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Free men and slaves

ACCORDING to the solid knowledge made available by the researches of archeologists, anthropologists, pre-historians and social historians, man lived on earth for more than one million years in non-parasitic social orders of various kinds. The inclination to parasitism is there in many human beings, but it was contained within the community by social organisation, social morality and collective sanctions. During the past six thousand years, however, the so-called civilizations that have occurred have been, according to the evidence, extremely parasitic. So-called civilization has rested on one or other parasitic theme: oppressor and oppressed, victor and vanquished, master and servant, slave owner and slave, feudal lord and subject peasant, landlord and tenant, usurious lender and helpless borrower, employing master and wage-earning servant, guild master and apprentice or journeyman, tax-collecting autocrat and tax-paying underdog, coloniser and colonised, imperialist nations and subject ones, profit-seeking seller and the needy consumer, monopolist and non-monopolist, speculator and society, robber and robbed, hegemony and mandatory follower, commander and commanded, powerful and powerless, in one word, exploiter and exploited, or predator and prey.

In-depth studies have shown that it is war and the inequalities associated with war that explain the origin of the whole epoch of parasitic society. The Twentieth Century Dictionary defines 'to exploit' as "to make gain out of or at the expense of" and 'exploitation' as "the act of using for

selfish purposes." It defines a predator as a plunderer.

Social historians and scientists have commonly classified the various predatory systems of so-called civilization into slavery, feudalism, the 'Asiatic' order, and capitalism. There are, however, several orders, such as those that some anthropologists call dukedoms, that do not fall or strictly fall into any of the foregoing broad categorizations. Even those belonging to those categories fall into different types in detail.

Slavery is of different types and capitalism is actually a form of it. Capitalism is a form of slavery usable by and conducive to parasitic industrialism. Industrialism is the production system which rests on the use of power machines.

The following parasitic production relationship is common to all forms of slavery, including capitalism. On the one hand we have a relatively few people who are masters of production because they own the means of production. Production is for them and they own the product. On the other hand we have poor or helpless people devoid of means of production who are coerced or forced by necessity to work for a master-owner of some means of production in order to live. Because the worker in this relationship is merely used and the products of his labour do not belong to him, the relationship is exploitative or predatory, whether the master is wicked or kind.

Two things differentiate precapitalist

from capitalist slavery. The first is that in precapitalist slavery, the slave himself is the property of his master. In capitalist slavery it is the labour ability and not the person of the slave that is the property of the master during the period which he is obliged to serve him. The second difference is that precapitalist master — slave relationship is not phenomenally a market relationship, under capitalism, the relationship is phenomenally a market one in which the slave loses his mastery over his destiny by selling his working ability under stress.

In any slave society, various other forms of predation are normally superimposed on the primary master-servant predatory relationship. For instance, under capitalism the wage worker normally lives where he pays rent to a landlord and these days normally buys goods sold by an oligopolist at monopolistic prices, which may again be raised by various profiteering middlemen and speculators.

Precapitalist slavery lasted in the world for centuries and capitalism has lasted in England for two centuries already. A number of reasons explain this longevity of slavery. The first is that those who are reduced to slaving for others in order to live are absorbed in the struggle to survive from day to day. The second is that effective struggle for liberty requires the organised unity of the exploited in the society

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and this organisation or unity is difficulty to effect. Thee third is that non-embryonic predatory society is characterised by a state which is an armed organisation that guarantees the given system of exploitation against rebellion by the exploited.

The fourth is that the master is in a position to deprive the slave of his life or means of survival.

The fifth is that courage or the capacity to take risks or bear suffering for a cause is not given to all men and women.

The sixth is that the longer people have been subjected to slavery, the more their descendants who experience the same subjection come to look on their condition as natural, inevitable, unchangeable, god-ordained, or providential. The masters are able to exploit this fatalistic submission and do everything to strengthen it.

The eighth is that the masters are able to exploit the paralysis of the underprivileged due to the intimidation of power and the deference to privilege arising from a feeling of inferiority.

The ninth is that where we have privilege and underprivilege, there we have also opportunism and sycophancy. Consequently, we find morally weaker slaves who lend themselves for use against the interests of the slaves or the exploited as a whole in the hope of obtaining some unilateral favour. The exploiters are for ever happy to flatter, "elevate" or "reward" the "good" slaves or "obedient servants".

The above explains why not only slavery but also other exploitative systems can last

long. No exploitative system, however, can go on eternally. After all, the love of liberty, dignity and independence for oneself is inborn in man. This is why the epoch of predatory societies is at the same time the epoch of revolts or revolutions. As with all other forms of parasitism, capitalism will pass away. Like others it will be burnt up in the fires of revolution.

The socialists assert that when capitalism is done away with, a modern society can be built that is exploitation-free. In the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, North Korean and Cuba, for instance, this is the effort being made by freedom fighters. An exploitation-free modern society is indeed possible as a very long-term project. After the overthrow of capitalism, the struggle to rid society of all forms of parasitism opens. It is bound to be a long and complex struggle. It will be more successful or less so in this or that country or decade depending on circumstances. While this struggle for a completely exploitation-free society goes on, in those countries and areas where capitalism has been overthrown by the socialist revolution, human society would have made one mighty leap forward. It would have rid itself of all forms of slavery. This riddance begins from the socialist thesis on the ownership of the productive property of society which the generality of people do not precisely understand and which the parasites do their utmost to hide, distort and lie about.

To be continued
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are many others unknown to me.

for either buying papers or to influence supervi- agents linked with some supervisors at certain cer-

WHEREVER there is exploitation, domination and oppression in human society, sooner or later we must see some resistance to exploitation, domination or oppression. Very unfortunately, not all men and women are ready to assume the risk of resistance to involuntary subordination to the power of others. Some accept this responsibility, however, on behalf of themselves or others.

And now let us listen to some voices from society. From Athens in ancient Greece comes the voice of the great scholar philosopher, Aristotle. He categorised slaves into two types. Since Aristotle wrote generations of social philosophers and libertarians have criticised him, accusing him of being an apologist for slavery by pretending that some human beings were natural slaves. The implication they see is that slavery is not objectionable in all cases. I have read these critics of Aristotle.

Aristotle in this matter has been misunderstood and maligned, just as the Italian Machiavelli and the German Karl Marx and Frederick Engels have been very often misunderstood, distorted and maligned. Aristotle lived his whole life in the pre-capitalist slave society of ancient Athens. At the time he lived the slaves outnumbered the free men in Athens. He had a very ample opportunity to observe in life and

not on paper many kinds of slaves and their situations and reactions. All who have read Aristotle with an historical mind will agree that he was very keen and meticulous observer of both nature and human society and a superb classifier of things.

What Aristotle actually did was to observe that slaves fell into two groups judged by their attitude to slavery. It is the slave's attitude that Aristotle adopted here as the *principio divisions*, as the logicians would say:

One type comprised slaves who were apparently not worried by slavery. They behaved as if nothing unusual had happened in their lives. They were concerned with ways to go on with their lives as slaves, pleasing their masters as best they could. Far from aspiring to be free men, some of this type would rather betray the struggles of other slaves to be free in order to gain favours from their masters. They bathed happily in the glitters of their sycophancy.

Servility to others seemed quite natural to them, such slave Aristotle, who himself hailed from the class of free men, categorised as 'slaves by nature.'

Aristotle, however, observed another kind of slave. This kind was very un-

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happy in slavery no matter how kind his master was. Slaves of this kind dreamt dreams of freedom. Plotted their escape, planned or actively worked for slave revolts, conspired to assassinate cruel masters, and were, from the point of view of the free men, stubborn or uncontrollable. From the master's standpoint, they deserved not favours but the severest punishment or death as an example to others. Aristotle saw these slaves as free men and women by nature who happened to be slaves only by circumstance. One can surmise that if his own status as a free man was dear to Aristotle, he admired the spirit of this kind of slaves.

Over the years I have put Aristotle's remarks and the comments of his critics before me. I must say that with the experience I now have of society and people, my judgment is that Aristotle was right. There is no question whether anyone naturally deserves to be a slave or whether anyone should be free. The point is that if anyone values his freedom and dignity, he should recognise slavery as an indefinite and fight against it. Every slave becomes a slave by the circumstances of

history, but there are those who, having fallen into servitude, behave as if slavery was natural to them. There are those who, though born into freedom, behave like slaves. Compare Gorbachev with Lenin vis-a-vis the slavery of capitalist imperialism. If an adult is not ready to assume responsibility for his freedom, but is blind to his slavery or behaves as if nothing is lost by his being in a servile condition, who can find a language more apt for describing him than Aristotle's term, 'slave by nature'?

During the century of colonial domination of Nigeria, for instance, patriots like Herbert Macauley, Eyo Ita, Akinola Maja, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Aminu Kano, Obafemi Awolowo, Raji Abdallah, Ibrahim Iman, Gambo Sawaba, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, Tony Enahoro, Chief Nyong Essien, Abubakar Zukogi, Magnus Williams, Nwafor Orizu, Margaret Ekpo, etc., were Aristotelian free people by nature. The host of servile elite Nigerians that the patriots rightly called 'Uncle Toms' were Aristotehan slaves by nature.

Today in Nigeria there are people who are undisturbed by their being wage and salary employees in private enterprises

belonging to other. There are so-called leaders or members of the servile elite who are not disturbed by Nigeria's status as a neocolonial appendage of Euro-American imperialism. This whole lot of good servants are Aristotle's slaves by nature

In the world of today free men are men like V.I. Lenin, Mao Zedong, Mohandas Ghandi, Pandit Nehru, Kwame Nkrumah, Fidel Castro, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Patrice Lumumba, Sylvanus Allende, Ho Chi Minh, Kim il Sung, Ab Nassar, Julius Nyerere, Muamar Gaddafi, Nelson Mandela, etc.

The non-capitalists who cannot see, or pretend not to see that capitalism is a form of slavery or who do not resent this fact are slaves by nature. Those inhabitants of the Third World who accept neocolonialism as 'partnership in progress' and show no appreciation of it as a variety of slave empire which must be dissolved are slaves by nature. Nigerians and other Africans who enjoy made-in-Europe, made-in-America or made-in-Japan limousines, planes, household gadgets, guns, etc., without any bother about their country's inability on its own to produce any of those things are slaves by nature.

If Aristotle did not like slaves by nature, then he was truly a free man.

•To be continued next week
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served British absentee overlords, and taxes imposed on Americans without their consent were used by British overlords to entrench and strengthen their domination and fight the wars that held or expanded their mercantilist empire. To British overlords, this was British wealth, empire, commerce, sovereignty and power. to Americans who were the serfs, it was chains and slavery.

Sooner or later the American *free-men by nature* rebelled, led by freedom fighters - George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Partick Henry, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and their free comrades, all my friends. There were many black slave in America suffering worse chains and slavery than the colonial bondage against which George Washington, etc, rebelled. Yet their own chains and slavery were not seen.

However, the chains and slavery of the black slaves could not remain forever unseen. About a century after the American revolutionary war, another war of liberation erupted in what was after

1783 the United States of America. Let us listen to another great patriot, humanist and freedom fighter. Affirmed Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot exist half slave, half free." It was under this great humanist slogan and the patriotic slogan, "The Union must be maintained," that Abraham Lincoln led the federalist (the unionist) in the American civil war. Lincoln was not only the President of the United States and a convinced federalist, he was also a leading champion of the abolition of precapitalist slavery. Most of the plantation owners in the solution part of the United States of America could not imagine any other way of retaining or expanding their wealth except through slave labour. In 1812 Denmark became the first country in the world to proclaim the abolition of slavery. The hour for the abolition of precapitalist slavery was at hand, but many slave owners in the United States, mainly but not entirely in the south of it, opposed the abolition. The leaders of the southern states in that country preferred secession and the dissolution of the American federation to

the abolition slavery. Lincoln had to decide to fight or not to fight to maintain the union and abolish precapitalist slavery. As history has it the unionists and abolitionists won and that victory gave a big boost to liberation struggles in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Soon after the victory of the unionists and abolitionists, however, capitalism (a machine based form of industrial-commercial slavery) developed rapidly in the U.S.A. With this development the United States got split into slave-owner and slavery in the new, capitalist, way that has dominated the twentieth century.

Just as the first wars to abolish pre-capitalist slavery were fought in San Domingo (Haiti) and the U.S.A, a little more than a century ago, so the first wars to abolish capitalist slavery were fought in Russia in 1918-20 and in Eastern Europe and China after the Second World War. Since slavery in any form is bound to disappear, the second type of anti-slave war will continue in spite of wishful thinking by people like the present rulers of America, fascists like: Hitler, Mobutu and Pinochet and other champions of capitalist and neocolonial plunder, no matter what masks they wear.

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LET us listen to more voice thundering down the corridors of history. Here comes one of my beloved historical friends, the great patriot and freedom fighter, Patrick Henry. He cried out: "Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may choose but, as for me, give me liberty or give me death." That was the flaming orator, Patrick Henry, addressing the first American Congress - I mean the Revolutionary Congress called by the thirteen North American colonies of Great Britain. Urged by free men by nature like my friend, Patrick, the Revolutionary Congress declared the independence of the thirteen colonies in 1776 and resisted British imperial counter-revolutionary war of independence which ended in 1783.

What did Patrick Henry mean by 'chains and slavery'? He meant the domination, curbs and bondage of British colonialism. The thirteen British colonies and others were held within the world-market of British mercantilism which was the trading imperialism that promoted the and nascent capitalists. American colonial land served as British plantations. American forests served Great Britain as sources of timber, American labour - including the labour of black slaves in America -