

Eddie Madge

THE 'MODE OF PRODUCTION' NUCLEUS AS INTEGRATOR OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SCIENCES

34

ESKOR TOYO*

In a general way the problem of sundering of economics and politics does not exist for Marxists. This paper attempts not only to spell out the concepts by which Marxists effect the general solution to the problem but to indicate the analytical effects of these concepts. Further, with a brief application of the general solution to Nigeria, an attempt will be made to show what is involved in applying the general concepts to particular cases, and, in particular, what difference Marxist orientation makes to the scientific study of transition in 'third world' countries.

Because of the prevailing ignorance, misunderstanding, confusion and distortion that have characterized and characterize the reception of anything Marxist by those hostile to Marx's ideological position, it becomes necessary to make the *scientific* propositions of Marxists clear and set the scientific record straight. We shall set about that task in our own way, not in the way Marx or anyone else might have done so. We shall lay emphasis on distinctions crucial for the development of *scientific* solutions: distinctions which escape attention in all the wooly writings on the so-called 'economic interpretation of history'.

Marx's contribution is sometimes carved up into 'Marx's sociology' 'Marx's economics' and 'Marx's political theory' as is done, for instance, by Schumpeter¹ and by books on political thought. Both the 'factor' mentality and the exigencies of specialization account for this, and too, such compartmentalization cannot always be avoided. It should never be forgotten, however, that Marx considered social science as one, and regarded an economics which is divorced from politics as merely an abstraction and vice versa.

All the writings of Marx and the Marxists on society, whether economic, political, anthropological-sociological, ² legal, historical, or social psychological, are based on a simple paradigm: the historical materialist approach. This approach is based on what has come to be called the 'materialist conception of history' as a concept, and historical or social dialectics as a method.

Marx's contributions to social scientific analysis are also sometimes reduced by condensation into a single thesis, namely, the core thesis of the materialist conception of history, put forward by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the middle of the nineteenth century. As is well known, this thesis says that by and large it is not men's consciousness—ideas, beliefs or social psychology—that account for the character of their social interactions and institutions but, on the contrary, the nature of the latter that explain, in the simplest possible way, the nature of the former.³

Despite all efforts to distort this thesis in order to 'prove it false' and sidetrack it simply because it was associated with revolutionary ideas,⁴ it has gained more and more scientific-philosophical influence since it was first formulated. In fact, today, it is used unconsciously—and thus often expertly⁵—by practically all social scientists. As matters stand today, John Madge is right to describe it as 'the immensely influential thesis of Marx and Engels.'⁶

*Eskor Toyo is lecturing in the Department of Economics, University of Calabar, Calabar.

Nevertheless, three observations must be made about the use of this thesis.

First, the thesis, although itself immensely powerful as a paradigm proposition and an integrator for all social studies—in fact, the only integral paradigm actually in existence⁷—is not the whole of historical materialism. Historical materialism is historical-social dialectics as a method, guided by the 'materialist conception' proposition as leading hypothesis.⁸

Secondly, to acknowledge the immense utility of the differential calculus, for instance, is not the same thing as to master mathematics. For the United States, for example, Beard regrets that, barring a few exceptions, "the hypothesis that economic elements are the chief factors in the development of political institutions ... has not been applied to the study of American history at large—certainly not with that infinite detailed analysis which it requires".⁹ Those who think that the materialist conception is something of a schematic 'straight-jacket' do not understand anything about it or are misled by vulgarized attempts to use it.

The historical materialist approach is, in fact, highly sophisticated. That the use of the materialist conception of history requires a lot of historical knowledge, dialectical flexibility and intellectual integrity is clear from Engels' own restatement of it which, in view of a century of distortions, we had better cite *in extense*.

According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence, if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religions views and their further development into systems of dogmas—also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose inner inter-connection is so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent, as negligible), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history would be easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degrees.¹⁰

It is obvious from this passage that far from being 'dogmatic' and 'rigid', this approach, while being disciplined, is the most antidogmatic and flexible because it is dialectical, is empirically oriented and sees things in the context of concrete historical conditions.

Thirdly, the tool of historical materialism makes it possible for analysis to be comparative, systematic, and functionalist all at once; to be objective without ignoring subjective experience, general yet concrete, structuralist yet dynamic, historical yet logical, deterministic, in so far as no science can exist without some determinism, yet flexible; to see interdependence yet see superordination and subordination as special categories of interdependence; to see unity and yet see contradiction as an aspect of unity; to grapple with complexity yet do that in the most scientifically simple way. The property that gives it this power is dialectics.

Non-Marxists make use of deductive and inductive reasoning only. Marxists make use of deductive, inductive and dialectical reasoning. All three require training, but non-Marxists miss the third kind of training. The result is that they are very often absurdly one-sided, absolutist and myopic.

As we have said, although it guides us to develop integrating empirical concepts and methods, the 'materialist conception of history' does not by itself yield such concepts and methods. The basic empirical concept for integration in social analysis used by Marxists, is the category of 'mode of production', Marxists do sometimes speak abstractly, like others, about 'society', but concretely and historically a society is a social system constituted on the basis of a mode of production or several modes in interaction.

If one went through non-Marxist books on sociology, one would come across definitions of society such as the following. Society is the aggregate 'of individuals in their relations to one another',¹¹ it is 'that group within which man can live a total common life rather than an organisation limited to some specific purpose or purposes' and, therefore, it 'consists not only of individuals related to one another but also of interconnected and partly overlapping groups'.¹² It is 'the system of institutions which govern behaviour and provide the framework for social life' and is thus 'to be described in terms of its principal institutions—familial, religious, economic, political, educational, and so on'.¹³ It is the 'largest relatively permanent group who share common interests, common territory, a common mode of life ...'¹⁴ It is 'the broadest grouping of people who share a common set of habits, ideas and attitudes, live in a definite territory and consider themselves a social unit'.¹⁵ Such citations could be continued *ad infinitum*.

It is instructive to compare these loose and vague notions that lead to no particular identification with Marx's own characterization of society:

The relations of production in their totality constitute what are called social relations, society, and specifically a society at a definite stage of historical development, a society with particular, distinctive character.¹⁶

By identifying a mode of production and the relations of production which characterize it, we have identified concretely the nucleus of a society.

Similarly, Marxists may speak loosely like others about 'economy' or 'polity', but concretely and historically an economy is a definite mode of production or a combination of modes in symbiotic or integral relationship. A polity is a mode of production as consolidated and influenced by the complex of institutions for order engendered or appropriated and used by it.

A 'mode of production' is a historically constituted structural entity with organic sides or aspects. The identification of these aspects in a general way yields categories for further analysis. The two sides are *material* and *ideological*.

A social system comes into being on the basis of a definite level in the development of productive forces—factual knowledge, tools and skills, division of labour and organization—which endows that society with a character of economic activity peculiar to it. For instance, according to the level of development of productive forces, we have the following models or levels of activity: simple hunter-gatherer (without bows), advanced hunter-gatherer (with bows), lower horticultural (without metals), advanced horticultural (with metals), lower agrarian (with ploughs), advanced agrarian (made possible by a host of inventions such as printing, iron casting, wind-mill, water-powered mill, spinning wheel, gunpowder), and industrial (based on machines driven by artificial power).¹⁷

The level of productive forces is one side of the material base of a mode of production. The other side is the relations of production: borrower-lender, buyer-seller, importer-exporter, master-servant, producer-consumer, employer-employee and similar social relations, formed between

man and man around goods. Of these the property relations are obviously the most crucial, since they have to do with control over the means of action—over the means of production, output and labour—in a given society. Let us call this material substratum the base of the mode of production, since obviously, what society can do and how depends on the means available, so that the structure of society depends on the rights to the means of production.

Consideration of the relations of production, along with the activity levels determined by the development of productive forces, gives us the base of the economic aspect of a mode of production. Thus, advanced horticultural activity may give us a slave society, a feudal society, or one transitional between the two. Industrial society may be capitalist or socialist with many transitional forms.

Needless to say, that, when a kind of mode of production such as feudalism, capitalist colonialism, or socialism is identified for purposes of comparison, (1) it may exist in symbiosis with other modes because of survivals from the past; (2) it does not exist in its simple theoretical form because this is always an abstract approximation to the complex historical reality; (3) it exists here and there with different local variations from the common generic model.

A mode of production is characterized by definite processes, assigns tasks and allots rights and obligations. It generates ideas as to what is right, just acceptable, rational etc.—ideas which vary according to the tasks and interests of man within the system. These include moral, philosophical, religious and scientific notions, and constitute the ideological aspect proper. Some of these ideas are formulated as rules, and institutionalized in law and custom and, in complex society, special organizations come into existence to sustain the rules. These rules of law and customs constitute the institutions of the society. The ideological side, including the institutions which follow from and sustain the accepted values and ideas, is known in historical materialism as the superstructure of the mode of production.¹⁸

Attention must be drawn to certain caveats.

For analytical purposes the 'base' and the 'superstructure' are only two sides of the same structural whole, one side being historically and logically related to the other.

Social relations may be relations of superordination and subordination, of harmony or antagonism, of cooperation or conflict.

The division of labour plays a crucial role in social analysis, because of its concrete role in social formations. Analytically it enables us to pass from the abstract concepts of 'interrelations', 'interactions' and 'society' to the concept of specific societies.

In particular, the passage from forms of so-called 'simple society', that is, societies so far characterized by the structural presence of the state, entails an all important structural transformation. It makes a great difference whether this transformation is observed at all or how it is handled. In fact, with this transformation the principle of social organization changes decisively and with that change go many crucial developments.

As we have urged, the concept of a mode of production enables us: (a) to start off with an idea in which the economic and the political are aspects of the same entity; (b) to bring the concept of society from abstraction to concrete historical reality; (c) to differentiate historically between types of societies and, therefore, types of relationship between economy and polity. We shall dwell a little more on the last point.

The importance of the transition from 'simple' to 'complex' society is missed by those who do not see clearly what is involved in it. The change opens a new structural epoch in human society and a new relationship between economy and polity, a relationship based on the existence of social classes. This matter requires more careful attention.

Non-Marxian sociologists have come up with no clear criterion for their classification of societies into 'simple' and 'complex' ones,¹⁹ but it is not difficult to see that this distinction turns upon the division of labour. 'Simple', 'segmentary', 'primitive communist', early 'classless' or early 'stateless' societies are characterized by the so-called 'natural' division of labour. This is the division of labour in which men or the elders perform some tasks and women or young people others. Apart from this there is no specialization.

However, it is our view that the crucial property of this division of labour is not that it is 'natural' rather than 'social', but that it allots functions with the family as the basic social-productive unit, the family here being usually the 'extended' type. It is intrafamilial division of labour that characterizes 'simple', 'segmentary' 'primitive communist', early 'classless' or early 'stateless' society. In this society the most important relations are lineage relations. The social nexus is the familial or kinship nexus.²⁰

The contradictions within or between kinship groups are settled by family and clan heads. There are no specialized organizations for performing such functions.²¹

However, as soon as a society is able to produce an alienable surplus a number of important developments take place.

- (a) Specialized functionaries who can be maintained on the basis of the surplus come into existence.
- (b) An extra-familial division of labour emerges as families are now differentiated into farming families and families of non-farmers: priests, warriors, administrators and judges, traders, handicraftsmen and scholars.
- (c) New relations—extra-familial—arise, new contradictions and new antagonisms.
- (d) Associations emerge for the organization of people for specialized tasks.
- (e) With the division of labour, concepts of private property develop and with them the need for special protection for private property. There follows the breakdown of early communistic appropriation arrangements and thus of the polity that sustained these arrangements.
- (f) Predatory activities become possible, because it is now possible to obtain goods not by one's own productive effort but by extorting the surplus that can now be produced by a group or a community.
- (g) The regular production of means of coercion emerges as an activity along with the regular production of means of production, and a struggle begins for the control of the resources necessary for both production and predation or coercion.
- (h) The society is split into superior and inferior families as some families or communities assume dominance over others by virtue of a natural advantage, such as number, or historical advantage such as access to the means of coercion. In short, the social order is now a class order.

- (i) Wars of conquest come into existence, replacing the wars of reprisal or raids that featured in earlier society.
- (j) A special machinery for the maintenance of both dominance and order is needed in society and it emerges out of the metamorphosis of war. This is the state.

As Engels summarises, the historical materialist approach 'is easiest to grasp from the point of view of division of labour. Society gives rise to certain common functions which it cannot dispense with. The persons for this purpose form a new branch of the division of labour *within society*. This gives them particular interests, distinct, too, from the interests of those who empowered them; they make themselves independent of the latter and—the state is in being'.²²

With these developments the epoch of class society opens. The unity of economics and politics is not now a segmentary unity; it is class unity. The polity is now a class polity. The state is a machinery for extracting the surplus from its producers, for guaranteeing unequal claims to social wealth, for sustaining the conditions of production in an antagonistic society, for maintaining order as dictated by the interests of dominant property owners.

As Lenski says of agrarian society 'the state was the basic integrative force. This was inevitable in societies created by conquest for the benefit of a tiny governing class'.²³

In the class epoch, the dynamics of society is still governed in general by the development of productive forces, but this development can now be accelerated or retarded by the state.²⁴ Class struggle now emerges as a new vehicle of social change from one mode of production to another or even within a given mode of production. This is so because class interests are now crucial determinants of social action. The 'general interests of the society' are internalized as class interests, and solutions to problems are no longer independent of class interest, class consciousness and class power.

It must be emphasized, that the attention apparently given to classes in Marxian analysis is necessitated by strategy. It need not arise, as many think, from the revolutionary urge to expose exploitation and champion class war. When a society is actually a class society, relations within it and its dynamic process are governed by this fact. It is invalid to build a model of it without highlighting its key structural principle. As Schumpeter observed:

Social classes are not the creatures of the classifying observer but live entities that exist as such. And their existence entails consequences that are entirely missed by a schema which looks upon society as if it were an amorphous assemblage of individuals or families ... That (the class phenomenon) is very important for many practical applications and for all the broader aspects of the social process²⁵ is beyond doubt.²⁶

Even for class society, however, it is an error to think that class struggle is the primary motive force for change. It is only a secondary, though a constantly active one. The development of productive forces is in all societies—past, present and future—the primary change promoting force.²⁷ Nevertheless, in class society this primary motive force operates within the social conditions of class mode of production.

Thus, to the 'mode of production' as an integral concept for economics and political science, we add 'class society' or its contrary, classless society, as an integral concept. The relations of production in the various modes of production in the class epoch are class relations. The basic political relations are simply a corollary of the economic class relations. The political institutions, whatever their character, will sustain these relations; the ideologies of the society will seek to perpetuate, reform or overthrow them.

So-called 'general social interests' are reflected in the ideologies of a society, but they are passed through the prism of particular class interest.

It must be observed, that the approach to analysis based on the recognition of the class nature of post-segmentary society does not automatically give us a valid piece of theorising or description. Moreover, such analysis is not necessarily easy. The basic class orientation is not a substitute for observation; it is rather a guide to observation. It is invalid if used a-historically, that is, without seeing any particular society as a product of a particular historical development. As Engels insisted, the materialist conception of history 'is above all a guide to study...' ²⁸

All history must be studied afresh, the conditions of existence of the different formations of society must be examined individually before the attempt is made to deduce from them the political, civil-law, aesthetic, philosophic, religious, etc. views corresponding for them. ²⁹

For instance, it would be wrong to picture Nigeria as a capitalist society and to analyse her economics and politics simply, or even primarily, in terms of bourgeoisie versus proletariat. Nigeria is, of course, a class society, but the actual structure of this society as a mode of production—actually a combination of modes—and the actual existing class and related contradictions affecting the dynamics of her affairs, must be concretely studied by the actual examination of her history and her society. It will not do to impose any ready-made scheme derived from the study of any particular society, such as Europe, although insights derived and lessons learnt from the study of other societies are useful.

The historical materialist approach is comparative in practice even if it is not apparently so. Mental experiments are being made all the time. ³⁰ The more other empirical cases are known as a basis for comparison, and the more dialectical the orientation, so that the analysis can come to grips as closely as possible with the concrete, the more valid can the analysis and conclusions be as regards any particular case.

This brings us to our observation that the class framework is not necessarily easy to use, since its use is both historical and logical, and the logic is not only inductive and deductive but also dialectical.

The first difficulty is the meaning of 'class' itself. The general guide given by Lenin's definition is that classes are large social groups, one of which can exploit the labour of another, by virtue of the positions they occupy in a definite system of social production. ³¹ However, since not all classes labour, it is more correct to say that they are large groups, some of which can be predatory upon others by virtue of the positions they occupy in a system of social production. They are groups classified according to their types and sources of income, or according to the type of privilege or under-privilege which is theirs in a hierarchical or unequal social order. In particular, they differ in their relations *inter-se* with regard to the means of production existing in a given society. This characterization is perfectly general and does not tie an analyst to any particular class scheme not existing in the particular society which he is studying.

One must go into great detail in observation. The categorization of people into rich and poor, exploiter and exploited, privileged and under-privileged, is a useful beginning, but only a beginning. ³² We have to go into the social economic character of what is owned, the kinds of rights or claims involved in ownership, the types of exploitations, the character of the privileges, the types and gradations among the relatively privileged and how they stand to one another, and this also for the under-privileged, etc.

We have to distil the various interests involved from all this and assess the various power positions. The latter involves an observation of institutions. Further, ideologies, political parties and programmes, have to be studied as they relate to the phenomena detailed already.

'Class analysis' must build up a dialectical link between those world historical developments in the epoch which affect local events on the one hand, and the local socio-political situation which defines certain interests and ideological elements on the other.

Since the analysis is historical, it has to give due place to cultural elements, such as ethnicity and religion, which affect the historical situation in which economy and polity operate. It is true that the motion of class society is promoted primarily by technological developments and secondarily by class struggles in class society, but all this does not take place on a historical *tabula rasa*.

As Engels insists:

We make our history ourselves, but, in the first place, under very definite assumptions and conditions. Among these the economic ones are ultimately decisive. But the political ones, etc., and indeed even the traditions which haunt human minds also play a part, although not the decisive one.³³

We have to identify not only what is but what *is becoming*. This calls for historical comparative analysis and for the concrete analysis of the various socio-historical processes, and the contradictions of the society resulting from them, which have to be resolved one way or other. The available means and possibilities of resolution have to be assessed.

The historical materialist analysing class society has to observe the multiple forms in which class interests manifest themselves and class struggles proceed: economic, political-legal, ideological, cultural forms and various varieties of these forms some of which undergo changes from one situation to another.³⁴

Non-Marxist social scientists speak volumes about 'status', 'classes', and 'inequality', but these are empty abstractions in so far as they do not refer these categories to historically existing system of social production. They are also arbitrary abstractions in so far as there is no systematic method by which such reference could be made.

Statuses, classes, inequalities, freedom, interest, protest, deviance, conflict, authority, power, etc. are defined historically within modes of production, and historical materialism afford the only scholarly means of fully and simply integrating the economic aspects and manifestations of these categories with their political aspects in concrete reality.

This brings us back to the state. It will be beyond the scope of this paper to embark on an extended discussion of the economic role of the state. However, let us observe that in non-Marxian economics the state is invariably treated as a *deus ex machina*,³⁴ as an *intervener* in economic affairs. This pictures the state as a neutral force standing above society and only intervening once in a while in the interest of peace and justice.

Suffice it to say here that the state is nothing of the sort. The state exists only in class society and is casually bound up with class society. The state arose in history to guarantee stable production conditions in an economically unequal society, split into antagonistic classes. Its primary role is to sustain property rights and economic obligations resting thereon as a basis for production. Property rights involve rights to means of production and to the output. Control over means of production implies control over the disposal of output and this in turn implies control over the use of available labour and natural resources in the given society.³⁶ In class society, *economy and*

polity is basically a theme around the economic value added, no matter how much culture and personality may complicate the issue. It is only by being historical that one can see this clearly.

Thus the following statement by Hurd is not entirely correct:

The most important characteristic of the state which distinguishes it from the simpler societies is that it is able to exert power; if necessary it can *force* its members to carry out certain tasks.³⁷

This statement is true only if we look exclusively at the problem of the mechanism of control, that is, the problem of the means of ensuring obedience. But we have to ask: Obedience to whom and for what purpose? Hurd comes nearer the truth when he writes:

Whatever the details, state formation is characterised by the gradual establishment within a given territory of twin monopolies: over the use of physical force, and over taxation ... Thus ... the law tends to protect the interests of the ruling group; taxes are paid *by* peasants *to* priests and Kings; the army is commanded by the strong at the expense of the weak. The emergence of the political state, then, is one manifestation of the growth of wealth and power of one small section of the population. It presupposes the establishment of surplus production.³⁸

The state up to our day has not changed its *raison d'être* and essential function. Since it is a structural necessity in class society, its functional necessity can cease to exist and thus the state itself, only with the disappearance of class society.

Let us apply the historical materialist approach briefly to Nigeria.

From the point of view of the mode of production, Nigeria today is a very complex society—much more so than, say, Britain, the United States or the Soviet Union.

It is a country where precapitalist modes of production, largely agricultural, are passing into the capitalist mode of production. This is by no means a simple matter of transition from traditional to industrial society. Nor is it sufficient, as some political analysts do, to regard Nigeria simply as a tribal society before colonial rule and cannot be today. Before colonial rule, Nigeria was an area where states and empires had existed for centuries.

We may start from the agrarian sector. Before colonial rule, slavery, and essentially feudal relations, had characterized large areas such as Bornu, Hausaland, Yorubaland, Nupe and the Bini empire; maritime merchant-dominated states, based partly on slave labour, had come into being in the coastal areas as we know from the case of Lagos, Bonny, Opobo and Calabar.

This means that in large parts of the country a class order, half slave, half-feudal, based on advanced horticulture had come into existence. Correspondingly, states and empires appropriate to these class orders had come into existence. In other words, before colonial rule, large parts of Nigeria had already been split into a privileged class of slave owners or feudal-type 'lords of land'³⁹ on the one hand, and peasants and slaves on the other. Many of the nationalities had already been split into super-ordinate and subordinate nationalities.

This dichotomy of privilege was not entirely destroyed by colonial rule. Of course, along with every slavery and every patron-client system, go slave and feudal or protofeudal wars. There were many such wars in Nigeria which many historians see simply and wrongly as 'tribal wars'. Colonialism did not completely destroy the ethnic antagonisms arising from these wars.

It was on a divided society that colonialism was imposed.

Thus, a horticultural society, large parts of which were divided into ruling and subject classes and peoples, had the imperialist colonial mode of production imposed on it. The effects of this imposition included the forging of external links with expatriate capitalism, the generation of augmented surpluses for a new state, the creation of new urban centres, and the coming into existence of a petty-bourgeois, and a working class, in a society transformed into a colonial appendage of British capitalist imperialism. In the new situation a colonial bureaucracy came into existence and colonial interests dominated economy and polity.

At the time of independence in 1960, formal political power passed into the hands of three ruling groups namely, the rural or traditional ruling classes; the new 'men of business', that is, the bourgeois class, and the bureaucracy, the last a powerful quasi-independent servant of the former two. The owners of expatriate investments remain an absentee ruling group whose interests serve at least as a check to local interests and ambitions.

Thus, we must see Nigeria as emerging from both a class-horticultural past that is very much alive, and a colonial past that is also very much present. The mode of production is a semi-colonial type, with remnants of a differentiated and divided 'traditional' society, advancing in the direction of an industrial society. But what is the character of this advance?

Nigeria is advancing in the capitalist direction. Therefore, the so-called modernizing processes are at bottom annexed to the governing process of primitive capitalist accumulation.

The process of primitive accumulation of a capitalistic character is marked by the rise and predominance of the merchant capitalist class. As in Western Europe, America, Eastern Europe, Latin America or Asia, the epoch of merchant capitalist accumulation is one of great turbulence.⁴⁰ Graft, embezzlement, various forms of unequal exchange, mendacity and violence characterize 'competition' in the period of primitive capitalist accumulation.

The state plays a great auxiliary role to the bourgeois class in the process of primitive accumulation. It does so economically, by centralizing and redistributing peasant—and in the case of Nigeria, mining—surpluses in various ways: through state purchases, infra-structural investments, loans, contracts, participation in large-scale enterprises, foreign trade policy, investment in education, wage pegging, land reform facilitating land acquisition by the bourgeoisie, cheap money policy, etc.

Politically, the capitalistic merchant state in the exercise of order collaborates with the traditional ruling class, exempt from the on-going process of dis-integration of the agrarian order. On the other hand, however, it is antagonistic to the conservative interests of the traditional elite. Throughout the 'third world, the extent of the collaboration depends on the particular history of the country concerned.

Essentially the state is used as an instrument of merchant and industrial capitalist accumulation.

In Nigeria—and other 'third world' countries as well—the accumulation is a combined process in the sense that it is both merchant and industrial. It is also combined, in the sense that it is done through market and extra-market processes. The latter fall into two sets: different forms of graft, theft, 'corruption', and naked force involving violence on the one hand, and political processes, in which the first set of methods also manifest themselves, on the other.

Side by side with this process of development of the bourgeoisie and the transformation of the old class of agrarian gentry into a class of collaborators, there proceeds in Nigeria what is in

essence the complement of it, namely, the development of a market-oriented or 'cash-crop' peasantry in the country, and a working class in the towns. The process of urbanization, which results from monetization and commercial and industrial activities give rise to both a swelling of the class of petty artisans and petty-traders of colonial society, and the growth of the lumpen proletariat—a stratum of extremely poor, unemployed and under-employed, people hanging on society, numbers of which can be procured for thuggery or any other crime.

Much of what we have observed so far about bourgeois accumulation in Nigeria is really not peculiar to Nigeria. The features described occur in one form or other everywhere in the period of bourgeois primitive accumulation. Complicating the situation for countries like Nigeria, however, is the fact that 'modernization' 'development' or 'transition' is taking place, first in a post-colonial context and, secondly, in the epoch of national liberation revolutions against imperialism and the revolutionary transition to socialism on a global scale.

In Nigeria the post-colonial context gives us, an inflated bureaucracy, unrenounced imperialist authority and remnants of colonial mentality. The world and African revolutionary context results in the presence of patriotic and 'state-socialist' sentiments of the Bismack variety reflected in the ideology of 'mixed economy'—which affect the way in which primitive accumulation is encouraged by the state in ideology and in fact.

Thus 'development', 'modernization' or 'transition' in Nigeria is a complicated process of combined development. It is combined in the sense we have already indicated. Still more basically, it is combined in the sense that it is a neo-colonial variety of decolonization, and a turbulent process of bourgeois development, as well as it is a process of transition into an industrial society.

These processes give rise to various interests and contradictions, which, as is often alleged, make Nigeria 'difficult to govern'.

The bourgeois class has hardly cut itself free of umbilical links with the countryside, as is evidenced by the growing number of bourgeois 'chiefs'. Further, the bourgeoisie normally have an ethnic-regional rather than a national business base. The latter statement has important political consequence and can be illustrated statistically.

If one looks at the record of privately-owned companies registered or incorporated in Nigeria as lately as January 1974, one finds that they very largely belong to people of the same ethnic area. This is shown in the table below which excludes a few doubtful cases and a few companies with no indication of registered capital. The details in the source show that fifty-five of these companies were registered in the Lagos Federal area, and this means that even in the Federal capital, business collaboration proceeds on an ethnic basis. The table shows that even the larger private Nigerian companies are mostly ethnic in their base.

New Companies Incorporated and/or Registered in Nigeria in January 1974

Registered Capital (₦)	Of Single Ethnic Origin	Of Mixed Ethnic Origin
200 — 999	6	Nil
1,000 — 4,999	13	1
5,000 — 9,999	3	2
10,000 — 19,999	17	1
20,000 — 99,999	17	Nil
100,000 — 499,999	10	2
500,000 — 999,999	Nil	Nil
1,000,000 and over	2	Nil
Total	68	6

Source: Federal Government of Nigeria, *The Nigeria Trade Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1978.

With this background, bourgeois competition easily becomes ethnic competition. Since bourgeois competition is antagonistic competition, its reflection, namely, as ethnic contradiction, chauvinism and antagonism is only to be expected. This economic basis of acerbic ethnic jingoism is reinforced by three factors. First, there is the historical background provided by the antagonism engendered by class exploitation, feudal vandalism, slave raids and similar phenomena in the precolonial past, which is well preserved in a memory and the actual social conditions of a population still largely rural. Secondly, is the historical background provided by the deliberate fanning of ethnic antagonism as a divide and rule technique especially in the last days of colonial rule. Thirdly, there is the cultivation of bourgeois parliamentary forms—partly by British colonial tutelage—which necessitate the egoistic cultivation of a personal 'constituency' for each politician. In the nature of things, this 'constituency' will almost invariably be that of the politician's own ethnic origin.

Since 'progress' is an inevitable social desire, the 'progress' of the bourgeois metamorphoses into the progress of the *area* or even of the people of the area from which he comes. The bourgeois businessman, the bourgeois politician and the bourgeois-minded bureaucrat or intellectual is 'our man'—a hero of 'progress'—for his area of ethnic origin.

In this way, even the desire for progress in an uneven and divided bourgeois class society is turned into 'competition' or antagonism between the more developed areas, whose bourgeois class have a relative economic power advantage, and the less developed ones, whose people remain tax payers for the 'progress' of the bourgeois stratum of *other* areas.

Federalism, and the creation of more states, may have prevented the country from breaking up, it was only to be expected that they cannot do more. Far from eradicating ruling class antagonisms, these solutions merely create a politico-economic basis for the continuation of the

most unabashed bourgeois opportunism and ruling class antimonies. Since the state is the most powerful means of financing the bourgeoisie, its control by this or that bourgeois group is a matter of life and death.

Thus, a powerful class-ethnic dialectic, as well as a powerful imperialist—nationalist combination and contradiction, which is itself a form of class-national or class-racial dialectic, underlie economic and political processes of 'modernization' in Nigeria. For opportunistic reasons, however, the bourgeoisie themselves strive to hide from the exploited classes their own ascendancy as a class. They prefer that the people see them simply as national patriots, anti-racists, ethnic patriots and promoters of economic and social progress. And here their newspapers and scholars do them yeoman service.

But then, the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie also proves that tribalism is not capable of autonomous development. It develops as the bourgeoisie develop—according to the contradictions engendered by the advance of the bourgeois order. Overall, tribalism is not determining in the class ethnic dialectic; it is determined. Yet, from stage to stage, Nigerian politics is the peculiar product of this dialectic.

With this pen-point illustration of the use of the historical materialist approach, the reader can already have the feel of how powerful historical materialism can be as an explanatory or as an integrating apparatus. With it, industrialization, 'modernization', 'transition', 'group interest' and 'coalition', 'contradictions', 'indiscipline', the various agonising 'problems', tribalism, the predominance of corruption—official or non-official—in short, the essence and modalities of economy and polity all fall into place simply as aspects of a concrete historical totality. Historical materialism alone affords the scholarly means of seeing how these various complex, conflicting and apparently confusing phenomena relate to one another, or the means of elucidating *in the simplest possible manner* the basic tendencies and processes to which they relate.

It is extremely superficial to see what is going on in the Nigerian economy and polity simply in terms of the categories of 'development', 'transition' or 'modernization'. It is even more superficial and, for that matter, particularly sterile, and misleading, to analyse her politics in terms of ethnic or political party coalition as inspired by the games theoretical model. All politics is, of course, a sort of game, but it is so only on a very thin, static, a-historical and formal superficial level. That is particularly true of a country like Nigeria where great social-historical questions are being determined and the substantial phenomena can assume a multitude of forms. The multiplicity of forms is made possible by the complexity of the inherited social apparatus and the possibility of borrowing political forms in an age where the agrarian traditional, the bourgeois-industrial, the imperialist-colonial, and the proletarian-socialist modes of society coexist in turbulent combination and conflict.

Economics and political science are brought to unity by a technique which focuses concretely on the concept of a mode of production.

The identification of a mode of production enables us concretely to unite history, political science, economics and sociology. It makes concrete and practically relevant such general categories as 'society', 'economy', 'polity', 'state', 'power', 'interdependence', 'economic institution', 'political obligation', 'political interest', 'competition', 'transition' and 'development' which all take concrete forms and meanings in accordance with the specific essence and requirements of an identified mode of production.

Since the ideological-political side and the material-economic side are only two structural aspects of a mode of production, the concept of a mode of production enables us to see their unity and interaction. More than that it enables us to see beyond the institutional surface.

There is, however, an expertise in the use of the historical materialist approach. In particular, it does not permit the imposition of any pre-imagined scheme on any historical-social situation. Moreover, the concept of a mode of production solves the problem of unity of economics and political science only in a general way. This general solution is extremely powerful for it permits both comprehensiveness and rigour. Nevertheless, its correct application as a methodology to the political science and economics of any concrete instance of a society, such as present-day underdeveloped countries, is itself a challenging scientific task.

WORKS CITED

- Artyukhin, N.Y. *et al.*, *Society and Economic Relations*, edited by A.S. Markhov and A.S. Frish, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1069.
- Beard, Charles, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, The Macmillan Co., New York, republished 1972.
- Cabral, Amilcar, *Revolution in Guinea, Stage 1*, London, 1969.
- Chinoy, E., *Society: An Introduction to Sociology*, New York, 1961.
- Conforth, M., *Dialectical Materialism*, Vol. 2, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1953.
- Duverger, Maurice, *Introduction to the Social Sciences*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1968.
- Engels, F., 'The Part Played by Labour, in the Transition from Ape to Man', in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works, Vol. 1*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975.
- Engels, F., 'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State' *op. cit.*
- Engels, F., 'Socialism: Utopian and Scientific', reproduced in K. Marx and F. Engels, *op. cit.*
- Engels, F., 'Letter to J. Bloch', *op. cit.*
- Engels, F., 'Letter to C. Schmidt' *op. cit.*
- Engels, F., 'Letter to F. Mehring' *op. cit.*
- Federal Government of Nigeria, *The Nigeria Trade Journal* Vol. 25. No. 2, 1978.
- Fortes, M. and E.E. Evans-Pritchard (eds.), *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, London, 1940.
- Goody, Jack, *Technology, Tradition and State in Africa*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971.
- Green, A.W., *Sociology*, New York, 1952.
- Jackson, Robert I. and Michael E. Stein, 'The Issues of Political Development in *Issues in Comparative Politics*, edited by the same authors, St. Matins Press, New York, and Macmillan, London, 1971.
- Lenin, V.I., *A Great Beginning*.
- Lenski, Gerhard, *Human Societies*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York—London, 1970.
- Madge, John, *The Tools of Social Science*, Longmans Green and Co., London, 1963.
- Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, Martin Press, London, 1977.
- Marx, K., *Capital*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1966.
- Osipov, G. *Sociology*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969.
- Schumpeter, J.A., *Ten Great Economists from Marx to Keynes*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1965.
- Sweezy, Paul, 'What has Keynes contributed to the analysis of capitalism?' in Rubert Lekachman (ed.), *Keynes and the Classics*, D.C. Heath and Co., Boston, 1965.
- Toyo, Eskor, 'On the Identification and Definition of Class' *Theory and Practice*, No. 2, 1977.
- Wetter, G., *Soviet Ideology Today*, Heineman, London, 1966.
- Young, K. and R. Mark, *Sociology and Social Life*, New York, 1959.

Notes:

1. See J.A. Schumpeter, *Ten Great Economists from Marx to Keynes*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1965.
2. See, for instance, F. Engels, 'The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man', in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, pp. 354—364, and F. Engels, 'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State', reproduced in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Ibid.*, pp. 461—483.
3. Thus, Engels says that with the birth of 'a materialist treatment of history a method (was) found of explaining man's "knowing" by his "knowing"', F. Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* reproduced in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, P. 410. Again, he asserts that with this approach 'all the historical phenomena are explicable in the simplest possible way ...' See F. Engels, Karl Marx, reproduced in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, *op. cit.*, pp. 371—372.
4. Charles Beard notes the 'tendency to treat it with scant courtesy and to dismiss it with a sharpness bordering on contempt'. Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1972, p. 6.
5. Thus in the prevailing 'Social—Mobilization' and 'social penetration' orientation of the study of transition in third-world countries, 'politics is treated as a subordinate variable which is determined by more powerful social and economic forces', whereas, as Jackson and Stein correctly observe, 'the reverse is often the case in the new nation'. (See Robert I. Jackson and Michael B. Stein, 'The Issues of Political Development' in *Issues in Comparative Politics*, edited by the same authors, St. Martins Press, New York, and Macmillan, London, 1971, p. 23). This is a use of the materialist conception thesis which is mechanistic and thus overdeterministic and blind to historical reality and, therefore, wrong.
6. John Madge, *The Tools of Social Science*, Longmans Green and Co., London, 1963, p. 4.
7. Cf. Maurice Duverger: 'Marxism is the first general theory and remains the only cosmology of the social sciences', See his *Introduction to the Social Sciences*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1968, p. 19.
8. Wetter is the only writer known to us who clearly points out this distinction between the *materialist conception of historical materialism* See G. Wetter, *Soviet Ideology Today*, Heineman, London, 1966, p. 158.
9. Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, The Macmillan Co., New York, republished 1972, p. 6.
10. F. Engels, *Letter to J. Bloch*, published in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, *op. cit.* p. 682.
11. E. Chinoy, *Society: An Introduction to Sociology*, New York, 1961, cited by G. Osipov, *Sociology*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 66.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. A.W. Green *Sociology*, New York, 1952, cited by G. Osipov, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
15. K. Young and R. Mack, *Sociology and Social Life*, New York, 1959 cited by G. Osipov, *Ibid.*
16. K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1966, cited by G. Osipov, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
17. This categorization follows Lenski, Cf. Gerhard Lenski, *Human Societies* McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York—London, 1970. For simplicity we have identified the mode of activity with one key invention that led to it —except for the advanced agrarian mode where a few such inventions are indicated.
18. Cf. N.Y. Artyukhin *et al.*, *Society and Economic Relations*, (eds.) A.S. Markhov and A.S. Frish, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, pp. 1—62. See also Geogfrey Kay, *Development and Underdevelopment*, Macmillan, London, 1975, cc.1
19. A host of vague criteria such as 'self-contained' and 'small-scale' are offered for 'simple society' which do not help us identify any actual society as 'simple'.
20. Cf. M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Introduction' to *African Political Systems*, edited by them, Oxford University Press, London, 1940. The term 'Segmentary' is due to these authors.
21. *Ibid.*
22. F. Engels, *Letter to C. Schmidt*, published in K. Marx and F. Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 685.
23. Gerhard Lenski, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
24. Cf. F. Engels, 'Letter to a Schmidt, 1890', in K. Marx and F. Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 686.
25. By 'broader aspects' Schumpeter means 'not purely economic aspects'.

26. J.A. Schumper, *Ten Great Economists*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1966, pp. 15—16.
27. Cf. Amílcar Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, Stage 1, 21 Theobalds Road London, 1969, p. 77. 'The level of production forces, the essential determining element in the content and form of class struggle, is the true and permanent motive force of history'.
28. F. Engels, 'Letter to C. Schmidt, August 5, 1890', in K. Marx and F. Engels, *op. cit.*, P. 699.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Thus Engels relates: 'In studying German history .. I have always found that only a comparison with the corresponding French periods produces a correct idea of proportions ..' F. Engels, 'Letter to F. Mehring, 1893', in K. Marx and F. Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 692.
31. V.I. Lenin "A Great Beginning", cited by M. Cornforth, *Dialectical Materialism, Vol. 2*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1953.
32. Cf. Eskor Toyo, *On the Identification and Definition of Class*, North-East College of Arts and Science, Maiduguri, 1975.
33. F. Engels, *Letter to J. Bloch*, in K. Marx and F. Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 682.
34. For excellent examples of the creative and conscious application of the historical materialist method to African reality, see Amílcar Cabral, 'Brief Analysis of the Social Structure of Guinea', also Amílcar Cabral, 'The Weapon of Theory' both in *Revolution in Guinea, op. cit.*
35. Paul Sweezy, "What has Keynes contributed to the analysis of capitalism?" in Robert Lekchman (ed.), *Keynes and the Classics*, D.C. Heath and Co., Boston, 1965, p. 34.
36. Cf. N.Y. Artyukhin et al., *op. cit.*, p. 64.
37. Geoffrey Hurd et al., *Human Societies*, Routledge and Regan Paul, London and Boston, 1953, p. 28.
38. *Ibid.*
39. 'Lords of the land' is the term preferred by Jack Goody to the term 'landlords' for describing the feudalistic agrarian patrons in Nigeria. We use this term to avoid controversy over words. Cf. Jack Goody, *Technology and State in Africa*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971, p. 31.
40. In his chapter on 'The Development of Capital', Ernest Mandel gives a masterly analysis of how merchant accumulation proceeds. It is easy to see the political implications from his analysis, intended though it is for economists. See Ernest Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory* Martin Press, London, 1977.