 'special repressive force' for the suppression of the oppressed class. ....

The state is a special organisation of force; it is the organisation of violence for the suppression of some class."

(V.I. Lenin: "The State and Revolution", in: "Selected Works", Volume 7; London; 1946; p. 9, 19, 24).

At this stage of social development, at which society is divided into an exploiting slaveowning class and an exploited slave class, the state is essentially the machinery of force by which the slaveowning class maintains its rule over the slaves:

"The ancient state was, above all, the state of the slave-owners for holding down the slaves."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 231).

"This state did appear — the slaveowning state, an apparatus which gave the slaveowners power and enabled them to rule over the slaves."

(V.I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p. 647).

Whatever the form which this slaveowning state acquires, depending on the balance of forces at a particular time between the "citizens" (aristocracy, merchants, common people), it is in all cases essentially the machinery of force by which the slaveowners rule over the slaves:



"Whether a monarchy was instituted or a republic, it was a monarchy of the slaveowners or a republic of the slaveowners. All rights under them were enjoyed by the slaveowners, while the slave was a chattel in the eyes of the law. . . Slaveowning republics differed in their internal organisation; there were aristocratic republics and democratic republics. In an aristocratic republic a small number of privileged persons took part in the elections; in a democratic republic everybody took part in the elections -- but again only the slaveowners, everybody except the slaves. This fundamental fact must be borne in mind, because it throws more light than any other on the question of the state and clearly demonstrates the nature of the state".

(V. I. Lenin: "The State", in: *ibid.*; p. 648-9).

#### The Division of Labour

The division of society into an exploiting class and an exploited slave class is, from one aspect, a division of labour between the classes, between administrative labour and productive labour:

"The simplest and most natural form of this division of labour was in fact slavery".

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 251).

On the basis of the exploitation of the productive labour of the slaves, a further division of labour takes place among the slaveowning class itself, between administrative labour and mental labour:

"The division of labour . . . manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental and material labour, so that inside this class one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), whilst the others' attitudes to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves".

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 39-40).

Thus, at this stage of social development, at this stage of the level of development of the productive forces, the development of art, science, philosophy, etc., is possible only on the basis of the exploitation of the productive labour of masses of slaves:

"It was slavery that first made possible . . . the flowering of the ancient world. Without slavery, no Greek . . . art and science. . .

So long as human labour was still so little productive that it provided but a small surplus over and above the necessary means of subsistence, any . . . development . . . of law, or foundation of art and science, was possible only by means of a greater division of labour. And the necessary basis for this was the great division of labour between the masses discharging simple manual labour and the few privileged persons directing labour, conducting trade and public affairs, and, at a later stage, occupying themselves with art and science".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 249, 250).



The establishment of slavery on a mass scale also develops the division of labour between agriculture and handicraft industry on a larger scale:

"(Under the ancient mode of production — Ed.) the division of labour is already more developed."  
(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p.10).

"It was slavery that first made possible the division of labour between agriculture and industry on a larger scale."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 249).

### The Development of the City-state

With the development of a wealthy, slaveowning, landowning, exploiting class, towns grow into cities, as centres of state administration, of commerce and of culture; the city becomes dominant over the countryside; it becomes, together with the landed estates surrounding it, the city-state:

"The basis here (i.e., under the ancient mode of production — Ed.) is not the land, but the city, but the city as already created seat (centre) of the rural population. The cultivated area appears as the territory of the city. ....

There is concentration in the city, with the land as its territory. ....

Ancient classical history is the history of cities, but cities based on landownership and agriculture. ....

In classical antiquity the city with its attached territory formed the economic whole."

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 71, 73, 77, 79).

"The town .... economically dominate(s) the country .... in antiquity."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 224).

Since the exploiting class is now centred in the city, while the exploited class, for the most part, occupies the countryside surrounding the city, the class antagonism between exploiting and exploited classes is reflected in an antagonism between town and country:

"(Under the ancient mode of production — Ed.) we already find the antagonism of town and country."  
(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 10).

### The "Common Land"

The common land or ager publicus survives from the Germanic mode of production as the communal property of the citizens, but the citizens are now, not the people as a whole, but the slaveowning class; it provides a source of economic power for the domination of the slaves. With the development of the state as the machinery of forcible rule of the slaveowning class, this common land is generally transformed into state-owned land:



"(Under the ancient mode of production — Ed.) part of it (i.e., the land — Ed.) remains with the community as such, as distinct from its members, ager publicus (common land) in its various forms."

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1963; p. 75).

"Ancient communal and State ownership .... proceeds especially from the union of several tribes into a city by agreement or by conquest and .... is still accompanied by slavery. .... It is only as a community that the citizens hold power over their labouring slaves, and on this account alone, therefore, they are bound to the form of communal ownership."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London: 1942; p.9.).

### The Importation of Slaves

A society in which slave-labour is the dominant form of production replaces and increases the number of its slaves primarily by wars of conquest and raids on neighbouring societies:

"The slave system .... -- so long as it is the dominant form of productive labour in agriculture, manufacture, navigation, etc., as it was in the advanced states of Greece and Rome — preserves an element of natural economy. The slave market maintains its supply of the commodity labour-power by war, piracy, etc., and this rapine is not promoted by a process of circulation, but by the actual appropriation of the labour-power of others by direct physical compulsion."

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 2; Moscow; 1974; p. 483).

In such slave-importing societies, it is economically most beneficial to the exploiting class to squeeze the maximum possible productive labour in the shortest possible time, irrespective of the effect of this on the health and longevity of the slave:

"It is .... a maxim of slave management, in slave-importing countries, that the most effective economy is that which takes out of the human chattel in the shortest space of time the utmost amount of exertion it is capable of putting forth."

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p. 293).

### The Principal Features of the Ancient Mode of Production

At this stage of social development, the ancient mode of production may be said to be fully developed.

The ancient mode of production represents a stage of social development through which all societies — except those in which the Germanic mode of production has been associated with oriental despotism — pass, except in so far as their development may be interfered with by another society or societies at a different stage of evolution. The term "ancient" reflects the fact that the developed Greek and Roman Empires, the civilisations of "classical antiquity", were based on this mode of production.

The principal features of the ancient mode of production are:



1. The peasants have, for the most part, been expropriated of their land and have become either slaves or an unemployed proletariat;
2. The arable land has, for the most part, become concentrated into large landed estates owned by a wealthy landowning class and operated either as pastoral farms with a few slaves or as agricultural farms with masses of slaves;
3. Slave-labour has become the dominant form of production, not only in agriculture, but in mining, manufacture and navigation;
4. Society has become fully divided into an exploiting, landowning, slaveowning class and an exploited slave class, with a fierce class struggle between them based on economic antagonism;
5. The kinship tribe has given way to the locality tribe;
6. A state has come into being as an apparatus of force by which the exploiting minority class maintains its rule over the exploited majority class;
7. Towns have developed into cities which dominate the countryside in the form of city-states;
8. An antagonism has arisen between town and country;
9. The common land survives as the communal or state property of the slaveowning class.

#### CIVILISATION

At this stage of social development, society may be said to have passed from the economic epoch of barbarism to that of civilisation:

"Civilisation is .... the stage of development in society at which the division of labour, the exchange between individuals arising from it, and the commodity production which combines them both come to their full growth and revolutionises the whole of previous society.

....

The stage of commodity production with which civilisation begins is distinguished economically by the introduction of:  
1) metal money, and with it money capital, interest and usury;  
2) merchants, as the class of intermediaries between the producers; 3) private ownership of land and the mortgage system;  
4) slave labour as the dominant form of production. .... Also characteristic of civilisation is the establishment of permanent opposition between town and country as the basis of the whole social division of labour; and, further, the introduction of wills."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 233, 234-235).

Civilisation, from its beginning until the introduction of the socialist mode of production, is based on the exploitation of one class by another:

"Civilisation is founded on the exploitation of one class by another."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 236).



## ORIENTAL DESPOTISM

### Introduction

It is now necessary to retrace our steps backward to the Asiatic and Germanic modes of production to consider how these may develop in modified ways as a result of geographical and climatic factors. Such modified Asiatic and Germanic modes of production are associated with a phenomenon called by Marxist-Leninists "oriental despotism", in which case they include important features of the ancient mode of production -- for example, the full division of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a general form of slavery and a fully developed state apparatus of force.

As a result of incorporating these basic features of the ancient mode of production, a society under the Germanic mode of production associated with oriental despotism may pass directly to the feudal mode of production.

### The Development of the Ruling Bureaucracy

Geographical and climatic factors play a certain role in the development of society:

"Once men finally settled down, the way in which to a smaller degree this original community is modified will depend on various external, climatic, geographical, physical, etc., conditions".

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 68).

"Geographical environment is unquestionably one of the constant and indispensable conditions of development of society and, of course, influences the development of society".

(J. V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 118).

A large part of the earth's surface is arid or semi-arid in its climate and/or is subject to periodic destructive flooding. In these areas agriculture can be adequately developed only with the aid of extensive public works relating to irrigation, drainage and flood control:

"Great stretches of desert . . . extend from the Sahara straight across Arabia, Persia, India and Tartary up to the highest Asiatic plateau. Artificial irrigation is here the first condition of agriculture".

(F. Engels: Letter to K. Marx, June 6th., 1853, in: K. Marx & F. Engels: "Correspondence: 1846-1895"; London; 1936; p. 67).

"Climate and territorial conditions, especially the vast tracts of desert extending from the Sahara, through Arabia, Persia, India and Tartary to the most elevated Asiatic highlands, constituted artificial irrigation by canals and waterworks the basis of Oriental agriculture".

(K. Marx: "The British Rule in India", in: "Selected Works", Volume 2; London; 1943; p. 652).

"It is the necessity of bringing a natural force under the control of society, of economising, of appropriating or subduing it on a large scale by the work of man's hand, that first plays the decisive part in the history of industry. Examples are the irrigation works in Egypt, Lombardy, Holland, or India and Persia, where irrigation by means of artificial canals not only supplies the soil with the water indispensable to it, but also carries down to it, in the shape of sediment from the hills, mineral fertilisers".

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Moscow; 1954; p. 514).

"In Persia and India . . . it was . . . irrigation throughout the river valleys without which no agriculture was possible there".

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 248).

"Because of India's peculiar climate and territorial conditions, artificial irrigation by canals and waterworks had to be the basis of a flourishing agrarian economy".

(R. Mukherjee: "The Rise and Fall of the East India Company"; Berlin; 1958; p. 153).



"The determining factor in Chinese history as a whole appears to have been the trend towards intensive agriculture nourished by irrigation. The technical practices of irrigation were stimulated in their development by the character of the environment; and they, in turn, in proportion as they became more efficient, transformed both landscape and people".  
(O. Lattimore: "Inner Asian Frontiers of China", New York; 1951; p. 326).

At the primitive level of the productive forces pertaining at the period of the dissolution of the primitive communal mode of production, such public works required the organisation of a mass labour force:

"Property . . . require(s) . . . communal labour for its valorisation . . . in the irrigation systems of the Orient".  
(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 72).

The efficient organisation of such a mass labour force requires a division of labour between manual workers and directing personnel on a much more extreme scale than is required under the Asiatic mode of production where such public works are not essential:

"All combined labour on a large scale requires, more or less, a directing authority, in order to secure the harmonious working of the individual activities, and to perform the general functions that have their origin in the action of the combined organism".  
(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p. 363).

"The work of large integrated teams requires on-the-spot leaders and disciplinarians as well as over-all organisers and planners. The great enterprises of hydraulic agriculture involve both types of direction".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: "Oriental Despotism"; New Haven; 1956; p. 26).

These directing personnel have to be given considerably greater powers and authority than the directing personnel under the Asiatic mode of production where such public works are not essential -- e.g., powers of census-taking, of conscription of labour, of coordination and direction of this labour.

As a result of being given these powers, the directing personnel become, relatively rapidly, a ruling class in the full sense of the word, and the organs of authority under their control a coercive state in the full sense of the word:

"The state, which the primitive groups of communities of the same tribe had at first arrived at only in order to safeguard their common interests (e.g., irrigation in the East) . . . from this stage onwards acquires just as much the function of maintaining by force the conditions of existence and domination of the ruling class against the subject class".  
(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 205).

"The communal conditions for real appropriation through labour, such as the irrigation systems (very important among the Asian peoples) . . . will then appear as the work of the higher unity -- the despotic government which is poised above the lesser communities".  
(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 70-1).

"This prime necessity of an economical and common use of water . . . necessitated in the Orient . . . the interference of the centralising power of government. Hence an economic function devolved upon all Asiatic governments, the function of providing public works".  
(K. Marx: "The British Rule in India", in: "Selected Works", Volume 2; London; 1943; p. 652).

"The formation of a centralised empire (in China -- Ed.) was inevitable. In no other way was it possible to maintain a state apparatus capable of initiating, operating and supervising immense public works which transcended regions and made profitable a uniform level of intensive cultivation".  
(O. Lattimore: *ibid.*; p. 373).



The ruling class is able to use its coercive power of conscription to raise a large army, and so increase the coercive power of its state apparatus:

"The masters of hydraulic society applied the same organisational devices in the military sphere that they employed with such success in construction. In many cases, the recruits for war could be as comprehensively mobilised as the recruits for toil. . .

The masters of the hydraulic state, who monopolised coordinated military action, could -- if they so wished -- raise large armies".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 61, 63).

The ruling class is, likewise, able to use its coercive power of conscription for the construction of public works other than those concerned with irrigation, drainage and flood control -- for example, the construction of installations for the storage and distribution of drinking water, of navigation canals, of defence works, and of roads:

"The masters of the hydraulic state did not confine their activities to matters immediately connected with agriculture. The methods of cooperation which were so effective in the sphere of crop-raising were easily applied to a variety of other large tasks. . .

Generally speaking, the irrigation canal is older than the navigation canal; and hydraulic digging and damming occurred prior to the building of high-ways. . .

A commonwealth able to transfer water for purposes of irrigation readily applied its hydraulic know-how to the providing of drinking water. . .

The irregular flow of rivers or streams or the relatively easy access to fresh and clear mountain water stimulated in many hydraulic landscapes the construction of comprehensive installations for the storage and distribution of drinking water. . .

Among the great agrarian conformations of history, only hydraulic society has constructed navigation canals of any major size. . .

The need for comprehensive works of defence arises almost as soon as hydraulic agriculture is practised. Contrary to the rainfall farmer, who may shift his fields with relative ease, the irrigation farmer finds himself depending on an immovable, if highly rewarding, source of fertility. In the early days of hydraulic cultivation reliance on a fixed system of water supply must in many cases have driven the agrarian community to build strong defences around its homes and fields. . .

The builders of canals and dams easily become the builders of trenches, towers, palisades and extended defence walls. . .

Great highways . . . were mainly executed through the cooperative effort of state-levied corvee labourers".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 30, 31, 34, 38).

The ruling class of an oriental despotism is thus a bureaucracy: for example, Lenin describes the oriental despotism of tsarist Russia as

". . . The oppressive regime of the bureaucratic dictatorship".  
(V. I. Lenin: "Review of Home Affairs", in: "Collected Works", Volume 5; Moscow; 1961; p. 301).

The material basis of its power is its control of the essential irrigation, drainage and flood-control works:

"One of the material bases of the power of the state over the small disconnected producing organisms in India was the regulation of the water supply".

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p. 564).



. By reason of the technical skills required for the direction of construction projects and flood-control, the ruling class of an oriental despotism is often dominated by, or closely linked with, priests or former priests, that is, it is hieratic or quasi-hieratic in character:

"The necessity for predicting the rise and fall of the Nile created Egyptian astronomy, and with it the domination of the priests, as directors of agriculture".

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p. 564).

"The majority of all hydraulic civilisations are characterised by large and influential priesthoods. . .

In a number of cases the officialdom included many persons who were trained as priests and who, before assuming a government position, acted as priests. It is important to note such a background, because it illuminates the role of the temples in the ruling complex. . . Thus, their regimes are . . . quasi-hierocratic".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 88).

The form of state power which is developed under these conditions is termed by Marxist-Leninists oriental despotism:

"Rosa Luxemburg evidently judges the state system of Russia by her economic, political and sociological characteristics and everyday life — a totality of features which, taken together, produce the concept of 'Asiatic despotism'". (V. I. Lenin: "The Right of Nations to Self-determination", in: "Collected Works", Volume 20; Moscow; 1964; p. 403).

The state system of oriental despotism thus arises on the foundation of the Asiatic mode of production in countries where large-scale public works of irrigation, drainage and/or flood control are essential to an adequate level of agriculture:

"Oriental despotism was founded on common property".

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 486).

"The stationary character of this part of Asia (i.e., the Indian sub-continent — Ed.) . . . is fully explained by two mutually dependent circumstances: 1) the public works were the business of the central government; 2) beside these, the whole empire, not counting the few larger towns, was resolved into villages, which possessed a completely separate organisation and formed a little world in themselves. . .

I do not think one could imagine a more solid foundation for the stagnation of Asiatic despotism".

(K. Marx: Letter to F. Engels, June 14th., 1853, in: K. Marx & F. Engels: "Correspondence: 1846-1895"; London; 1936; p. 70).

"This prime necessity of an economical and common use of water . . . necessitated in the Orient . . . the interference of the centralising power of government. . .

These idyllic village communities . . . had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism".

(K. Marx: "The British Rule in India", in: "Selected Works", Volume 2; London; 1943; p. 652, 655).

#### The Forms of Exploitation

Having armed themselves with the coercive power of the state, the ruling bureaucracy proceed to use it for their own benefit, that is, to develop their exploitation of the mass of the people:

"This (ruling — Ed.) class never failed, for its own advantage, to impose a greater and greater burden of labour on the working masses".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 251).



The principal form of exploitation of the working masses during the early stage of development of oriental despotism is the use of corvee labour (i.e., forced labour on a temporary basis) for the benefit of the ruling class:

"The unity (i.e., the despotism — Ed.) can involve a common organisation of labour itself, which in turn can create a veritable system".  
(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 70).

Such forced labour is used for the erection of luxurious edifices for the ruling bureaucracy and its associated priesthood:

"A governmental apparatus capable of executing all these hydraulic and non-hydraulic works could easily be used in building palaces and pleasure grounds for the ruler and his court, palace-like government edifices for his aides, and monuments and tombs for the distinguished dead. . .

Government-directed work teams, which erected gigantic palaces, were equally fitted to erect gigantic temples".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 39, 41).

These buildings, both secular and religious, are generally built in a monumental style to demonstrate the power and superior social position of the ruling bureaucracy in relation to the common people:

"The palaces, government buildings, temples and tombs . . . tend to be large. The architectural style of hydraulic society is monumental. . .

The proverbial glamour of Oriental courts is merely an economic expression of the ruler's despotic control over his subjects".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 43, 305).

At a later stage of development of oriental despotism, corvee labour is generally commuted in favour of a land-tax, paid to the ruling bureaucracy from the produce of peasant agriculture — at first in kind, later, with the further development of a money economy, in money. This commutation is favoured by the ruling class because it provides them with wider forms of wealth than is available to them by the exploitation of corvee labour; it is also, in general, favoured by the peasants since it frees them of the burden of corvee labour, which takes them away from their agricultural pursuits from time to time:

"In Indian society as a whole . . . it is the surplus alone that becomes a commodity, and a portion of even that, not until it has reached the hands of the State, into whose hands from time immemorial a certain quantity of these products has found its way".  
(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p. 392).

"The despot here appears as the father of all the numerous lesser communities, thus realising the common unity of all. It therefore follows that the surplus product . . . belongs to this higher unity".  
(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 69-70).

"In Asiatic societies . . . the monarch appears as the exclusive owner of the surplus product of the land".  
(K. Marx: "Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie"; Berlin; 1953; p. 371).

"The Chinese people suffer from the same evils as those from which the Russian people suffer — they suffer from an Asiatic government that squeezes taxes from the starving peasantry and that suppresses every aspiration towards liberty by military force".  
(V. I. Lenin: "The War in China", in: "Collected Works", Volume 4; Moscow; 1960; p. 377).

The enforced payment of land-tax by the peasants to the orientally despotic state — the head of which is usually a monarch — presents the appearance that the latter is the owner of the land and that the land-tax is "rent":



"In most Asiatic fundamental forms . . . the all-embracing unity which stands above all these small common bodies may appear as the higher or sole proprietor, the real communities only as hereditary possessors. . . . The despot here appears as the father of all the numerous lesser communities, thus realising the common unity of all. It therefore follows that the surplus product . . . belongs to this highest unity. Oriental despotism therefore appears to lead to a legal absence of property. In fact, however, its foundation is tribal or common property".

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 69-70).

"In the monarchies, the king, though autocratic and actively governing, had a right to the title on raw produce, collected as yearly tax; and only to this extent could be considered the ultimate owner of the soil".

(C. A. F. Rhys-Davids: "Economic Conditions according to Early Buddhist Literature", in: "The Cambridge History of India", Volume 1; Cambridge; 1922; p. 198).

### The Orientally Despotic State

The most common form of the orientally despotic state is the absolute monarchy:

"The absolutist regimes of hydraulic society are usually headed by a single individual in whose person is concentrated all the power over major decisions.

.. .  
The great monarchs of the Oriental world were almost without exception 'self-rulers' — autocrats".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 106, 107).

The theoretical justification for this autocracy is generally provided by the priesthood, who present the monarch as "divine":

"It was upon this centre (i.e., the monarch — Ed.) that the magic powers of the commonwealth tended to converge. The bulk of all religious ceremonies may be performed by a specialised priesthood. . . . But in many hydraulic societies the supreme representative of secular authority is also the embodiment of supreme religious authority.

Appearing as either a god or a descendant of a god, or as high priest, such a person is indeed a theocratic (divine) or quasi-theocratic (pontifical) ruler. . . .

In his person the ruler combines supreme operational authority and the many magic and mythical symbols that express the terrifying (and allegedly beneficial) qualities of the power apparatus he heads".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 90, 305).

On this basis the monarch is able to consolidate the secular basis of his autocratic rule:

"Under such conditions there develops what may be called a cumulative tendency of unchecked power. . . . Under absolutist conditions the holder of the strongest position, benefitting from the cumulative tendency of unchecked power, tends to expand his authority through alliances, manoeuvres and ruthless schemes until, having conquered all other centres of supreme decision, he alone prevails".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 106-7).

The character of the orientally despotic state precludes any peaceful change of ruler. Such a change can, in general, be brought about only by violent means — usually through a coup engineered by a person or group in an influential position:



"The ruler, being most illustrious, is also most to be envied. Among those near him, there are always some who long to replace him. And since constitutional and peaceful change is out of the question, replacement usually means one thing and one thing only: physical annihilation. The wise ruler therefore trusts no one. . . .

All members of his entourage must be watched and controlled. The king must spy on his prime minister. He must beware of his close friends, of his wives, of his brothers, and most particularly of his heir apparent".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 155).

The orientally despotic state thus characteristically rules by ruthless methods of terror and torture:

"Terror is the inevitable consequence of the rulers' resolve to uphold their own and not the people's rationality optimum.

Many spokesmen of hydraulic despotism have emphasised the need for rule by punishment. . . .

The agronomanagerial despot . . . exercises unchecked control over the army, the police, the intelligence service; and he has at his disposal jailers, torturers, executioners, and all the tools that are necessary to catch, incapacitate and destroy a suspect. . . .

He can employ these devices with maximum psychological effect. . . .

Judicial torture is widespread in the hydraulic world".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 137, 138, 141, 145).

The state demands complete obedience and submission from the common people — a submissiveness expressed in the characteristic custom of prostration before members of the ruling bureaucracy:

"Total submission is ceremonially demonstrated whenever a subject of a hydraulic state approaches his ruler or some other representative of authority. . . .

Under the shadow of Oriental despotism, prostration is an outstanding form of saluting the sovereign or other person of recognised authority. . . .

Generally speaking, prostration is . . . characteristic for hydraulic society".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 152).

The higher officials of an orientally despotic state are usually drawn from the primitive aristocracy or the priesthood, and are given titles to denote their rank in the bureaucratic state. They are generally allotted a certain amount of land as a perquisite of office; such land is called office land:

"The civil or military official of an agrarian despotism is part of a bureaucratic hierarchy which, taken in its entirety, enjoys more power, revenue and prestige than any other group in the society. . . .

Land that is temporarily, or indefinitely, assigned to officials (is termed) office land. . . .

The ranking officials include civil and military functionaries of recognised status. . . . The civil officials resemble their military colleagues in that both are in positions of command and able to make limited and intermediate decisions, . . . that both unconditionally (and usually full-time) serve their ruler, and that both are government-supported either by salary or by revenue derived from state-assigned office lands".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 177, 271, 306).

Officials concerned with the collection of land-tax are generally tax-farmers, entitled to retain a percentage of the tax collected as their commission:



"Fiscal agents (tax farmers) . . . are recognised as servants of the government. In this capacity they are supported and given authority, sometimes even coercive authority, and to compensate them for their services they are granted a fee or commission".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 317).

The minor -- and sometimes the major -- officials of an orientally despotic state are generally drawn from social strata which have a minimum of social roots and consequently a maximum of dependence on the despotism: eunuchs, slaves and freed slaves:

"Eunuchs . . . did not come from prominent families. Socially rootless, they owed everything they had and everything they were to their ruler; and their doglike devotion to him therefore resulted as consistently from their position as did their detachment from, or their open hostility to, the regular members of the officialdom. . . .

Oriental despots were pleased to use eunuchs in many semi-personal and semi-political spheres of court life and in government proper. Often the eunuchs were entrusted with confidential tasks of intelligence. Not infrequently they were responsible for their sovereign's personal safety (as heads of his body-guard); and at times they were placed in command of important armies or navies, or in charge of the royal treasury. . . .

Slaves (and ex-slaves) may serve similarly, since they too are socially rootless. And they may fulfil their purpose even more effectively, since their more normal physique makes them seem more suitable to represent the despot's authority everywhere. . . .

Slave officials were among the most effective tools that the ruler of a hydraulic state could muster".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 355, 360, 362).

The position of the father of a family is frequently "elevated" to that of an unofficial policeman responsible for the obedience to the despotic state of his family:

"The father's power varied notably in different hydraulic civilisations. But almost everywhere the government was inclined to raise it above the level suggested by his leadership functions in the family".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*, p. 117).

Under the Asiatic mode of production associated with oriental despotism, the chief of a village community is generally made into a semi-official of the state, responsible to it for the collection of the land-tax from his village and its transmission to the state. In the towns, the head of a guild is treated similarly:

"Almost everywhere the hydraulic government holds the headman responsible for the obligations of his co-villagers. It thus places him in a position of state dependency. Where land is communally held and where taxes are communally paid, the village headman is likely to wield considerable power. Assisted by a scribe and one or several policemen, he may become something of a local despot. . . .

The professional corporations of the artisans and traders in hydraulic civilisations were similarly conditioned. Again the appointment of the leading officials is significant; . . . it is . . . one of several ways in which the despotic state assures its unchecked superiority and the weakness of the tolerated organisation".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 118, 120).

#### Restrictions on Property-owning Classes

The ruling bureaucracy is concerned to restrict the wealth and potential power of such property-owning classes as exist in order to forestall a possible threat to its rule from these classes:



"Under hydraulic conditions, the state restricted the development of private property through fiscal, judicial, legal and political measures". (K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 78).

Under oriental despotism, the property of peasants and artisans was economically fragmented and politically impotent:

"From the standpoint of the absolutist bureaucracy, the property of both artisans and peasants was Beggars' Property, property that was economically fragmented and politically impotent". (K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 296).

An orientally despotic state generally restricts the conspicuous consumption of property-owning classes by sumptuary laws:

"By concentrating the national surplus in their own hands, the rulers restrict the amount of goods physically available to non-governmental consumers. By legally forbidding the general use of prestige-giving objects, they reserve to themselves conspicuous consumption. . .

In hydraulic civilisations wealthy commoners . . did not dare to engage in the conspicuous consumption which the mediaeval businessman practised". (K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 129, 131).

An orientally despotic state generally restricts the wealth and potential wealth of property-owning classes by taxation:

"The hydraulic state, which asserts its fiscal power so effectively in the countryside, pursues a similar policy also towards artisans, merchants, and other owners of mobile property . . by . . taxing handicraft and commerce". (K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 72).

In cases of real or suspected evasion, or of political intrigue, it can — and generally does — resort to partial or total confiscation of their property, as well as to more extreme measures:

"Arbitrary confiscation as a general policy is characteristic of a genuinely absolutist regime. . .

The confiscatory measures of the hydraulic state . . hit with particular harshness the owners of mobile — and concealed — property. . .

Businessmen are primarily prosecuted for tax evasion, but they . . may become involved in a political intrigue. In the first instance they may be partially expropriated; in the second, they must pay with their entire fortune and with their life. . .

In the case of political accusation, spies and agents could be depended upon to supply the required evidence. A middle-class 'traitor' might be framed in several ways. . .

In hydraulic civilisations wealthy commoners were denied . . proprietary security".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 73, 76, 131).

An orientally despotic state generally imposes laws of inheritance which fragment property — particularly landed property:

"Throughout the hydraulic world the bulk of a deceased person's property is transferred not in accordance with his will but in accordance with customary or written laws. These laws prescribe an equal or approximately equal division of property among the heirs, most frequently the sons and other close male relatives. . .

Landed wealth tends to shrink rather than to grow; and this essentially because of the laws of inheritance. . .

The fragmentation of wealth through more or less equal inheritance is certainly a significant institution. . .

Hydraulic laws of inheritance fragment privately owned land. . .



The hydraulic state . . . generally kept landed property weak".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 79, 81, 292, 303).

An orientally despotic state generally holds back the development of wealth on the part of artisans and merchants by state control of essential materials and such large industrial enterprises as may exist:

"A government capable of handling all major hydraulic and non-hydraulic construction work may, if it desires, play a leading role in the non-constructional branches of industry. There are 'feeding' industries, such as mining, quarrying, salt gathering, etc.; and there are finishing industries, such as the manufacture of weapons, textiles, chariots, furniture, etc. Insofar as the activities in these two spheres proceeded on a large scale, they were for the most part either directly managed or monopolistically controlled by the hydraulic governments. . .

In hydraulic society the majority of the not-too-many larger industrial workshops was government managed. . .

Government-managed construction works make the state the undisputed master of the most comprehensive sector of large-scale industry. In the two main spheres of production the state occupied an unrivalled position of operational leadership and organisational control. . .

Employing a large labour force, the agrarian apparatus state enjoys what amounts to a monopoly of all large-scale construction work. Often it also manages those extractive operations which provide the bulk of all raw materials for the large government constructions. Other extractive industries, such as mining and certain forms of salt production, may either be directly managed by the government or, and particularly under the conditions of a money economy, they may be controlled through monopolistic licensing.

Thus property-based and independent action cannot hope to prevail in the most important sector of hydraulic industry: large-scale constructions. Nor can it hope to operate freely in the large extractive enterprises".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 45, 46, 47, 243-4).

#### General Slavery

Marxist-Leninists regard the oppression and exploitation of the masses under oriental despotism -- oppression and exploitation which include, at least in the early stage of the development of oriental despotism, the "part-time slavery" of corvee labour -- as general slavery.

Marx, for example, speaks of this oppression and exploitation of the masses as

". . . the general slavery of the orient",  
(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 95).

while Engels says that

". . . in Asiatic . . . antiquity slavery was the predominant form of class oppression, i.e., not so much the expropriation of the masses from the land . . . as the appropriation of their persons".  
(F. Engels: "The Workers' Movement in America", in: K. Marx & F. Engels: "Werke", Volume 21; Berlin; 1962; p. 338-9).



This general slavery of the masses under oriental despotism must be distinguished from the specific slavery of a slave class distinct from and socially lower than the masses as a whole. Under oriental despotism, under both the Asiatic and Germanic modes of production, such specific slavery of a slave class generally exists in addition to the general slavery of the masses as a whole, but it is a minor feature in comparison with that which exists under the ancient mode of production:

"In irrigation-based hydraulic agriculture slave labour was little employed. . .

Slaves are found primarily at the court, in government offices, workshops and mines, and in special types of building activities. . . Privately-owned slaves were essentially employed domestically and by wealthy persons, who could afford the luxury of lavish consumption".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 322).

#### "Acquired" Oriental Despotism

A society having no essential need for large-scale public works of irrigation, drainage and/or flood control in order to carry on agriculture at an adequate level may have oriental despotism imposed on it by another society which conquers it.

Similarly, the primitive aristocracy of a society having no essential need for such public works may be able to establish an orientally despotic state as a result of conquest of an orientally despotic society or as a result of conscious imitation of such a society with which they are in close contact:

"Pastoral nomads frequently supplement their herding economy by farming. Yet . . . their migratory way of life . . . excludes the construction of elaborate and permanent works of water control, which form the foundation of hydraulic agriculture.

But this mode of life does not prevent them from adopting Orientally despotic methods of organisation and acquisition. To be sure, such methods do not grow out of the needs of pastoral life. . .

The chiefly leader and those close to him are eager to place themselves in a position of permanent and total power; but as a rule they attain this goal only after submission to, or conquest of, a hydraulic country. In the first case the overlords of the agrarian state may apply their own patterns of political control (registration, corvee, taxation) to the submitting herders, whose chieftain usually emerges as the absolute and permanent master of his tribe. In the second case the supreme chieftain (khan, khaghan, etc.) seizes the power devices of the agromanagerial civilisations he has conquered".

(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 204-5).

Having "acquired" oriental despotism, this society may establish it in other societies (for example, the Mongols acquired oriental despotism as a result of their conquest of North China in 1211-22, and in turn imposed it on Russia, which they conquered in 1237-40):

"Russia had no close hydraulic neighbours when, in the 13th. century, the Mongols began to introduce Orientally despotic methods of government. . .

The tribal masters of a compound hydraulic empire may maintain their social and cultural identity; and while doing so, they may impose their newly acquired power techniques to outlying non-hydraulic countries. This happened when the Mongols, after the conquest of North China, subdued Russia".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 191-2, 205).

"The Mongol Tartars established a rule of systematic terror, devastation and wholesale massacre forming its institutions. . .

It is in the terrible and abject school of Mongolian slavery that Muscovy was nursed and grew up".

(K. Marx: "Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century"; London; 1969; p. 111, 121).



### The Relative Stagnation of Societies under Oriental Despotism

By reason of the features already described, societies under oriental despotism are relatively stagnant in their social development:

"The stationary character of this part of Asia — despite all the movement on the political surface — is fully explained by two mutually dependent circumstances: 1) the public works were the business of the central government; 2) beside these the whole empire, not counting the few larger towns, was resolved into villages, which possessed a completely separate organization and formed a little world in themselves. . .

I do not think one could imagine a more solid foundation for the stagnation of Asiatic despotism".

(K. Marx: Letter to F. Engels, June 14th., 1853, in: K. Marx & F. Engels: "Correspondence: 1846-1895"; London; 1936; p. 70).

"However changing the political aspect of India's past must appear, its social condition has remained unaltered since its remotest antiquity until the first decennium of the nineteenth century".

(K. Marx: "The British Rule in India", in: "Selected Works", Volume 2; London; 1943; p. 653).

"It is generally known that this kind of state system (i.e., oriental despotism — Ed.) possesses great stability whenever completely patriarchal and pre-capitalist features predominate in the economic system and where commodity production and class differentiation are scarcely developed".

(V. I. Lenin: "The Right of Nations to Self-determination", in: "Collected Works", Volume 20; Moscow; 1964; p. 403).

"Hydraulic society is the outstanding example of societal stagnation".  
(K. A. Wittfogel: *ibid.*; p. 420).

As has been said, where oriental despotism comes into being in a society internally, it does so on the basis of the Asiatic mode of production.

Despite this relative stagnation of social development, however, some societies under oriental despotism — the leading example being China — did advance to the Germanic mode of production.

### Oriental Despotism and Feudalism

Certain superficial similarities exist between, on the one hand, the Asiatic and Germanic modes of production under oriental despotism and, on the other hand, the feudal mode of production.

Despite these superficial similarities, these social formations are qualitatively distinct, the principal differences between them being as follows:

#### Asiatic and Germanic modes of production in association with oriental despotism

1. A local "lord" is generally drawn from socially rootless strata.
2. A local "lord" generally does not have his own state apparatus of force.
3. The relation of the local "lord" to the central state is generally one of complete dependence.
4. The local "lord" holds landed estates only by virtue of his state office, and only for so long as he holds this office.

#### Feudal mode of production

1. A local lord usually belongs to a hereditary aristocracy.
2. A local lord generally has his own state apparatus of force.
3. The relation of the local lord to the central state is one of semi- or complete independence.
4. The local lord holds landed estates in his own right.



Asiatic and Germanic modes  
of production in association  
with oriental despotism

Feudal mode of production

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>5. The peasant performs corvee labour where this is in operation as (legally) a freeman, and only for the central state. This labour is generally non-agricultural in character.</p> <p>6. Where corvee labour has been commuted, the peasant pays land-tax to the central state, and the local "lord" functions as a tax-farmer.</p> <p>7. Severe restrictions are placed on property-owning classes.</p> | <p>5. The peasant performs corvee labour where this is in operation as a serf and generally for the local lord. This labour is generally agricultural in character.</p> <p>6. Where corvee labour has been commuted, the peasant pays rent to the local lord, who functions as a landlord.</p> <p>7. Mild restrictions are placed on property-owning classes -- none on the landowning classes.</p> |
|---|---|

However, as a result of these superficial similarities, a number of bourgeois historians and sociologists have defined societies in which the Asiatic or Germanic mode of production was associated with oriental despotism (e.g., tsarist Russia, India prior to the British conquest, and imperial China) as "feudal".

But bourgeois writers who have studied feudalism in depth decisively reject the view that tsarist Russia was a "feudal" society:

"It is clear that feudalism as an all-inclusive system, a 'total culture', did not develop in any period of Russian history".

(N. Szeftel: "Aspects of Feudalism in Russian History", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): "Feudalism in History"; Princeton; 1956; p. 181).

This was certainly the view of Marx and Lenin:

"The Russian farm-labourer, owing to the common ownership of the land in the village community, has not yet been fully separated from his means of production".

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 2; Moscow; 1974; p. 34).

"It (i.e., the land -- Ed.) is held in common and retains this form more or less according to the extent to which these nations hold on to traditions; such, e.g., is land-ownership among the Slavs".

(K. Marx: "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy"; Chicago; 1913; p. 303).

When speaking in a precise scientific manner, Lenin was careful to use the term "krepostnichestvo" (bondage) -- a term equivalent to Marx's term "general slavery" -- to describe the system of oppression and exploitation in operation in tsarist Russia and to repudiate the term "feodalizm" (feudalism):

"The feudal-handicraft period . . . Here, an expression seems to have been chosen, as though deliberately, which is least applicable in Russia, for it is questionable whether the term 'feudalism' is applicable to our Middle Ages".

(V. I. Lenin: "Notes on Plekhanov's Second Draft Programme", in: "Collected Works"; Volume 6; Moscow; 1961; p. 45).

"With bondage substituted for feudalism, all these propositions are fully applicable to the Russia of 1905".

(V. I. Lenin: "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", in: "Socheniya", Volume 9; Moscow; 1947; p. 114).

(It is unfortunate that, despite Lenin's clear distinction between the terms, "krepostnichestvo" has sometimes been mistranslated into English as "feudalism").

Although Lenin described the tsarist Russian social system sometimes as a sort of

". . . state feudalism",

(V. I. Lenin: "The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy", in: "Collected Works", Volume 13; Moscow; 1962; p. 330).



Although Lenin sometimes described the social system of tsarist Russia as a sort of

". . . state feudalism",

(V. I. Lenin: "The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy", in: "Collected Works", Volume 13; Moscow; 1962; p. 330).

he made it clear that the term "feudalism" could only be used in relation to tsarist Russia "inexactly" -- speaking, for example, of

". . . the feudal (let us use this not very exact, general European expression) landowners",

(V. I. Lenin: "The Social Structure of State Power, the Prospects and Liquidationism", in: "Collected Works", Volume 17; Moscow; 1963; p. 146).

and making it clear that the tsarist regime was, in fact, one of oriental despotism:

"Rosa Luxemburg evidently judges the state system of Russia by her economic, political and sociological characteristics and everyday life -- a totality of features which taken together produce the concept of 'Asiatic despotism'". (V. I. Lenin: "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", in: "Collected Works", Volume 20; Moscow; 1964; p. 403).

"The Chinese people suffer from the same evils as those from which the Russian people suffer -- they suffer from an Asiatic government".

(V. I. Lenin: "The War in China", in: "Collected Works", Volume 4; Moscow; 1960; p. 377).

"The Provisional Regulations of 1899 tear off the pharisaical mask and expose the real Asiatic nature even of those of our institutions which most resemble European institutions".

(V. I. Lenin: "The Drafting of the 183 Students into the Army", in: "Collected Works", Volume 4; Moscow; 1960; p. 416).

"Tolstoi-ism . . . is an ideology of an Oriental, an Asiatic order".

(V. I. Lenin: "Lev Tolstoi and his Epoch", in: "Collected Works", Volume 17; Moscow; 1963; p. 51).

"In very many and very essential aspects, Russia is undoubtedly an Asian country and, what is more, one of the most benighted, mediaeval and shamefully backward of Asian countries".

(V. I. Lenin: "Democracy and Narodism in China", in: "Collected Works", Volume 18; Moscow; 1963; p. 163-4).

He speaks of the forms of exploitation in tsarist Russia as

". . . the Asiatically barbarous forms of exploitation".

(V. I. Lenin: "Three Amendments to the Draft Programme", in: "Collected Works", Volume 6; Moscow; 1961; p. 34).

and of the state officials of tsarist Russia as

". . . the officials of Asiatic despotism".

(V. I. Lenin: "The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution 1905-1907", in: "Collected Works", Volume 13; Moscow; 1962; p. 278).

As a result of his analysis of the social system in India prior to the British conquest, Marx concluded that it was one in which the Asiatic mode of production was associated with oriental despotism.

D. Thorner, in his study of this question, points out that there are

". . . two regimes to which the term 'feudal' has occasionally been applied: the Rajput rule in western India, and the Muslim regimes of northern India".

(D. Thorner: "Feudalism in India", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): "Feudalism in History"; Princeton; 1956; p. 133).

The view that the Rajput society in western India was feudal in character was put forward by J. Tod ("Sketch of a Feudal System in Rajasthan", in: "Annals



and Antiquities of Rajasthan"; London; 1922), but was decisively rejected by A. C. Lyall, who pointed out that Tod had ignored

". . . the radical distinction between the two forms of society, tribal and feudal. Although he clearly understands the connection of those whom he calls 'vassals' with their suzerain to be affinity of blood, still he insists that the working system of Rajasthan is feudal".  
(A. C. Lyall: "The Rajput States of India", in: "Asiatic Studies", Volume 1; p. 243).

The view that the Muslim regimes of northern India were feudal in character was put forward by the Russian sociologist M. M. Kovalevski in "Obshchinnoye zhemlevladyeniya, prichini khod i posledstviya evo razlocheniya"; Moscow; 1879. This view was refuted by Marx himself:

"Kovalevski forgets among other things serfdom, which is not of substantial importance in India. (Moreover, as for the individual role of feudal lords as protectors not only of unfree but of free peasants . . . this is unimportant in India except for the wakuf (estates devoted to religious purposes). Nor do we find that 'poetry of the soil' so characteristic of Romano-Germanic feudalism . . . in India. . . In India the land is nowhere 'noble' in such a way as to be inalienable to non-members of the noble class".

(K. Marx, cited in: L. S. Gamayunov & R. A. Ulyanovsky: "The Work of the Russian Sociologist M. M. Kovalevski . . . and K. Marx's Criticism of his Work", in: "XXV International Congress of Orientalists", Volume 4; Moscow; 1963; p. 42).

Thorner concludes:

"Neither the Rajput states nor the Muslim regimes of northern India were feudal".  
(D. Thorner: *ibid.*; p. 150).

Marx's analysis is confirmed by the official documents of the British East India Company and the British government:

"Sale of land . . . appears to have been unusual, if not unknown, in all parts of India before its introduction by the British government into the Company's dominions. . . .

The zemindars in general . . . were never acknowledged by their rulers as independent or tributary chiefs, or as even having any property in the land. . . .

The Potail, or head inhabitant, . . . performs the duty . . . of collecting the revenues within his village".

(Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the British East India Company, July 1812; p. 47-48, 80, 85).

"The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. . . . Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindu, Patan, Mogul, Mahratta, Sikh, English, are all masters in turn; but the village communities remain the same".

(Sir Charles Metcalfe: Minute of November 7th., 1830, in: Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1832; Volume 3; Appendix 84; p. 331).

"The zemindar . . . was originally . . . the mere hereditary Steward, Representative or Officer of the Government and his undeniable hereditary property in the Land Revenue was totally distinct from property in the Land".  
(Minute of Evidence, Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1832; Volume 3; p. iv).

Marx's analysis is confirmed by other writers on India:

"In India . . . the sovereign's power was not, until a late period, regarded as absolute and unlimited over the agricultural land of the kingdom. The king did not, in theory, create subordinate owners of land because he himself was not in theory the supreme owner of the land. What he delegated to the intermediaries was . . . only the specific and individual rights of zamin, the revenue-collecting power. . . .



There was in general none of the intermingling of peasant land with demesne land in a common village, nor interdependence for labour service such as marked the manorial system. The peasant was not the lord's serf, nor was the lord directly interested in cultivation. . . .

At the basis of the Indian agrarian system, as at the basis of all ancient agrarian systems, there was the more or less collective or cooperative village".

(K. S. Shelvankar: "The Problem of India"; London; 1940; p. 99, 100, 101).

"The village communities continued unaffected by the establishment of a new (i.e., Turko-Afghan -- Ed.) government in the country".

(R. C. Majumdar et al.: "An Advanced History of India"; London; 1960; p. 395).

"Periodical redistribution of the arable land of a village among its inhabitants prevailed in many parts of the country till comparatively recently".

(K. A. N. Sastri: "A History of South India"; Oxford; 1955; p. 315).

"Occasionally Brahmans, temples and monasteries were assigned entire villages, but the donees acquired only the right to receive the royal revenues".

(R. C. Majumdar & A. S. Altekar: "The Vakataka-Gupta Age"; Banaras; 1954; p. 331-2).

"The zamindars . . . were revenue collectors. . . They were not landowners or a landed aristocracy in the British sense".

(V. A. Smith: "The Oxford History of India"; Oxford; 1958; p. 534).

"The headman . . . performs the duty of collecting the revenues within his village".

(J. Matthai: "Village Government in British India"; London; 1915; p. 15).

"The village headman . . . hands over the collected taxes to his superior after taking away his own share".

(J. Jolly: "Hindu Law and Custom"; Calcutta; 1928; p. 203).

"These 'zamindars' had not previously been 'owners' of the land at all, but officials, or 'farmers', appointed by the Moguls to collect the land revenue, and paid by means of a commission on what they collected".

(W. Anstey: "The Economic Development of India"; London; 1952; p. 98).

"The soil in India belonged to the tribe or its subdivision -- the village community, the clan or the brotherhood settled in the village -- and never was considered as the property of the king as has been assumed by many writers. . . .

There never was any notion of the ownership of the soil vesting in anybody except the peasantry".

(R. Mukerjee: "Land Problems of India"; London; 1933; p. 16, 36).

"The Mughuls did not, as has sometimes been suggested, introduce a new revenue system into northern India; they took over the system which they found in operation. . . .

Most villages, though not all, were occupied by what appears to be a very old institution, a brotherhood or community of peasants, acknowledging, and united by, the tie of common ancestry. Each member of the brotherhood held in separate possession the land which he cultivated, and enjoyed the fruits of his labour".

(W. H. Moreland: "The Revenue System of the Mughul Empire", in: "The Cambridge History of India", Volume 4; Cambridge, 1937; p. 451).

The same writer declares it to be

".. quite impossible to think of such a nobility in terms of a feudal system with a king merely first among his territorial vassals; what we see is a royal household full of slaves, who could rise, by merit or favour, from servile duties to the charge of a province, or even of a kingdom -- essentially a bureaucracy of the normal Asiatic type. . . .



We have officers posted to their charges by the king, and transferred, removed, or punished, at his pleasure, administering their charges under his orders, and subjected to the strict financial control of the Revenue Ministry. None of these features has any counterpart in the feudal system of Europe. . . . The kingdom was not a mixture of bureaucracy with feudalism, its administration was bureaucratic throughout".

(W. H. Moreland; "Agrarian System of Moslem India"; Cambridge; 1929; p. 218-9, 221).

Marx concluded that the social system in contemporary imperial China was one in which the Germanic mode of production was associated with oriental despotism:

"The broad basis of the mode of production is here (i.e., in India and China -- Ed.) formed by the unity of small agriculture and domestic industry, to which is added in India the form of communes resting upon common ownership of the land, which, by the way, was likewise the original form for China". (K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 3; Chicago; 1909; p. 392).

Lenin was referring to oriental despotism in China when he spoke of

". . . benighted, inert, Asiatic China".

(V. I. Lenin: "Democracy and Narodism in China", in: "Collected Works", Volume 18; Moscow; 1963; p. 164).

"The Chinese people suffer from the same evils as those from which the Russian people suffer -- they suffer from an Asiatic government".

(V. I. Lenin: "The War in China", in: "Collected Works", Volume 4; Moscow; 1960; p. 377).

Marx's analysis is confirmed by bourgeois writers who have examined the social system of imperial China in depth:

"The political aspects of feudalism, if we examine China, are found to be largely or totally absent under most of the major dynasties. The common characteristic of these dynasties is that they governed a centralised empire through a salaried civilian bureaucracy, which was appointive, non-aristocratic, theoretically non-hereditary, and in many cases recruited by the famous Chinese examination system".

(D. Bodde: "Feudalism in China", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): "Feudalism in History"; Princeton; 1956; p. 49-50).

Marx concluded, on the other hand, that the social system in contemporary Japan was one of the feudal mode of production:

"Japan, with its purely feudal organisation of landed property and its developed petite culture, gives a much truer picture of the European middle ages than all our history books".

(L. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p. 789).

## THE TRANSITION TO THE FEUDAL MODE OF PRODUCTION

### The Decay of the Ancient Mode of Production

With the development of the forces of production within the framework of the ancient mode of production, slavery increasingly becomes a fetter on the full use and further development of the forces of production:

"The system of latifundia run by slave labour no longer paid. . .

The slavery of classical times had outlived itself. Whether employed on the land in large-scale agriculture or in manufacture in the towns, it no longer yielded any satisfactory return. . .

Slavery no longer paid; it was for that reason it died out".

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 209, 210).



This leads to a decline in the economy and a decrease in both the rural and urban population:

"General impoverishment; decline of commerce, handicrafts and art; fall in the population; decay of the towns; relapse of agriculture to a lower level -- such was the final result of Roman world rule. . .

The country estates and their gardens had been ruined through the impoverishment of their owners and the decay of the towns".  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 209).

"Agriculture had declined, industry had decayed for want of a market, trade had died out or been violently suspended, the rural and urban population had decreased".

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 11).

As a result of this decline, the town loses its supremacy over the countryside:

"In the last centuries of the Roman Empire the town had lost its former supremacy over the country".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 214).

The efforts of the ruling class to solve their problems by increasing exploitation accentuate the social contradictions within the decaying ancient mode of production:

"The Roman state had become a huge, complicated machine, exclusively for bleeding its subjects. Taxes, state imposts and tributes of every kind pressed the mass of the people always deeper into poverty; the pressure was intensified until the exactions of governors, tax-collectors and armies made it unbearable. . .

Social conditions were . . . desperate. Already in the last years of the Republic the policy of Roman rule had been ruthlessly to exploit the provinces; the empire, far from abolishing this exploitation, had organised it. The more the empire declined, the higher rose the taxes and levies, the more shamelessly the officials robbed and extorted".

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 208).

The full use and further development of the new forces of production can now be achieved only through a return to small-scale agriculture and handicraft, performed by workers who have a greater interest in production and a greater opportunity for economic self-advancement than are possessed by slaves:



"Small production had again become the only profitable form."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 209).

"The new productive forces demand that the labourer shall display some kind of initiative in production and an inclination for work, an interest in work. The feudal lord therefore discards the slave, as a labourer who has no interest in work and is entirely without initiative, and prefers to deal with the serf, who has his own husbandry, implements of production, and a certain interest in work essential for the cultivation of the land and for the payment in kind of a part of his harvest to the feudal lord."  
(J.V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 125).

The essence of this process is formed by the liberation of increasing numbers of slaves, the division of the large estates previously operated by slave labour into small plots, and their allotment to semi-servile peasant farmers known as coloni:

"Slavery is abolished by compulsion or voluntarily, whereupon the former mode of production perishes and large-scale cultivation is displaced by small-peasant squatters."  
(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 480).

"One country estate after another was cut up into small lots. .... For the most part .... these small lots of land were given out to coloni, who .... were tied to the soil and could be sold together with their plots. True, they were not slaves, but neither were they free. .... They were the forerunners of the mediaeval serfs. ....

Hence, on the one side, increasing manumissions of the superfluous slaves who were now a burden, on the other hand, a growth in some parts of the numbers of the coloni."

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 209, 210).

The transition from the ancient mode of production to a higher mode of production is, however, held back by the social stigma attaching to productive labour under the former mode of production:

"Although it was dying out, slavery was still common enough to make all productive labour appear to be work for slaves, unworthy of free Romans. ....

Slavery no longer paid; it was for that reason it died out. But in dying it left behind its poisoned sting — the stigma attached to the productive labour of freemen. This was the blind alley from which the Roman world had no way out; slavery was economically impossible, the labour of freemen was morally ostracised."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 209-210).

"Wherever slavery is the main form of production it turns labour into servile activity, consequently makes it dishonourable for freemen. Thus the way out of such a mode of production is barred, while on the other hand slavery is an impediment to more developed production, which urgently requires its removal. This contradiction spells the doom of all production based on slavery and of all communities based on it."

(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 480).



For this reason the transition from the ancient mode of production to a higher mode of production within a particular society tends to be overtaken and modified by the conquest of this society by a more virile society at the developing stage of the Germanic mode of production:

"A solution comes about in most cases through the forcible subjection of the deteriorating communities by other, stronger ones (Greece by Macedonia and later Rome). As long as these themselves have slavery as their foundation there is merely a shifting of the centre and a repetition of the process on a higher plane until (Rome) finally a people conquers that replaces slavery by another form of production." (F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 480).

Despite the social modifications resulting from such a foreign conquest, the new developing mode of production has its basis in the level of the productive forces of the conquered society itself:

"The feudal system was by no means brought complete from Germany. .... This only evolved after the conquest into the feudal system proper through the action of the productive forces found in the conquered countries. To what an extent this form was determined by the productive forces is shown by the abortive attempts to realise other forms derived from reminiscences of ancient Rome (Charlemagne, etc.)"

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 62-63).

#### The Decay of the Germanic Mode of Production associated with Oriental Despotism

With the development of the forces of production within the framework of the Germanic mode of production associated with oriental despotism, the general slavery of this social formation likewise becomes a fetter on the full use and further development of the forces of production.

This leads to a decline in the economy and a decrease in both the rural and urban population.

The efforts of the ruling class to solve their problems by increasing exploitation accentuate the social contradictions within the decaying Germanic mode of production associated with oriental despotism.

Here, however, small-scale agriculture and handicraft is already in operation, and the war-bands associated with the Germanic mode of production (which, in the case of the decaying ancient mode of production are an external conquering force) are here an internal feature.

With the decline in the power of the orientally despotic central state apparatus that reflects the decay of the mode of production, these war-bands are able to seize control of one locality after another and to establish them as independent or semi-independent states which repudiate their former obligations to the central state:

"Japanese feudalism took shape from two separate institutions. .... One was the sho (or manor). .... The other, which was the warrior clique, seems at least in part to have been a survival from the ancient social organisation of the Japanese. As might be expected in a period of declining central authority, both institutions served to give the individual participant the protections which the central government no longer could furnish, but the one was primarily economic, affording protection from ruinous taxation, and the other military, providing simple police protection.



The sho began to appear as early as the eighth century when newly cultivated lands, because of oversight or special permission, remained off the tax registers. They grew through further land reclamation, through slow but steady depredations on the public domain by those with sufficient political power to be able to escape the tax collectors. .... By the tenth century the great bulk of the agricultural land of Japan was divided among sho which enjoyed complete or partial tax exemption on the various pieces of land of which they consisted.

....  
By the twelfth century we find a complex pattern of relationships of men to land within a sho. These relationships were similar to the 'tenures' of Western feudalism. ....

In the twelfth century they (i.e., the leaders of the war-bands — Ed.) were largely identical with the local .... holders of the sho. .... This local aristocracy .... were in actual control of the sho, which they defended by their military prowess and from which they derived their support through shiki (i.e., feudal rights and privileges — Ed.)"

(E.O. Reischauer: "Japanese Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): "Feudalism in History"; Princeton; 1956; p. 28-29, 31).

#### Vassalage

A war band which has succeeded in conquering an area formerly under the control of a central state ruling over a society under the decaying ancient mode of production or ruling over a society under the decaying Germanic mode of production associated with oriental despotism, establishes itself as a new ruling hereditary nobility of the conquered area, augmenting this nobility by outside elements useful to it:

"The feudal system was by no means brought complete from Germany, but had its origin, as far as the conquerors were concerned, in the martial organisation of the army during the actual conquest."  
(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 62-63).

"It was the attachment of leader and follower in the comitatus, or war-band, which came to serve as the central ethic of feudal society."  
(R. Coulborn: "A Comparative Study of Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): "Feudalism in History"; Princeton; 1956; p. 189).

"The honourable character of the personal vassalage relation is .... a modification of the relation between leader and followers in a barbarian war-band."

(J.R. Strayer & R. Coulborn: "The Idea of Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 8).

#### Serfdom

The peasants of the conquered society are transformed, by the military force of the conquering war band, into semi-servile serfs (in the case of coloni, this involves merely an intensification of their servile status):

"It is certain that serfdom and bondage are not a peculiarly mediaeval-feudal form, we find them everywhere or nearly everywhere where conquerors have the land cultivated for them by the old inhabitants."

(F. Engels: Letter to K. Marx, December 22nd, 1882, in: K. Marx & F. Engels: "Correspondence: 1846-1895"; London; 1936; p. 411-12).



"where man himself is captured as an organic accessory of the land and, together with it, he is captured as one of the conditions of production, . . . this is the origin of . . . serfdom".

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 89).

"The serfs, the conquered inhabitants, had now no claim on the territory on which they dwelt".

(F. A. Brooke: "The Science of Social Development"; London; 1935; p. 193).

Even where direct conquest is not involved, the constant threat from rival war bands forces increasing numbers of formerly free peasants, where these exist, to seek the protection of some lord, and to accept the status of serfs as the price of this protection:

"The . . . peasants were . . . ruined by wars, so that nothing remained to them but to become serfs".

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 3; Chicago; 1909; p. 703).

"On the one hand, the ravages of . . . invasions, the eternal wars between kings and feuds between nobles, compelled one free peasant after another to seek the protection of some lord. Upon the other hand, the covetousness of these same lords . . . hastened this process; by fraud, by promises, threats, violence, they forced more and more peasants and peasants' land under their yoke. In both cases, the peasants' land was added to the lord's manor and was, at best, only given back for the use of the peasant in return for tribute and service. Thus, the peasant, from a free owner of the land, was turned into a tribute-paying, service-rendering appanage of it, into a serf".  
(F. Engels: "The Mark", in: "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific"; London; 1944; p. 105-6).

"By the incessant civil wars and wars of conquest, . . . the free land-owning peasants . . . were reduced to . . . exhaustion and penury. . .

The free . . . peasants . . ., plundered and ruined by wars, . . . had been forced to put themselves under the protection of the new nobles. . . . But they had to pay dearly for it. . . . They had to transfer their rights of property in land to their protecting lord and received the land back from him in tenancies of various and changing forms, but always only in return for services and dues. Once in this position of dependence, they gradually lost their personal freedom also; after a few generations most of them were already serfs".

(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 213-4).

Thus, the directly producing class in the countryside becomes the enserfed small peasantry:

"The directly producing class . . . is . . . the enserfed small peasantry".  
(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 12).

Although he "holds", is "in possession of", the land allotted to him, the serf does not own this land; rather does he belong to the land, and the lord of the land:

"The serf belongs to the land".  
(K. Marx: "Wage-Labour and Capital", in: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 257).

"The serf is the adjunct of the land".  
(K. Marx: "Rent of Land", in: "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844"; Moscow; 1959; p. 61).



"Personal service forms at bottom merely the mode of existence of the landowner, who no longer labours himself, but whose property includes the labourers themselves as serfs .... among the conditions of production."

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p.102).

"In feudal society the peasant is tied to the soil. The chief feature of feudalism was that the peasants .... were considered attached, or in fee, to the land — hence the term feudalism."  
(V.I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p.649).

"The serfs .... belonged to the lord of the manor. .... The serf could never leave his land without his lord's permission."  
(F.A. Brooke: "The Science of Social Development"; London; 1936; p. 193, 245).

Nevertheless, since he is "in possession of" the land he uses, his exploitation by the lord is based on the social relation of master and unfree servant existing between lord and serf:

"Alongside of feudal ownership there exists individual ownership by the peasant .... of his implements of production and his private enterprise based on his personal labour".

(J.V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 124-25).

"In all forms in which the direct labourer remains the 'possessor' of the means of production ...., the property relation must at the same time assert itself as a direct relation between rulers and servants, so that the direct producer is not free. This is a lack of freedom which may be modified from serfdom with forced labour to the point of a mere tributary relation."

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 3; Chicago; 1909; p. 918).

The exploitation of the serf by the lord is carried out principally by means of the forced labour, the corvee labour, of the serf for a certain number of days each week on the personal estate of the lord:

"The peasant serf .... worked, for example, three days for himself on his own field or the field allotted to him, and the three subsequent days he performed compulsory and gratuitous labour on the estate of his lord."

(K. Marx: "Value, Price and Profit", in: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 318).

"In the corvee, the labour of the worker for himself and his compulsory labour for his lord differ in space and time in the clearest possible way."

(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1932; p. 591).

This forced labour may be regarded as a primitive form of ground rent — ground rent in the form of labour rent — paid by the "tenant" to the "landlord":

"If we observe ground-rent in its simplest form, that of labour rent, which means that the direct producer cultivates during a part of the week, with instruments of labour (plough, cattle, etc.) actually or legally belonging to him, the soil owned by him in fact, and works during the remaining days upon the estate of the feudal lord, without any compensation from the feudal lord, the proposition is quite clear. .... The rent .... is here the form through which the



unpaid surplus labour expresses itself."  
(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 3; Chicago; 1909; p. 917).

In addition to his exploitation through forced labour, the serf may also be required to hand over to the feudal lord a part of the produce from "his own" land:

"The feudal lord .... prefers to deal with the serf, who has his own husbandry, implements of production, and a certain interest in work essential for the cultivation of the land and for the payment in kind of a part of his harvest to the feudal lord."  
(J.V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 125).

"The conquered inhabitants .... had, as well, to supply him (i.e., the lord — Ed.) with a certain portion of their own produce."  
(F.A. Brooke: "The Science of Social Development"; London; 1936; p. 245).

Serfdom, as a system of exploitation of unfree workers, stands higher than slavery. The serf can no longer be killed, as can the slave, at the whim of his lord:

"The basis of the relations of production under the feudal system is that the feudal lord owns the means of production and does not fully own the worker in production — the serf, whom the feudal lord can no longer kill, but whom he can buy and sell."  
(J.V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 124).

Furthermore, serfs can obtain, under favourable conditions, a certain amount of movable property and, through this, the possibility of their eventual liberation as a class:

"This (i.e., the condition of serfdom — Ed.) made it possible for the serf to accumulate movable property."  
(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p.78).

"The milder form of servitude (i.e. serfdom — Ed.) .... gives to the bondsmen the means of their gradual liberation as a class ...., a form of servitude which thus stands high above slavery."  
(F. Engels: "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; London; 1972; p. 216).

"Some historians have expressed astonishment that it should be possible for the forced labourers, or serfs, to acquire any independent property or, relatively speaking, wealth. .... However, it is evident that tradition must play a very powerful role in the primitive and undeveloped circumstances upon which this relation in social production and the corresponding mode of production are based. .... Take it, for instance, that the forced labour for the landlord originally amounted to two days per week. These two days of forced labour are fixed, are a constant magnitude legally regulated by laws of usage or written laws. But the productivity of the remaining days of the week, over which the direct producer has independent control, is a variable magnitude, which must develop in the course of his experience. .... These things will spur him on to a greater exertion of his labour-power. .... The possibility of a certain economic development .... is open in this case."  
(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 3; Chicago; 1909; p. 921-22).



"In practice their (i.e., the serfs' — Ed.) condition differed very little from the condition of slaves in the slave state. Nevertheless a wider road was opened for .... the emancipation of the peasants, since the peasant serf was not regarded as the direct property of the landlord. He could work part of his time on his own plot, could, so to speak, belong to himself to a certain extent; and with the wider opportunities for the development of exchange and trade relations the feudal system steadily disintegrated and the scope of emancipation of the peasantry steadily widened."  
(V.I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p. 649).

### The Manor

Social organisation on the basis of the kin has now all but disappeared, having given way to social organisation on the basis of territory:

"The longer the gens remained settled in its village and the more the Germans and the Romans gradually merged, the more the bond of union lost its character of kinship and became territorial. The gens was lost in the mark community. .... The gentile constitution changed insensibly into a local constitution. ....

This weakening of the bond of blood in the gens followed from the degeneration of the organs of kinship .... as a result of their conquests. As we know, rule over subjugated peoples is incompatible with the gentile constitution."  
(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 211-12).

The basic social organisation thus becomes the territorial manor, mark or township, consisting of one or more villages under the overlordship of a lord:

"A township (.... mark, .... march, .... tithing, .... manor) .... might be either a village .... or a number of scattered hamlets. ....

The serfs had now no claim to the territory on which they dwelt. This belonged to the lord of the manor, to whom it had been granted in reward for his services in the successful conquest. In this way a manor became the property of the lord and his heirs."  
(F.A. Brooke: "The Science of Social Development"; London; 1936; p. 190, 193).

The lord of a manor is usually, in his origin, a rank-and-file warrior of a war band (from which is derived his courtesy title of "knight" or "squire"; the latter being originally a knight's attendant). Lords of the manor are not regarded as members of the nobility, but of the lowest level of the aristocracy, the gentry.

The territory of a manor is usually divided into three parts:

firstly, the demesne land, the personal estate of the lord of the manor, usually adjacent to his hall or manor-house:

"The lord of the manor .... (possesses) rights and privileges attached to the manor itself. His demesne now lies round the manor house or hall. .... The title of knight now becomes one of courtesy only."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 200).



Secondly, strips of arable land allotted to the serfs of the manor:

"In each field every male member of the village community who was a serf had his allotted share of this arable land. ....

A man did not have his portion of arable land all in one place, but in a number of strips scattered about in different parts of the field. .... This was done so that everyone might have a fair share of the good and poor land."

(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 193-94).

Thirdly, the common land (forest, pasture land, etc.) available for the use of the serfs of the manor as a whole:

"The .... conquerors .... introduced .... everywhere .... common holding of woods and pastures, together with the over-lordship of the mark in respect to the partitioned land. ....

All other land, i.e., all that was not house and farmyard, .... remained, as in early times, common property for common use: forests, pasture lands, heaths, moors, rivers, ponds, lakes, roads and bridges, hunting and fishing grounds. ....

The chief use of the common mark was in pasturage for the cattle and feeding of pigs on acorns. Besides that, the forest yielded timber and firewood, litter for the animals, berries and mushrooms, whilst the moor, where it existed, yielded turf."

(F. Engels: "The Mark", in: "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific"; London; 1944; p. 97, 99, 100).

"The village community were entitled to graze their stock in the adjacent pastures. .... Or their stock could graze over the waste, the waste being all land which was not cultivated, including woodland. ....

The neighbouring forest supplied all the wood necessary for fuel, building and other purposes."

(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 196).

### The Development of the Feudal State

The new ruling class thus comes to consist of a hierarchy of aristocratic families, nobles and gentry, from (generally) a monarch at the top, through intermediate ranks of dukes, counts or earls, and barons, down to the lords of the manor or knights at the base. An aristocrat of each rank is, at least nominally, the vassal of a superior lord:

"The hierarchical system of land ownership, and the armed bodies of retainers associated with it, gave the nobility power over the serfs."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p.12).

Each aristocratic family has its coat-of-arms, etc., surviving from the totemism of tribal society:

"All that now remains of totemism is to be seen in heraldry: the crests, coats-of-arms, blazons and armorial bearings are the emblems of the totems of clans, heraldry being the survival of these tribal marks".

(F.A. Brooke: "The Science of Social Development"; London; 1936; p. 186).



The machinery of force of this aristocracy, by which it rules over and maintains its exploitation of the rest of the people, constitutes the feudal state:

"The state was the official representative of society as a whole. .... But it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole: .... in the Middle Ages, the feudal lords."  
(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 386-7).

"The change in the form of exploitation transformed the slave state into the feudal state. .... Here too the forms of state differed. .... But always the feudal landlord was regarded as the only ruler. The peasant serfs were absolutely excluded from all political rights. ....

Under the feudal system the small minority of people could not dominate over the vast majority without coercion. ....

In order to maintain their rule and to preserve their power, the landlords had to have an apparatus by which they could subjugate a vast number of people and subordinate them to certain laws and regulations; and all these laws fundamentally amounted to one thing -- the maintenance of the power of the landlords over the peasant serfs. .... Feudal society represented a division of classes under which the vast majority -- the peasant serfs -- were completely subjected to an insignificant minority -- the landlords, who owned the land."

(V.I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p. 649-50, 651).

"It is the possession of rights of government by feudal lords and the performance of most functions of government through feudal lords which clearly distinguishes feudalism."

(J.R. Strayer: "Feudalism in Western Europe", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): "Feudalism in History"; Princeton; 1956; p. 16).

"Feudal lords have usually, perhaps always, .... had the right to command and judge the peasants."

(J.R. Strayer & R. Coulborn: "The Idea of Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 7.).

"The commoners, who formed the bulk of the population, were sharply divided from the feudal aristocracy of daimyo (i.e., feudal lords -- Ed.) and retainers and were barred from all political power."

(E.O. Reischauer: "Japanese Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 40).

The physical backbone of this apparatus of coercion, the feudal state, is the professional fighting man, the knight or samurai, himself a minor member of the ruling aristocracy:

"The professional fighting man becomes the backbone of the feudal class".

(J.R. Strayer & R. Coulborn: "The Idea of Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p.9.).

"The retainers remained the chief fighting men, and they became increasingly numerous. They came to form a special class, the samurai, 'those who serve'. These men's attachment to their leaders was in every way the equivalent of the attachment of the Teutonic



barbarian to his war-leaders, and the ethic of this attachment came to penetrate Japanese society as conspicuously as that of the Teutonic barbarian's attachment came to penetrate Western European society."

(R. Coulborn: "A Comparative Study of Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 201).

"The warrior was an aristocrat. No doubt one basic reason for this, as in Europe, was the cost of the equipment of warfare. The fighting unit was the individual knight, elaborately armoured and mounted on a horse. Although he was supported by grooms and other attendants, he fought as an individual, relying on his horse for mobile bow and arrow attacks upon his adversary and using his sword for close fighting."

(E.O. Reischauer: "Japanese Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 30).

In the early state of development of the feudal mode of production the feudal state is generally small, the territory ruled over by a local lord who, although he may be vassal to an overlord in form, is in practice an independent ruler:

"The arrival of the early stage of feudalism is announced by the emergence of the elemental, small, strong fief, that immensely tough little political unit headed by a feudal lord with his band of personal retainers, and populated by the lord, his retainers, his other vassals scattered over the fief, some rear-vassals probably, and all the simple people tending to become praedial and menial dependents. .... The elemental, strong fief is an area of peace internally, a small state.

(R. Coulborn: "A Comparative Study of Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): "Feudalism in History"; Princeton; 1956; p. 190-91).

"A fiction of unity — a theory of subordination or cooperation among feudal lords — exists, but government is actually effective only at the local level of the county or the lordship. It is the lords who maintain order, if they can, who hold courts and determine what is the law. The king, at best, can merely keep the peace among the lords and usually is unable even to do this. ....

Effective feudal government is local, and at the local level public authority has become a private possession. .... Kingship survives, with real prestige, but through attenuated power. ....

The feudal lord .... is the government in his own area. ....

The first period of feudalism is best exemplified by .... the small feudal state dominated by the local lord. He might bear any title .... but whatever his title, whatever his nominal dependence on a superior, he was in fact the final authority in his region. No one could appeal from his decisions to a higher authority; no one could remain completely indifferent to his commands. His position was based on his military strength. He had a group of fighting men in his service; he held fortified strategic positions throughout his lands; he possessed sufficient economic resources to pay for both the army and the fortifications."

(J.R. Strayer: "Feudalism in Western Europe", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 17-18, 18-19).

The desire of each feudal lord to extend his territory — and with it the number of vassals and serfs and the amount of his wealth — leads to constant warfare between them:



"These fiefs .... were extremely strong: the war that was the normal external relation between them enforced peace, order, discipline, close cooperation, within each of them."  
(R. Coulborn: "A Comparative Study of Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 212).

"In this period, owing to agriculture having become the primary means of subsistence and so the dominant economic factor, land is of the utmost importance. ....

This very naturally gives rise to the desire (on the part of the feudal lords — Ed.) .... to acquire as much land as possible to augment their .... personal wealth, .... which led to endless strife .... and hence to the necessity for castles and walled towns in this period. ....

Owing to land with its agriculture being the dominating economic factor, the acquisition of it caused incessant strife, as it could only be obtained by conquest."

(F.A. Brooke: "The Science of Social Development"; London; 1936; p. 242, 247).

By means of such strife, in course of time the stronger feudal states are able to conquer, or bring under their suzerainty, the weaker. This leads to the establishment of relatively large feudal kingdoms, within which the hierarchical system of vassalage is no longer nominal but actual, being based on the superior military power of the greater lords. As a result of the Crown itself becoming a prize of the most powerful feudal family, the supremacy of the monarchy similarly ceases to be nominal and becomes actual:

"The disorders and violence continue into the early feudal stage for perhaps a century or two, but in a spasmodically diminishing extent."

(R. Coulborn: "A Comparative Study of Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 190).

"Feudalism provided a solid basis for organising powerful, relatively centralised states. ....

Fully developed feudalism is one of the ways in which sizable political structures can be built out of elementary local ones."

(J.R. Strayer & R. Coulborn: "The Idea of Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 9.).

"The grouping of larger territories into feudal kingdoms was a necessity for the landed nobility as for the towns. The organisation of the ruling class, the nobility, had, therefore, everywhere a monarch at its head."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 13).

"In the second stage of feudalism .... the bonds of vassalage have been tightened at the upper and relaxed at the lower level; the ruler of a province now owes more obedience to his superior. .... The local lord still performs important functions but he can be directed and controlled by higher authority. Appeals from the local lord to his superior are encouraged; petty vassals are protected against excessive demands for service or attempts to seize their fiefs. .... Royal law-courts play a great role in this reorganisation. .... Force is still important, but only the king and the greatest lords possess sufficient force to gain by its use; the ordinary lord has to accept judicial solutions to his controversies."

(J.R. Strayer: "Feudalism in Western Europe", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 19, 20).



"The sho (i.e., the independent or semi-independent local feudal state — Ed.) itself disappeared and in its place began to appear the consolidated feudal realm which was the undisputed possession of a single lord (Daimyo) or possibly of a great religious institution. The process was a slow and irregular one, as certain powerful local warriors extended their authority through infeudation or conquest over their weaker neighbours. .... There was a clear tendency for the number of independent lords to decrease as the domains grew in size and the remaining daimyo increased their effective control over their vassals. ....

The sho gradually gave way to consolidated feudal realms. ....

During the second half of the sixteenth century, .... the consolidation of feudal realms went on even more rapidly than before, until virtually all of Japan was divided among such domains, and a hierarchic order of vassalage among the daimyo began to appear. Eventually Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a common soldier of obscure origin who had achieved the status of a daimyo, established control over so many vassal domains that the remaining independent daimyo felt constrained to recognise his suzerainty."

(E.O. Reischauer: "Japanese Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 34, 35, 36).

In a feudal kingdom, superior lords who hold their estates directly from the king are called tenants-in-chief:

"Those lords who held their estates directly from the .... king were called tenants-in-chief."

(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 243).

In a feudal kingdom, the king and the greatest lords come to possess a number of manors in their own right in various parts of the kingdom; these are placed in the care of stewards:

"A baron's estate was his barony, which consisted of several manors, and his bailiffs lived in the manor-houses on his estates, while the baron lived in his castle and employed a steward to superintend his various estates. ....

The abbot of a monastery held an equivalent position to that of a baron, ruling over the monastery as well as the manors attached to the monastery for its support. ....

The lord of such a lordship as a county was called an earl in England and a count in Europe. .... Besides being lord of a county, an earl is at the same time a baron of a certain 'hundred' (i.e. originally a territory embracing ten manors — Ed.), if not of more than one hundred within the country, and similarly lord of a number of manors, and it is from these estates and from certain taxes and fines that are due to him as earl that he is maintained. The result is that his wealth is much greater than that of a mere baron. In the same way, a baron's wealth is a great deal more than that of a lord of a manor. ....

The king held a number of estates in every county, so that he was obliged to appoint a man to administer these estates for him there. This man was called the sheriff (shire-reeve), and his jurisdiction was over those 'hundreds' that belonged to the king. Under the sheriff were appointed bailiffs or sergeants over the 'hundreds'. In the same way in towns that belonged to the king sheriffs were appointed, called town-sheriffs and port-sheriffs.

Earls who had lordship over .... provinces were regarded as great earls. .... When the title of duke was introduced, it was in most



cases conferred upon the great earls. These petty kings were all entitled to wear coronets as their kingly crowns.

....  
The king is the largest landowner, and the richest man in the state."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 220, 227-28, 232).

In a feudal kingdom, the town where the king resides and has his court becomes the centre of state administration and is known as the capital:

"The town where the king ..... resides, and where the great lords as well have their residence, becomes the capital. .... This city becomes the centre .... where most of the activities of the state are carried on, and it is generally a great deal larger than any other city."  
(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 230).

### The Institution of Primogeniture

In order to prevent the fragmentation of their estates, on which their wealth and power depends, the ruling feudal aristocracy introduces a system of inheritance under which, on the death of a lord, his title and estates pass to a single son -- usually the eldest, when the system is known as primogeniture:

"The next system of inheritance of property was that of primogeniture, under which only the eldest son inherited his father's title and estates to the exclusion of the younger sons. The property was said to be entailed. ....

This system of primogeniture naturally caused the younger sons to seek their fortunes elsewhere, some joining the church, others joining the household of some lord as a retainer (warrior), others emigrating to seek their fortunes abroad under the banner of some powerful lord."

(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 240; 241).

"Primogeniture had become the rule, or rather a Japanese variant of primogeniture, which permitted a father to name any of his natural sons or even an adopted son as the heir of his full position."

(E.O. Reischauer: "Japanese Feudalism", in: R. Coulborn (Ed.): "Feudalism in History"; Princeton; 1956; p.35).

### Towns and Handicraft

The feudal mode of production is based primarily upon the countryside, the towns being in general at a low stage of development:

"The Middle Ages started out from the country."  
(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p.11).

"At that time (i.e., under the feudal mode of production -- Ed.) the peasants constituted the majority; there was a very poorly developed urban population."

(V.I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p. 649).



Nevertheless, some villages become transformed into towns, at first under the domination of the local feudal lord, and fortified:

"With the expansion of trade and population, some villages grew into towns, so that these towns were subservient to some lord or to the king."

(F.A. Brooke: "The Science of Social Development"; London; 1936; p. 217).

"Walled towns are a feature of this period."

(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 216).

With the coming of the second stage of development of feudalism, and the establishment of relatively large, relatively internally stable, feudal kingdoms, however, towns ceased to be fortified:

"The walled towns of the previous period are now replaced by open undefended towns, as there is no longer any necessity for every town to be well fortified against a sudden attack from some neighbouring marauding lord."

(F.A. Brooke: *ibid.*; p. 218).

Within these towns, there is a considerable development of small-scale handicraft industry, based on ownership by the producer of his means of production and primarily on his own labour:

"In the Middle Ages the system of petty industry obtained generally, based upon the private property of the labourers in their means of production; .... in the towns the handicrafts. .... The instruments of labour — .... the workshop, the tool — were the instruments of labour of single individuals, adapted for the use of one worker and therefore of necessity small, dwarfish, circumscribed. But, for this very reason, they belonged, as a rule, to the producer himself. ....

The individual producer, as a rule, had, from raw material belonging to himself and generally his own handiwork, produced it with his own tools, by the labour of his own hands or of his family. .... The new product .... belonged wholly to him, as a matter of course. His property in the product was, therefore, based upon his own labour." (F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 369, 371).

"Ownership of the tool by the labourer assumes a particular form of development of manufacture — namely, in the form of handicraft labour.

.....  
We are considering a situation in which the labourer not only owns the instrument, but in which this form of the labourer as proprietor or of the labouring proprietor is already distinct and separate from landed property ....; in other words, the artisan and urban development of labour. Hence, also, we here find raw material and means of subsistence mediated as the property of the artisan, mediated through his craft, through his property in the instrument." (K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 98, 100).

In these circumstances, the hereditary character of handicraft labour undergoes a further development:

"The mode of labour becomes hereditary together with the organisation of labour and its instrument."  
(K. Marx: *ibid.*; p. 98).



together with the guild organisation appropriate to it:

"Ownership of the tool by the labourer assumes a particular form of development of manufacture — namely, in the form of handicraft labour. Guild and corporative institutions are bound up with this.

....  
The essential character of guild or corporative systems (artisan labour as its subject and the constituent element of ownership) is analysable in terms of a relation to the instrument of production: the tool as property. ....

Guild relations, .... presuppose the labourer's property in the instrument of production and labour itself, as a certain form of craft skill. ....

Urban craft activity .... rests .... on the organisation of labour in guilds."

(K. Marx: *ibid.*; p. 98, 101, 104, 112).

Under the conditions of handicraft labour, the craftsman takes great pride in his work, the product of which is, to a considerable extent, a work of art:

"There is found with mediaeval craftsmen an interest in their special work and in proficiency in it, which was capable of rising to a narrow artistic sense."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 46).

"Here (i.e., in handicraft labour under the feudal mode of production — Ed.) labour itself is still half the expression of artistic creation, half its own reward, etc."

(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p.98).

This leads, however, to a slavish attitude on the part of the craftsman to his work, in which he is excessively absorbed:

"For this very reason, however, every mediaeval craftsman was completely absorbed in his work, to which he had a contented, slavish relationship, and to which he was subjected to a far greater extent than the modern worker."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 46-47).

The growth of population in the towns leads to the formation of a class of employed handicraft workers, and so to a hierarchy — of master craftsmen, journeymen (employed craftsmen) and apprentices — corresponding to that of the countryside:

"Feudal organisation of land-ownership had its counterpart in the towns in the shape of corporate property, the feudal organisation of trades. ....

The gradually accumulated capital of individual craftsmen and their stable numbers, as against the growing population, evolved the relation of journeyman and apprentice, which brought into being in the towns a hierarchy similar to that in the country."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 12).

The guild system corresponds to the requirements of the feudal mode of production, and to the domination of the whole of society by the landed aristocracy; it places rigid limits on the possibility of a master craftsman becoming a capitalist by restricting the number of tools and employees which a master may possess and by ensuring that journeymen and



apprentices have, after a certain time, the opportunity to become masters themselves:

"The guilds of the middle ages .... tried to prevent by force the transformation of the master of a trade into a capitalist by limiting the number of labourers that could be employed by one master within a very small maximum."  
(K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1; Chicago; 1906; p. 337).

"Under guild conditions, .... there are regulations determining how many looms a man may employ, etc."  
(K. Marx: "Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 108).

"The guilds were so organised that the journeyman of today became the master of tomorrow."  
(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 373).

The guilds, together with the journeymen and apprentices, are under the domination of the master craftsmen:

"The journeymen and apprentices were organised in each craft as it best suited the interest of the masters."  
(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 46).

However, the relationship between master and employee is not solely one of exploitation; it is primarily one of cooperation and of technical education of the latter by the former, with a strong patriarchal character:

"External help .... was, as a rule, of little importance, and in many cases received other compensation in addition to wages. The apprentices and journeymen of the guilds worked less for board and wages than for education, in order that they might become master craftsmen themselves."  
(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 371).

"As a youngster he (i.e., the craftsman — Ed.) is still an apprentice, he does not yet appear as an independent worker in the strict sense, but shares the master's food in the patriarchal manner. As a (genuine) journeyman there is certain common utilisation of the fund of consumption which is in the master's possession. Though this is not the journeyman's property, the laws and customs, etc., of the guild at least make him into a co-possessor."  
(K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 98).

"The filial relationship in which they (i.e., the employees — Ed.) stood to their masters gave the latter a double power".  
(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 46).

In this urban handicraft industry, there is a natural division of labour between the various guilds, but virtually no division of labour at all within the individual guilds, within the individual trades, each craftsman performing all the operations required to complete the product of his trade:

"In industry there was no division of labour at all in the individual trades themselves. ....

In the towns, the division of labour between the individual guilds was as yet quite natural, and, in the guilds themselves, not at all developed between the individual workers. Every workman had to be



versed in a whole round of tasks, had to be able to make everything that was to be made with his tools. .... Every man who wished to become a master had to be proficient in the whole of his craft." (K. Marx & F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 13, 46).

"Under the feudal and corporative system, .... division of labour in the workshop .... was very little developed." (K. Marx: "The Poverty of Philosophy"; London; n.d.; p. 114).

### Small-scale Production

Production under the feudal mode of production is thus, in both agriculture and industry, essentially small-scale production:

"Peasant agriculture on a small scale, and the carrying on of independent handicrafts .... together form the basis of the feudal mode of production. ....

Japan, with its purely feudal organisation of landed property and its developed petite culture, gives a truer picture of the European middle ages than all our history books." (K. Marx: "Capital", Volume 1,; Chicago; 1906; p. 367, 789).

"In the Middle Ages the system of petty industry obtained generally ....; in the country, the agriculture of the small peasant ....; in the towns, the handicrafts organised in guilds. The instruments of labour — land, agricultural implements, the workshop, the tool — were the instruments of labour of single individuals, adapted for the use of one worker and therefore of necessity small, dwarfish, circumscribed. ....

Mediaeval society — individual production on a small scale. Means of production adapted for individual use; hence primitive, ungainly, petty, dwarfed in action. ....

Cultivation by serfs is not cultivation of considerable tracts, but of small holdings and the cultivation always antedates the serfdom." (F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 369, 391, 492).

### The Limited Development of Commodity Production

Under the feudal mode of production, each peasant family and, to an even greater extent, each village is largely self-supporting:

"The feudal rule of the Middle Ages rested on the self-sufficient economy of small peasant communities which themselves produced almost all their requirements." (F. Engels: "Karl Marx", in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1942; p. 11.).

"The family of the peasant produced almost everything they wanted: clothes and furniture, as well as the means of subsistence." (F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 375).

As a result, production is predominantly for use, not for exchange; commodity production is little developed:



"The feudal rule of the Middle Ages rested on .... small peasant communities ....., in which there was almost no exchange."  
(F. Engels: "Karl Marx", in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1942; p. 11).

"In mediaeval society, especially in the earlier centuries, production was essentially directed towards satisfying the wants of the individual. It satisfied, in the main, only the wants of the producer and his family. Where relations of personal dependence existed, as in the country, it also helped to satisfy the wants of the feudal lord. In all this there was, therefore, no exchange; the products, consequently, did not assume the character of commodities. ....

The artisans of the towns, it is true, had from the first to produce for exchange. But they, also, themselves supplied the greatest part of their own individual wants. They had gardens and plots of land. They turned their cattle out into the communal forest which also yielded them timber and firing. The women spun flax, wool, and so forth. Production for the purpose of exchange, production of commodities, was only in its infancy. Hence, exchange was restricted, the market narrow, the methods of production stable; there was local exclusiveness without, local unity within; the mark in the country; in the town, the guild. ....

Mediaeval society -- .... Production for immediate consumption, either of the producer himself or of his feudal lord."  
(F. Engels: "Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science"; Moscow; 1959; p. 374-75, 391).

Nevertheless, the urban artisans necessarily produced for exchange and sought to exchange their commodities for surplus agricultural produce with the peasants:

"In the Middle Ages the peasant, e.g., sold to the artisans agricultural products and bought from him the products of handicraft.

....  
The artisans of the town, it is true, had from the first to produce for exchange."

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 370, 375).

Thus, commodity production developed to a limited extent, mainly to the limited extent that peasants produced a surplus over and above their own needs and the demands of their lords:

"Only when it (i.e. the peasant family — Ed.) began to produce more than was sufficient to supply its own wants and the payments in kind to the feudal lord, only then did it also produce commodities. This surplus, thrown into socialised exchange and offered for sale, became commodities. ....

Mediaeval society — Only where an excess of production over this consumption occurs is such an excess offered for sale, enters into exchange.

(F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 375, 391).

The division of labour between craft industry and commerce, the separation off of a class of merchants, which took place in the older towns at an earlier stage of social development, soon develops in the new towns:

"The next extension of the division of labour was the separation of production and commerce, the formation of a special class of merchants; a separation which, in the towns bequeathed by a former period, had been handed down (among other things with the Jews) and



which very soon appeared in the newly formed ones."  
(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p.47).

This development leads to the spread of commerce beyond local boundaries:

"With this there was given the possibility of commercial communications transcending the immediate neighbourhood, a possibility the realisation of which depended on the existing means of communication, the state of public safety in the countryside, which was determined by political conditions; ... and on the cruder or more advanced needs (determined by the stage of culture attained) of the region accessible to intercourse."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 47).

This development, in turn, leads to the establishment of closer relations between towns and to a division of production between towns specialising in particular crafts:

"With commerce the prerogative of a particular class, with the extension of trade through the merchants beyond the immediate surroundings of the town, there immediately appears a reciprocal action between production and commerce. The towns enter into relations with one another, new tools are brought from one town into the other, and the separation between production and commerce soon calls forth a new division of production between the individual towns, each of which is soon exploiting a predominant branch of industry."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: *ibid.*; p. 47-48).

#### Class Struggle within the Feudal Mode of Production

As a result of the exploitation of the peasant serfs by the feudal lords in the countryside, and of the more restricted exploitation of the journeymen and apprentices by the master craftsmen in the towns, a class struggle rages within feudal society between exploited and exploiters:

"Exploitation is nearly as severe as it was under slavery — it is only slightly mitigated. A class struggle between exploiters and exploited is the principal feature of the feudal system."

(J.V. Stalin: "Dialectical and Historical Materialism", in: "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)"; Moscow; 1941; p. 125).

"Lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open, fight."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "Manifesto of the Communist Party", in: K. Marx: "Selected Works", Volume 1; London; 1943; p. 205).

However, the class consciousness and solidarity of the exploited urban journeymen and apprentices is limited:

"The journeymen and apprentices were organised in each craft as it best suited the interest of the masters. The filial relationship in which they stood to their masters gave the latter a double power — on the one hand because of their influence on the whole life of the journeymen, and on the other hand because, for the journeymen who worked with the same master, it was a real bond, which held them together against the journeymen of other masters and



separated them from these. And finally, the journeymen were bound to the existing order by their simple interest in becoming masters themselves."

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p.46).

The class consciousness and solidarity of the rural peasant serfs is also limited, although not nearly to the same extent as that of the urban exploited. It is limited above all by the dominant ideology of the feudal mode of the production, which teaches:

firstly, that the land, the estate of a lord, is a noble personification of the lord himself:

"The estate is individualised with its lord; it has his rank, is baronial or ducal with him, has his privileges, his jurisdiction, his political position, etc. .... Feudal landed property gives its name to its lord, as does a kingdom to its king. His family history, the history of his house, etc. — all this individualises the estate for him and makes it literally his house, personifies it.

....  
Such is the nobility's relationship to landed property, which casts a romantic glory on its lords."

(K. Marx: "Rent of Land", in: "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844"; Moscow; 1974; p. 57-58).

secondly, that to the serf, as an "appendage" of the lord's estate, this estate is a sort of constricted fatherland to which he owes patriotic loyalty:

"For those belonging to it, the estate is more like their fatherland. It is a constricted sort of nationality."

(K. Marx: *ibid.*; p. 57).

Nevertheless, especially in the later stage of development of the feudal mode of production, widespread peasant risings against the exploiting feudal lords do take place:

"The whole epoch of feudalism is ... marked by constant uprisings of the peasants. For example, in Germany in the Middle Ages the struggle between the two classes — the landlords and the serfs — assumed wide dimensions and was transformed into a civil war of the peasants against the landlords."

(V.I. Lenin: "The State", in: "Selected Works", Volume 11; London; 1943; p. 650).

"The great risings of the Middle Ages all radiated from the country".

(K. Marx & F. Engels: "The German Ideology"; London; 1942; p. 46).



### The Principal Features of the Feudal Mode of Production

The principal features of the feudal mode of production are as follows:

1. The countryside dominates the towns.
2. Society is based, no longer on kinship, but on territorial organisation.
3. Society is hierarchic in character, with commoners at the base, gentry above, and nobility at the top.
4. The aristocracy is hierarchic in character, each lord holding his estates in fief from (as vassal to) a superior lord for whom he, with his personal retainers, is pledged to fight when called upon.
5. The mass of the peasantry are semi-servile serfs, holding strips of land (to which they are legally tied) from a lord in return for corvee labour on the latter's personal estate.
6. The basic territorial unit is the manor, one or more villages held by a single lord.
7. The aristocracy maintains its rule over, and exploitation of, the masses of the people by means of an apparatus of coercion, the feudal state.
8. In order to prevent the fragmentation of their estates, the source of their wealth and position, the ruling feudal aristocracy introduces a system of inheritance by a single son.
9. In the towns handicraft production is carried on by artisans (masters, journeymen and apprentices).
10. Both agricultural and handicraft production is small-scale in character.
11. Commodity production is still but little developed.
12. Feudal society is marked by a class struggle between exploited and exploiters, especially in the countryside.

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Part Two of this report will cover the development of society from feudalism to socialism.

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REVISIONISM AND THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

Asian Bourgeois Nationalism  
and the Materialist Conception of History

Bourgeois nationalism in Asia -- that, is the outlook of the national bourgeoisies of Asia -- has, in general, found a number of features of the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the development of society objectionable and unacceptable. The Marxist-Leninist view that social development proceeded, generally speaking, more slowly in Asia than in Europe, so that in consequence European societies reached a certain stage of social development, such as the capitalist mode of production, at an earlier date than most Asian societies, tended to be repugnant to the "national pride" of Asian national bourgeoisies, despite the fact that the Marxist-Leninist analysis makes it clear that these differences in the rate of social development were due to environmental factors, and not in any way to biological differences between European and Asian peoples.

Particularly objectionable, in general, to Asian bourgeois nationalism has been the conclusion logically following from the above -- that, as a result of the fact that European societies reached a higher stage of social development at an earlier date than most Asian societies, the conquest of Asian societies by European societies had, in its initial stages, an objectively socially progressive aspect as well as a negative effect:

"England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, and the other regenerating -- the annihilation of old Asiatic society and the laying the material foundations of Western society in Asia. . . .

The British were the first conquerors superior, and therefore inaccessible, to Hindu civilisation. They destroyed it by breaking up the native communities, by uprooting the native industry, and by levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society. The historic pages of their rule in India report hardly anything beyond that destruction. The work of regeneration hardly transpires through a heap of ruins. Nevertheless it has begun.

The political unity of India, more consolidated and extending farther than it ever did under the Great Moguls, was the first condition of its regeneration. That unity, imposed by the British sword, will now be strengthened and perpetuated by the electric telegraph. The native army, organised and trained by the British drill-sergeant, was the sine qua non of Indian self-emancipation and of India ceasing to be the prey of the first foreign intruder. The free press, introduced for the first time into Asiatic society and managed principally by the common offspring of Hindus and Europeans, is a new and powerful agent of reconstruction. The Zemindaree and Ryotwar themselves, abominable as they are, involve two distinct forms of private property in land -- the great desideratum of Asiatic society. From the Indian natives, reluctantly and sparingly educated in Calcutta under English superintendence, a fresh class is springing, endowed with the requirements for government and imbued with European science. Steam has brought India into regular and rapid communication with Europe, has connected its chief ports with those of the whole south-eastern ocean, and has revindicated it from the isolated position which was the prime law of its stagnation. . . .



The railway system will therefore become, in India, the forerunner of modern industry.

All the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people, depending not only on the development of the productive power but of their appropriation by the people. But what they will not fail to do is to lay down the material premise for both. Has the bourgeoisie ever done more?"

(K. Marx: "The Future Results of British Rule in India", in: "Selected Works", Volume 2; London; 1943; p. 658-9, 661, 662).

The "national pride" of Asian national bourgeoisies led them not only to reject the Marxist view that European conquest of Asian societies had a socially progressive aspect; it led them into the practice of describing Asian societies characterised by the Asiatic or Germanic mode of production associated with oriental despotism as "feudal" or "semi-feudal", so speeding up -- in concept, if not in reality -- social development in Asia.

### Revisionism and the Materialist Conception of History

The Programme of the Communist International, adopted at its Sixth Congress in 1928, upheld the validity of the Asiatic mode of production as the prevailing mode of production in certain colonial-type countries:

"Colonial and semi-colonial countries (China, India, etc.), dependent countries (Argentina, Brazil, etc.) have . . . feudal mediaval relationships or 'Asiatic mode of production' relationships prevailing in their economies and in their political superstructures. . . . The political task in such countries is . . . to fight against the feudal and pre-capitalist forms of exploitation".

("Programme of the Communist International", in: E. Burns (Ed.): "A Handbook of Marxism"; London; 1935; p. 1012).

During this period the organ of the Communist International continued to publish articles putting forward the Marxist view that, for example, Chinese society was one in which the Germanic mode of production was associated with oriental despotism:

"The special conditions obtaining in China, which it shares with the other regions of Central Asia and Asia Minor, only permit agriculture to be carried on successfully with the aid of artificial irrigation. . . .

The damming back of the rivers and their utilisation for irrigation purposes requires innumerable workers, technical aid being of the most primitive nature. This work has always been done by forced labour. . . .

The central and local powers of the state in China have originated out of the necessity of water regulation: protection against floods on the one hand and artificial irrigation on the other. . . .

The result has been the development of a ruling class of a most unique character, a type entirely unknown to European civilisation".

(E. Varga: "Economics and Economy Policy in the Third Quarter of 1925", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 5; 1925; p. 1280, 1281).

"In the history of the exploitation of the Chinese workers, the erection of dams against floods has played a tremendous role. The oriental despotism of the Chinese ruling classes mobilised millions and millions of peasants in order to erect and repair the gigantic dams".

(L. Magyar: "The Flood Disaster in China", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 11; 1931; p. 865).



Revisionism is the perversion of Marxist-Leninist principles to suit the interests of a capitalist class.

In 1931 the revisionists opened their attack upon the materialist conception of history by attacking, within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the concept of the Asiatic mode of production. At a special discussion on this mode of production held in Leningrad in this year, the revisionists, headed by Godes and Yolk, dissociated themselves from the references to this mode of production in the Programme of the Communist International.

("Diskussia ob Asiatskom sposobe proizvodstvo"; Moscow/Leningrad; 1931; p. 20, 24).

They declared that it was immaterial whether the Asiatic mode of production existed in reality; it was necessary to repudiate it for "political reasons":

"YOLK: I want to warn against this theory. What is really important is to unmask it politically, and not to establish the 'pure truth' as to whether the 'Asiatic mode of production' existed or not".  
(Ibid.; p. 89).

The "political reasons" given for the rejection of the concept were that it was objectionable to Asian bourgeois nationalists and so tended to alienate the latter from the Asian communist parties.

(Ibid.; p. 34).

The conference reached no decisions, but the revisionists continued their attacks within the Soviet Union upon the Asiatic mode of production.

By 1950, when concealed revisionists were already in a majority on the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Soviet revisionist writers were speaking gleefully of the "rout" of Marx's "notorious" theory of the Asiatic mode of production:

"Soviet orientalists have dealt successfully with a number of vital problems on the history of countries of the East. Suffice it to mention the rout of the notorious theory of the 'Asiatic mode of production'".  
(S. Tolstov: "For Advanced Oriental Studies", in: "Kultura i Zhizn", August 11th., 1950).

In November 1951 a conference was held at the Soviet Institute of Oriental Studies on "People's Democracy in Countries of the East". The main report, by E. M. Zhukov, made no mention either of the Asiatic mode of production or of Asiatic despotism, referring only to

". . anti-feudal tasks" and

". . struggle against feudalism".

("Labour Monthly"; 1952; p. 40, 42).

Meanwhile, with the domination from 1935 on of the leadership of the Communist Party of China by a revisionist faction headed by Mao Tse-tung, the repudiation of the Marxist-Leninist analysis of imperial Chinese society was consolidated:

"The feudal society, beginning with the Chou and Chin dynasties, lasted about 3,000 years".  
(Mao Tse-tung: "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party", in: "Selected Works", Volume 2; Peking; 1965; p. 307).



As open manifestations of revisionism spread through the international communist movement, the attack on the concepts of the Asiatic mode of production and oriental despotism came out into the open in the Communist Party of Great Britain. In his book "India Today", published in 1940, R. P. Dutt had endorsed Marx's conclusion that the society in India prior to the British conquest was based on the Asiatic mode of production associated with oriental despotism:

"The well-known writings of Marx on India . . . are among the most fertile of his writings, and the starting point of modern thought on the questions covered".

(R. P. Dutt: "India Today"; London; 1940; p. 93).

In this work Dutt describes the social system in pre-British India as

". . . the typical 'Asiatic economy'".

(R. P. Dutt: *ibid.*; p. 95)

and endorses Marx's view of the partly

". . . 'regenerating' role of British rule in India".

(R. P. Dutt: *ibid.*; p. 102).

In 1942, however, Dutt issued a new version of his book, to which the publishers appended the following note:

"Chapters II-XIII of this book are based on a previous book by the same author, 'India Today'. . . These sections are considerably condensed from the treatment in the early book, and in part rewritten and brought up to date".

(Publishers' Note, in: R. P. Dutt: "Guide to the Problem of India"; London; 1942).

This condensation and rewriting significantly included the removal of all the material which had formed Chapter V of the earlier book, that is, all the material relating to Marx's analysis of Indian society.

By 1946-7 Dutt was speaking of the Indian sub-continent as having a "feudal" society:

"Feudal oppression in Kashmir is terrible".

(R. P. Dutt: "Travel Notes No. 5", in: "Labour Monthly"; 1946; p. 321).

"Pakistan would represent one-quarter of India, country mainly agricultural, feudal and industrially undeveloped".

(R. P. Dutt: "The Mountbatten Plan for India", in: "Labour Monthly"; 1947; p. 211).

In recent years, however, the revisionist attack has gone far beyond such questions as the Asiatic mode of production, oriental despotism and the partly regenerating role of the British conquest of India.

In his introduction to Marx's "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations", published in 1964, the British revisionist E. J. Hobshawm denies that each social formation has its own objective laws of development:

"There is nothing in Marx to authorise us to look for some 'general laws' of development which might explain its (i.e., feudalism's -- Ed.) tendency to evolve into capitalism. . . .

The unilinear approach . . . leads to the search for 'fundamental laws' of each formation, which explain their passing to the next-higher form".

(E. J. Hobshawm: Introduction to: K. Marx: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 43, 60).

According to Hobshawm, therefore, a social formation may pass to one of several alternative social formations -- by chance, it would appear. For example, the primitive communal mode of production may,



in Hobshawm's view, pass directly to the Asiatic, the Germanic, the ancient or the feudal mode of production:

"Broadly speaking, there are now three or four alternative routes out of the primitive communal system, . . . the oriental, the ancient, the Germanic. . .

He (i.e., Marx -- Ed.) and Engels left the way open for a direct transition from primitive society to feudalism". (E. J. Hobshawm: *ibid.*; p. 32, 35).

According to Hobshawm, the materialist conception of history means only that one social formation should be eventually succeeded by some other social formation, but in no particular order of succession:

"Historical materialism requires only that there should be a succession of modes of production, though not necessarily any particular modes, and perhaps not in any predetermined order. . .

We ought therefore to understand Marx not as referring to chronological succession, or even to the evolution of one system out of its predecessor . . ., but to evolution in a more general sense".

(E. J. Hobshawm: *ibid.*; p. 19-20, 36).

The gross, blatant and deliberate falsification of Marx's thought on the part of Hobshawm is demonstrated by the fact that, in the very text which the latter introduces, appears the following passage:

"Primitive communities are not all cut to a single pattern. On the contrary, taken together they form a series of social groupings, differing both in type and in age, marking successive phases of development".

(K. Marx: Third Draft of Letter to V. Zasulich, March 8th., 1881, in: "Pre-capitalist Economic Formations"; London; 1964; p. 144).

The struggle to defend the materialist conception of history against its distortion, falsification and outright repudiation by the modern revisionists forms a not insignificant aspect of the struggle to defend Marxism-Leninism -- that is, of the struggle to defend the world outlook which serves both truth and the working class against the false and unscientific "world outlook" which serves the interests of the class enemies of the working class.

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