**Wu Ying: Reinterpreting the Materialist Conception of History; Role of Class Struggle in Class Society**

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**Books**

1.  Reinterpreting the Materialist Conception of History; China Social Sciences Press, 2024 .

2. Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin on the Science of History, Social Sciences Academic Press, 2014.

3. Introduction to Historiography, Higher Education Press , 2006 .

Science is a system of knowledge that reveals the causal laws of existence and change of things and can test whether these laws are correct in practice. Historical view is people's systematic understanding of social history. The scientific historical view is a historical view that reveals the causal laws of social and historical development and change. The materialist conception of history created by Marx and Engels is "the science of real people and their historical development" [[1]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn1" \o ") .

Starting from the ultimate cause of the existence and development of human society, it dynamically and progressively analyzes people's material production practice activities and the material production capacity formed in such practice activities, thereby revealing the causal laws of human social historical evolution. Among the various historical views, the materialist conception of history has the most scientific character.

However, for a period of time, doubts about the scientific nature of historical materialism have gradually arisen, and as a result, the guiding position of historical materialism in historiography has also been challenged, and calls for the diversification of guiding theories for historical research have become increasingly popular. The reasons for this are certainly influenced by many factors, but one of the important reasons is that the original interpretation system of historical materialism has been unable to give satisfactory explanations for major historical and current issues. Therefore, it is necessary to make great efforts to reinterpret the basic theories and basic principles of historical materialism, deepen the understanding and grasp of the true meaning of this theory in line with the times, and make more people believe in the scientific nature of historical materialism.

This article will reinterpret historical materialism around the objective basic factors of the historical evolution of human society and their interrelationships, and around the laws presented by the historical development process of human society, in order to prove that historical materialism is a scientific historical view.

**I. The Objective Basis of Social History**

In order to survive, people must first be able to sustain their lives, and therefore must engage in practical activities of material production to sustain their living needs. The materialist conception of history starts from this most realistic and basic survival activity of human beings and begins to analyze and explain the laws of the historical evolution of human society. Therefore, Engels pointed out in his speech at Marx's tomb: "Marx discovered the law of development of human social history, namely, a simple fact that was originally concealed by a complex ideology: people must first eat, drink, live and wear clothes, and then they can engage in politics, science, art, religion, etc.; therefore, the production of direct material means of subsistence, and thus a certain stage of economic development of a nation or an era, constitutes the basis, and people's state facilities, legal views, art and even religious concepts develop from this basis, and therefore must also be explained by this basis." [[2]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn2" \o ")

Engels's summary of the basic principles of the materialist conception of history in the most concise language reveals the objective basis of the historical development of human society and the relationship between people's social activities at many levels and this objective basis. We will elaborate on the viewpoints of several basic issues of the historical evolution of human society discussed in the materialist conception of history in five parts, namely "the restrictive role of the mode of production", "social existence and social consciousness", "economic base and superstructure", "division of social and economic forms", and "class struggle and its role in class society".

**1. The Constraining Effect of the Mode of Production (Productive Forces and Production Relations)**

The materialist conception of history holds that the mode of production is the way to obtain the material resources necessary for human survival, and is the way people combine and work together in the production process.

The composition of the mode of production includes two levels: productive forces and production relations. Regarding productive forces, Marx has made a clear explanation. He said: "People cannot freely choose their own productive forces - this is the basis of their entire history, because any productive forces is an acquired force and the product of past activities. It can be seen that productive forces is the result of people's application ability, but this ability itself is determined by the conditions in which people are, by the productive forces that has been acquired before, and by the social form that existed before them, which was not created by them but by the previous generation." [[3]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn3" \o ")

This passage on productive forces can help us establish three understandings:

First, "productive forces" refer to the ability of people to understand and transform nature in production practice. It is not innate or innate, but the result of application ability, or the result of labor production practice.

second, the productive forces possessed by each generation must first be inherited from the ancestors, that is, the product of past activities, and then innovation and development will make new progress in productive forces.

third, people's ability to understand and transform nature will also vary depending on their conditions. Regarding production relations, it refers to the social relations formed by people in the process of material production.

Since there is a clear division of labor in the social production process, and this division of labor is becoming more and more advanced with the development of productive forces, there are distribution and exchange relations for the results of production, as well as ownership relations for the means of production.

Marx clearly pointed out: "The structure of distribution is entirely determined by the structure of production. Distribution itself is a product of production, not only in terms of objects, but also in terms of form. In terms of objects, only the results of production can be distributed. In terms of form, certain forms of participation in production determine specific forms of distribution and determine forms of participation in distribution." [[4]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn4" \o ") The structure of production or the form of participation in production is the division of labor, which determines the form of exchange and the mode of distribution, and thus determines the different nature of ownership. The materialist conception of history mainly defines four meanings of the "division of labor": First, it distinguishes three types of division of labor, namely, the division of mental labor and physical labor, the social division of labor in the production of different products, and the division of labor in the production process of the same product. The first type of division of labor leads to class differences in society, the second type of division of labor is common to all social and economic forms, and the third type of division of labor is only developed in the capitalist social and economic form. Second, the fundamental reason why the division of labor can emerge and develop is that the continuous improvement of productive forces has led to the continuous increase of surplus products, which has led to the emergence of surplus labor and the development of new production and work areas. Third, "with this division of labor, there is also distribution, and it is an unequal distribution of labor and its products (both in quantity and quality); thus, ownership is generated." [[5]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn5" \o ")

"Different stages of the development of the division of labor are also different forms of ownership. That is to say, each stage of the division of labor also determines the relationship between individuals and labor materials, labor tools and labor products." [[6]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn6" \o ")

Fourth, “the degree of development of the productive forces of a nation is most clearly shown by the degree of development of the division of labor within that nation. Any new productive force, as long as it is not a simple quantitative expansion of the productive forces hitherto known (for example, the reclamation of land), will lead to a further development of the division of labor” [[7]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn7" \o ") .

The restrictive (determining) role of the mode of production on social and historical evolution is manifested in the following aspects: First, productive forces is the ultimate cause of the historical evolution of human society.

In order to survive, human beings must engage in material production practices; engaging in material production practices will inevitably continuously improve people's ability to understand and transform nature; the improvement of material production capacity will inevitably promote the movement and change of production relations and superstructures, and promote the continuous development of social and economic forms from low to high levels.

Therefore, the original motive for the entire historical movement of human society is people's material production activities, and it is the continuous development of social production capacity that promotes the continuous change of production relations and superstructures and thus determines the continuous evolution of social forms. In these two senses, the materialist conception of history believes that "the sum of the productive forces achieved by people determines the social situation" [[8]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn8" \o ") , that is, the continuous improvement of productive forces is regarded as the ultimate cause of the historical development of human society.

From ancient times to the present, people have evolved from extremely low production capacity, only able to engage in the most primitive material production activities, and barely survived by fishing and hunting in groups. After thousands of years of accumulation of production experience and improvement of production methods, they have entered the information society. They can not only pursue higher-level spiritual needs on the basis of meeting basic material needs, but also explore outer space and the microscopic world on the basis of controlling natural forces. Second, the decisive role of productive forces on production relations. Marx clearly pointed out: "In the social production of their life, people enter into definite relations that are inevitable and independent of their will, namely, relations of production that correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces" [[9]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn9" \o ") .

"Social relations are closely linked to productive forces. With the acquisition of new productive forces, people change their mode of production; with the change of the mode of production, that is, the way of making a living, people will also change all their social relations" [[10]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn10" \o ") .

Therefore, Engels pointed out: "Any change in the social system, every revolution in the ownership relations, is the inevitable result of the old ownership relations no longer being adapted to the new productive forces" [[11]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn11" \o ") .

Third, the restrictive role of the social production mode (productive forces and production relations) on the historical evolution of human society.

From the above citations, it can be seen that the development of productive forces will inevitably lead to the evolution of social production relations (division of labor, distribution, and exchange) and the change of ownership of means of production, which will promote the development of human social history from a low level to a high level.

**Based on this, we can clearly understand the restrictive (determining) role of the production mode on the historical evolution of human society.**

First, it restricts the nature of society at the economic foundation level. For example, when people relied on hunting, fishing, animal husbandry, or extremely low-yield farming to survive, they could only be ancient societies that implemented community ownership; and in the era of small-scale, crude land cultivation and handicraft industry, they could only establish feudal societies with land ownership or hierarchical ownership as the main form. Second, the pace of evolution and change of the production mode restricts the speed of social transformation and the transition of the times. Therefore, the transformation of social times fundamentally depends on the qualitative evolution of the production mode.

Below we give two historical examples to illustrate the restrictive effect of the evolution of the mode of production on the evolution of social history.

First, Engels made a systematic discussion on the evolution of human society from the barbaric era to the civilized era (that is, the emergence of class society). He pointed out: "The productive forces gradually increased; the denser population formed common interests among various communes in some cases, and conflicting interests among various communes in other cases, and these communes were combined into a larger whole, which in turn led to a new division of labor and the establishment of institutions to protect common interests and prevent conflicting interests.

These institutions, as representatives of the common interests of the entire collective, were already in a special and even antagonistic position in relation to each individual commune under certain circumstances, and they soon became more independent... Here we do not need to study in depth: how this independence of social functions from society gradually rises to rule over society; how the initial public servants gradually become masters when the situation is favorable... Finally, how the various ruling figures combine to form a ruling class. Here, the problem is only to determine the fact that political rule is everywhere based on the performance of certain social functions, and political rule can only last when it performs its social functions."

In addition to this process of class formation, there is another process of class formation: "The spontaneous division of labor within the agricultural family, when it has reached a certain level of prosperity, makes it possible to absorb one or more external laborers into the family. This is especially common in places where the old common ownership of land has collapsed or at least the old common cultivation of the land has given way to individual cultivation of plots of land allocated to each family. Production has developed to such a point that human labor can now produce more than is required for the simple maintenance of labor; the means of maintaining more labor are already available; the means of using this labor are also available; labor has acquired a certain value. But the commune itself and the group to which it belongs cannot yet provide a surplus of freely disposable labor. War provides this labor... Slavery is discovered. This institution soon becomes the dominant form of production among all nations that have developed beyond the ancient commune, but in the final analysis it is also one of the main causes of their decline." [[12]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn12" \o ")

The main difference between the two paths of class and ruling relations discussed by Engels is that the former path is the formation of the ruling class when small communes are combined into large communities mainly due to the development of productive forces without the emergence of private ownership and slavery, which leads to new division of labor and the establishment of new institutions "to protect common interests and oppose conflicting interests".

The latter path of Engels is the emergence of classes with the emergence of slavery and other exploitative systems after the emergence of private ownership or at least individual farming has replaced the communal farming system.

In Engels' view, in the process of the first path to the emergence of the ruling class, the first "ruling figures" include not only "Oriental tyrants or governors", but also "Greek clan leaders", "Celtic patriarchs" and so on.

However, it seems that those ruling figures of the Greeks and Celts have transformed into the second path of class formation as private ownership and slavery have emerged before they have finally "combined into a ruling class".

In this way, it is mainly the Eastern countries that form the ruling class and the ruled class along the first path. However, although the paths to the emergence of classes are different, the laws are the same: "As long as the products provided by the total social labor are only a small surplus beyond the minimum living needs of all members of society, that is, as long as labor still occupies all or almost all of the time of the majority of members of society, this society will inevitably be divided into classes. Next to the majority of people who are forced to engage in labor, a class is formed that is separated from direct production labor and is in charge of the common affairs of society: labor management, state affairs, justice, science, art, etc.

Therefore, the law of division of labor is the basis of class division." [[13]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn13" \o ") In short, the development of productive forces has not only produced a small surplus, but also produced increasingly complex social public functions. In the case of both surplus and small surplus, a small special class that is separated from direct production labor and specializes in performing public functions will inevitably emerge; they are both "public servants" who perform social public functions, and gradually use their privileges to evolve into "masters" - exploiters and oppressors. This division of labor between the minority who are separated from direct labor and specialize in performing public functions and the majority who are completely committed to labor is what Marx and Engels called the initial division of mental and physical labor. Mencius called this division of labor the division between "those who work with their minds" and "those who work with their hands", which is very accurate. Since the rulers and managerial classes (slave owners or feudal lords) performed public functions such as organizing, managing and supervising production in the social division of labor, they also obtained ownership of the most important means of production - land as real estate - and even obtained personal control over the direct producer class, in order to claim surplus products. In the case of little surplus, it is impossible to obtain surplus products through exchange. The only way to obtain surplus products is to control the ownership of land and thus control people by force, thus forming an unequal personal dependency relationship. It can be seen that the improvement of productive forces promotes the transformation of production relations and enables social transformation.

Secondly, Marx made a brilliant argument for the transformation of human society from a traditional society dominated by a self-sufficient peasant economy to a modern society dominated by large-scale socialized production, large-scale exchange and non-agricultural industries. He pointed out: "The whole labour of one part of society in agriculture - necessary labour and surplus labour - must produce the necessary food for the whole of society, and therefore also for non-agricultural workers; that is, to make possible this great division of labour between those engaged in agriculture and those engaged in industry; and also to make possible the division of labour between the peasants who produce food and those who produce raw materials." [[14]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn14" \o ") He also pointed out: "If we leave aside foreign trade... then it is obvious that the number of workers who are completely separated from agriculture, engaged in processing industry, etc., depends on the amount of agricultural products produced by agricultural workers in excess of their own consumption." That is to say, without considering foreign trade factors, the transformation from traditional society to modern society first requires that agricultural production must develop substantially, and that the agricultural population must produce agricultural products that can meet the needs of the large number of non-agricultural industry population and the agricultural raw materials needed for industrial production in addition to their own consumption, so that non-agricultural industries can be established and developed.

Later, with the continuous advancement of industrialization and the gradual realization of large-scale socialized production, universal social material exchange will be generated at the level of economic exchange. As a result, the self-sufficient small peasant natural economy is replaced by the commodity - market economy. At this point, another social transformation process is completed. As the ruling class, the bourgeoisie will mainly exploit surplus products or surplus value by controlling the ownership of movable means of production (money as capital, and even means of production in the form of immovable property are calculated in currency), and personal dependence loses its rationality. The law that the development of productive forces leads to changes in production relations is once again revealed.

**2. Social Existence and Social Consciousness**

The relationship between social existence and social consciousness is a question that must be answered first by various historical perspectives. Therefore, different understandings and grasps of the relationship between social existence and social consciousness have become a fundamental divergence point among different historical perspectives, and often lead to completely different understandings of historical events and historical phenomena. The materialist conception of history takes social existence determining social consciousness as its theoretical cornerstone, thus establishing a scientific starting point for the historical evolution of human cognition of itself.

**First, the scientific definition of the relationship between social existence and social consciousness has laid a solid foundation for the materialist conception of history to understand history.**

Marx and Engels have a clear definition of "social existence". They pointed out that "the existence of people is their real life process." [[15]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn15" \o ") It is in this sense that they affirm that "consciousness can only be the existence that is realized at any time"; "it is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness" [[16]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn16" \o ") . In their words, people's "real life process" refers to people's life practice process. Therefore, they also call the materialist conception of history a historical view that "does not explain practice from the perspective of ideas, but explains the formation of ideas from the perspective of material practice" [[17]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn17" \o ") . In this way, the materialist conception of history is established on a solid realistic foundation. In his article “The Development of Socialism: Utopian and Scientific”, Engels clearly pointed out: “The materialist conception of history proceeds from the following principle: production and the exchange of the products which follow from production are the basis of all social systems; that in each historically arising society the distribution of the products and the accompanying division of society into classes or estates is determined by what is produced, how it is produced and how it is exchanged. Therefore, the ultimate cause of all social changes and political revolutions must be sought, not in the minds of men, in their increasing knowledge of eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the mode of production and of exchange; not in the philosophy of the particular epoch, but in the economy of the particular epoch.” [[18]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn18" \o ")

This view of history clearly shows its difference from the idealist view of history, which seeks the ultimate cause of historical changes in people’s consciousness, spirit and ideas, and therefore cannot grasp the real basis of the development of human society. Marx and Engels sharply criticized the idealist view of history: "All historical views to date have either completely ignored this real basis of history, or have regarded it as a mere incidental factor without any connection with the historical process. History is therefore always written according to some external standard; real life production is regarded as something non-historical, and history as something divorced from everyday life, something outside and above the world." [[19]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn19" \o ")

The materialist conception of history follows the basic principle that "social existence determines social consciousness" and traces the ultimate cause of the historical changes of human society back to people's material production practices and the material production capacity formed in such activities, thus completely revealing the mystery of the intricate evolution of the times in human history. In addition, it scientifically predicts that socialism and communism will eventually replace capitalism and promote the development of human society to a future world of great harmony.

Regarding the evolution of human society to communist society, Marx once made a brilliant statement: "Just as the savage must struggle with nature to satisfy his needs, to maintain and reproduce his life, so must the civilized man do so; and he must do so in every social form, in every possible mode of production. This kingdom of natural necessity will expand with the development of man, because needs will expand; but at the same time will the productive forces to satisfy these needs also expand. Freedom in this sphere can only be that socialized people, united producers, will rationally regulate the material transformation between themselves and nature, bringing it under their common control, and not allowing it to rule them as a blind force; carrying out this material transformation with the least consumption of energy and under conditions that are most worthy of and most suitable for their human nature. But in any case, this sphere is always a kingdom of necessity. On the other side of this kingdom of necessity, the development of human abilities as an end in itself, the true kingdom of freedom, begins. But this kingdom of freedom can only prosper if it is established on the basis of the kingdom of necessity. The shortening of the working day is the fundamental condition." [[20]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn20" \o ") It is very clear here: when human production capacity develops to the point where a very short working day is enough to produce the products necessary for a rich material life, everyone will have a vast kingdom of freedom to fully develop their abilities, hobbies and free personality, and no longer need to compete for scarce products; the diversity of people's free personality will be unprecedentedly increased, and the differences in people's practical activities in the material and spiritual fields will be unprecedentedly reduced. By then, everyone can engage in both material and spiritual production, and be both a producer and a manager.

Once people's material and spiritual production capacity develops to that level, the time will come to establish a union of free people and finally break away from the animal world; by then, no individual will can stop the establishment of a union of free people. The historical process of the past century shows that the trend pointed out by Marx is moving forward. Several trajectories can be seen from the following two sets of data [[21]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn21" \o ") :

**Average annual working hours per employed person from 1870 to 1992 (unit : hours )**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| years | U.K. | Germany | USA | Japan |
| 1870 | 2984 | 2941 | 2964 | 2945 |
| 1913 | 2624 | 2584 | 2605 | 2588 |
| 1950 | 1958 | 2316 | 1867 | 2166 |
| 1973 | 1688 | 1804 | 1717 | 2042 |
| 1992 | 1491 | 1563 | 1589 | 1876 |

**Average years of formal education for the working population from 1913 to 1992**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| years | U.K. | Germany | USA | Japan |
| 1913 | 8.82 | 8.37 | 7.56 | 5.36 |
| 1950 | 10.60 | 10.40 | 11.27 | 9.11 |
| 1992 | 14.09 | 12.17 | 18.04 | 14.87 |

This trend is exactly what Marx said, that the "kingdom of necessity" is gradually shrinking and the "kingdom of freedom" is gradually expanding.

Since the process of increasing human labor productive forces, shortening the working day, and increasing free time in the past century has indeed been advancing at an increasingly accelerated rate, and since there is no reason to believe that this accelerated process will suddenly stop at some point; we have no reason not to believe that the free human beings with fully developed free personalities that Marx foresaw will definitely grow up, and there is no reason not to believe that the free people's association of the global village will definitely be established.

It can be seen from this that Marx revealed a truth about the historical development of human society, not from a certain concept or fantasy of a better society, but from the basic social existence of social existence determining social consciousness and from the basic social existence of labor or material production practice.

Secondly, to accurately grasp the connotation of “social existence determines social consciousness”, we must also distinguish it from mechanical materialism. It is easier to understand the distinction between the materialist conception of history and the idealist conception of history. This is because the latter believes that it is not existence that determines consciousness, but consciousness that determines existence. Therefore, the ultimate cause of historical change is sought from the thoughts, consciousness and ideas of social and historical figures, especially the elites. It is easier to understand the erroneous view that this historical view does not seek the cause of the emergence of thoughts and consciousness. However, the distinction between the materialist conception of history and mechanical materialism is often confused, because both advocate that “existence determines consciousness”, but the understanding of “existence” is substantially different. Mechanical materialism understands “social existence” as “objective environment” outside of people, and thus misunderstands “social existence determines social consciousness” as “the objective environment in which people live determines people’s consciousness”. For example, the mechanical materialist Feuerbach believed this, saying: “What people in the palace think is different from what people in the hut think” [[22]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn22" \o ") . This figurative expression simply regards human "social existence" as the external conditions of human existence, that is, their living environment, while consciousness is the reflection of different external living conditions or living environments in people's minds. In "Theses on Feuerbach", Marx critically pointed out: "The main defect of all previous materialism (including Feuerbach's materialism) is that objects, reality, and sensibility are understood only in an objective or intuitive form, instead of as sensual human activities, as practice, and not from the perspective of the subject." [[23]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn23" \o ") This mechanical understanding of the relationship between man and the "object" world (or "reality", "sensual" world - in short, regarded as the "object" world outside of man) leads to the dual coexistence of man as the subject and "environment" as the "object", leading to the wrong conclusion that "environment determines man's destiny", so that ordinary people can only expect "educators" to change "environment and education". In response to this erroneous view, Marx pointed out sharply: "The materialist doctrine that the environment and education play a changing role forgets that the environment is changed by people, and the educator himself must be educated. Therefore, this doctrine must divide society into two parts, one part of which is above society."

Marx and Engels never regarded "social existence" as an "object" or external environment outside of human beings. What they said about "existence determines consciousness" actually means "life determines consciousness" or "practice determines consciousness". If we equate "existence determines consciousness" with "environment determines consciousness" as mechanical materialism does, we cannot explain why some people who live in huts want to be loyal and obedient citizens, while others want to be emperors themselves; and some people who live in the palace want to maintain the privileges of the emperor and the imperial system, while others sympathize with the oppressed and even join the ranks of the oppressed in rebellion. However, when we specifically analyze the profound impact of different production and life practices on the thoughts of individuals living in the palace and those living in huts, it is not difficult to find the root cause of their different life pursuits. Similarly, if we equate "existence determines consciousness" with "environment determines consciousness", we cannot explain why many people from non-working family environments in ancient and modern times, both at home and abroad, have become outstanding leaders of the working class, while some people from working family environments have stood on the opposite side of the working class at the critical moment of class struggle. But when we use the principle of "life determines consciousness" or "practice determines ideas" to analyze, we can sort out the law of causal inevitability from the complex phenomena.

It is also necessary to emphasize here that the subject of "social existence" refers to the social existence of "man", and this "man" is by no means an abstract person, but a real person with flesh and blood who engages in material production practice. Marx and Engels have explained this nature of "man" in many places.

In The German Ideology, they emphasized: "The first premise of all human history is undoubtedly the existence of living individuals. Therefore, the first fact that needs to be confirmed is the physical organization of these individuals and the relationship between individuals and other natural things that arise from this. ... Any historical record should start from these natural foundations and their changes in the course of history due to people's activities"; "certain individuals who carry out production activities in a certain way have certain social and political relations. Empirical observation should always reveal the connection between social structure and political structure and production based on experience, and should not be mysterious or speculative. Social structure and the state always arise from the life process of certain individuals. However, the individuals mentioned here are not the individuals they or others imagine, but real individuals, that is, these individuals are engaged in activities, carry out material production, and therefore act within certain material boundaries, premises and conditions that are not at their disposal" [[24]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn24" \o ") . The "social consciousness" corresponding to the social existence of real people refers to the cognition generated by real people in the process of their material life, such as religion, law, morality, science, art, etc.

**3. Economic Base and Superstructure**

**When analyzing the historical development of human society, the materialist conception of history divides all human activities into two relatively separate but closely related parts, namely the economic base and the superstructure.**

The economic base refers to "certain, inevitable, and independent relations between people in the social production of their lives, that is, production relations corresponding to a certain stage of development of their material productive forces". It includes production division relations, exchange and distribution relations, and ownership relations. These production relations together constitute the economic structure of society. This economic structure plays a prescriptive role in the superstructure of society, so it is called the "economic base", which means that it plays a fundamental role. The superstructure refers to the political, legal, religious and other systems and institutions of society, as well as the social ideology such as politics, law, morality, philosophy, art, religion and other concepts. The superstructure is built on the economic base, and it must adapt to the requirements of the economic base, so it is regarded as the superstructure of society.

**First, the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure.**

From the perspective of historical materialism, the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure is essentially an extension and expansion of the view that "social existence determines social consciousness", which includes several meanings.

First, "the mode of production of material life restricts the entire process of social life, political life and spiritual life". This "restriction" is manifested in the fact that the economic base determines the nature of the superstructure and requires the superstructure to serve it, that is, all kinds of political and legal systems and institutional facilities in society, as well as various conceptual forms in the ideological and cultural categories, must protect and strengthen the economic base, thereby "escorting" and promoting the development of material productive forces. Second, the evolution of the mode of production is a natural historical process. With the continuous improvement of productive forces from low to high, the production relations will evolve accordingly. When " the material productive forces of society have developed to a certain stage, they come into conflict with the existing production relations or property relations (this is just the legal term for production relations) within which they have been moving. Thus, these relations, instead of being forms of development of the productive forces, become fetters on them. Then the era of social revolution arrives. With the change of the economic base, the entire huge superstructure will also change more or less quickly" [[25]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn25" \o ") .

That is to say, the existing superstructure should maintain the existing division of labor, exchange and distribution relations, but when the existing production relations undergo a qualitative evolution, the original superstructure will inevitably undergo changes more or less quickly in order to adapt to the requirements of the new economic structure and serve the changed economic base. However, whether this change from the economic base to the superstructure occurs in the form of a violent revolution or in the form of gradual reform will depend on the interests and power balance of the social and political forces at that time and place.

**Second, in a class society, the changes in the economic base and superstructure are all strongly class-based.**

Since human society entered the class society, the economic base, as the sum of production relations, essentially reflects the status of class status in different eras. The superstructure serves the economic base, and its essence is to safeguard the interests of the ruling class that is dominant or ruling at the time; moreover, the ruling class will also strengthen the service function of the superstructure to better consolidate the economic base that is beneficial to their class interests. Therefore, the contradictory movement between the economic base and the superstructure reflects the struggle for interests between the ruling class and the ruled class, and between the new powerful class and the old ruling class. When the productive forces make a qualitative leap, such as the first industrial revolution, the bourgeoisie, which represents the new and advanced productive forces, uses all means in the superstructure category (political, military, ideological and cultural...) to build the economic base of capitalism, carry out bourgeois revolution, and promote the construction of capitalist production relations; and after the new economic base is built, it continues to use the service function of the superstructure to protect and strengthen the new economic base. The feudal landlord class, the former ruling class, faced with the situation of being deprived of and losing its interests, would artificially block the transformation of the superstructure in order to protect the old economic base, block the transformation of the economic base, and create obstacles to the development of new productive forces. In his later years, Engels made a classic statement on this, pointing out: " It (the superstructure) can act in the same direction, in which case it will develop faster; it can act in the opposite direction, in which case, as is the case with every major nation today, it will collapse after a certain period of time; or it can prevent economic development from going in a given direction and set it in another direction - in the final analysis, this situation still boils down to one of the first two situations. But it is obvious that in the second and third situations, political power will bring great damage to economic development and cause a huge waste of manpower and material resources." [[26]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn26" \o ")

**Third, in the contradictory movement between the economic base and the superstructure, people can correctly play the active role as the subject to promote the economic base that adapts to the level of development of productive forces as soon as possible.**

In the process of human social history, the evolution of productive forces and the transformation of production relations are the products of people's material production practice activities; and the construction of the superstructure and superstructure’s function of serving the economic base are also the result of people's accumulated wisdom in social life practice.

Therefore, in the contradictory movement between the economic base and the superstructure, people's subjective initiative plays an important role.

However, the exercise of people's subjective initiative cannot be arbitrary. We must avoid the bias of exaggerating people's subjective initiative and believe that substantial progress can be achieved by constructing an advanced social superstructure; we must also avoid the bias of denying people's subjective initiative and believe that human society can spontaneously and automatically realize historical development, thereby establishing a correct view of historical development. By scientifically summarizing the laws of historical evolution, people are likely to adopt moderate institutional changes to reduce the cost of historical evolution. The fundamental purpose of this moderate institutional change is to develop productive forces in a new and less costly way. China's strategy of reform and opening up can be said to be the best example for this.

Historically, the market economy, from its origin, is linked to the development of the capitalist economy. Therefore, people conceptually associate the market economy with the capitalist system, and one-sidedly believe that developing a market economy is developing capitalism. However, for China, a socialist country, developing a market economy is absolutely not feasible. Comrade Deng Xiaoping freed people from ideological shackles, clarified muddled ideas, and led the implementation of the reform of the socialist market economic system. In order to comprehensively build a socialist market economic system, not only major adjustments have been made at the level of distribution relations and ownership in production relations, and those distribution and ownership systems that are not suitable for the development of productive forces and cannot mobilize the enthusiasm of the majority of workers have been reformed; but also the construction of the market economic system has been paved from the constitution, laws, policies and regulations to the guidance of social public opinion, giving full play to the role of the superstructure in protecting and strengthening the economic base. As a result, the development of China's economy has achieved remarkable achievements in just over 40 years. This convincingly reveals that on the basis of a full understanding of the laws, people can give full play to the active role of the subject, promote the contradictory movement between the economic base and the superstructure, and promote the rapid growth of productive forces.

**4. Division of social and economic forms**

Historical materialism calls the sum of production relations at a certain stage of development of human society "social-economic formation". "(Historical materialism) explores the concept of social-economic formation as the sum of definite production relations, and explores that the development of this formation is a natural historical process." [[27]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn27" \o ") At the same time, it defines the role of social-economic formation in social structure: "The sum of production relations constitutes what is called social relations, what is called society, and it constitutes a society at a certain stage of historical development, a society with unique characteristics. Classical ancient society, feudal society and bourgeois society are all sums of such production relations, and each of these sums of production relations also marks a special stage in the development of human history." [[28]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn28" \o ")

That is to say, according to the basic viewpoints of historical materialism, first, the economic formation of society determines the nature of society, and different social-economic formations reflect the economic foundation of different societies; second, the evolution of social-economic formations is a natural historical process, so the evolution of social nature cannot be arbitrarily changed according to human subjective will.

Looking at the writings of Marx and Engels, they have three different general statements on the division of economic forms in the historical process of human society:

**The first general statement is the well-known division of the "five modes of production".**

It comes from Marx's "Preface to the Critique of Political Economy", and the original text is: "Generally speaking, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production can be regarded as several epochs in the evolution of economic social forms." This is a statement based on the mode of production (productive forces and production relations) as the scale for dividing economic forms. Influenced by the former Soviet theoretical circles, the Chinese theoretical community once regarded the evolution sequence of the five modes of production as a universally applicable law of social and historical development. This understanding was actually imposed on Marx and was a misunderstanding of the materialist conception of history on the laws of human social and historical development. Judging from the textual expression of the original text, Marx used the word "generally speaking". Since it is "generally speaking", it does not mean that all societies will inevitably experience this evolution sequence. Moreover, when criticizing the Russian liberal populist thinker Mikhailovsky for his distortion of historical materialism, Marx once pointed out: "He is determined to transform my historical outline of the origin of capitalism in Western Europe into a historical-philosophical theory of a general path of development. All nations, no matter what their historical circumstances may be, are destined to follow this path - in order to finally arrive at an economic form which guarantees both a very high development of the productive forces of social labor and the most comprehensive development of mankind. But I ask for his forgiveness. In doing so, he would give me too much honor and too much insult." [[29]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn29" \o ") In a letter to the Russian social democratic activist Zasulich, he also stated that the "historical inevitability of the emergence of the capitalist system he expounded is clearly limited to Western European countries... Russia can avoid passing through the Caucasus of the capitalist system." [[30]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn30" \o ") It can be seen that the division of the "five modes of production" is not a division of social and economic forms that evolve in sequence and has universal laws, but at most a summary of the historical development process of Western Europe.

The second general statement comes from The German Ideology, co-authored by Marx and Engels, which is a work that marks the formation of the materialist conception of history. In the book, Marx and Engels pointed out: "The different stages of the development of the division of labor are at the same time different forms of ownership. That is to say, each stage of the division of labor also determines the mutual relations of the individuals with the material, the tools, and the products of their labor." [[31]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn31" \o ")

 Based on the historical knowledge they had at the time, they summarized the ownership forms before capitalism as follows: "The first form of ownership is tribal ownership," "The second form of ownership is communal ownership and state ownership in classical antiquity society," and "The third form is feudal or class ownership." [[32]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn32" \o ")

This summary of social and economic forms is quite different from the general statement in the Preface to the Critique of Political Economy. It is a division of economic forms at different historical stages based on the specific nature of the sum of production relations that constitute the social and economic form. In the statement, different economic eras are divided according to different forms of ownership of the means of production.

The third generalization is that proposed by Marx in his Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58, which is an evolutionary sequence of "three great forms" or "three stages": " The dependence of man (at first entirely natural) is the first social form, in which his productive capacity develops only within a narrow range and in isolated places. The independence of man, based on material dependence, is the second great form, in which the system of universal social material changes, comprehensive relations, multifaceted needs and comprehensive capacities is formed. The free personality based on the comprehensive development of individuals and their common social productive capacity as their social wealth is the third stage. The second stage creates the conditions for the third. Thus, the patriarchal, archaic (and feudal) state declines with the development of commerce, luxury, money, exchange value, and modern society develops with these things." [[33]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn33" \o ")

The Preface to the Critique of Political Economy and the Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58 are different parts of the same work written by Marx at the same time and along the same lines. The Preface was written for the first volume of the Critique of Political Economy, which was about to be published at that time. The first volume was a work extracted from the Manuscripts. (Marx originally planned to publish the contents of the Manuscripts in 6 volumes, but the publisher refused to publish the next 5 volumes after publishing the first volume , so the plan was not realized.) Therefore, the discussion that was not expanded in the Preface can be more fully understood in the Manuscripts.

Looking at Marx's many discussions on the division of social and economic forms, although the entry points are not exactly the same and the expressions are also unique, they are essentially based on the evolution of various levels of production relations in the composition of the mode of production to define different social forms. The different emphases in perspective are due to specific historical backgrounds and different pertinences. For example, the induction in "The German Ideology" was proposed in response to the Young Hegelians and Feuerbach starting from abstract people and human nature and ignoring the historical development process of real people. Marx used the changes in economic forms as historical examples to illustrate that real people will change their forms of communication and ownership accordingly with the development of productive forces and division of labor.

The "four forms" induction in the "Preface" is mainly to criticize the eternalism of capitalism adhered to by bourgeois political economy, and to reveal the historical and logical origins of Western European capitalism to prove that Western European capitalism has neither existed since ancient times nor can it exist forever. The three-form division in the "Manuscript" is Marx's criticism of Proudhon for not understanding the objective law that people's exchange methods and social systems evolve with the development of productive forces, and fantasizing about establishing a "labor money bank" to realize the direct exchange of labor between people, thereby realizing socialism. Marx pointed out that this was just a fantasy.

To this end, Marx summarized the three major forms or stages and compared their different characteristics to prove that only when people's production capacity develops to the point where they can enter the third stage from the second stage can the freedom of labor and direct exchange be realized.

This leaves a doubt: does "modern society" as the second major stage refer to capitalist society, or does it refer to all societies that use money as the main means of exchange?

From the context, it refers to capitalist society. But Marx also said that the "historical inevitability" of the emergence of capitalism he mentioned is limited to Western Europe. It can be seen that the three major stages he summarized here are not summarizing the universal laws of the historical development of all mankind. This can also prove that Marx and Engels' several discussions on the division of economic forms are by no means expounding the universal laws of the historical development of human society. The sequence of economic form evolution they outlined is still their understanding of the investigation of Western European history.

However, if we compare several general statements, it is not difficult to see that the “three forms” or “three stages” summarized in the Manuscript have revealed the connection between the level of development of productive forces and the transformation of social and economic relations from a broad perspective, and have shown the causal and inevitable relationship between the two.

In the first stage, because human productive forces only developed within a narrow scope and isolated locations, the scope and quantity of product exchange and people’s communication were extremely limited, so there would inevitably be “patriarchal relations, ancient communities, feudal systems and guild systems”. [[34]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn34" \o ") When people’s productive forces and production levels broke through the limitations of narrow scope and isolated locations and universal exchange emerged, people would break away from “human dependence” or “direct domination and obedience” and establish social relations with “human independence based on material dependence” (the so-called “material dependence” mainly refers to dependence on money as a universal means of exchange), which means entering the second stage. In the historical process of the second major stage, people’s production capacity will further develop to a higher level, “forming a system of universal social material transformation, comprehensive relations, multi-faceted needs and comprehensive capabilities”. People will generally experience and realize the irrationality of a society where money is “the power of all powers” [​​[35]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn35" \o ") , and thus demand to abandon the social form characterized by “material dependence” and demonstrate “free personality based on the comprehensive development of individuals and their common social production capacity becoming their social wealth”, and establish a “association of free people” [[36]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn36" \o ") in which “the free development of each person is the condition for the free development of all people” , that is, the beautiful ideal society of mankind - the communist society.

**From the above historical process, we can see that productive forces determines production relations only in terms of the general common characteristics of the same social form.**

**It does not directly determine the individual forms and specific characteristics of production relations (and superstructure) in different forms at the same stage.**

For example, the production relations characterized by "human dependence" or "direct domination and obedience" in the first major stage, as well as the corresponding social, political relations and ideology, are determined by the level of productive forces dominated by self-sufficient small peasant productive forces. As long as productive forces has not reached the level of breaking through the natural economy, such production relations and the corresponding superstructure cannot undergo qualitative changes. However, different nation-states in the same first major stage have many different specific manifestations of production relations and the corresponding social, political relations and ideology , such as "patriarchal relations, ancient communities (referring to ancient Greece and Rome), feudal system and guild system". This is because "social structure and the state always arise from the life process of certain individuals" [[37]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn37" \o ") . It depends on the natural and human conditions, historical origins, national characteristics and other historically formed production and living styles of different nation-states and the way of social combination.

**5. Class Struggle and Its Role in Class Society**

In The Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels clearly pointed out that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." [[38]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn38" \o ")

That is, since the beginning of human civilization, society has entered a society of class antagonism. Therefore, in their materialist conception of history, Marx and Engels paid special attention to the real existence of class society, the class antagonism and struggle, and their relationship with the evolution of social history.

In a letter to Johann Weydemeyer, Marx said: "... As for me, it is not my credit either to have discovered the existence of classes in modern society or to have discovered the struggle between them. Long before me, bourgeois historians had already described the historical development of the class struggle, and bourgeois economists had already made an economic analysis of the various classes. The new content I added was to prove the following points: ( 1 ) The existence of classes is only related to a certain historical stage of the development of production; ( 2 ) Class struggle inevitably leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; ( 3 ) This dictatorship is only a transition to the abolition of all classes and to the entry into a classless society..." Below, we will summarize the explanation of historical materialism on the emergence of class society, class antagonism and the historical role of class struggle.

First, let us first understand the root cause of the emergence of class society. In the previous article, we have quoted the arguments of Marx and Engels to explain that the development of social division of labor led to the earliest differentiation of classes. "

As long as the actual working population must spend a lot of time on their necessary labor and therefore have no extra time to engage in the public affairs of society - labor management, state affairs, legal affairs, art, science, etc., there must always be a special class that is separated from actual labor to engage in these affairs; and this class, for its own interests, will never miss the opportunity to impose an increasingly heavy labor burden on the shoulders of the working people ."

However, with the progress of productive forces and the development of society, when the level of productive forces that can be achieved by capitalist large-scale industry has greatly increased, everyone's working hours have been greatly shortened, and everyone has enough time to participate in social activities and public affairs, the ruling class and the exploiting class will become redundant.

They "will be ruthlessly eliminated no matter how much 'direct violence' they have" [[39]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn39" \o ") . It can be seen that the existence of class society is only a product of a certain historical stage. It arises when productive forces has initially developed, that is, when we enter the civilized era from the barbaric era. When productive forces has made great progress and people have the conditions to engage in mental labor and management work, the rationality of the existence of classes will disappear, and classes will gradually disappear. It is precisely because the emergence and existence of class society are constrained by the development of productive forces and the evolution of division of labor; therefore, historical materialism clearly points out: "These struggling social classes are at all times the product of production relations and exchange relations, in a word, the product of the economic relations of their own time." [[40]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn40" \o ")

**Second, historical materialism has a clear definition of the role of class struggle in class society.**

Marx and Engels argued: "For nearly 40 years we have consistently stressed class struggle as the direct driving force of history, and in particular we have consistently stressed the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as the great lever of change in modern society; therefore we must never follow those who want to write off class struggle from the movement." [[41]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn41" \o ")

This reflects two meanings: first, class antagonism and class struggle are an eternal proposition that cannot be avoided in class society; second, class struggle is the direct driving force for the evolution of class society and plays a lever-like role in changing society. The so-called "lever" in mechanics refers to a kind of power tool, just as a pregnant woman needs the help of a "midwife" to give birth. [[42]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=#_ftn42)A "midwife" is naturally not a midwife. Therefore, it is the economic movement that breeds the newborn, the increase in production capacity and the change in the mode of production required for the birth of a new society.

Marx and Engels conducted many case studies on the historical phenomena of social evolution, and these case analyses reflect their theoretical understanding.

For example, Engels analyzed the process of the disintegration of feudal society in Western Europe: "When the noise of the crazy struggles of the ruling feudal aristocracy filled the Middle Ages, the quiet labor of the oppressed class was destroying the feudal system of the entire Western European society and creating conditions for the increasingly weakened status of the feudal lords."

This "quiet labor" is actually the process of gradual accumulation and improvement of the "individual autonomous activity ability" of the broad masses of working people, which makes it possible for a new and larger-scale division of labor between handicrafts and agriculture.

Therefore, after the 10th century, many areas in Western Europe began to see the process of handicrafts separating from agriculture and rural areas, and the process of rapid development of commodity-money economy. It was under the impetus of this economic movement that a series of changes in economic relations and class relations that led to the disintegration of the feudal system in Western Europe emerged, such as: the separation of handicrafts from agriculture and rural areas, the development of commodity-money economy, and the rise of cities, and the serfs who escaped from the manor became the earliest city citizens. Thus, "in the feudal areas, cities with anti-feudal demands, their own laws and armed citizens were wedged everywhere". "Behind these walls and moats, medieval handicrafts (full citizen guilds and small ones) developed, initial capital was accumulated, and the need for commercial exchanges between cities and between cities and the outside world was generated. At the same time, this need also gradually generated means to protect commercial exchanges".

Under the impact of commodity-money economy, the feudal class gradually declined. The city "has, through money, to a certain extent, made the feudal lords subordinate to itself in social and even political aspects in some places". However, the citizen class, which embodies the demands for the development of production, trade, education, social system and political system, was still very weak at that time and could only rely on the royal power.

Thus, a joint struggle between the citizen class and the royal power against the feudal aristocracy was formed. This protracted struggle finally won the victory over the feudal system in the second half of the 15th century. However, the victory over the feudal system at that time was only manifested as the victory of the royal power, not the victory of the citizen class (bourgeoisie).

After that, "the long struggle of the bourgeoisie against the feudal system reached its climax in three decisive battles". These were the Reformation - the German Peasant War, the British Revolution and the French Revolution. After three decisive battles, the feudal system was finally overthrown . [[43]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn43" \o ")

It is not difficult to see from this that Marx and Engels always regarded the development of productive forces and the changes in economic relations caused by it as the ultimate cause of the disintegration of the feudal system in Western Europe, and the role played by the urban citizen class (bourgeoisie) was the direct driving factor that prompted the fundamental changes in the feudal society in Western Europe.

**II. The Dialectical Movement of Historical Development**

    In the previous part, we interpreted several basic factors of historical materialism that influence and restrict social and historical development. Whether it is the restrictive effect of the mode of production on social and historical evolution, the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure, or the promotion or hindrance of historical change by class struggle, they all show us that the evolution and development of human society is a natural historical process. As the subject of social and historical movement, people can only exert their subjective initiative and promote historical development in this natural historical process by correctly grasping the dialectical laws of historical development; otherwise, they will be abandoned by the advancing society. So, how does historical materialism understand the dialectical movement of historical development? What kind of inevitable laws does it present under the influence of several basic factors that restrict social and historical evolution? We will analyze this in four parts.

**1. General and Special Laws of Historical Development**

The historical evolution of human society is an extremely complex movement. Therefore, when revealing the laws of the historical development of human society, the materialist conception of history starts from the actual structure of its overall development, partial evolution and individual evolution. When summarizing the general laws, it also pays attention to the different levels of special and individual, as well as the connection between them, and strives to fully and accurately reflect the objective laws of movement of historical development, so that the subjective initiative of human beings can grasp the correct direction and appropriate strength.

First, analyze the materialist conception of history's statement about the general laws of the historical development of human society. Marx has a brilliant statement in the "Preface to the Critique of Political Economy", which is recognized as a concentrated statement of the general laws of historical development. The original text is: "In the social production of their lives, people enter into definite relations that are inevitable and independent of their will, relations of production corresponding to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum of these production relations constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which the legal and political superstructure is erected and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of material life determines the entire process of social life, political life and spiritual life. It is not people's consciousness that determines their existence, but on the contrary, it is people's social existence that determines their consciousness. When the material productive forces of society develop to a certain stage, they come into conflict with the existing production relations or property relations (this is just the legal term for production relations) in which they have been moving. As a result, these relations change from forms of development of productive forces to fetters on productive forces. Then the era of social revolution has arrived. With the change of the economic base, the entire huge superstructure also changes slowly or quickly. When examining these changes, , we must always distinguish between the material changes in the economic conditions of production, which can be described with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophical, in short, ideological forms by which people become aware of this conflict and strive to overcome it. ... We cannot judge such an era of change on the basis of its consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained in the contradictions of material life, in the existing conflict between social productive forces and production relations. No social form will ever perish before all the productive forces that it can accommodate have been developed; and new and higher production relations will never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the embryo of the old society. Therefore, mankind always only poses tasks that it can solve, because if we examine it carefully, we will find that the task itself only arises when the material conditions for solving it already exist or are at least in the process of being generated." [[44]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn44" \o ") These few hundred words vividly and comprehensively summarize the general laws of the historical development of human society, and provide a basis for future generations to scientifically understand the historical evolution of society in such a huge time and space background.

The above-mentioned law-based summary of the dialectical movement of the overall development of human society is a scientific summary because, first, it starts from the most essential phenomenon that people must engage in productive labor in order to survive, and reveals the ultimate cause of social and historical development from the source; second, the law of human social and historical development it reveals is a general law with causal inevitability, because it starts from the ultimate cause of human social and historical development, and explains the inherent connection that the improvement of material production capacity will inevitably lead to the transformation of production relations and superstructure. Therefore, this law of causal inevitability is a general law with universal applicability; third, it fully appreciates the diversity and complexity of the evolutionary forms of the basic units or individual levels of human society, emphasizes the different manifestations of general laws at the individual level, and organically combines diversity and unity into one; fourth, it starts from the ultimate cause, analyzes the role and mutual relationship of various factors that affect and restrict social evolution, reveals the conditions and limitations of human social historical evolution, and provides scientific guidance for the exercise of people's subjective initiative.

Secondly, below the level of overall development (or general, universal) laws, there is a special level, that is, a level of partial evolution. It can be regional, such as Western European society, North American society, East Asian society, South Asian society, etc.; it can also be a certain type of social and historical phenomenon, such as the transformation from traditional society to modern society; it can also be the study of a certain type of regional social and historical phenomenon, such as the study of the reasons for the transition from feudal society to capitalist society in Western Europe, the study of the characteristics and long-term existence of rural communes in Eastern society, etc.

Below the special, partial evolution level, there is also a basic unit, that is, the individual evolution level, such as a certain country, a certain ethnic region, where the evolution shows certain individual characteristics. This is the lowest level in the overall structure, and it should also be the most specific and diverse level.

There is a covering relationship between the three structural levels of general, special and individual. That is, the general law is a law with universal applicability, which is a summary of the common characteristics of all individual phenomena. To say that the general contains the special means that the general is a summary of the common characteristics of all phenomena at the special level. The special law is a law applicable to a specific time and space range, which is an abstraction and summary of the common characteristics of all individual phenomena within a specific range; to say that the special contains the individual means a summary of the common characteristics of all phenomena at the individual level. Of course, this special is not the special outside the general, but the specific manifestation of the general law within a specific time and space. The individual is the characteristic of the basic unit. There is no individual outside the general and the special, but the individual included in the general and the special. If there is no such covering relationship between the three, then the whole will not be a whole because it cannot contain the common characteristics of all individuals, thus appearing exceptional phenomena; the special will not be a special because it cannot contain the common characteristics of some individuals, thus appearing exceptional phenomena; accordingly, the so-called general law and special law will be difficult to establish. This is also the standard for testing whether the summary of the relevant laws is objective and scientific. It should be said that the materialist conception of history's summary of the overall law of human social historical development reflects the above requirements. As a summary of the overall law, it includes all components and the characteristics shared by the individuals in each component. To give a simple example, we cannot say that Eastern society is special and Western society is universal, or vice versa, Eastern society is universal and Western society is special. Both are at a special level; the abstraction and induction of the common characteristics of the two are universal. Similarly, we cannot say that the British road is universal and the Chinese road is individual. Both are individual; the induction and abstraction of the common characteristics of all individual social development paths is universal, while the induction and abstraction of the common characteristics of all individual social development paths within a specific range is special. For another example, all nation-states have a task of achieving industrialization in the process of modernization without exception; it is the product of the productive forces entering into socialized large-scale production, large-scale exchange, and industrial structure upgrading. This is a summary of the general law of social and historical development. An important sign of achieving industrialization is that the industrial population must account for more than 50% of the total population . In other words, without considering foreign trade, agricultural labor productive forces must be greatly improved, which can not only provide agricultural products consumed by the industrial population, but also transport a large number of agricultural raw materials to the industry. These are all universal requirements and belong to the category of general rules. However, how each country or region can achieve the improvement of agricultural labor productive forces, provide a large number of agricultural products to meet market demand, and how the agricultural population can leave agriculture and work in the city, due to different national conditions, each country will have its own approach, so it has entered the special or individual level.

Third, it is not difficult to realize from the above analysis that the summary of the law of historical development of human society by the materialist conception of history can be summarized as "the law of causal necessity of single cause and multiple results".

This law can be expressed as follows: in order to survive, people must engage in material production practice activities; and the material production practice activities of successive generations will inevitably promote the improvement of material production practice capabilities, thereby promoting the development of society from low to high levels; this is the connotation of "oneness", that is, the universal and common law of social and historical development under the action of the ultimate cause.

The material production practices of people of different nationalities and countries face different external conditions, which constitute multiple factors that influence and restrict development, so different development paths will inevitably appear; this is the connotation of "multiple causes and multiple results", that is, the manifestation of universal laws at the special and individual levels. For example, the material production practice activities of the British are carried out under the natural and humanistic conditions of the UK, which produces the unique historical development path, social form and value system of the UK. The material production practice activities of the Chinese face the natural and humanistic conditions of China, thus producing the unique historical development path, social form and value system of China.

Even if new case characteristics are revealed by the study of new nations and countries, it will not constitute a falsification of existing knowledge, but a new development path will be added to the law, making the law richer. Different nations and countries may present many confusing historical appearances that are "similar and different", but a careful examination will reveal that there is a fact that remains unchanged: the degree to which the production and living styles of people in different nations and countries are similar to their actual life processes, their development paths, social forms and value systems are similar to the same degree; conversely, the degree to which their production and living styles are different from their actual life processes, their development paths, social forms and value systems are different to the same degree. Or to put it simply: the same conditions will inevitably produce the same results; different conditions will inevitably produce different results. When we observe the historical changes of human society, we find that economic forms such as slavery, serfdom and capitalism appeared and did not appear in different nations or eras. Even if they did appear, their forms of expression would be different. However, it cannot be said that one of the processes or forms is in line with general laws and is normal, while the other process or form violates or deviates from general laws and is a variant. They are all inevitable manifestations of the same universal law under different conditions, that is, the improvement of people's material production capacity will inevitably lead to the evolution of human social history. As for the conditions and forms of realization of this improvement and evolution in specific countries and regions, they will inevitably show diversity.

**2. Continuity and stages of historical development**

Looking at the development process of human social history, the evolution of social and economic forms has obvious continuity and stage characteristics. In terms of stages, each stage has its own specific social and economic form. This specific social and economic form is different from other social and economic forms. It not only has unique characteristics and corresponding social superstructures, but also always lasts for a period of time, or even centuries, in the place where it exists (country or region). Therefore, when people examine the historical evolution process of a country or region, they often measure the degree of its evolution and progress by the different stages of the development of social and economic forms. In terms of its continuity, the stage evolution of social and economic development is manifested as a gradual process, and there is no leap-forward transformation that can be chosen arbitrarily; moreover, at the beginning of the stage change, the new stage always retains some important characteristics of the old stage to a greater or lesser extent, showing the various traces that the new stage is conceived and matured in the womb of the old society. When exploring the universal laws of the historical development of human society, the materialist conception of history fully recognizes that there is such a unified relationship between continuity and stages in the development of social history and analyzes the reasons for it.

First, the reason why the historical development of human society has continuity is that each generation must rely on the material and spiritual wealth left to them by the previous generation to seek survival and development. The basis of this material and spiritual wealth is not chosen by them according to their own will, but left to them by the previous generation. It is true that human beings are the creators of their own history. However, this creative process is not started out of thin air. Its starting point is precisely the achievements created by the previous generation inherited by them. Therefore, when analyzing the continuity characteristics presented by social and historical evolution, the materialist conception of history points out: "Every stage of history encounters certain material results, a certain sum of productive forces, and the historically formed relationship between man and nature and between individuals. It encounters a large amount of productive forces, capital and environment passed on from the previous generation to the next generation. Although on the one hand these productive forces, capital and environment are changed by the new generation, on the other hand, they also predetermine the living conditions of the new generation itself, so that they can develop to a certain extent and have special characteristics." [[45]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn45" \o ")

It is for this reason that Marx said when describing communist society: "We are dealing with a communist society which has not developed on its own basis, but, on the contrary, has just emerged from capitalist society, and therefore bears in every respect, economically, morally and spiritually, the marks of the society from which it sprang." [[46]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn46" \o ")

Secondly, the development of the material and spiritual power of each generation has a natural process that cannot be arbitrarily skipped. Just as people must first master elementary mathematics before they can learn higher mathematics, the working masses of a society cannot leap from the level of crude small-scale production technology to the level of universal mastery of high-tech technology. The growth of the ability and level of social managers, as well as the formation of various new systems and institutions that are compatible with the new development of productive forces and people's adaptation to them, all have a gradual process. When we talked about the restrictive role of the mode of production earlier, we cited an example, that is, if people's material production capacity is measured by their labor productive forces, without considering foreign trade, industrialization is impossible when agricultural labor productive forces fails to meet the food needs of at least half of the non-agricultural population. This is a manifestation of the continuity and insurmountability of the development of people's material production capacity. For another example, the process of human social history is not uniform, and latecomers can learn from the experience of developed countries to accelerate their own development. However, the basis for latecomers to learn and apply the advanced experience of other countries is the established social and economic conditions inherited from the previous generation. Through learning and reference, they can effectively improve their own understanding and practical ability to transform the objective world. Therefore, they may shorten the process of social and economic transformation and reduce the cost of the transformation process; but the extent to which it can be shortened and reduced depends on the degree of improvement of their understanding and practical ability. In Capital, Marx pointed out: "It is not a question of the degree of development of the social antagonisms caused by the natural laws of capitalist production. It is a question of these laws themselves, of the tendencies which are operating with iron necessity and are being realized. The more developed industrial countries show the less developed only a picture of their future"; "Whether it will take a more cruel or more humane form depends on the degree of development of the working class itself. Therefore, apart from noble motives, the vital interests of the present ruling class also require the removal of all obstacles that can be controlled by law and hinder the development of the working class. ... A country should and can learn from other countries. Even if a society has discovered the natural laws of its own movement - the ultimate goal of this book is to reveal the laws of economic movement of modern society - it can neither skip nor abolish the natural stages of development by decree. But it can shorten and alleviate the pains of childbirth." [[47]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn47" \o ")

Popper insisted that this passage of Marx was tantamount to "teaching people that it is futile to try to change the changes that are coming; this can be said to be a special form of fatalism, a fatalism about the trend of history . " [[48]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn48" \o ")

 It can be seen that he failed to understand that what Marx actually expressed was the continuity of historical development or the insurmountable development of material production capacity. In countries that have already embarked on the capitalist road, the "iron necessity" of the natural law of capitalist production will inevitably take effect. Even if people have recognized that natural law, they can neither skip it nor abolish it by decree. But even so, whether capitalism will take a more cruel or more humane form depends on the degree of development of the working class itself; in addition, a country should and can learn from the experience and lessons of other countries, so as to shorten and alleviate the pain of childbirth. The extent to which it can be shortened and alleviated obviously depends on the degree of development of people's practical ability to understand and transform the world. This is by no means "fatalism of historical development", but is due to the "continuous" characteristics of the historical evolution of social economy.

**Secondly, the historical development of human society has the characteristics of continuity, and at the same time it progresses to a higher level in a staged evolution.**

The materialist conception of history tells us that "all development, regardless of its content, can be regarded as a series of different stages of development, which are connected with each other in a way that one negates another. ... The development of any field cannot but negate its previous form of existence." [[49]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn49" \o ") Therefore, through this staged evolution, human society can achieve a step-by-step progress from a low level to a high level. The materialist conception of history reveals the reason why social and historical development progresses in stages: "Each certain historical form of the labor process will further develop the material basis and social form of this process. When this certain historical form reaches a certain stage of maturity, it will be abandoned and give way to a higher form. When the contradiction and opposition between the distribution relations and the corresponding certain historical forms of production relations on the one hand, and the development of productive forces, production capacity and its elements on the other hand, expands and deepens, it indicates that such a moment of crisis has arrived. At this time, a conflict occurs between the material development of production and its social form." [[50]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn50" \o ")

At this moment, social and historical evolution will leap to a higher stage. It can be seen that the phased leap is the result of the qualitative improvement of people's material production capacity in the continuous growth and accumulation. The previous article quoted Marx's discussion on the three-stage division of the historical evolution of human society, which clearly revealed the historical trajectory of the qualitative improvement achieved in the previous stage leading to the evolution to a higher stage. In the first major stage, because people's production capacity only developed in a narrow range and isolated places, the amount and scope of exchange of surplus products were extremely limited. "The smaller the social power of the means of exchange, the closer the connection between the means of exchange and the nature of the direct labor products and the direct needs of the exchangers, the greater the power of the community that connects individuals to each other." Therefore, there must be "patriarchal relations, ancient communities, feudal systems and guild systems"; once the level of people's production capacity breaks through the limitations of narrow scope and isolated places, the substantial increase in surplus products leads to the emergence of universal exchange, and people must abandon "human dependence" or "direct domination and obedience. ", establish social relations with "human independence based on material dependence", that is, enter the second major stage; in the historical process of the second major stage, people's production capacity develops to a higher level, "forming universal social material transformation, comprehensive relations, multi-faceted needs and a comprehensive capacity system", then people will generally experience and realize the irrationality of a society with money as "the power of all powers", and will inevitably abandon the social form characterized by "material dependence", produce "free personality based on the comprehensive development of individuals and their common social production capacity becoming their social wealth", and establish "a union of free people" where "the free development of everyone is the condition for the free development of all people". Of course, many small stages can be divided in these three major stages. For example, the second major stage is a historical process that started in the 16th century and has continued to this day without ending; in this long process, its primary, intermediate and advanced stages can be divided, among which the transition from industrial society to post-industrial society is an obvious stage-by-stage transformation.

Looking at the development of history, it is both continuous and phased, and the two are not contradictory. They constitute a dialectical unity, that is, a phased leap is achieved in continuous accumulation, and a continuous accumulation process is needed before a new phased leap arrives; thus, human society is driven to develop from low to high, from simple to complex.

**3. The Inevitability and Contingency in Historical Development**

The "necessity" of historical development means that the emergence, evolution and extinction of any social and historical phenomenon have their own internal causes and a causal relationship. Therefore, the existence of any historical phenomenon is inevitable. The "contingency" of historical development means that among historical phenomena at different levels of the same causal chain, the lower-level historical phenomena are contingent relative to the higher-level historical phenomena. Engels once systematically discussed the relationship between necessity and contingency. In his Dialectics of Nature, he quoted Hegel's proposition: " What is accidental is inevitable; necessity defines itself as accident, while on the other hand, this accident is rather absolute necessity." He also criticized the erroneous understanding of natural science on this proposition: "Natural science simply throws these propositions aside as paradoxical word games and self-contradictory nonsense, and in theory adheres to the empty metaphysical thinking of Wolff, believing that a thing is either accidental or inevitable, but cannot be both accidental and inevitable at the same time..." [ [51]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn51" \o ")

Engels believed that a thing is necessary because it has its own reasons for existence, but it is also relatively accidental because it is at a lower level in the overall structure.

The "necessity" and "contingency" of historical development are a pair of relatively abstract concepts, which can be better grasped through some specific examples. We have mentioned before that social and historical phenomena have a multi-level structure such as the whole, part, and basic unit, and corresponding universal, special, and individual laws at different levels. For example, at the overall level, the universal law is: the historical development process of human society depends on the level of development of the material production capacity of workers. When the surplus products produced by workers are very small and there is little exchange, a society characterized by human dependence will be produced. But at the partial or special level, different regions and countries have different characteristics in the personal dependence system. In medieval China, the surplus products of workers were very small and there was little exchange, which gave rise to a Chinese-style feudal society with a strong centralized rule represented by the emperor; while in medieval Western Europe, the surplus products of workers were very small and there was little exchange, which gave rise to a Latin - Germanic feudal society with powerful feudal lords, who formed relatively independent "kingdoms" in their respective fiefdoms, and the royal power was relatively weak; ... Therefore, it is the common cause that drives the evolution of human society to the Middle Ages. However, in this causal chain, due to the different specific conditions of regions and countries, the feudal systems established also have their own characteristics. Therefore, the former is regarded as the inevitability in the process of historical development, and the latter is regarded as the contingency in the process of historical development relative to the former. Therefore, if we grasp the position of things in the causal chain, it is not difficult to grasp the inevitability and contingency of historical evolution phenomena. For example: the universal law of social and historical development revealed by the materialist conception of history is that human beings promote the contradictory movement of productive forces and production relations, economic base and superstructure from low to high through production practice activities. Human society gradually develops from low to high based on common causes, which is a kind of historical inevitability; but in Western Europe, East Asia and other regions, what kind of appearance this gradual development is is regarded as the contingency in the overall process of historical development.

Further analysis shows that social and historical phenomena have a multi-layered structure; therefore, the phenomena at the middle layer are accidental phenomena relative to the upper layer, but they become inevitable phenomena for the lower layer. For example, in the history of Chinese feudal society, the outbreak of peasant uprisings has its causal inevitability. The fundamental reason is that the feudal rulers who represent the interests of the landlord class cruelly oppress and exploit the poor peasants, forcing the peasants to rise up. But each peasant uprising has its specific reasons. For example, the peasant war at the end of the Qin Dynasty was caused by heavy corvee and cruel punishment, the peasant war at the end of the Sui Dynasty was caused by endless military service, corvee and harsh politics, and the peasant war at the end of the Ming Dynasty was caused by the intensification of land annexation and the cruel exploitation of the government... Although the specific reasons for these peasant uprisings are not exactly the same, they are all caused by the brutal rule of the feudal dynasty. Therefore, they are all regarded as accidental phenomena in the history of peasant uprisings in Chinese feudal society. If we look into it in detail, peasant uprisings in all dynasties have not occurred only once, and each uprising has its more specific reasons. If the uprising of Chen Sheng and Wu Guang had not encountered heavy rains that delayed their march and put them in real danger of being beheaded, perhaps the uprising would not have necessarily broken out at that time and would not have been led by the two of them. Therefore, compared with the peasant wars of the Qin Dynasty, the uprising of Chen Sheng and Wu Guang was an accidental phenomenon.

Given that **contingency** and necessity are at different levels, people’s understanding often starts with understanding the lower level, individual phenomena, and gradually grasps the special laws of the higher level from the shallow to the deep, from the surface to the inside, and then grasps the universal laws of the higher level. Therefore, without grasping chance, there is no way to grasp necessity, let alone grasp the necessity of a higher level. Therefore, Marx pointed out: "If '**contingency** ' does not play a role, then world history will have a very mysterious nature." [[52]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn52" \o ")

Another usage of contingency is derived from the laws of people's cognitive movement. People's understanding of the internal connection of a thing is a process. When people have not yet gained a definite understanding of the internal connection of things, they temporarily attribute it to contingency. But when people's cognitive ability improves or the internal connection of things gradually emerges, so that they gain a definite understanding of this connection, it is attributed to necessity. At this time, contingency is transformed into necessity. For example, Engels once used the analysis of the number of peas in a pea pod as an example and pointed out: Just because most pea pods have 5 peas, it cannot be concluded that the pea pod has 5 peas is inevitable, and the pea pods with more or less than 5 peas are accidental. The problem is that "as long as we cannot prove the basis of the number of peas in a pea pod, the number of peas is still accidental" [[53]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn53" \o ") .

So the key is to understand the "causal relationship" that determines the number of peas in a pea pod. Engels also pointed out: "Chance is only one level of interdependence; the other level is called necessity. In nature, which also seems to be dominated by chance, we have long proved that in every field there is an inherent necessity and regularity that realizes itself in this chance. However, what applies to nature also applies to society. The more a social activity or a series of social processes go beyond people's conscious control, the more they go beyond the scope of their control, the more they appear to be at the mercy of pure chance, the more their inherent laws realize themselves in this chance with natural necessity." [[54]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn54" \o ")

Take commodity production and commodity exchange as an example. When they are unknown forces whose nature needs to be explored and revealed, commodity producers are blindly dominated by them, and even often show their destructive power through periodic crises. At this time, the inevitable laws of commodity production and exchange seem to be exerted through various accidental phenomena. For commodity producers and exchangers, they have never seen through the mystery. To them, everything seems to be accidental. Once they have mastered the law and realized its inevitability, they can take the initiative to reduce or delay the occurrence of this periodic crisis. Therefore, from the perspective of cognitive movement, contingency and inevitability can be transformed into each other.

Finally, we need to clarify one point: the relationship between necessity and contingency is by no means the relationship between majority and minority. If we regard necessity and contingency as the relationship between majority and minority, we will regard the "majority" as "necessity" or "universal law" and the "minority" as "contingency" or "variant form" that deviates from the law. As we know, there are no exceptions to laws with universal applicability; once exceptions appear, the laws with universal applicability lose their "universal applicability" characteristics and are degraded to special or even individual cognition.

**4. The role of the masses and individuals in historical development**

Regarding the role of the masses and outstanding figures among them in the process of social and historical development, historical materialism not only affirms the decisive role of the masses in promoting social and historical development, but also positively evaluates the historical role of individuals. This makes historical materialism truly a scientific theoretical system for comprehensively and profoundly understanding history and using history as a mirror to correctly guide practice.

First, we will analyze the materialist conception of history's discussion on the historical role of the masses.

Marx and Engels have a very classic statement in their co-authored book “The Holy Family”: "History does nothing, it 'possesses no infinite richness', it 'does not fight any battles'! It is not 'history' that creates all this, possesses all this and fights for all this, but people, real, living people. 'History' is not a special personality that uses people as tools to achieve its own goals. History is nothing but the activities of people pursuing their own goals." [[55]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn55" \o ")

This passage clearly reveals the most popular and simple objective fact: the so-called "history" is the sum of the material and spiritual production practices carried out by people. If there were no people and their activities for survival, there would be no history. Therefore, it is not history that creates people, on the contrary, history is created by people. This is the premise of the understanding that the masses of people play a decisive role in the development of social history. On this basis, let us further examine how the masses of people play a decisive role in the evolution of social history.

First, the masses are the creators of the social material wealth on which mankind depends for its survival. In The German Ideology, Marx and Engels made a good explanation of the premise of historical development recognized by the materialist conception of history: "We must first of all establish the first premise of all human existence, that is, the first premise of all history, that in order to be able to 'create history', people must be able to live. But in order to live, they first need food, shelter, clothing and other things. Therefore, the first historical activity is to produce the means to meet these needs, that is, to produce material life itself, and this is such a historical activity, a basic condition of all history, which people must complete every day and every hour just to be able to live, both now and thousands of years ago. ... Therefore, the first thing for any historical view is to pay attention to the full significance and full scope of the above basic facts and to give them due attention." [[56]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn56" \o ") It goes without saying that the production of material life itself is the first historical activity of mankind and the necessary condition for the existence of all history. And it is the masses who produce the social material wealth on which mankind depends for its survival. The masses, not individuals, are the subject and implementer of material production activities. As for other aspects of social life, such as political life, spiritual and cultural life, etc., they all develop under the constraints of the mode of production of material life. Therefore, if we ignore the fact that the people create social material wealth and the evolutionary history of material production methods, we will not be able to make a correct analysis of other areas or even the entire history.

Second, the masses are the decisive force in social change. In social change, is it individual leaders or the masses who play the historical role of determining victory or defeat? The materialist conception of history gives this honor to the broadest masses. In The Development of Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, Engels discussed the three decisive battles of the bourgeoisie against the feudal system. He pointed out: "In these three great uprisings of the bourgeoisie, the peasants provided the fighting army... Without these self-cultivating farmers and urban civilians, the bourgeoisie would never have carried the struggle to the end alone and would never have sent Charles I to the guillotine." [[57]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn57" \o ") In "The Prussian 'Crisis'", Engels pointed out: "In seventeenth-century England and eighteenth-century France, even the most brilliant achievements of the bourgeoisie were not won by itself, but by the masses, the workers and peasants." [[58]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn58" \o ") The facts of every social and historical change have shown that the masses play a decisive role. The root cause is that the leaders and elites have certain qualities because they are bred and cultivated in the practice of fighting together with the masses. “The environment is changed by people, and educators themselves must be educated.” [[59]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn59" \o ") In other words, no outstanding person is born with the ability to save the world, but is gradually nurtured in the nursery of the masses. Furthermore, whether a leader can play a leadership role depends on whether he has the support of the masses. Only when leaders reflect the will of the masses and represent the interests of the masses can they accomplish their heroic cause with the active support and participation of the masses; otherwise, no matter how “intelligent and brave” they are, they can only be a lonely person, unable to arouse the enthusiasm of the masses for change, let alone attract the active participation of the masses. Therefore, the rationality of the existence of the ruling class and even leaders depends on the support of the masses. The importance of the support of the people has long been recognized by wise men in the ruling group of ancient China. "Xunzi·Wangzhi" quotes "The legend says, 'The king is a boat, and the people are water.' Water carries the boat, but water overturns it." This warning is very severe. If anyone disobeys it without authorization, he will not be able to escape the fate of being abandoned by the masses.

Third, in the final analysis, the improvement of the people’s material production capacity is the ultimate cause of social and historical development. When explaining the basic factors of social and historical evolution, we mentioned that the evolution of productive forces is the ultimate cause of social and historical development. This productive forces refers to the material production capacity formed and continuously improved by the people in the process of labor. Therefore, Engels called the materialist conception of history and the scientific socialism based on the materialist conception of history "a new school that has found the key to understanding the whole history of society in the history of the development of labor" [[60]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn60" \o ") . Marx pointed out that "in the act of reproduction itself, not only objective conditions change, such as the countryside turning into cities, the wilderness into cleared land, etc., but also the producers change, refine new qualities, develop and transform themselves through production, create new forces and new ideas, create new ways of communication, new needs and new languages" [[61]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn61" \o ") . The major changes in human social history can and must be explored in the history of the development of labor, especially in the history of the development of the people's labor capacity.

In summary, the materialist conception of history regards the role of the masses in historical movement as a decisive force. Its scientific and objective basis is that they are both the creators of social material wealth and the decisive force of social change. The development of social history ultimately depends on the continuous improvement of the material production capacity of the masses. It can be seen that without the masses, the subject of social history, the evolution and development of society can only be a kind of myth made up by "prophets".

Secondly, how does historical materialism define the role of individuals in historical development?

First, no elite can transcend the limitations imposed on them by the historical era. Marx and Engels said in this regard: "The development of an individual depends on the development of all the others with whom he interacts directly or indirectly." [[62]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn62" \o ")

Engels's statement in Anti-Dühring also strongly supports this view: "The utopians are utopians precisely because they can only be so in an era when capitalist production is still very underdeveloped. They have to conceive the elements of the new society from their minds, because these elements have not yet been generally and clearly manifested in the old society itself; they can only have the help of reason to conceive the basic features of their new architecture, because they cannot yet have the help of contemporary history. But if today, almost 80 years after their appearance, ... large-scale industry has developed the contradictions latent in the capitalist mode of production into obvious contradictions, so that the imminent collapse of this mode of production can be felt with the hand; ... if Mr. Dühring now creates a new utopian social system not on the basis of existing economic materials, but from his own supreme head, then he is not just engaging in simple 'alchemy'." [[63]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn63" \o ")

Engels used the materialist conception of history to explain that the utopian socialist construction of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen was limited by the historical era. He further criticized Dühring for ignoring the reality of historical evolution and "forcibly creating a new utopian social system" from his closed mind after the internal contradictions of capitalism had emerged and the conditions for implementing socialist transformation were ripe. Therefore, the conclusion that should be drawn is that individuals grow up in the group of their historical era and are therefore inevitably limited by the objective historical conditions at that time.

The limitation of history is also manifested in that the individual’s historical role can only be played on the premise of meeting the needs of the society at that time. That is to say, when an individual is based on the era in which he lives, understands the conditions for the development of society at that time, can point out the way for such development, and is good at solving all difficulties and problems that may be encountered in the process of progress, he can play a historical role. We have noticed that the social status of the elites in class society is mostly in the ranks of the ruling class. This is because the class differentiation itself is the result of the separation of material labor and spiritual labor among the real people [[64]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn64" \o ") .

While the ruling class rules and oppresses the ruled class, they are also the undertakers of "spiritual labor" to perform social public functions and economic and cultural functions, although these social functions and economic and cultural functions are to maintain the needs of the existing society and reflect the interests of those in power. Therefore, when discussing the two different paths of class formation, Engels pointed out: "Political rule is everywhere based on the performance of a certain social function, and can only last if it performs its social function. No matter how many despotic governments have risen and fallen in Persia and India, every despotic government knows very well that it is first and foremost the governor of river valley irrigation, and that there can be no agriculture without irrigation." [[65]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn65" \o ")

 In the course of historical development, some special individuals will always be created. They are the product of social needs and social functions. The rationality of their existence and the size of their historical role will mainly depend on the extent to which they meet social needs and social functions.

Second, individuals can play a significant role in promoting and accelerating the development of history. Outstanding people are the product of meeting social needs and fulfilling social functions. Therefore, the emergence of outstanding people has its historical inevitability. The reason why outstanding people are outstanding is that they, rather than others, have the special ability to undertake historical missions. His talent enables him to rely on the power of the masses and through his own efforts to meet the needs of society and promote the development of history. As explained in the previous article, scientific socialism can only appear when the internal contradictions of capitalist society reach a very sharp level and the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has become a new driving force for development in European history. And it was with his extraordinary talent that Marx turned socialism from fantasy to science and became the founder of scientific socialism. Engels made a high evaluation of this: "I cannot deny that I worked with Marx for forty years. Before and during this period, I participated independently to a certain extent in the creation of this theory, especially in its elaboration. However, most of the basic guiding ideas (especially in the fields of economics and history), especially the final and clear expression of these guiding ideas, belong to Marx. What I provided, except for a few specialized fields at most, Marx could have easily done without me. As for what Marx did, I cannot do it. Marx stood higher than all of us, saw farther, observed more and faster. Marx was a genius, and we are at most experts. Without Marx, our theory would be far from what it is today. Therefore, it is fair to name this theory after him." [[66]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftn66" \o ")

For another example, the "Resolution" of the Sixth Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China affirmed the historical contributions of Comrade Mao Zedong: Mao Zedong is a great proletarian revolutionary, theorist and strategist born in the Chinese revolution, and the greatest national hero in the history of the Chinese nation. The reason why he was great was not because he was some genius, a saint or a god, but because of all the genius he possessed, which enabled him to concentrate the wisdom of the whole party, exert his outstanding ability to creatively apply Marxism to the practice of the Chinese revolution, lead the Chinese people to achieve the great victory of the new democratic revolution, and meet the objective needs of the historical trend of semi-feudal and semi- China taking the socialist road. It was precisely because of the wise and correct leadership of Comrade Mao Zedong that the Chinese people were able to achieve the great victory of the national democratic revolution and establish a new socialist China in just over twenty years. These examples that are familiar to us all reveal a truth, that is, the talents of outstanding people can only be fully exerted and achieve success in their careers when they conform to the trend of historical development and when objective conditions are ripe. If so, the exertion of his personal role has promoted the development of history. However, some historical figures who violate the trend of historical development and the demands of the people can only play a role in hindering the progress of history. They may also be arrogant for a while and use their power and status to release the "energy" that hinders progress, but they cannot change the trend of historical development after all, and will eventually be abandoned by history.

Through the above analysis of the role of the masses and individuals in the development of history, we can understand the dialectical viewpoint of historical materialism on this issue. Any outstanding person is born in the group of his own time, grows up by absorbing the wisdom of the masses, and rises by taking on the tasks entrusted by history. Outstanding people make achievements and lead the masses to promote the progress of history with the support and support of the masses.

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[[35]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref35" \o ") Karl Marx, Capital,1, People’s Publishing House1975, p.786.

[[36]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref36" \o ") Karl Marx, Capital,1,95.

[[37]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref37" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,1,80,71.

[[38]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref38" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,1,272.

[[39]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref39" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,3,525-526.

[[40]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref40" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,3,365.

[[41]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref41" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,3,685.

[[42]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref42" \o ") When discussing the various methods used by the ruling classes of Western Europe to promote primitive accumulation of capital, Marx pointed out: “All these methods utilize state power, that is, centralized and organized social violence, to greatly accelerate the process of transformation from the feudal mode of production to the capitalist mode of production and shorten the transition period. Violence is the midwife of every old society that is pregnant with the new. Violence itself is an economic force.” (Selected Works of Marx and Engels,2,266)

[[43]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref43" \o ") The Collected Works of Marx and Engels,21, People’s Publishing House1965,448-458.

[[44]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref44" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,2,32-33.

[[45]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref45" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,1,76-77.

[[46]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref46" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,3,304.

[[47]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref47" \o ") Capital,1,8,11.

[[48]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref48" \o ") ​​Popper, The Poverty of Historicism, translated by Du Ruji and Qiu Renzong, Huaxia Publishing House1987, p39.

[[49]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref49" \o ") The Collected Works of Marx and Engels,4, People’s1958, p329.

[[50]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref50" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,2,587.

[[51]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref51" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,4,326.

[[52]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref52" \o ") The Collected Works of Marx and Engels,33, People’s1973,210.

[[53]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref53" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,4,325.

[[54]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref54" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,4,175-176.

[[55]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref55" \o ") The Collected Works of Marx and Engels,2, People’s1957,118-119.

[[56]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref56" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,1,78-79.

[[57]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref57" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,3,707.

[[58]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref58" \o ") The Collected Works of Marx and Engels,18, People’s1964, p.325.

[[59]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref59" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,1,55.

[[60]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref60" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,4,258.

[[61]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref61" \o ") The Collected Works of Marx and Engels,Vol46494.

[[62]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref62" \o ") The Collected Works of Marx and Engels,3, People’s Publishing House1960, p515.

[[63]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref63" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,3,616-617.

[[64]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref64" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,1,82,84; see also Vol.3,pp525-526,632, etc.; and Vol. 4,pp.700-701.

[[65]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref65" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,3,523.

[[66]](https://192.168.91.85:8443/wcm/app/editor/editor/fckeditor.jsp?InstanceName=TRS_Editor&Toolbar=44641&SiteId=68&Version=1.0.0.11&ItemCount=44&excludeToolbar=" \l "_ftnref66" \o ") Selected Works of Marx and Engels,4, p242note1.