

In the primitive community there was no property inequality or private property in the means of production; there were no classes or exploitation of man by man. Social ownership of the means of production was confined within a narrow framework; it was the property of small communities more or less isolated from one another.

(3) The basic economic law of the primitive community consists in the securing of man's vitally necessary means of subsistence with the help of primitive implements of production, on the basis of communal property in the means of production, by means of common labour and the equal distribution of the products.

(4) Working together, men for a long time performed uniform labour. The gradual improvement of implements of production promoted the rise of a natural division of labour, depending on sex and age. Further perfecting of the implements of production and the mode of obtaining the means of life, the development of cattle-breeding and agriculture led to the appearance of the social division of labour and exchange, of private property and property inequality, to the division of society into classes and to the exploitation of man by man. Thus the growing forces of production entered into contradiction with the relations of production, as a result of which primitive communal society gave way to another type of relations of production—the slave-owning system.

CHAPTER II

THE SLAVE-OWNING MODE OF PRODUCTION

Rise of the Slave-owning System

Slavery is the first and crudest form of exploitation in history. In the past it existed among almost all peoples.

The transition from the primitive community to the slave-owning system took place for the first time in history in the countries of the ancient East. The slave-owning mode of production predominated in Mesopotamia (Sumer, Babylonia, Assyria and others), Egypt, India and China by the fourth millennium B.C. in some cases, and not later than the second millennium B.C. in others. In the first millennium B.C. the slave-owning mode of production was dominant in Transcaucasia (Urartu); from the eighth or seventh centuries B.C. to the fifth or sixth centuries A.D. a powerful slave-owning State existed in Khorezm. The culture achieved in the slave-owning countries of the ancient East greatly influenced the development of the peoples of European countries.

In Greece the slave-owning mode of production reached its height in the fifth to fourth centuries B.C. Subsequently slavery developed in the States of Asia Minor, Macedonia (from the fourth to the first centuries B.C.). The slave-owning system reached the highest stage of its development in Rome in the period from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D.

At first slavery bore a *patriarchal* or *domestic* character. There were comparatively few slaves. Slave labour was not yet the basis of production but played a subsidiary part in the economy. The aim of the economy remained the satisfaction of the demands of the large patriarchal family which had hardly any recourse to exchange. The master's power over his slaves was already unlimited but the sphere of application of slave labour was limited.

The further growth of productive forces, and the development of the social division of labour and of exchange, formed the basis of society's transition to the slave-owning system.

The advance from stone to metal implements of labour led to a considerable extension of the limits of human labour. The invention of the blacksmith's bellows enabled man to make

iron implements of labour of a durability not seen before. It became possible with the help of the iron axe to clear the land of forests and undergrowth for ploughing. The wooden plough with iron share made it possible to work comparatively large plots of land. Primitive hunting economy gave place to agriculture and cattle-breeding. Handicrafts appeared.

In agriculture, which remained the main branch of production, methods of tillage and cattle-breeding improved. New branches of agriculture arose; vine and flax growing, the growing of oil crops, and so on. The rich families' herds increased. More and more working hands were needed to look after the cattle. Weaving, metal-working, the art of pottery and other crafts gradually improved. Formerly a craft had been a subsidiary occupation of the husbandman or herdsman. Now for many people it became an independent occupation. The *separation of handicraft from agriculture* took place. This was the *second* large-scale social division of labour.

With the division of production into two large basic branches, agriculture and handicraft, there arises production directly for exchange though still in an undeveloped form. The growth in productivity of labour led to an increase in the amount of the surplus product which, with private property in the means of production, afforded the opportunity for the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a minority of society, and on this basis for the subordination of the working majority to the exploiting minority, for the conversion of labourers into slaves.

Under conditions of slavery the economy was basically a *natural* one. A *natural* economy is one in which the products of labour are not exchanged but consumed within the economy where they were produced. At the same time, however, the development of exchange took place. At first craftsmen made their products to order and then for sale on the market. At the same time, many of them continued for long to have small plots of land and to cultivate them to satisfy their needs. In the main the peasants carried on a natural economy, but were compelled to sell a certain part of their produce on the market in order to be able to buy the craftsman's wares and to pay money taxes. Thus gradually part of the products of the craftsman's and peasant's labour became commodities.

A *commodity* is a product prepared not for direct consumption but for exchange, for sale on the market. The production of

objects for exchange is the characteristic feature of *commodity economy*. Thus the separation of handicraft from agriculture, the rise of handicraft as an independent occupation, signified the birth of commodity production.

So long as exchange bore a fortuitous character one product of labour was directly exchanged for another. As exchange expanded and became a regular phenomenon, a commodity for which any other commodity would be willingly given gradually emerged. Thus money arose. *Money* is a universal commodity by which all other commodities are evaluated and which serves as an intermediary in exchange.

The development of handicraft and exchange led to the formation of *towns*. Towns arose in remote antiquity, at the dawn of the slave-owning mode of production. At first the town was little to be distinguished from the village, but gradually handicraft and trade concentrated in towns. The towns became more and more distinct from villages by the type of occupation of the inhabitants and by their way of life.

Thus began the *separation of town from country* and the rise of the *antithesis* between them.

As the quantity of exchangeable commodities increased, the territorial limits of exchange also expanded. *Merchants* arose who in pursuit of gain purchased commodities from the producers, carried the commodities to markets sometimes quite far from the place of production, and sold them to the consumers.

The expansion of production and exchange considerably intensified inequality of property. Money, working cattle, implements of production and seeds accumulated in the hands of the rich. The poor were compelled more and more frequently to turn to them for loans, mainly in kind, but sometimes also in money. The rich lent them implements of production, seeds and money, making bondsmen of their debtors and, when the latter did not pay their debts, made them slaves and took their land. Thus *usury* arose. It brought a further growth of riches to some, debt bondage to others.

The land also began to be converted into private property. It began to be sold and mortgaged. If a debtor could not pay the usurer, he had to abandon his land and sell himself and his children into slavery. Sometimes, on one pretext or another, the large landowners seized part of the meadows and pastures from the peasant village communes.

Thus proceeded the concentration of landed property, wealth in money and masses of slaves in the hands of the rich slave-owners. The small peasant economy more and more broke down, while the slave-owning economy grew strong and expanded, spreading to all branches of production.

"The continued increase of production and with it the increased productivity of labour enhanced the value of human labour-power. Slavery, which had been a nascent and sporadic factor in the preceding stage, now became an essential part of the social system. The slaves ceased to be simply assistants, but were now driven in scores to work in the fields and workshops." (Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"; Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, English edition, vol. II, p. 283.)

Slave labour became the basis of society's existence. Society split into two basically opposed classes, slaves and slave-owners.

Thus the *slave-owning mode of production* was established.

Under the slave-owning system the population was divided into free men and slaves. The free had all civil, property and political rights (except women, who were essentially in the position of slaves). The slaves were deprived of all these rights and had no right of admission to the ranks of the free. In their turn the free were divided into a class of large landowners, who were also large-scale slave-owners, and a class of small producers (peasants, craftsmen), the well-to-do strata of which also made use of slave labour and were slave-owners. The priests, who played a great part in the period of slavery, were attached, because of their status, to the class of large landowners and slave-owners.

Apart from the class contradiction between slaves and slave-owners there also existed a class contradiction between the large landowners and the peasants. But with the development of the slave-owning system slave labour, as the cheapest, embraced the larger part of the branches of production and became the main basis of production; and the contradiction between slaves and slave-owners became the basic contradiction of society.

Society's split into classes evoked the necessity for the State. With the growth of social division of labour and the development of exchange, separate clans and tribes came ever closer

together and combined into unions. The character of clan institutions was changed. The organs of the clan system more and more lost their popular character. They were converted into organs of dominance over the people, into organs of plunder and oppression of their own and of neighbouring tribes. The elders and military leaders of the clans and tribes became *princes* and *kings*. Formerly they had authority as people elected by the clan or union of clans. Now they began to use their power to defend the interests of the propertied upper layer, to keep a grip on their fellow clansmen falling into poverty, and to hold down the slaves. Armed retinues, courts and punitive organs served this end.

Thus *State power* arose.

"Only when the first form of the division of society into classes appeared, only when slavery appeared, when a certain class of people, by concentrating on the crudest forms of agricultural labour, could produce a certain surplus, when this surplus was not absolutely essential for the most wretched existence of the slave and passed into the hands of the slave-owner, when in this way the existence of this class of slave-owners took firm root—and in order that it might take firm root—it was essential that the state should appear." (Lenin, "The State", *Selected Works*, English edition, vol. XI, p. 647; and in "Lenin and Stalin on the State", *Little Lenin Library*, vol. XXIII, p. 15.)

The State arose in order to hold in check the exploited majority in the interests of the exploiting minority.

The slave-owning State played a great part in the development and stabilisation of the production relations of slave-owning society. The slave-owning State held the slave masses in subjection. It grew into a widely ramified machinery for domination over and oppression of the masses of the people. The democracy in ancient Greece and Rome which bourgeois history textbooks extol was essentially a slave-owning democracy.

Production Relations of the Slave-owning System. Position of Slaves

The production relations of slave-owning society were based on the fact that not only the means of production but also the workers in production, the slaves, were the slave-owners'

property. The slave was considered a chattel. He was at the complete and utter disposal of his owner. Slaves were not only exploited, they were bought and sold like cattle and were even killed with impunity. While in the period of patriarchal slavery the slave had been regarded as a member of the family, in the conditions of the slave-owning mode of production he was not considered even a man.

"The *slave* did not sell his labour-power to the slave-owner, any more than the ox sells its services to the peasant. The slave, together with his labour-power, has been sold once and for all to his owner." (Marx, "Wage, Labour and Capital", *Selected Works*, English edition, vol. 1, p. 77.)

Slave labour had an openly compulsory character. Slaves were made to work by means of the crudest physical force. They were driven to work with whips and were subjected to harsh punishments for the least negligence. Slaves were branded so that they could be more easily taken if they fled. Many of them wore permanent iron collars which bore their owner's name.

The slave-owner acquired the whole product of slave labour. He gave the slaves only the smallest possible quantity of the means of subsistence—sufficient to prevent them dying of hunger and to enable them to go on working for him. The slave-owner took not only the surplus product but also a considerable part of the necessary product of the slaves' labour.

The development of the slave-owning mode of production was accompanied by an increase in the demand for slaves. In a number of countries slaves as a rule had no family. The rapacious exploitation of slaves led to their rapid physical exhaustion. It was continually necessary to add to the numbers of slaves. *War* was an important source of obtaining new bondmen. The slave-owning States of the ancient East carried on constant wars with a view to conquering other peoples. The history of ancient Greece is full of wars between separate city States, between metropolis and colonies, between Greek and Oriental States. Rome carried on uninterrupted wars; at her height she conquered the greater part of the lands known at that time. Not only the warriors who had been taken prisoner, but also a considerable part of the population of the conquered lands, were enslaved.

Provinces and colonies served as another source for adding

to the numbers of slaves. They supplied the slave-owners with "living commodities" as well as with every other commodity. The slave trade was one of the most profitable and flourishing branches of economic activity. Special centres of the slave trade arose: fairs were arranged to which came traders and buyers from distant countries.

The slave-owning mode of production opened broader opportunities for the growth of productive forces than the primitive community. The concentration of a large number of slaves in the hands of the slave-owning State and of individual slave-owners made possible the use of simple co-operation of labour on a large scale. This is attested by the gigantic construction works which were executed in antiquity by the peoples of China, India, Egypt, Italy, Greece, Transcaucasia, Central Asia and others: irrigation systems, roads, bridges, military fortifications, cultural monuments.

Social division of labour developed and expressed itself in the specialisation of agricultural and handicraft production, thus creating conditions for raising the productivity of labour.

In Greece slave labour was widely applied in handicraft. Large workshops arose, *ergasteria*, in which there worked several dozen slaves at a time. Slave labour was also used in building, in mining iron ore, silver and gold. In Rome slave labour was widespread in agriculture. The Roman aristocracy owned broad estates, *latifundia*, where hundreds and thousands of slaves worked. These *latifundia* were created by the seizure of peasants' lands and also of unoccupied State lands.

The slave-owning *latifundia*, in consequence of the cheapness of slave labour and the utilisation of the advantages of simple co-operation, were able to produce grain and other agricultural produce at lower cost than the small farms of the free peasants. The small peasantry was squeezed out, fell into slavery or swelled the ranks of the impoverished sections of the town population, the lumpen-proletariat.

The contradiction between town and country, which had already arisen during the transition from the primitive communal system to the slave-owning system, grew deeper and deeper. The towns became the centres where the slave-owning nobility, the merchants, the usurers, the officials of the slave-owning State, all of whom exploited the broad masses of the peasant population, were concentrated.

On the basis of slave labour the ancient world achieved considerable economic and cultural development. But the slave-owning system could not create the conditions for any further serious technical progress. Slave labour was distinguished by extremely low productivity. The slave was not at all interested in the results of his labour. The slaves hated their labour under the yoke. Frequently they expressed their protest and indignation by spoiling the implements of labour. Therefore the slaves were given only the crudest implements, which it was difficult to spoil.

The technique of production founded on slavery remained at an exceedingly low level. Despite a certain development of the natural and exact sciences, they were hardly applied at all in production. Certain technical inventions were used only for war purposes and in building. Through the several centuries of its dominance the slave-owning mode of production went no further than the application of manual implements borrowed from the small agriculturalist and craftsman, and no further than simple labour co-operation. The basic motive force remained the physical strength of men and cattle.

The wide application of slave labour allowed the slave-owners to free themselves from all physical labour and to transfer it completely to the slaves. The slave-owners treated physical labour with scorn, considered it an occupation unworthy of a free man and led a parasitic form of life. With the development of slavery greater and greater numbers of the free population broke away from any productive activity. Only a certain part of the slave-owning upper class and of the other free population engaged in public affairs, the sciences and the arts, which attained a considerable level of development.

The slave-owning system gave birth to the *antithesis between mental and physical labour*, to the gap between them.

The exploitation of slaves by slave-owners is the main feature of the production relations of slave-owning society. At the same time the slave-owning mode of production had its peculiarities in various countries.

In the countries of the ancient East natural economy predominated to a still greater degree than in the ancient world of Europe. Here slave labour was widely applied in the State economies and those of the large slave-owners and temples. Domestic slavery was greatly developed. Huge masses of

members of peasant communities were exploited, as well as the slaves, in the agriculture of China, India, Babylonia and Egypt. Here the system of enslavement for debt acquired great importance. The member of the peasant community who did not pay his debt to the usurer, or his rent to the landowner, was compelled to work on their land for a definite time as a bond-slave.

In the slave-owning countries of the ancient East communal and State forms of ownership of land were widespread. The existence of these forms of property was linked with the system of cultivation based on irrigation. Irrigated agriculture in the river valleys of the East demanded enormous labour expenditure for the construction of dams, canals and reservoirs and the draining of marshes. All this evoked the necessity of centralising the construction and use of the irrigation systems over large territories. "Artificial irrigation is here the first condition of agriculture and this is a matter either for the communes, the provinces or the central government." (Engels, "Letter to K. Marx", June 6, 1843, Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence, 1846-95*, 1934, English edition, p. 67.) With the development of slavery the communal lands were concentrated in the hands of the State. The king with unlimited power became the supreme owner of the land.

The slave-owners' State, concentrating in its hands the ownership of land, imposed huge taxes on the peasants, compelled them to carry out different types of duties and thereby put the peasants in a condition of servile dependence. The peasants remained members of the rural community. But with the concentration of the land in the hands of the slave-owning State, the rural community was a firm base for oriental despotism, i.e., the unlimited autocratic power of a despotic monarch. The priestly aristocracy played an important part in the slave-owning States of the East. The great estates belonging to the temples were maintained on the basis of slave labour.

Under the slave-owning system the slave-owners in all countries expended unproductively by far the greater part of slave labour and its products: on the satisfaction of personal fancies, the accumulation of treasure, the construction of military fortifications and armies, the erection and maintenance of luxurious palaces and temples. In particular the Egyptian

pyramids, which have been preserved up to the present day, testify to the unproductive expenditure of huge masses of labour. Only an insignificant part of slave labour and its product was expended on the further expansion of production, which therefore developed exceedingly slowly. Ruinous wars led to the destruction of productive forces, the extermination of huge numbers of the peaceful population and the ruin of the culture of entire States.

The *basic economic law of the slave-owning system* consists in the production of surplus product to satisfy the demands of the slave-owners, by means of the rapacious exploitation of the slaves, on the basis of full ownership by the slave-owners of the means of production and of the slaves themselves, by the ruining and enslaving of peasants and craftsmen, and also by conquering and enslaving the peoples of other countries.

Further Development of Exchange. Merchants' and Usurers' Capital

The slave-owning economy in the main preserved its natural character. In it production was mainly for the direct consumption of the slave-owner, of his numerous hangers-on and retainers, not with a view to exchange. All the same, exchange gradually began to play a more noticeable part, particularly in the period of the greatest development of the slave-owning system. In a number of branches of production a certain part of the products of labour was regularly sold on the market—that is, was converted into commodities.

With the expansion of exchange the part played by money increased. Usually there arose as money that commodity which was the most frequently exchanged. Among many peoples, particularly among cattle-breeders, cattle first served as money. Among others salt, grain or furs became money. Gradually all other forms of money were squeezed out by metallic currency.

Metallic currency first appeared in the countries of the ancient East. Money in the form of bronze, silver and gold bars was already circulating here in the third to second millennia B.C., and in the form of coins from the seventh century B.C. In Greece in the eighth century B.C., iron money was current. In Rome even in the fifth to fourth centuries B.C. only copper money was used. Later iron and copper money were replaced by silver and gold.

The Greek city States carried on quite far-flung trade, including trade with the Greek colonies scattered along the shores of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The colonies regularly supplied the basic labour force—slaves—and certain forms of raw material and foodstuffs: hides, wool, cattle, grain and fish.

In Rome, as well as in Greece, apart from trade in slaves and other commodities, trade in luxury objects played a great part. These commodities were supplied from the East mainly in the shape of all sorts of tribute taken from conquered peoples. Trade was connected with plunder, piracy and the enslavement of colonies.

Under the slave-owning system money had already become not only a means of buying and selling commodities; it had also come to serve as a means for the appropriation of the labour of others by means of trade and usury. Money expended with a view to appropriating surplus labour and its product becomes *capital*, that is, a means of exploitation. Merchants' and usurers' capital were historically the first forms of capital. *Merchants' capital* is capital engaged in the sphere of commodity exchange. Merchants buying up and reselling commodities appropriated a considerable part of the surplus product created by the slaves, small peasants and craftsmen. *Usurers' capital* is capital applied in the form of loans of money, means of production or objects of consumption for the appropriation of the peasants' and craftsmen's surplus labour by means of high interest rates. The usurers also granted money loans to the slave-owning aristocracy, thus sharing in the surplus product that the latter received.

Sharpening of the Contradictions of the Slave-Ownning Mode of Production

Slavery was an essential stage on mankind's road of development.

"It was slavery that first made possible the division of labour between agriculture and industry on a considerable scale, and along with this, the flower of the ancient world, Hellenism. Without slavery, no Greek state, no Greek art and science; without slavery, no Roman Empire. But without Hellenism and the Roman Empire as a basis, also no modern Europe." (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 1934, English edition, p. 203.)

On the bones of generations of slaves there arose a culture which was the basis for mankind's further development. Many branches of knowledge—mathematics, astronomy, mechanics, architecture—achieved considerable development in the ancient world. The artistic objects which have come down to us from antiquity, the works of literature, sculpture and architecture have entered for ever into the treasury of human culture.

The slave-owning system, however, concealed in itself insuperable contradictions which led to its destruction. The slave-owning form of exploitation constantly destroyed the basic productive force of this society, the slaves. The struggle of the slaves against harsh forms of exploitation was more and more frequently expressed in armed risings. An uninterrupted influx of slaves and their cheapness were a condition of existence for slave-owning economy. Slaves were mainly supplied by war. The mass of free small producers, the peasants and craftsmen, formed the basis of the military power of slave-owning society. They served in the armed forces and bore on their shoulders the main burden of taxes essential for conducting war. But as a result of the competition of large-scale production based on cheap slave labour, and under the weight of burdens beyond their strength, the peasants and craftsmen were ruined. The insoluble contradiction between large latifundia and peasant farms continued to intensify.

The squeezing out of the free peasantry subverted not only the economic, but also the military and political might of the slave-owning States, and particularly Rome. Victories were replaced by defeats. Wars of conquest were replaced by defensive ones. The source of the uninterrupted supply of cheap slaves dried up. The negative aspects of slave labour appeared more and more strongly. A general fall in production took place in the last two centuries of the existence of the Roman Empire. Trade fell into confusion, formerly rich lands became poor, the population began to decline, crafts perished and towns began to be deserted.

The productive relations based on slave labour had turned into fetters for the expanded productive forces of society. The labour of slaves, completely uninterested in the results of production, had outlived itself. There had arisen the historical necessity for the replacement of slave-owning production relations by other production relations, which would change

the situation in society of the main productive force, the labouring masses. The law of the obligatory correspondence between production relations and the character of the productive forces demanded the replacement of slaves by workers who were to some extent interested in the results of their labour.

As large-scale slave-owning production became economically unprofitable the slave-owners began to set free considerable groups of slaves whose labour no longer brought them any income. Large estates were broken into small plots. These plots were handed over on definite conditions, either to former slaves who had been set free, or to formerly free citizens who were now obliged to bear a number of duties for the benefit of the landowner. The new tillers of the soil were bound to the plots of land, and could be sold together with them. But they were no longer slaves.

This was a new social stratum of small-scale producers, occupying an intermediary position between free and slave, and having a certain interest in the results of their own labour. They were called *coloni*, and were the predecessors of the medieval serfs.

Thus the elements of a new, feudal mode of production were born in the womb of slave-owning society.

Class Struggle of the Exploited against the Exploiters. Slave Revolts. Downfall of the Slave-Owning System

The history of slave-owning societies in the countries of the ancient East, in Greece and Rome shows that with the development of the slave-owning economy the class struggle of the enslaved masses against their oppressors was intensified. Slave revolts were linked with the struggle of the exploited small peasants against the slave-owning upper class, the large landowners.

The contradiction between small producers and large well-born landowners gave birth already at an early stage in the development of slave-owning society to a democratic movement among the free men which set itself the aim of destroying debt bondage, the redivision of lands, the abolition of the prerogatives of the landed aristocracy and the transfer of power to the *demos* (that is, to the people).

Of the numerous slave risings in the Roman Empire that led by Spartacus (74-71 B.C.) was particularly remarkable. The most vivid page in the history of the slaves' struggle against the slave-owners is linked with his name.

Slave risings flared up more than once throughout many centuries. Impoverished peasants joined the slaves. These risings achieved particular force in the second to first centuries B.C. and in the third to fifth centuries A.D. The slave-owners suppressed the risings with the fiercest measures.

The risings of the exploited masses, primarily of the slaves, radically undermined the former might of Rome. Blows from inside began more and more to be interconnected with blows from outside. The inhabitants of neighbouring lands who had been enslaved revolted in the fields of Italy, while at the same time their fellow-tribesmen who had remained free stormed the frontiers of the Empire, broke into its territories and destroyed Roman supremacy. These circumstances hastened the downfall of the slave-owning system in Rome.

The slave-owning mode of production achieved its greatest development in the Roman Empire. The fall of the Roman Empire was also the fall of the slave-owning system as a whole. The feudal system took the place of the slave-owning system.

Economic Views of the Slave-Ownning Period

The economic views of the slave-owning period were reflected in many literary works left by poets, philosophers, historians, statesmen and public figures. In the view of these men, a slave was considered not a person but a chattel in his master's hands. Slave labour was scorned. And, since labour became predominantly the lot of slaves, there followed scorn for labour in general, as activity unworthy of a free person.

The code of laws of the Babylonian king Hammurabi (eighteenth century B.C.) provides evidence of the economic views of slave-owning Babylonia. The code defends the property and personal rights of the rich and noble slave-owners and landowners. According to the code, whoever concealed a runaway slave was punished with death. A peasant who did not pay his debt to the moneylender, or his rent to the landowner, had to give his wife, son or daughter into bond slavery until he had worked off the debt. In the ancient Indian collection "The Code of Manu" social, religious and moral injunctions sanctifying slavery are expounded. According to these laws a slave had no property. The law punished with death anyone who "gave shelter to a runaway slave".

The views of the ruling classes were reflected in religion. Thus, in

India Buddhism became widespread beginning from the sixth century B.C. Proclaiming acceptance of reality, non-resistance to violence and humility before the ruling classes, Buddhism was a religion of use to the slave-owning aristocracy which they used to strengthen their domination.

Even the outstanding thinkers of antiquity could not imagine the existence of society without slavery. For example, the Greek philosopher Plato (fifth to fourth centuries B.C.) wrote the first *Utopia* in the history of mankind about an ideal social system. But even in his ideal State he retained slaves. The labour of slaves, tillers of the soil and artisans, had to supply the means of existence for the higher class of rulers and warriors.

In the eyes of the greatest thinker of antiquity, Aristotle (fourth century B.C.), slavery was also an eternal and inevitable necessity for society. Aristotle greatly influenced the development of thought in the ancient world and in the middle ages. Though he rose high above the level of contemporary society in his scientific conjectures and anticipations, on the question of slavery Aristotle remained a prisoner of the conceptions of his age. His views on slavery amounted to the following: for the helmsman the rudder is an inanimate instrument, but the slave is an animate instrument. If implements performed their work to order, if, for example, shuttles wove of themselves, there would be no need for slaves. But since in economic life there existed many occupations demanding simple unskilled labour, Nature had made wise provision, by creating slaves. In Aristotle's opinion Nature itself had ordained that some men should be slaves and that others should rule them. Slave labour supplied free men with leisure for perfecting themselves. Hence, he concluded, the whole art of the master consisted in knowing how to use his slaves.

Aristotle gave to the science of management of resources the name "oikonomia". In his lifetime exchange, trade and usury were quite widely developed, but the economy basically preserved its natural character, producing for consumption within its own framework. Aristotle considered natural the acquisition of benefits only by means of agriculture and handicrafts; he was a partisan of *natural economy*. However, Aristotle also understood the nature of *exchange*. He found exchange with a view to consumption completely natural "because usually people have more of certain objects and fewer of others than is essential for the satisfaction of their needs". He understood the necessity for money for exchange.

At the same time Aristotle considered that trade with a view to profit, and usury, were reprehensible occupations. He pointed out that these occupations, as distinct from agriculture and handicraft, knew no limits to the acquisition of wealth.

The ancient Greeks already had a certain conception of the *division of labour* and the part it played in the life of society. Thus Plato envisaged division of labour as the basic principle of the State system in his ideal republic.

The economic conceptions of the Romans also reflected the relations of the prevailing slave-owning mode of production.

Roman writers and public men, expressing the ideology of the slave-owners, counted slaves as simple implements of production. It is to the Roman encyclopaedist *Varro* (first century B.C.) who composed, among a number of other books, a sort of handbook for slave-owners on the conduct of agriculture, that we owe the well-known division of implements into (1) the dumb (carts); (2) those which utter inarticulate sounds (cattle); and (3) those gifted with speech (slaves). In giving this definition he was expressing views generally accepted among slave-owners.

The minds of Rome, as well as of Greece, were concerned with the art of managing slaves. *Plutarch* (first to second century A.D.), the historian of the Roman era, tells of the "model" slave-owner Cato and how he bought slaves young "that is at the age when, like puppies and foals, they can be readily subjected to education and training". Later he says that "among the slaves he constantly invented methods of maintaining quarrels and disputes, for he considered agreement among them dangerous and feared it".

In ancient Rome, especially in the later period, breakdown and decay of the economy founded on the compulsory labour of slaves grew worse and worse. The Roman writer *Columella* (first century A.D.) complained: "The slaves do the greatest harm to the fields. They lend the oxen 'on the side'. They also pasture the other stock badly. They plough the land poorly." His contemporary *Pliny the Elder* said that "the latifundia have destroyed Italy and its provinces".

Like the Greeks, the Romans considered normal the natural form of economy, in which the master exchanges only his surpluses. Sometimes in the literature of that time high trading profits and usurious rates of interest were condemned. In reality, however, the merchants and usurers accumulated enormous fortunes.

In the last period of the existence of the slave-owning system voices could be already heard condemning slavery and proclaiming the *natural equality of men*. These views, understandably, met with no sympathy among the ruling class of slave-owners. As for the slaves, they were so crushed by their servitude, so downtrodden and ignorant, that they were unable to work out an ideology of their own more progressive than the obsolete ideas of the slave-owning class. This is one of the causes of the spontaneity and unorganised character of the slave revolts.

One of the sharp contradictions inherent in the slave-owning system was the struggle between large and small land-holders. The impoverished peasantry put forward the demand for the limitation of the landed property of the great slave-owners and the re-allocation of lands. This was the essence of the agrarian reform for which the brothers *Gracchi* struggled (second century B.C.).

In the period of the decline of the Roman Empire when an absolute majority of the population of town and country, both slaves and free,

saw no way out of the situation, there developed a severe crisis in the ideology of slave-owning Rome.

A new religious ideology, *Christianity*, emerged on the basis of the class contradictions of the dying Empire. The Christianity of that period expressed the protest of slaves, of the ruined masses of the peasantry and craftsmen, and of declassed elements, against slavery and oppression. On the other hand, Christianity reflected the mood of broad strata of the ruling classes, who sensed the utter hopelessness of their situation. That is why, in the Christianity of the decline of the Roman Empire, by the side of grim warnings to the rich and powerful, there are also calls to humility and to seek salvation in life beyond the grave.

In the following centuries Christianity finally became the religion of the ruling classes, a spiritual weapon for the defence and justification of the exploitation and oppression of the labouring masses.

BRIEF CONCLUSIONS

(1) The slave-owning mode of production arose thanks to the growth of the productive forces of society, the appearance of a surplus product, the origin of private property in the means of production, including land, and the appropriation of the surplus product by the owners of the means of production.

Slavery is the first and crudest form of the exploitation of man by man. The slave was the full and unlimited property of his master. The slave-owner, at his will, commanded not only the slave's labour, but also his life.

(2) The State first took shape with the rise of the slave-owning system. It arose, as a result of the splitting of society into irreconcilably hostile classes, as the machine for suppressing the exploited majority of society by the exploiting minority.

(3) Slave-owning economy was in the main of a natural character. The ancient world broke down into numerous separate economic units satisfying their requirements by their own production. Trade was mainly in slaves and luxury articles. The development of exchange gave rise to metallic currency.

(4) The basic economic law of the slave-owning mode of production consists in the production of surplus product, to satisfy the demands of the slave-owners, by the rapacious exploitation of the slaves on the basis of full ownership by the slave-owners of the means of production and the slaves themselves, by the ruining and enslaving of peasants and craftsmen,

and also by conquering and enslaving the peoples of other countries.

(5) A comparatively high culture (art, philosophy, the sciences) arose on the basis of slavery. Its fruits were enjoyed by the small upper class of slave-owning society. The social consciousness of the ancient world corresponded to the mode of production based on slavery. The ruling classes and their ideologists did not consider the slave a man. Physical labour, being the lot of the slaves, was considered a shameful occupation, unworthy of a free man.

(6) The slave-owning mode of production caused an increase in the productive forces of society compared with the primitive communal system. But later the labour of the slaves, who were completely without interest in the results of production, outlived its usefulness. The spread of slave labour and the lack of any legal protection whatsoever for the slaves resulted in the destruction of the basic productive force of society—the labour force—and the ruin of the small free producers—the peasants and artisans. This predetermined the inevitable downfall of the slave-owning system.

(7) Slave revolts shook the slave-owning system and hastened its destruction. The feudal mode of production came to replace the slave-owning mode of production; instead of the slave-owning form of exploitation there arose the feudal form of exploitation, which gave some scope for the further development of the productive forces of society.

CHAPTER III

THE FEUDAL MODE OF PRODUCTION

Rise of Feudalism

The feudal system existed, with particular features of one sort or another, in almost all countries.

The era of feudalism covers a long period. In China the feudal system existed for more than two thousand years. In Western Europe feudalism covers a number of centuries, from the time of the fall of the Roman Empire (fifth century) to the bourgeois revolution in England (seventeenth century) and in France (eighteenth century); in Russia from the ninth century to the peasant reform of 1861; in Transcaucasia from the fourth century to the seventies of the nineteenth century; among the peoples of Central Asia from the seventh or eighth centuries right up to the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia.

In *Western Europe* feudalism arose out of the breakdown of Roman slave-owning society, on the one hand, and the decay of the tribal system of the conquering tribes, on the other; it was established as a result of the interaction of these two processes.

Elements of feudalism, as has already been said, had originated in the womb of slave-owning society in the form of the system of *coloni*. The *coloni* were obliged to work the land of their master, the large landowner, to make him a definite money payment or hand over a considerable share of the harvest, and to fulfil various types of duty. Nevertheless, the *coloni* had more interest in their labour than the slaves, since they had their own holdings.

Thus there arose new productive relations which achieved full development in the feudal period.

Tribes of Germans, Gauls, Slavs and other peoples living in different parts of Europe destroyed the Roman Empire. The slave-owners' power was overthrown and slavery fell. The large latifundia and handicraft workshops based on slave labour broke down. The population of the former Roman Empire consisted of large landowners (former slave-owners, who had adopted the system of *coloni*), freed slaves, *coloni*, small peasants and artisans.

The conquering tribes, at the time of the subjugation of