

CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT:

ISSUES

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**STATE, CLASS & MODE OF
PRODUCTION IN THE STUDY OF
POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT
AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT.**

By
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INTRODUCTION

Many a writer has propounded theories on the role of the state in enhancing or slowing down development. One school of thought holds that the state encourages the existence of class, which is incorporated in the mode of production that serves to dehumanize man. This is the Marxist or Progressive viewpoint. They go on to hold that the real elements of the state – family and civil society – are everywhere subordinate to the spirit of the state, whose mystical power infuses the other social spheres with a part of its essence. The methodology adopted by Marxists in their theorizing about the state intrinsically has some close links with Marx's theory of class struggle and with the theory of history.

The liberal capitalist school, on the other hand, opines that the fundamental aim of men uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government (state) is the preservation of their property – which are imbued in lives, liberties and estates.

However, the main thrust of this chapter is to focus on the role of the state, class and mode of production in studying development and underdevelopment. Effort is made here to treat it from the two major paradigms in the political economy discourse of development and underdevelopment: Marxist and capitalist. The chapter demonstrates how the state uses all the apparati at its disposal to maintain unity and cohesion of a social formation by concentrating and sanctioning class domination thus producing in this way, social relations. These apparati include, among others as we identify – the repressive state apparatus – the

army, police, prisons, judiciary, civil service, the educational, religious (church), cultural, information (Radio, TV, the Print media) systems, the trade union which actually is an apparatus of class collaboration between the bourgeois and petty – bourgeois political parties, as well as the family, in certain respects.

The chapter submits in conclusion that both the capitalist and socialist – Marxist schools agree that the state exists to moderate the interplay of relations between the classes, social formations and mode of production.

“The capitalistic mode of production (essentially the production of surplus value – the absorption of surplus – labour) produces thus, ... not only the deterioration of human labour power by robbing it of its normal moral and physical human conditions of development and function ..., also the premature exhaustion and death of labour power itself” (Marx, Capital Vol. 1 1969:292)

“Powerless economically, unable to bring about the existence of coherent social relations, and standing on the principle of its domination as a class, ... It does not yet have the quiet conscience and the control which the state machine alone can give” (Fanon 1966:37).

The brief analysis of the above extracts would readily indicate the existence of class which is incorporated in the mode of production that is supported by the state (as instrument of coercion and control) which serves to dehumanize man. The main thrust of this chapter is to focus on the role of the State, class and mode of production in studying development and underdevelopment. This, I hope to treat, from the two major paradigms in studies of development and underdevelopment: Capitalist and Marxist.

Many a writer has propounded theories on the role of the State in enhancing or slowing down development but, if one may

ask, how authentic are all these theories? How, for instance, can **we determine** (in the words of Edmund Burke) “What the state **ought to take** upon itself to direct by Public Wisdom, and what it **ought to leave**, with as little interference as possible, to individual **freedom?**” (Appadorai 1978:95). In contrast, the totalitarian **conception** of the state asserts that “Nothing beyond the state, **nothing** against the state, and nothing outside the state”.

However, one common theme strands Political Philosophy, Political economy and Development Studies – which **are** that it is the duty of the state to promote social good on the **largest possible scale**. Going by Jeremy Bentham’s Utilitarian **thesis**, it is the state’s duty to promote the **greatest happiness of the greatest number**. And in trying to achieve this purpose, the **tendency**, over the years, has been for the state to make itself more **and more conspicuous**, more especially in the planning and **implementation** of economic life. Max Weber, the great German **Jew – Sociologist**, in his own definition of State linked it with **Politics** and opined that the state is “a geographically delimited segment of human society characterized by its monopoly of the **illegitimate means of physical violence**” (Ollawa 1979:28).

Karl Marx, while writing the ‘Manifesto of the Communist Party’, with his friend Fred Engels in 1848, asserted categorically that “in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; consequently the whole history of mankind ... has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes ... a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class – the proletariat cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class – the bourgeoisie – without ... emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction and class struggles” (Feuer, 1959:4)

Each concept would be treated not only separately, but also a synthesis of how the state, class and mode of production relate to the phenomenon of development and underdevelopment would be treated.

The State:

What is the state and why does one concern oneself about studying the state in relation to the Political economy of development and underdevelopment? The answer varies as each student of Political Economy, Sociology and Development Studies differ in person and context of his social milieu. But, however, and generally, the concept 'state in modern socio-political phraseology connotes that politically organized body of people occupying definite territory and living under a government entirely and almost free from external control and competent to secure habitual obedience from all persons within it. Thus, it is within the frame of possibility to accept that the state as an institution has the Supreme Power in a society.

Many reasons, since the days of the sophist-Socrates – to our time, have been adduced for the justification of the existence of the state. The inference one will readily draw from the definition given here to the state, would imply that every citizen of the modern world is the subject of a state though he would be bothered as to its origin. Attempts to answer this question over the year have resulted in various theories concerning the beginning of the state, some of which are:

- (a) the Social Contract Theory;
- (b) the Divine Right Theory;
- (c) the Force Theory;
- (d) the Patriarchial Theory;
- (e) the Matriarchial Theory;
- and (f) the Evolutionary Theory (Appadorai 1975:19).

Theoretical surveys of the literature in Social and Political as well as Developmental Thoughts tend to attribute the modern use of the word 'State' to Niccolo Machiavelli – the celebrated

author of *The Prince*. For, before the 16th century, the word 'state' was used to refer to the 'estates' of the realm or to kingly office or dignity, but apparently not to an independent political community or sovereign (Edwards 1967:6)

On the origin of the state, the Social Contract Theorists (SCT) postulated that the formation of the state was the result of an agreement entered into by men who originally had no governmental organization. The history of the world is thus divided into two clear periods: the period before the state was instituted and the period after (Appadorai 1975:19).—Among the SCTs in the Western world are Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacque Rousseau.

The *Hobbessian* version of the Social Contract was set out in his book the 'LEVIATHAN (1651). Basically, the Leviathan deals with the institutions needed to secure order in the 'state of nature'. Hobbes held that, the life of man, in the state of nature is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' (Walker 1979:148). The Hobbessian thesis held further that what man needed, therefore, was a strong government to maintain law and order. As shown in the book, Thomas Hobbes was inclined towards absolutism or totalitarianism. Although Hobbes' views were accepted with suspicion and distaste in the light of subsequent development in Political Economy and especially in view of Marxist account of these development, what is striking is the Hobbes' "Commonwealth", once created is not one which obviates or suppresses the self-seeking appetites of natural men but one which channels and facilitates them (Walker 19979:148).

For Locke, civil society (an equivalent of the state) existed in order to safe-guard the fundamental rights of individuals, which men could not successfully preserve in the 'state of nature'. John Locke published his own works in his Two Treatises of Government (1690). Karl Marx even observed that John Locke's Philosophy "served as the basis for the whole of subsequent English Political economy of development" (Marx 1969:367).

The idea of social contract is found not only in the political treatises of the West but also in the East. An example is Kautilya, the Minister of Chandragupta Maurya, who refers to this in his *Arthashastra* (C.321-300B.C.) that

'People suffering from anarchy, as illustrated by the proverbial tendency of a large fish swallowing a small one, first elected Manu to be their King; and allocated one-sixth (1/6) of the grains grown and one-tenth (1/10) of their merchandise as sovereign dues. Supported by this payment, Kings took upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining the safe and security of their subjects' (Appadorai 1975:20).

A brief excursion into the theory of Divine Origin (a.k.a. the Theory of the Divine Rights of Kings) will bring the following to focus:

- (a) the State has been established by an ordinance of God
- (b) its rulers are divinely appointed
- and (c) the Kings are accountable to no authority but God's.

It is perhaps in consonance with this theory that the Holy Bible opines that:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God the Powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the Power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resisteth shall receive to themselves damnation" (Romans XIII, 1-2).

The Theory of Force on its part, could be treated in this simplistic but important manner thus: "War begets the King". Following from this, the state is the subjugation of the weaker by the stronger, almost in complete agreement with Charles Darwin's *Origins of the Species* that approves of the survival of the fittest where the more powerful eliminates the less powerful in the

process of life and living. Gregory VIII who in 1080 wrote thus lends further credence to this theory:

'Which of us is ignorant that Kings and Lords have had their origin in those who, ignorant of God, by arrogance, rapine, perfidy, slaughter, by every crime with the devil agitating as the prince of the world, have contrived to rule over their fellowmen with blind cupidity and intolerable presumption'. (Appadorai 1971:32)

The Evolutionary theory, conversely, rejects earlier theoretical discussions of the state and their submissions as unsatisfactory (Appadorai 1975:36). The theory sees the coming into existence of the state as the result of the natural evolution. Some of these natural factors include kinship, religion, war and political consciousness of common worship could undoubtedly weld together families and tribes.

The Purpose of the State

What then, one could inquire, is the purpose of the state with particular reference to the study of Political economy of development and underdevelopment? In addressing this answer, it is imperative starting with the capitalist analysis. As far as John Locke is concerned, the fundamental aim of men uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property – which is Locke's general name for 'lives, liberties and estates'. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), noted three main duties of the state or sovereign:

- (i) the duty of protecting society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies;
- (ii) the duty of protecting individuals within the society against injustice from each other
- and (iii) the duty of erecting and maintaining certain Public works and certain Public institutions.

Smith's writings and policies advocate state interference in the economic process and the distortion of market forces by the

use of duties on imports and bounties on exports. Smith's postulates, writings and discourses tended nonetheless to relegate the state to the periphery, instead of the core, of society. He advanced further that the "Wealth of Nations" can be and was read as a treatise extolling the rights of the individual at the expense of the regulatory power of the state (Walker 1979:36). Adam Smith, no doubt, virtually like John Locke, was naturally opposed to any state intervention in industry and commerce. He was therefore, in liberal capitalist parlance, a staunch believer in free trade or enterprise and hence advocated the policy of "laissez-faire" in economic life and structure of a society.

Herbert Spencer on his part, notes that the state is nothing but natural institution for preventing one man from infringing and impinging upon the rights of others. It is, to him, a joint-stock protection company for mutual assistance. One strand, it must be noted, ran through Locke's, Smith's and Spencer's ideas and that is that state is a means to an end, the end being a better life for the individual members constituting it". This, of course, runs counter to the views of idealist thinkers, like Hegel, who believed that the state is an end in itself, even though his writings in almost all cases supported the capitalist views and purpose of the state.

In the final part of his work "Rechtsphilosophie" (Philosophy of Law), which was devoted to the purpose of the state, Hegel explains that concrete freedom consists in the identity of the system of private interests (family and civil society) with the system of general interest (the state) which he describes as both "eternal necessity" and the 'immanent aim' (McClelland 1980:110). Hegel's ideas about the purpose and nature of society and the way in which it functions have been extensively elaborated in his book *The Philosophy of Right* (1821). The purpose of his work in 1821 was basically to expose the basic tenets of the "science of the state" (Walker 1979:65), which essentially agrees with the functionalist analysis of the state and society where the state is seen to exist to maintain functional equilibrium of the super-structure (Haralambos 1980:521-531).

Hegel tends to emphasize much on property as a **fundamental** element in the society and politics than did Hobbes and Locke. Hegel asserts that property is not only basic to social and political activity but also to identity, and it is only by possession of things that a man realizes himself and established his position in the world. He supports the dissolution of monasteries on the grounds that "no community has so good a right to property as a person has" and that "property is the embodiment of personality" (Hegel 1952:236:45). One scarcely finds space to pitch tent against Hegel for all his liberal capitalist thoughts because many researches on him indicate that all that Professor Hegel knew about economics was mostly derived from his readings of British political economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo.

Attention will now be focused on the Progressive Socialist or Marxist conception of the state in the study of political economy of development and underdevelopment. It is only fair to start with Marx himself who says that Hegel's whole enterprise of reconciling the universal and the particular is a failure, and that the real elements of the state – family and civil society – are everywhere subordinate to the spirit of the state, whose mystical powers infuses the other social spheres with a part of its essence. The methodology adopted by the Marxists in their theorizing about the state intrinsically has some close links with Marx's theory of class struggles and with 'the theory of history'.

Perhaps, an example will suffice here. In his theory of history, Marx considered the economic structure of society as the foundation and other aspects of social life is the superstructure resting upon that foundation. Changing as it changes, the state in Marxian conception is part of the superstructure and its nature will be determined by the economic foundation of society.

A cursory examination of quotes from Engel's *Origin of the family, Private Property and the State*, would provide a useful insight in stating Marxist Theory of the State.

"the state is by no means a Power imposed on society from the outside ... Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development: ... But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, may not consume themselves, and society in sterile struggle, a power apparently standing above society becomes necessary, whose power is to moderate conflict and keep it within bounds of order..." (Eddy 1970:47).

One could infer from the quote above that the state in Marxian parlance had not existed from time immemorial. There were, from the Marxian extracts, which agrees essentially with the social contract theory, earlier expounded, societies that afforded to exist without the state which also had no conception of the state and state power. Marx and Engel also believed that the society is approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes will not only cease to be a necessity, but will inevitably fall as they rose at a earlier stage. Along with them, the state will also inevitably fall. The society will organize production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe "(Feuer 1959: 394). In short, this is what Marx called "the withering away of the state". The state, according to the Marxian thesis, is unnecessary after capitalism is completely destroyed, for there will be no longer any capitalists, for whose protection it (the state) now exists. The Marxian thesis holds that after the state withers away, the new society will have as cardinal principle: "from each according to his capacity (ability), to each according to his needs".

Modern Progressive Socialists or Marxian apostles like V.I. Lenin and Bukharin were not left out on the issue of the state. In his work *State and Revolution*, Lenin opined on the necessity of the state machinery to expropriate, the expropriators, whereas Bukharin had emphasized the "withering" aspect. Lenin's

simplistic, definition of the state is that "the state is a special organization of force; it is an organization of violence of the suppression of some class (Lenin 1960:320).

Following Marx's conclusion on the Paris Commune therefore, Lenin, declared that the task of the Revolution was to smash the state, and he believed that after a successful proletarian revolution, the state had not only begun to wither, but was necessarily in an advanced condition of decomposition (McClellan, 1979:98).

Class And Mode Of Production

Since class is closely connected and associated with mode of production in the study of political economy of development and underdevelopment, it is necessary to deal with the two together in this section of our analysis. Before the emergence of the Industrial Revolution, the issue of class or social stratification was, described in terms of rank, estate or peasant. After the revolution, class stratification became commonly known as the phenomenon that differentiates groups of people in the distribution of resources and rewards in society – whether simple, complex, urban or rural. In contemporary times, when class stratification is used, sociologists follow the criteria earlier set out by Max Weber, to refer to the hierarchical arrangement of individuals or persons in societies based mainly on property (wealth), prestige and power.

But according to Marx, the class theory of history fits into the Marxist materialist conception of history. To Marx and Engels, workers and capitalists (who own the means of production) as the two antagonistic classes emerge at only a later stage in history. They hold that there was a primitive classless phase of society, a phase before private property and a phase of primitive communism. Classes emerged with the emergence of private property means of production, i.e. those who own this property and those who do not. Marx and Engel believed then that there were three main phases or epochs in history:

- (i) the phase of slave society (or slavery) where one found the dominant relationship in the slave-owners and slaves;
 - (ii) the feudal phase – in which the feudal lords and the serfs dominated;
- and (iii) the Capitalist Phase – an epoch in which Capitalists (i.e. owners of the means of production) and workers became the dominant factors.

Marx and Engel talked of the overlapping of these Phases or epochs – e.g. it is a common feature to find slavery persisting into feudal and even into capitalist society and also there were intermediate classes. For instance, in any kind of class society, you may find men who own and work on their own land, and in some capitalist countries also, these peasants constitute the bulk of what Marx calls Petty – bourgeoisie – a class which includes also working owners in small industrial concerns and shops (Eddy, 1979:34). The Marxist theory of class further states that a ruling class has its own state and the substitution with a new state. *And that is the form taken basically in economic.* Because every ruling class has its own ideology, its decline or demise lies with the rejection of such an ideology. The theory holds further still that men in history are largely ignorant of what they are doing and described them in mistaken terms. Men, the theory continues, often hold the view that they are fighting or struggling for liberty and emancipation of their kind whereas in real fact they are fighting or struggling for the actual liberty or Private Capital (Eddy 1979:38).

One could make the inference, arising from the Marxian theory of class, that social classes are grouping of social agents defined mainly though not exclusively by their place in the production process, i.e. in the economic sphere. The economic place of the social agents has a principal role in determining social classes. When Marxism as a theory states that the economic sphere does indeed have the determinant role in the mode of production or a social formation, it needs be stated equivocally

that the political as well as the ideological (the superstructure) also have very important role in any class structure and analysis.

Classes, according to Professor T. Bottomore, exist only as the class struggle should be distinguished from class position in each specific conjuncture. As established earlier in this chapter, the determination of classes, is greatly influenced by economic relations, which is itself determined by process of production, and the place of the agents, their distribution into social classes and by the relations of production (Essoh, 1994:69-83); Bottomore 1981:138). What one has to bear in mind is that it was Marx who first used the words "mode of production". Marx and Engels in *The Crundrises* discussed the following modes of production: Germanic, Slavoic, Asiatic and Classical modes of production. These modes reflected the character of economic structures of those societies and hence the state of their development.

Contrasting the Marxian position with the capitalist mode of production, what we notice being involved is the overall reproduction cycle of social capital; productive capital, commodity capital and money capital. In this unity, it is production which plays the determinant and dominant role. The difference that exists between the classes at this level is not, for example, a difference based on relative sizes of income (a distinction between "rich" and "poor"), as was believed in contemporary times by whole gamut of social scientist but undoubtedly, it is a consequence (i.e. the difference) of the relations of production.

In pre-capitalist modes of production, the direct producers (the workers) were not entirely 'separated' from the object and means of labour. For instance, the feudal mode of production, even though the lord had both the legal and economic right to the ownership of the land, the Serf still had possession of his parcel or land too. The Serf could not be dispossessed easily of his parcel of land by the lord. This was achieved, as in England, for example, in the way whole bloody process of enclosures in the transition from feudalism to capitalism – a situation Marx refers to

as the primitive accumulation of capital. Exploitation here is predominantly by direct extraction of surplus labor, in the form of corvée payable in labour or in kind (Bottomore, 1981:144).

However, in the capitalist mode of production, the direct producers (the working class or proletariat) are completely dispossessed of their means of labour, of which the capitalists have the actual possession. Marx referred to this as the phenomenon of the 'naked worker'. The worker in this case does nothing except his labour power which he sells. The fact that labour is a commodity is not the effect of a prior generalization of the celebrated 'commodity relation'. The extraction of surplus value is, therefore, achieved in this case not directly, but by way of labour incorporated into commodities, in other words, by the creation and monopolization of surplus value.

The productive forces and the labour process, including technology, which Ake ably distinguishes (Ake 1981:8-16), do not exist in themselves, but always in their constitutive connection with the relations of production. It becomes absurd, therefore, if one speaks of societies divided into classes of productive labour. In a society divided into classes, that labour is productive which corresponds to the relations of production or mode in question, i.e. that which gives rise to the specific and dominant form of exploitation. Production in these societies means at the same time, and as one and the same process, class division, exploitation and class struggle (Bottomore 1981:143).

The dominant role of the relations of production over the productive force and the labour process is what gives rise to the constitutive role of political and ideological relations in the structural determination of social classes. It, however, suffices to distinguish mode of production from social formation.

When speaking of a mode of production, though it may sound an abstract and formal object, one is still keeping to a general and abstract level, even though the concept mode of production itself already comprises relations of production, political relations and ideological relations in examples provided

by the **slave**, feudal and capitalist modes of production. All these mode of production exist and reproduce themselves within social formation that are historically determinate – France, Germany and Britain – or such and such a moment of historic process (Poulantzas 1975:).

On the contrary, social formation comprises several modes as well as forms of production, in a specific articulation. For instance, the European capitalist societies in the dawn of the 20th century were composed of : -

- (i) elements of the feudal mode of production
- (ii) the form of simple commodity production and manufacture (i.e. the transition from feudalism to capitalism).
- and (iii) the capitalist mode of production in its competitive and monopoly forms (Poulantzas 1975; Ake 1981:13-19; Onimode 1981:26-48)

Despite all these elements, one cannot deny the fact that ~~these societies~~ were definitely capitalist societies, in so far as the **capitalist mode of production** – dominates in them. One could also realize that in every social formation, the dominance of one mode of production, which produces complex effects of dissolution and conservation on the other modes of production and which gives these societies their overall character (feudal, capitalist, etc) is seen. But an exception is the case of societies in transition, which are, characterized by an equilibrium between the various mode and forms of production.

If we limit ourselves to modes of production alone, we find that each of them involves two classes present in their full economic, political and ideological determination the exploiting class, which is political and ideologically dominant, and the exploited class which is politically and ideologically dominated: Masters and slaves in the slave mode of production, lords and serfs, in the feudal mode of production; bourgeois and workers (Proletariat) in the capitalist mode of production. A concrete society (a social formation), however, involves more than two

classes, in so far as it is made up of various mode and forms of production. There is no social formation which involves only two classes, though the two fundamental classes in any social formation, are those of the dominant mode of production. A society or social formation will then be adjudged developed or underdeveloped depending on the prevailing mode of production and the historical circumstance of such society in the comity of societies or contemporary social formations. This then, summarizes the positions of various societies or regional groupings in our contemporary world system with respect to the issues of development and underdevelopment.

CONCLUSION

The role of the state using all the apparati at its disposal is to maintain unity and cohesion of a social formation by concentrating and sanctioning class domination thus reproducing in this way, social relations (i.e. class relation). These apparati include, among others on the one hand, the repressive state apparatus – the Army, Police, Prisons, Judiciary Civil Service – and on the other hand – the educational, religious (church), cultural, information (radio, TV, the Print media) systems, the trade union which actually is an apparatus of class collaboration between the bourgeois and petty – bourgeoisie, bourgeois political parties, etc as well as in a certain respect, according to Bottomore, in the capitalist mode of production – the family (Bottomore-1981:150). Both the capitalist and socialist or Marxist Schools agree that the state exists to moderate the interplay of relations between the classes, social formations and mode of production.

Classes exist only within the context of class struggle, with its historical and dynamic dimension, classes, fractions, strata and class categories can only be/discerned or even defined by taking into account the historic perspective of the class struggle. A mode of production can exist only in a social formation if it reproduces itself. This reproduction is nothing other than the extended

reproduction of its social relations thus making class struggle the engine or motor of history. Marx did not only postulate the theory of class struggle in the state or society as a result of the mode of production in the capitalist society, but provided guidance too. The class is only a study of the sum of the strivings of all the members of a given society that can lead to a scientific definition of the result of those strivings showing the position and mode of life of the classes so stratified.

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