The underlying theme in almost all of Arnošt Klíma's writings on economic history is that of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. This theme is not only one of the most problematic in economic history, but also has emerged time and again in different guises as a central theme from the days of Marx, Sombart, and Weber to the most current writings on economic development, on the economics of slavery and serfdom, and in the most recent discussions of proto-industrialization. Professor Klíma's work has centered on various aspects of these problems, primarily in the light of the rich history of the Bohemian crownlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Probably of as much importance as his large body of writings on the subject is the fact that through his participation in international conferences and his numerous contributions to journals in non-Slavic languages he has emerged from the 1950s up to the present as the major Czech voice in economic history familiarizing foreign readers with the Bohemian experience with respect to ongoing scholarly discussions.

Klíma's writings began in the midst of and as part of a debate among marxists in Eastern and Western Europe in the early 1950s over the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The debate began in the pages of Voprosy istorii in the Soviet Union and spread to East Central and to Western Europe. In the East the discussion centered on finding inherent or general laws for the transition, with emphasis on the role of merchant capital and the stage of primitive capital accumulation; in the West there was more attention to whether feudalism was dynamic or static, with the moving force for change coming from within or from outside the system. In retrospect it could be remarked that this debate shed more heat than light on the theoretical aspects, but it did generate a great deal of research into the historical processes of the periods under consideration. While this is surely not the place to discuss this debate at length, nevertheless, in order to understand the framework and con-

text within which Klíma's work took place, it seems most helpful to look briefly at the general overview which Marx, himself, had provided for examining this transition. What is important here is as much what Marx did not say as what he did say. Marx never dealt directly in an overall manner with the problem of the transition from a feudal society to a capitalist one. Although he wrote on various aspects of this problem, he did so, as he often did with other topics, by bringing in those historical aspects which bore on the particular concept under discussion, such as the origin of capital, the creation of a proletariat, and so forth. At the same time, as Eric Hobsbawm has correctly pointed out, Marx dealt little if at all with the internal dynamics of the feudal system itself. 2

The result of these features of Marx's writings is that Marx left his adherents no general framework for examining the transition from feudalism. Indeed, in his chapter on the primitive accumulation of capital in *Das Kapital*, he deals primarily with the separation of the worker from the tools of production and with the role of merchant capital, leaving aside other aspects treated in other writings as part of the process, and thus leaving the impression with some readers that he considered these as the most important aspects of the industrialization process. Further, in his discussion of the process of the primitive accumulation of capital, he notes that "its history takes on varied colors in different countries and goes through various phases in various orders of progression in different historical periods. Only in England, which we are taking here as an example, did it possess its classical form." 3

If one takes the exposition in *Das Kapital* together with Marx's other writings, particularly his section on Economic Formations (*Formen die der Kapitalistischen Production vorhergelten*) in the *Grundrisse*, it is possible to discern more of an overall framework for the transition from feudalism to capitalism. This framework (or more properly, these prerequisites) consists of the following: First, a process whereby the peasantry is no longer bound to the land, and in fact is forced by various circumstances to leave the land and at the same time lose its possession of tools of production in order to form a labor force; second, the development of urban crafts and cottage industries which serve as a basis for the accumulation of capital by means of commerce and usury, primarily usury on land, as well as by intercession of the capitalist between the artisan and his means of production. 4 A vital part of the process for Marx, of course, is the separation of the peasantry from its tools of production. The peasant is separated from the land, thus becoming a landless laborer, often working on large estates or migrating to cities as a wage worker;

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