

# Kiyoaki Hirata, Marx's Concept of Civil Society

Translated by Kunihiro Uemura

## Translator's Introduction

This article was first published in the *Economic Review* (July 1969, vol. 20, no. 3), issued by the Institute of Economic Research, Hitotsubashi University, and reissued in Kiyoaki Hirata, *Civil Society and Socialism* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten Publishers, 1969). The book was a bestseller at the time and ignited several controversies over Marx's interpretation, especially among Japanese Marxists.

In the article, Hirata emphasizes that Marx understood the distinction between individual and private property as well as that between civil and bourgeois society. Hirata's originality lies in his definition of modern civil society as one in which individual property is established under the appearance of private property. He asserts that Marxian socialism should be a re-establishment of individual property. Thus, John Keane in his book *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998, p. 12) named Hirata and his camp the "civil society school of Japanese Marxism" and Andrew E. Barshay called them the "civil society Marxists" in *The Social Sciences in Modern Japan: The Marxian and Modernist Traditions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, p. 175).

Kiyoaki Hirata (1922–1995) was born in Tokyo and studied economics at Tokyo University of Commerce (today known as Hitotsubashi University). He taught at Yokohama National University, Saitama University, Nagoya University, and Kyoto University. After his retirement, he was invited to assume the president role at Kagoshima University of Economics. For more information, see Toshio Yamada's "Hirata Kiyoaki and His Thoughts on Civil Society," in *The History of Economic Thought* (July 2014, vol. 56, no. 1), issued by The Japanese Society for the History of Economic Thought.

## Introduction

Today, the phrase “civil society” is not only an academic term but also one that refers to the real life in Japan. This term has left the libraries of scholars studying Western European classics<sup>1)</sup> and entered daily lives. However, what civil society expresses and to what extent it does so is disputable. The rapid capital accumulation in Japan in the past decade has accelerated urbanization and promoted the social formation of the citizenry. As a result, postwar democracy has become institutionalized and the concept of civil society has been diffused as a common expression of urban life.

However, with this popular usage, civil society has merely become a situation or an aspect of capitalist society, as is the case with industrial, mass, and information-oriented society. To this effect, the following questions must be considered. Is civil society understood as the present society's state being able to conform to its original concept? Is the original meaning of this term in accordance with the accepted meaning of civil society in present-day Japan? Is one meaning opposed to the other?

A question for critical consideration in not only contemporary Japan but also studies of Western European social sciences is “What is the precise meaning of civil society?” A deeper understanding of the topic is important given that the historical development of Western European society involved the social formation of a specific form of civil society. Western European social sciences are based on this history of civilization. In fact, Western European theory was developed by asking what “civil society” is, and its interpretation determined the historical and social character of the theory. Marx, which is the focus of this study, is not exception. Marx began his substantial economic study by questioning the meaning of civil society, and attempted to complete the contextual and critical consideration of this question through his studies. For Marx, civil society was not only a historical situation but also the social formation of Western Europe and the methodological concept to theoretically comprehend its history. As a Western European intellectual, Marx certainly inherited the comprehension of history as that of civil society; however, his originality lies in his philosophical critique of civil society at the time, which he attempted to use for the efflorescence of true human history.

In Japan, however, studies of Marx have lost Marx himself. Owing to the lack of mediation between contextual studies in European classics, Japanese studies have largely overlooked the core of Marx's views of society and history and even his concept of civil society. Even though Marx often used this concept in his main work *Capital* and various other studies, Japanese scholars have de-

nied the concept and instead referred to it using specific Japanese words, such as “merchandise economic society” or “capitalism society.” As a result, misunderstanding prevails of Marx’s critical views of capitalist society and the basic structure of historical materialism. Here, I specifically deal with Marx’s lost concept of civil society to identify clues of his original views of society and history.

## I Civil Society and Capitalist Society

Marx’s concepts of society comprise neither merchandise economic society nor capitalism society, but rather civil society and capitalist society. Society (*Gesellschaft*) is, first, a mode of combination of humankind or a particular form of associative relations between persons. The personification of things, for example, commodities or capital, is the precise result of the reification of persons; nevertheless, imagined society is nothing but associative relations between persons. Civil society and capitalist society are concepts of modern society that Marx used to primarily presuppose the forms of economic processes of society to regulate those of political and moral processes. Marx comprehended that social formation as a synchronic development of economic, political, and moral processes is the process of transforming civil society into a capitalist one. Thus, the so-called “materialistic comprehension” of merchandise economic society or capitalist society can be misleading from the beginning for interpreting Marx.

In particular, it is important to attend to the transformation of civil society into a capitalist one and remember that it refers to the transformation of social relations between citizens to those between capitalists. By way of precaution, a capitalist, in this case, is defined as “*bürgerlicher Kapitalist*” in the German edition of *Capital* or “*bourgeois capitaliste*” in the French edition. In other words, capitalists “lift” (*aufheben*) social relations between citizens. Here, “lift” means the abolition of lower relations along with their preservation in a higher dimension. An actual civil society exists alongside the continuous transformation of civil society into a capitalist one, and so does an actual capitalist society. Therefore, Marx referred to capitalist society in the phrase civil society. To reiterate our earlier precaution, the so-called “civil society” did not historically exist before the development of capitalist society. Civil society, distinguished from capitalist society, was not a historical stage, and a period of civil society did not exist as such. The actual social formation developed alongside the continuous transformation of the primary formation of civil society into the secondary formation of capitalist society.

We can see that this social formation typically existed in Western Europe. When the civil aspect of social formation transforms into a capitalist aspect, the

owners of commodities and money become owners of capital in the economic foundation, and, at the same time, citizen property transforms into capitalist property. These processes determine the transformation of political and moral relations in the superstructure. Although Marx described only the basic economic process of social formation in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and *Capital*, the development of economic categories mentioned therein represents not only an exclusively economic process but also the development of legal and moral relations determined by economic forms. Therefore, persons appear during the significant transformation of basic economic categories in *Capital*, which discusses economy, morality, and law. We now aim to confirm that Marx wrote *Capital* from the viewpoint of this synchronic development of economy, morality, and law in Western Europe and described it specifically to the case of Western European.

Doing so is important because the absence of such confirmation has led to the misunderstanding of *Capital*. —In addition to Marx's description of persons appearing at the point of theoretical and systematic development, the categories in *Capital* and their transformation can also be applied to non-Western European regions. In this sense, *Capital* can be treated as a universal theory. Here, we can indeed establish the enormous significance of *Capital*. However, readers in non-Western European regions who attempt to find the existence of economic categories in *Capital* often miss the fact that legal and moral relations between citizens do not exist in their regions yet. Moreover, they lose sight of the existence of non-civil economic relations in their regions. Nevertheless, they believe that they are applying Marxism to their society and consider their understanding of society to be a materialistic one. Undoubtedly, this is a crude understanding that does not amount to Marxian materialism.

Section 2 considers these issues from the viewpoint of categorical history.

## II Categorical Reconstruction of Civil Society

Critically, Marx inherited the concept of civil society directly from Hegel, and further, from Ferguson and Smith. Through this inheritance, he created new categories and used them to reconstruct the concept of civil society.

### 1. Civil Society as a Methodological Concept

It is worth remembering that before Marx, and even Hegel, the concept of civil society with basic categories, such as the division of labor and property, was already made known in Western Europe by Rousseau, Ferguson, and Smith. Although they opposed each other, they shared the viewpoint of understanding civil society. Hegel's originality was in his methodologically articulated and es-

established concept of civil society with the state. We can now say that Hegel presented the superstructure of society already proposed by Ferguson as, in effect, a methodological concept for social cognition. However, Hegel's civil society is a lower and disunited form of the higher form, the state. This provides the basis for the idea to transform the lower and concrete form into a higher and ideal state and to unite the two factors.<sup>2)</sup>

As Hegel had already presented such a concept of civil society, Marx could comprehend that it constructed a particular idea or state above itself and completed its own social formation by alienating and estranging the superstructure from itself. In other words, Hegel was able to find the basic factor of social formation not in the abstract idea but in concrete civil society and confirm that social formation was an actual process of history.

From the beginning, Marx recognized and confirmed that civil society was inherently related to law and morality independent of it. Civil society is a methodological concept that can be used to understand society as a whole.

## 2. Modes of Commerce and Production

When civil society was introduced as a methodological concept, it had already been reconstructed in the new economic category of "the mode of reproduction," which is a combination of the modes of production, commerce, and consumption.

First of all, civil society is a commercial society and comprehended as a particular mode of commerce. It comprises relations between citizens, in which "private individuals" freely communicate with each other as equal proprietors. Marx called this form of communication or commerce the civil form or mode of commerce, although this does not qualify as one of Marx's original contributions. Of course, this civil mode of commerce did not suddenly appear at a point in human history. It became the prevailing mode of commerce in society owing to the developing productive power of the division of labor and the socialized mode of production in the form of commodity production. Marx's originality lies in his methodological confirmation that the mode of commerce is generated and determined by that of production. Accordingly, the comprehension of civil society as the mode of production and commerce is the first step in Marx's reconstruction of civil society. If people can freely think, understand, and act in production, they can do so in commerce. In addition, if they can behave so in production and commerce, they can freely select and enjoy consumption. More precisely, this is the self-acquisition (property, *propriété*, *Eigentum*) of individuals in production, commerce, and consumption, that is, "individual property." Recall here that Ferguson mentioned "a right to defend their persons, and to act with freedom" and "a right to maintain the apprehensions of reason, and the

feelings of the heart” as “the rights of individuals.”<sup>3)</sup> However, individual property produced in the civil mode of production<sup>4)</sup> actually exists in a form of private property. Proprietors privately possess the means of life by possessing the means of production and are, in any event, exclusive in production, commerce, and consumption. They exclude not only others by eliminating collectiveness in production and life but also themselves, from both their humanity and collective nature. In other words, they estrange not only those outside of them but also themselves internally. Here, we may imagine the new individuals, described by Ferguson, who “need to take care of themselves.”<sup>5)</sup> Marx comprehended and described the relation and distinction between individual and private property as a determinant of civil society. This was a decisive step in his reconstruction of civil society.

As for private property, independent labor processes first characterize the civil mode of production, which produces a particular “mode of appropriation” that purchases and controls the products of others and their labor by developing a production process of abstract value. This is Marx’s presentation of origin of inequality. Here, appropriation means to commandeer the commons or the property of others. The inequality in private property brings about control over the poor by the rich.

The concept of civil society is essentially reconstructed on the basis of these categories, namely the modes of production, commerce, and consumption; the mode of reproduction; individual and private property; and finally, the mode of appropriation. Clearly, commodity and money are strict economic concepts that form the foundation for these categories.

### 3. Inversion of the Laws of Property

The civil mode of production develops a motion of self-disorganization during its own competitive development. This defeats many civil producers by accelerating the inequality of private property and removes them from the arena of equal competition. The process of exclusion has been historically supported by the violence of old society, which complements the civil mode of appropriation. In addition, through the civil form of commerce, it excludes former producers from the submissive production process. The civil mode of production then transforms into the capitalist mode of production, which means that few citizens destroy the private property of the means of production possessed by many civil producers, and this inequality of private property brings about qualitative change. Furthermore, at the point of transformation, the civil mode of commerce exists as the accredited form of commerce and formally reserves the civil principles of liberty and equality. However, in this case, liberty and equality simply disguise the inequality of private property, which has already been qualitatively

transformed.

Despite the transformation of the mode of production, the accumulation process as the reproduction process (a combination of the production and circulation process) explicitly reserves the civil form of the mode of commerce and forms capitalist content. Civil property based on the labor of its owner is formally reserved but its content is the appropriation of others' labor. The law of civil property has transformed into that of capitalist appropriation while maintaining its form. In doing so, the relations between equal citizens have transformed into those of control over the working class by the capitalist class. What is specific to the capitalist mode of accumulation is the establishment of working class dependence in the form of relations between equal citizens.

As mentioned, the transformation of civil society into capitalist society is theoretically expressed by the development of these categories. The basic and decisive process is the continuous transformation of the civil mode of production into the capitalist mode of production. Accordingly, in Volume 1 of *Capital*, Marx develops the formal characteristic of the civil mode of production in Part I, Commodities and Money; describes the formal transformation of the civil mode of production into the capitalist mode of production in Part II, The Transformation of Money into Capital; discusses the substance of this transformation in Part III–VI, On Surplus-Value and Wages; proves that the bourgeois form of control appears as the capitalist mode of accumulation in Part VII, The Accumulation of Capital; and finally, reveals the historical and theoretical meaning of this transformation in Part VIII, Primitive Accumulation.\* In its entirety, Volume 1 of *Capital* theoretically expresses the process of continuous transformation as the progressive development of factors that form this process. Volume 2, The Process of Circulation of Capital, develops this continuous transformation in a higher dimension into the reproduction process (a combination of the production and circulation process) and mode of reproduction (a combination of the modes of production and commerce). Furthermore, Volume 3, The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole, reveals the continuous formation of the capitalist mode of appropriation already contained in the development of the mode of reproduction. In other words, it reveals the continuous development of the process of capitalist appropriation already contained in the process of capitalist reproduction and the constructive features of development. The final part of this volume, Part VII, Revenues and their Sources, clarifies that in the system of capital in general, capitalist appropriation is the final existing form of civil property, which is formally characterized in the first part of Volume 1 of *Capital*, which discusses the civil mode of production.

Originally, the three volumes of *Capital* corresponded to the first three parts in Marx's prepared plan of the system of political economy in the follow-



ing six parts: “capital, landed property, wage labor; the State, foreign trade, the world market.”<sup>6)</sup> However, these volumes contain the contents of the second half of this plan in the most abstract formulation. If I were to characterize this plan according to this article, I dare say that the plan develops the estrangement of the state by internal civil society (capital, landed property, and wage labor) and external civil society (foreign trade and the world market) mediated by the estranged state. This is precisely the categorical development of “international civil society.”

Marx's civil society as a methodological concept is continuously fulfilled in the categorical development of civil society as a literal concept of the system.

\* The contents of Volume 1 of *Capital* need to be established according to the French edition, which was edited and authorized by Marx himself. In the French edition, he included a new part, Part VIII, which included the revised version of the second half of Part VII in the German edition,<sup>7)</sup> and completed the first volume with a description of primitive accumulation, that is, the historical and theoretical process of inverting the laws of property. For more details, refer to “The Significance of the French Edition of *Capital* for Marx-studies” in *Shiso [Thought]*, 1969, no. 5–6.

### III Civil Society and Historical Materialism

#### 1. Economic Social Formation and Economic Structure of Society

The unity of the processes of economic categories developed, as we saw above, in the three volumes of *Capital* and the dimensions of planning the system of political economy is the “economic social formation” (*ökonomische Gesellschaftsformation*). Once established, it becomes a type of structure for the synchronic progression of logical factors in different dimensions. Therefore, economic social formation itself develops “the economic structure of society.”<sup>8)</sup> Note that the “structure” is the development of the “formation” itself. For good measure, we note that “formation” is a geological concept adopted in social and historical views. Geological formation refers to a series of layers from various ages. Its primary characteristic feature is the continuous formation of an ascending series, followed by the development of a structure for the progression of layers of differing ages. Marx himself referred to this in a letter to Zasulich in 1881.<sup>9)</sup>

When this economic social formation develops as the economic structure in all categories, it generates corresponding political, social, and moral mo-



ments, and alienates these moments as independent, that is, it estranges them as its “superstructure.” For this superstructure, the economic social formation is the “real foundation” of social formation. Here, Marx reused the concept of superstructure presented by Ferguson in the 18th century<sup>10)</sup> as a result of his deep studies of economics and its systematic development, and theoretically described the total relations of society as such.

It is worth remembering that the formation develops into the structure. The concept of formation states that social formation as civil society will be structured as a capitalist society. Simply put, the formation of society is nothing but the formation of history and, therefore, society is history. Those who doubt that society is history know little of the concept of formation.

## **2. Modern Concept of Classes and Individual Property**

The history of Western Europe as a history of civil society generated the development of formation as a structure. Observing this history of civil society, Marx could construct and develop his economic categories and, consequently, provide scientific substance to his materialistic views of history.

Developing his economics and historical materialism from the viewpoint of civil society, Marx inherited his views of history of civil and civilized society from Ferguson and Smith. These civil historians and economists in the 18th century had already sensed that the development of the division of labor and private property would produce the social formation of classes as, for example, slavery and serfdom, through specific social content. The positivist historians of 19th century France, such as Thiers and Guizot, clearly knew and described that the history of society was that of class struggles. Accordingly, the historical views of civil society and classes had already been established before Marx.

Since Marx critically inherited these concepts, he could develop them in his own way. The civil historians and economists in the 18th and 19th centuries compared civil and civilized society with early primitive societies and understood the path from a primitive society to a civilized one as the quantitative development of the division of labor and private property. By contrast, Marx considered community as the opposite of civil society and confirmed that the forms of the division of labor and private property in both these concepts were opposed in quality through the philosophical and economic critique of civil society and knowledge that the Asiatic mode of production existed at the beginning of world history. Community is the historical form of the collective mode of production, which is contrary to the civil mode of production. It existed at the beginning of history in Europe and is the dominant existing mode of production in Asia and Africa, outside of European civil or capitalist society. That Marx could simultaneously peer back to the beginning of world history and scan the

whole of human history makes his views of history and society original.

Marx understood this opposition between civil society and community through his theoretical critique of existing civil society and his theoretical consideration of the specific formation of civil society in ancient and medieval ages. This understanding characterizes his discussion on the history of Western European civil society. In Western Europe, there were two types of communities, ancient and German. As a result of the destruction of the Asiatic community, each systematically developed their own private or individual property, which completed the social formation as slavery and serfdom. This was Marx's viewpoint, and correctly so. He considered that the primary formation of the division of labor and property transformed into the secondary formation through the process of transformation as "its own dialectic."<sup>11)</sup> In this way, the society of private proprietors, a type of civil society, was formed in ancient Greece and Rome and in medieval cities. However, these civil societies were formed not on the destruction of community, but on the basis of community, and developed as an attribute of it. In this sense, they oppose modern civil society formed on the destruction of community and complete this destruction. Therefore, Marx named them "the old civil society."<sup>12)</sup> Of course, "modern" opposes "old" in Marx's concepts. Marx considered the concept of "modernity" contrary to that of community. It is worthwhile to confirm that the term old opposes to modern and does not simply refer to precedence. The term is often expressed as ancient (*altertümlich*), which apparently also refers to communal. Undoubtedly, Marx was able to view the historical process as "the transformation of the ancient (*altertümlich*) mode of production into the modern mode of production." Rediscovery of the concept of modernity by Marx is a new horizon for studies on Marx and cannot distort such studies. By contrast, distortion occurs by those who understand Marx as a simple theorist of class struggle without rediscovering the concept of modernity. The originality of Marx's modernity concept lies in his view that modernity is not affirmative and unilateral, unlike most civil historians and economists in the 18th and 19th centuries, but is simultaneously affirmative and negative. Marx recognized the opposition between the private and individual, which the so-called "bourgeois historians" did not distinguish, and confirmed that modernity develops positive individuality in negative privateness and the individual is realized only in the limitation of private form. In addition, Marx discovered that modernity destroyed the essential communality of individuals by destroying old communities.<sup>13)</sup>

This transformation of the ancient mode of production into the modern mode of production is performed as "the transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode of production" in the process of primitive accumulation. This is because all ancient modes of production were reconstitut-

ed as the feudal mode in medieval society.

Of course, in this case, the “modern mode of production” is the civil mode of production that is continuously transforming into the capitalist mode. For Marx, the modern mode of production is the formation process of modern society, in which the civil mode of production transforms into the capitalist mode while struggling against the ancient mode.

If this is missed, all basic categories of capitalist society posed by Marx are misunderstood, and at the same time, the theoretical perspective of communism abolishing civil or capitalist society is fundamentally misconceived.

Typical misunderstandings of the basic categories are seen in the misuse of the notorious categories of bourgeoisie and proletariat. Bourgeoisie is commonly understood as the capitalist class and proletariat as the working class. However, bourgeoisie etymologically means the relations between equal citizens and this meaning has been maintained. Historically, it means the actual qualification of independent artisans and merchants as freemen who built cities fighting against the rule of feudal lords in the middle ages. It also means the social relations between citizens who share this qualification, and furthermore, the collective form of these men. Accordingly, bourgeoisie is characterized by the negation of the feudal and, adjunctively, the communal. The citizens of ancient Rome belong to this category because they were private proprietors and, indeed, are considered the historical precedent of the bourgeoisie in the middle ages. When the inequality of private property develops into antagonism between the private property of the means of production and commerce and non-property, the private proprietors grasp the substance of civil relations as bourgeoisie, and consequently, refer to themselves as bourgeoisie and monopolize public life as citizens. In addition, they deprive the poor citizenry of the property of the qualification of bourgeoisie and consider the latter to be “a new proletariat.” In doing so, the relations between modern classes appear from relations between equal citizens. Observing this process of historical and social formation, Marx wrote, “As the bourgeoisie develops, there develops in its bosom a new proletariat, a modern proletariat; there develops a struggle between the proletarian class and the bourgeoisie class”<sup>14</sup>) (*The Poverty of Philosophy*, Chapter 2, Section 1, Seventh and Last Observation). Here, proletariat was the sixth and lowest status in the Roman Empire, the poorest citizens who contributed soldiers to the state only by bearing them as children. This proletariat comprised members of the Roman community who were guaranteed “bread and circuses” by the community. Contrary to this old proletariat in communal relations, a “modern proletariat” is born from the relations between equal citizens who now oppose and destroy communal relations. The concept of the modern proletariat is determined by the establishment of the bourgeoisie as a modern bourgeoisie. Using proletariat

without an adjective, Marx referred to the modern proletariat in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and *Capital*. A simple reading of bourgeoisie as the capitalist class and proletariat as the working class is a serious historical and social fallacy just as the simple reading of commodities and money as capital and wage labor is a serious economical fallacy.\* These misunderstandings cause us to miss not only the features of the formation and history of Western European society but also those of the formation of non-civil society and history in non-Western European regions. As for the interpretations of Marx's writings, these fallacies also cause us to misunderstand his *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

Even worse, they lead us to a fundamental fallacy about the theoretical perspective of communism abolishing the civil or capitalist society.

\* These readings are, however, admitted within certain limits. In addition, determining capital as money and commodities is considered within limits because capital is a developed form of commodity and money and exists in these forms. In fact, in some cases, Marx surely expressed the capitalist class by the bourgeoisie and the working class by the proletariat. Therefore, these common readings are not a simple fallacy. Nevertheless, they become a serious fallacy as long as they attempt to reject the understanding of the features of the formation of Western European society and history.

According to Marx, the process of forming modern society is, on the one hand, the struggle of the civil mode of production against the ancient mode, and, on the other, the transformation of the civil mode of production into the capitalist mode. In the former process, individual property flourishes in the form of the destruction of communities or the growth of private property at the cost of losing the essential communality of individuals. In the latter process, many immediate producers are deprived of their private property by few proprietors; their individual property is in name only, and private property as capitalist appropriation becomes the norm. Thus generalized, the characteristic features of the capitalist private property are the cooperation and the de facto socialized property of the means of production it organizes. The civil mode of production that has already been transformed into the capitalist mode produces communism as a negation of itself. This results in the reestablishment of community lost in the formation process of modernity and materialization of the hollow individual property, that is, the "reestablishment" of individuals with communal property. This refers to the development of the history of Western European civilization into universal human history.<sup>15)</sup>

It is entirely significant at this point of development that the flourishing of individuals belonging to the working class as free individuals materializes the de facto socialized property established in the capitalist era. This is the core process of the self-liberation of the modern proletariat. Therefore, even if the relations between capital and wage labor are entirely abolished in the transitional period when the capitalist and civil modes of production remain, civil relations are retained as long as there prevails the social division of labor and separation of production and commerce. Furthermore, civil relations can even develop. The individuality of individual workers could certainly develop because the private property of the means of production is abolished. However, the inequality between individuals could develop even without the ossification of privateness. Therefore, in such cases, civil rights can be established in purer shape than in the former civil society.\* The socialized property would be increasingly materialized by the labor development of working individuals who are guaranteed their sociality by civil rights, and thereby realize the immediate amalgamation of the individual and social.

Such were Marx's views of world history. As he stood on the cusp of civil society, he may have held the perspective of world history being informed by the critical examination of civil society.

I reexamined Marx's concept of civil society because I would like to recall this understanding of world history and its perspective from oblivion.

\* For the realization of socialism in non-Western European regions, the appearance of civil rights at the transition point of abolishing the Western European civil or capitalist society takes a particular historical role. As the ancient relations remained strong in those regions, having escaped destruction even in the landowning capitalist era, the relations between equal citizens or civil rights were never established as dominant. In this case, socialism itself has to accelerate intentionally these relations or civil rights. Therefore, a concept of the socialist civil society is required to express a structure formed by these conditions. This concept can be valid at the transition point of abolishing the Western European civil or capitalist society within certain bounds; however, it is in the course of constructing socialism in non-Western European regions that the concept fills the role of a definitive category for social comprehension. By way of precaution, we state that the stage of communism is conceptually that in which all accompaniments to civil society are abolished.

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## Translator's note

- 1) Hirata frequently used the terms "Western Europe" and "Western European," which referred to Great Britain, France, and Germany. As authors of "Western European classics," he cited Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, G. W. F. Hegel, and Karl Marx in this text.
- 2) cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, edited by Allen W. Wood and translated by H. B. Nisbet, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- 3) Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, edited by Fania Oz-Salsberger, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 38.
- 4) "The civil mode of production" is never found in Marx's vocabulary. He once referred to "the modern bourgeois mode of production" in his Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Marx, *Later Political Writings*, edited and translated by Terrell Carver, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 160). However, he soon renamed it "the capitalist mode of production" in *Capital* (Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, translated by Ben Fowkes, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990, p. 125). "The civil mode of production" is an original concept invented by Hirata, with which he seems to assume that "commodity production by the worker appropriating his own product" or "small-scale industry, where the worker is the free proprietor of the conditions of his labor" in Marx's own words (Marx, *Capital*, pp. 730, 927).
- 5) Ferguson, op. cit., p. 245.
- 6) Marx, "Preface," op. cit., p. 158.
- 7) The content of the English edition of *Capital* is identical to that of the French edition. However, as the Japanese editions of *Capital* were, without exception, based on the German edition, Japanese readers of *Capital* perceived Hirata's comments to be the original writing.
- 8) cf. Marx, "Preface," op. cit., p. 159.
- 9) More precisely, this is referred to not in the letter to Vera Ivanovna Zasulich but in its second draft, in which Marx stated as follows: "The archaic or primary formation of our globe itself contains a series of layers of differing ages, one superimposed on the other; in the same way, the archaic formation of society reveals to us a series of different types, marking progressive epochs" (Marx, Drafts of the Letter to Vera Zasulich, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works [MECW]*, vol. 24, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1989, p. 363).
- 10) cf. Ferguson, op. cit., p. 289.
- 11) Marx, *Capital*, op. cit., p. 729.
- 12) Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, in *MECW*, vol. 6, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1976, p. 175.
- 13) For Marx's understanding of "modernity," see Kunihiro Uemura, "Marx and modernity," in *Marx for the 21st Century*, edited by Hiroshi Uchida, London and New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 9–21.
- 14) Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 175.
- 15) Hirata's explanation in this paragraph is based on Chapter 32 of *Capital*. See Marx, *Capital*, op. cit., pp. 927–30.