

## ***Reconstructing Historical Materialism: Some Key Issues***

What I'd like to do in this paper is raise the general issue of how we can develop historical materialism in more powerful ways than Marxists have tried to do since the sixties. The general issue is addressed by raising three specific questions. First, how should Marxists periodize capitalism? Second, is there a consistent materialist characterization of 'Asiatic' regimes, since Marx's Asiatic mode of production clearly doesn't work as one? And third, why have Marxists had so little to say about the deployment of labour? By deployment of labour I mean not the general ways of controlling and exploiting labour that Marx himself would repeatedly refer to in categories such as 'slavery', 'serfdom' and so on, but the organization and control of the labour-process in concrete settings, as in Carlo Poni's fine monograph on the struggle between landowners and sharecroppers over methods of ploughing that increased the intensity of labour<sup>1</sup> or Hans-Günther Mertens' discussion of the organization of Mexican estates.<sup>2</sup>

### **1. Commercial capitalism, slaveholder capitalism: the problem of configurations**

Let me start with the issue of slavery because that will lead into the wider issue of the periodization of capitalism. In the *Grundrisse* Marx states, 'The fact that we now not only call the plantation owners in America capitalists, but that they *are* capitalists, is based on their existence as anomalies within a world market based on free labour'.<sup>3</sup> This has always struck me as one of the most intriguing passages in all of Marx's writings. The Southern slaveholders are called capitalists but their form of capitalism is anomalous, because capitalism for Marx presupposes free labour (or at least wage-labour) and the Southern plantations are clearly not based on that. On the other hand, the plantations clearly are capitalist enterprises (in Marx's eyes) or the problem of characterizing them wouldn't exist. A passage in *Theories of Surplus-Value* is more explicit in exposing the roots of the tension evident here. Here Marx writes, 'In the second types of colonies — plantations — where commercial speculations figure from the start and production is intended for the world market, the capitalist mode of production exists, although only in a formal sense, since the slavery of (blacks) precludes free wage-labour, which is the basis of capitalist production. But the business in which slaves are used is conducted by *capitalists*. The method of production which they introduce has not arisen out of slavery but is grafted on to it'.<sup>4</sup> Here he actually states that a capitalist mode of production exists in the colonial plantations *despite* the existence of slave labour. It is clear that the two determinations that summed up the nature of capitalist production for Marx (the production of capital or the drive to accumulate, on the one hand, the domination and use of wage-labour on the other) *were in conflict here*, and that Marx seemed to think that in one sense at least, that of characterizing the nature of these enterprises, the former mattered more. By the 1860s this was certainly his position, because in Volume 2 he describes the money capital invested in the purchase of (slave) labour-power as 'fixed capital',<sup>5</sup> and in Volume 3 he states bluntly, 'Where the capitalist conception prevails, as on the American plantations...'.<sup>6</sup> I'd like to suggest that the real reason why Marx had to acknowledge the capitalist nature of the plantations was the impact of the colonial trades

on the equalization of the general rate of profit, in particular their role in ‘raising the general level of profit’.<sup>7</sup> ‘As far as capital invested in the colonies, etc. is concerned...the reason why this can yield higher rates of profit is that the profit rate is generally higher there on account of the lower degree of development, and so too is the exploitation of labour, *through the use of slaves and coolies, etc.* Now there is no reason why the higher rates of profit that capital invested in certain branches yields in this way, and brings home to its country of origin, *should not enter into the equalization of the general rate of profit* and hence raise this in due proportion, unless monopolies stand in the way.’<sup>8</sup> Again, ‘the average rate of profit depends on the level of exploitation of *labour as a whole* by capital as a whole.’<sup>9</sup> “Labour as a whole”, *including*, then, slave labour or any other form of labour whose exploitation generated capital. It was Marx’s recognition of the contribution of the colonial trades to the general rate of profit that tilted his conception decisively in favour of seeing the Atlantic slave economy essentially as capitalist.

But if that is so, the implications of this view for historical materialism have scarcely been discussed. On the contrary, most Marxists have played it safe and forestalled such a discussion by endorsing an orthodoxy that has little to do with Marx himself. For example, in his debate with Frank, Laclau took the stand that ‘in the plantations of the West Indies, the economy was based on a mode of production constituted by slave labour’,<sup>10</sup> characterizing the *use* of slave labour as a ‘mode of production’ when Marx himself had stated explicitly that a *capitalist* mode of production ‘exists’ in the slave plantations. That was in 1971. By 1997 when Blackburn published *The Making of New World Slavery*, the same orthodoxy persisted but now in a much less confident form. ‘The American slave planter of the seventeenth century and after was not a capitalist — in the strict sense of the term, the species was only just coming into existence — *but neither was he as far removed from capitalism* as the feudal lord or the Ancient slaveowner.’<sup>11</sup> Or again, ‘the undoubted fact that neither the feudal estates of Eastern Europe nor the slave plantations of the Americas can properly be regarded as capitalist enterprises should not lead us, as it has led some writers, to regard them as *equivalently distant from the capitalist mode of production*’.<sup>12</sup> The hesitation expressed in these passages stemmed presumably from Blackburn’s deeper historical understanding of the Caribbean plantations. They were ‘run according to business principles which were very advanced for the epoch’; ‘The construction of slave plantations did indeed require large fixed investments’; ‘The performance of the early eighteenth-century sugar plantation embodied technical improvements in nearly every aspect of cultivation and processing’; and finally, ‘the high capital value of a Caribbean slave plantation put pressure on the planter to maximize output from a given crew’.<sup>13</sup> All of which was a considerable advance over Laclau’s blunt assertion of a ‘mode of production constituted by slave labour’.

By contrast, the historiography of the Old South moved in the 1990s to an aggressive assertion of what James Oakes would call the ‘capitalist nature of the slave system’ there.<sup>14</sup> Genovese, Oakes argued, ‘misses the powerful force of capitalism within the slave system. Marx captured the essence of the problem when he wrote of capitalism as having been “grafted” on to slavery in the Old South’.<sup>15</sup> A whole strand of American historiography had seen Southern slavery as a capitalist structure. Lewis Gray, for

example, had described the plantation as a ‘capitalistic type of agricultural organization in which a considerable number of unfree laborers were employed under unified direction and control’.<sup>16</sup> That was in the early 1930s. ‘Was not the plantation owner just another capitalist?’, Barrington Moore had asked in the sixties.<sup>17</sup> When Fogel and Engerman demonstrated the profitability of slavery in the 1970s, it was no longer possible to see the South as an economic backwater.<sup>18</sup> In retrospect, Genovese was fighting a rearguard action and Oakes had seen why. ‘Implicitly equating capitalism with free labor, Genovese argues that slavery was a pre-capitalist form of social organization...’.<sup>19</sup> The upshot of the Southern debate is not, of course, that the peculiarities of the South should be disregarded but that Southern paternalism was not ‘intrinsically antagonistic to capitalist enterprise’, not ‘necessarily a barrier to profit maximization’.<sup>20</sup> In other words, historical materialism has to be able to accommodate distinct *configurations of capitalism* and not look at the history of capitalism by simply reiterating the abstract unity of capital ‘in contrast to the multiplicity of its external forms’. This method of forced abstraction will only contribute to stagnation and leave the best historical work to historians less encumbered by false notions of orthodoxy.

If it was capitalism that generated modern slavery, then we need to ask both what kind of capitalism and what that means for the history of capitalism more generally. Marx himself drew a sharp distinction between manufacture and large-scale industry and worked with a periodization of capitalism that contrasted the ‘period’ of manufacture with that of large-scale industry. *Both* were forms of the ‘modern mode of production’ but manufacture was its first ‘period’,<sup>21</sup> which Marx saw as firmly established by the sixteenth century, when, as he says, ‘the modern history of capital starts to unfold’.<sup>22</sup> It was the creation of the world market that formed the great watershed of the sixteenth century. Manufacture ‘springs up where mass quantities are produced for export, for the external market — i.e. on the *basis of large-scale overland and maritime commerce*, in its emporiums like the Italian cities, Constantinople, in the Flemish, Dutch cities, a few Spanish ones, such as Barcelona etc.’.<sup>23</sup> In Volume 1 Marx was willing to concede that ‘we come across the first sporadic traces of capitalist production as early as the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries in certain towns of the Mediterranean’,<sup>24</sup> and in the *Grundrisse* these early centuries, labelled the ‘Mercantile system’, are called an ‘epoch’.<sup>25</sup> The variegated backgrounds and origins of this first epoch of capitalism would culminate eventually in the dominance of Dutch capitalism in the seventeenth century.<sup>26</sup> The global history of capitalism between the later Middle Ages and the seventeenth century was of course one of the emergence and brute consolidation of the ‘colonial system’, and it was Holland that ‘first brought the colonial system to its full development’.<sup>27</sup> A large part of Dutch capital was tied up in the Atlantic sugar industry.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, sugar was ‘more heavily capitalized than any other plantation industry of that day...the industrial capital of the plantation ...was probably not much less than half its total capital’.<sup>29</sup> Now, for Marx the striking feature of the colonial system was the fact that under it commercial capital ceased to be a mere mediation between extremes and *dominated production directly*.<sup>30</sup> It was the *fusion* of merchant capital and production that formed the true hallmark of commercial capitalism, and if the slave plantations were exemplars of this form of capitalism, ‘an aspect of early modern capitalist enterprise’, as one historian has described them recently,<sup>31</sup> so of course were the many forms of the putting-out system

and the domination exercised by merchants over direct producers (weavers and other artisans) in a whole range of industries in Europe itself.<sup>32</sup> Marx saw this type of capitalism transforming artisans into ‘mere wage-labourers’<sup>33</sup> and a likely starting-point for the evolution of ‘manufacture proper’.<sup>34</sup>

The theoretical point here is that it is just not tenable to hold fast to the distinction between circulation and production, or between ‘capital’ and ‘capitalism’ (Laclau), when we drop the level of abstraction and depict the concrete movement of capital as this appears in history. The task facing materialist historiography is not the endless repetition of formulas valid at certain levels of abstraction but writing histories of early capitalism that can generate more sophisticated models of the world economy than any currently on offer. Laclau’s response to Frank that the expansion of capitalism consolidated pre-capitalist *modes of production* suffers from its radical incoherence. The colonial system was a legacy of commercial capitalism and the forms of exploitation used within it were not independent modes of production in any strict historical sense but forms of productive organization and control of labour peculiar to specific configurations of capital. The hybrid culture of Southern capitalism<sup>35</sup> could easily count as an example of this sort of purely historical configuration, but the historiography of the medieval and early modern worlds is sufficiently rich and detailed for Marxists to be able to map more of them.

## **2. ‘Asiatic’ regimes, or the class relations of tributary production**

Turning to Asiatic regimes, Anderson’s understanding of Russian Absolutism can serve as the counterpart to Blackburn’s anomalous characterization of Atlantic slavery. Anderson reads Russian absolutism on a European model, describing the *boyars* as a feudal aristocracy,<sup>36</sup> referring to the ‘impulse within the aristocracy towards a military monarchy’,<sup>37</sup> as if Russian absolutism was the creation of a coherent aristocracy (!), and even arguing that ‘undiluted feudal principles were to govern the construction of the State machine’.<sup>38</sup> None of this comes remotely close to grasping the peculiarities of Russia’s historical development or displaying any sense of why Trotsky for example characterized Tsarism as a ‘bureaucratic autocracy’<sup>39</sup> or ‘bureaucratic absolutism’<sup>40</sup> and *insisted* on the ‘special features’ that set Russia apart from western Europe.<sup>41</sup> The issue is crucial, because once we have demolished the ‘Asiatic mode of production’, which is easy to do (and which Anderson himself does effectively), we are left with whole continents of history — Byzantine, early Islamic, Russian, Ottoman, Mughal, Chinese, etc. — that clamour for a Marxist characterization lest they sink torpidly into the ‘absolving ocean’ of feudalism.<sup>42</sup> What Slavatsky called the ‘fundamental difference which separates our “service nobility” from the feudal landowning aristocracy of Western Europe’<sup>43</sup> marked off a distinct configuration of *class* relationships, a ‘totality’ of production relations,<sup>44</sup> quite different from feudalism. The dispossession of the old *boyar* aristocracy that culminated in the sixteenth century under Ivan the Terrible and its forcible integration into an expanded service class would mean that by the late sixteenth century ‘private property of the means of production became virtually extinct’.<sup>45</sup> ‘It was the combination

of absolute political power with *nearly complete control of the country's productive resources* that made the Muscovite monarchy so formidable an institution.<sup>46</sup>

On the wider canvas that stretches back to the autocracies of the Byzantine and early Islamic worlds, it is the feudal mode of production that appears exceptional. The more widespread pattern was *state economy* and the regimes based on it, where class relations were configured around the legal fiction of the sovereign as the 'real' owner of all the land and the ruler either had no feudal elements to contend with (Muslim Spain)<sup>47</sup> or ruthlessly subordinated such elements on the model of Ivan's subversion of the aristocracy. If, with John Haldon, we call these regimes the *tributary* mode of production,<sup>48</sup> then Muslim societies lay at one extreme of a spectrum of class relationships defined in their case by the absence of an aristocracy in any conventional sense. The 'Islamic social formation' (to use M. Ación's expression) emerged through conquest and, as Coulson noted, the conquered territories were retained in the 'public ownership of the Muslim community'.<sup>49</sup> Marx even believed that it was the Muslims who 'first established the principle of "no property in land" throughout the whole of Asia'.<sup>50</sup> Be that as it may, the key institution was the *iqta'* or what the Russian liberal historian Paul Miliukov called the 'eastern system of military holdings' which was eventually borrowed by the Muscovite princes in their creation of the *pomest'ye* in the fifteenth century.<sup>51</sup> With taxation as the general form of ground-rent, the assignment of villages to members of the military élite (*amirs, pomeshchiki*, etc.) was essentially an assignment of revenue, so that the class relations of tributary production were defined by an inherent instability of property rights. At the other extreme from this tightly centralized model lie India and China but exemplifying a less autocratic pattern in *opposite* ways. If Tsarism encapsulated the integration of the aristocratic and the service element into a unified Court nobility, Trotsky's 'noble bureaucracy',<sup>52</sup> but one totally subservient to the ruler (they numbered *c.*3000 in 1552),<sup>53</sup> then India under the Mughals, coeval with the paroxysm of Absolutism in sixteenth-century Russia, illustrates the falling apart of those elements, a model that *juxtaposes* a service élite with powerful regional aristocracies that were only loosely integrated into the administration<sup>54</sup> and heavily armed to boot.<sup>55</sup> This was certainly the most conflicted form of the tributary mode, one where Imperial cohesion was irreparably vulnerable to refractory aristocracies.<sup>56</sup> Despite their own internal divisions and amorphousness, the *zamindars* were an entrenched source of subversion, a perfect counterpoint to the disciplined nobility (*mansabdars*) that Akbar had created as the backbone of his imperial State. Finally, China saw new landed élites emerge from the ranks of higher officialdom, once the territorial aristocracies of the North had finally disintegrated and a more powerful bureaucratic regime emerged in the great transition from T'ang to Sung (tenth century). The 'widespread illegal acquisition of landed properties'<sup>57</sup> was nothing new in China, and the Sung developments can be seen *either* as collusion between the bureaucracy and the landed élite *or* a pattern where powerful landed interests could dominate the government because they were leading members of the official class.<sup>58</sup>

This is hardly the place to rehearse the details of these separate forms of evolution. The key point here is that these variant class patterns describe the different ways in which the tributary mode was *configured historically*. This matches the point made earlier that the

history of the capitalist mode of production is itself best reconstructed as a movement of distinct historical configurations of capitalism, each absorbing the previous one (Marx refers to industrial capital first having to ‘destroy’ commercial capital *as an independent form*).<sup>59</sup> More importantly, there was sufficient historical connectivity between the different forms and exemplars of the tributary mode for us to call ‘Asiatic production’<sup>60</sup> an *epoch* that ran concurrently with feudalism in the West and outlasted it by several centuries till its own eventual dissolution under the unremitting pressure of world capitalism, starting with zamindar rebellions and outright seizure of territory in India, large-scale foreign borrowings by the Ottomans, and so on. But while they lasted, the ‘Asiatic’ or tributary regimes had considerably more vitality than Marx ever attributed to the Asiatic mode.

### **3. The indeterminacy of ‘free labour’ and the return to materialist categories**

The last issue I’d like to raise is the incoherence of the notion of free labour. Much is made of free labour in run-of-the-mill discussions of historical materialism, as if the whole edifice of Marxist theory would collapse without the crucial cornerstones of free/unfree labour, economic/extra-economic coercion, and so on. These dichotomies are rooted in the voluntarist models of contract that sprang from the pervasive individualism of the nineteenth century and barely survived the searing assaults of American legal realism.<sup>61</sup> If *Marxists* continue to repeat them, one imagines that is because they derive comfort from the illusion that free labour is essential to capitalism. But the dichotomy between free and unfree labour is either a tautology (under most legal systems there are individuals who are either free or unfree) or a remarkably naïve reposing of faith in freedom of contract which is assumed to be a reality when it is in fact a transparent fiction, even more of one today than it was in the nineteenth century, as every good lawyer knows.<sup>62</sup> Marx called it an ‘embellishment’ on the sale and purchase of labour-power.<sup>63</sup> Contracts between employers and workers were simply a ‘legal fiction’.<sup>64</sup> More often than not, free labour for Marx only meant labour dispossessed of the means of production. More illuminating than the contrast between free and unfree labour and its obvious potential for mystification would be a *history of wage-labour itself*, the ‘differences of form’ that Marx would doubtless have developed in his ‘special study of wage-labour’,<sup>65</sup> but reconstructed historically, with a wealth of material that scarcely existed for him.

Both the extent of wage-labour *before* capitalism and the brutality with which wage-labourers were treated *under* capitalism (and still are in most parts of the world) have been massively underestimated by Marxists. These are both issues that only historians can sort out properly but they will obviously have a major bearing on the future shape of historical materialism. As Karen Orren writes, ‘the institution of wage labor long preceded the emergence of capitalism in the seventeenth century’.<sup>66</sup> Both the dispossession of labour and large-scale migrancy have been more common throughout history than the standard model of historical materialism suggests. Disposessed farmers who worked as casual labourers or tenant-farmers on great estates in China from the late seventh century on,<sup>67</sup> ‘runaway households’ as the early T’ang sources refer to such

impoverished peasants;<sup>68</sup> the seasonal labourers who migrated from Umbria to the Sabine country to handle the harvests there;<sup>69</sup> the substantial volume of hired labour used in public works at Rome;<sup>70</sup> or the extensive use of wage-labour on English estates of the thirteenth century<sup>71</sup> are random examples drawn from the history of China and Europe. What was *distinctive* about agrarian, mining and industrial capital was not the existence of wage-labour markets but their forcible creation — laws for the ‘enforcement of industry’,<sup>72</sup> the control of unregulated squatting on private land,<sup>73</sup> the kind of mechanisms discussed by Arrighi in his classic paper ‘Labour supplies in historical perspective’; and so on. That the Roman agricultural writer Varro recommended the use of wage-labourers for hazardous jobs<sup>74</sup> suggests that the capital invested in slaves was seen as *fixed* capital and vulnerable to loss (devaluation). It was Roman civil law that evolved the first clear model of the buying and selling of labour-power, doubtless because the use of hired labour was so widespread. Indeed, Roman labour markets were incomparably *less* regulated than the labour markets of colonialism with their widespread regulation by master and servant regimes. For example, there were half a million contract workers in the tea gardens of Assam by the early twentieth century, yet ‘flogging of men and women was common in every garden, either for non-completion of work or for disobedience and desertion’.<sup>75</sup> The forced recruitment of wage-labour that characterized pre-industrial forms of capitalism shaded off into the repeated use of force against wage-labourers, even in England in the nineteenth century when legal coercion was widely used against craft workers and the English working-class was, in a technical sense at least, still ‘unfree’ when Marx wrote *Capital*.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, it may well be that the *overdetermination* of ‘purely’ economic coercion by legal compulsion is a peculiarity of modern wage-labour markets, if we date the emergence of these to the Statute of Labourers in the fourteenth century.

To return to Laclau with this background behind us, the centrality of free labour to capitalism was the crux of his critique of Frank. Laclau’s implicit reasoning was as follows: capitalism is characterized by free labour, free labour by the use of purely economic coercion. ‘Extra-economic’ coercion defines non-capitalist relations of *exploitation*, and these in turn constitute pre-capitalist modes of *production*. If the expansion of world capitalism consolidated pre-capitalist modes of production, then that is because it was bound up with the widespread use of non-capitalist relations of exploitation in the countrysides of Latin America and other parts of the Third World. The coherence of this picture is still seductive some forty years down the line, which is why Laclau continues to be cited. But taken individually, almost every link in the chain of reasoning is false. The contrast between servile relations of production in the periphery and free labour in Europe is consistently overstated. Dispossession was no less characteristic of the colonies than it was of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was sufficiently widespread in New Spain in 1633 for the abolition of compulsory labour to have no serious effect on the supply of farm workers to private estates.<sup>77</sup> In South Africa, ‘the struggle to dispossess blacks on alienated land and subjugate them in the interests of capital accumulation proper’ lasted throughout the nineteenth century. In the sheep-farming districts of the Cape interior, ‘Khoi labour was thoroughly proletarianised, even if subject to non-economic coercion’.<sup>78</sup> Second, free labour in the classic nineteenth-century sense that Marx understood it was certainly not free of penal coercion or most other forms of extra-economic compulsion.<sup>79</sup> In England,

‘employers commonly used criminal sanctions to hold skilled workers to long contracts’.<sup>80</sup> Most *peones* who worked on Mexican estates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were not serfs but wage-labourers bound by debt.<sup>81</sup> They lacked any means of subsistence of their own and worked *full time* for the estates. Thus the distinction between free and unfree labour collapses in a grey area which is much better sorted out in terms of a notion of *how wage-labour markets are structured and how they work*, especially in agriculture, than through the distorting lens of ideological categories that have nothing to do with historical materialism. Finally, there is no logical inference from non-capitalist relations of exploitation to non-capitalist relations of *production*. Slave labour can feed into the expansion of individual capitals. Forced labour under fascism sustained large sectors of German industry, e.g., in Volkswagen plants the foreigner contingent was as high as 45% by 1942, and, as Ulrich Herbert says, ‘Virtually all large enterprises demonstrated their strong interest in foreign skilled workers’, i.e. forced labour.<sup>82</sup>

The more general point here is that modes of production cannot be inferred from the relations of exploitation that are typical of them. Their laws of motion suggest a more complex level of determination than any simple characterization in terms of slavery, serfdom, and so on. The corollary of this is that the analysis of exploitation also implicates a much richer, denser level of abstraction than simple taxonomies based on historically generic categories conceived in their abstract purity. The reason why Marxist historians have paid so little attention to *this* level of analysis, the deployment of labour, is that they have rarely moved beyond the general categories of labour to a grasp of the actual organization and control of labour-processes in history. Histories of capitalism in agriculture are a partial exception to this (Frank Snowden’s work on Italy, William Beinart, Helen Bradford and Tim Keegan on South Africa, William Dusinger on the slave-based capitalism of the Carolina ‘rice kingdom’,<sup>83</sup> Mertens on the Mexican estates) but in general the ‘special study of wage-labour’ that Marx had planned *remains a huge lacuna in Marxist theory*. Much of his study would clearly have been about ‘distinctions of form’. For example, when Tim Keegan refers to ‘white farmers’ preference for a tenant labour force rather than a proletarian one’, the contrast here is *not* between wage-labourers and other forms of labour but a ‘form determination’ within wage-labour, a contrast between labour-tenants and ‘pure’ wage-labourers, paid in cash, that Keegan describes as a ‘proletarian work force’.<sup>84</sup> Again, the sharecroppers (*haris*) employed by large landlords in Sind were on one description ‘more like labourers than tenants’. ‘They were hired by the season and did not necessarily work for the same zamindar in consecutive seasons.’ They were a ‘floating population drifting from zamindar to zamindar’.<sup>85</sup> The “form” of sharecropping doesn’t settle the issue of the *nature* of exploitation, only a concrete grasp of the actual relations concealed within it can do that. Such examples could be multiplied — the *Instleute* on nineteenth-century Prussian estates, paid largely in kind, including small allotments of land;<sup>86</sup> shepherds on the livestock haciendas of the Peruvian *altiplano*, whose remuneration was even more complex;<sup>87</sup> the peculiar methods of payment used to attract the thousands of casual labourers that descended on the reclaimed areas of Emilia, the bulk of them women<sup>88</sup> (the nucleus of Giuseppe Massarenti’s ‘proletarian republic’ at Molinella — from the 1890s to 1920 — and the seminal base of the Italian Socialist Party); *etc.* In the section on ground-



rent proposed for Volume 3, Marx, Engels noted, was planning to deal with the ‘diversity of forms of exploitation’ of the Russian agricultural labour-force but ‘was never able to carry out this plan’.<sup>89</sup> There is clearly a major ‘scientific research programme’ here that Marxists have barely begun to address, but when they do, with the same sense for method that distinguished Marx himself, we shall finally have a more complex model of the integration of world economy than the schematic and formalist constructions on offer today.

Jairus Banaji (20/10/2009)

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<sup>1</sup> Poni, *Gli aratri e l'economia agraria nel Bolognese dal XVII al XIX secolo*.

<sup>2</sup> Mertens, *Wirtschaftliche und soziale Strukturen zentralmexicanischer Weizenhaciendas aus dem Tal von Atlixco (1890–1912)*.

<sup>3</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 513.

<sup>4</sup> Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value*, 2, p. 302–3.

<sup>5</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 2, p. 554: ‘In the slave system, the money capital laid out on the purchase of labour-power plays the role of fixed capital in the money form...’.

<sup>6</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, p. 940.

<sup>7</sup> Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value*, 2, p. 436.

<sup>8</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, p. 345.

<sup>9</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, p. 299.

<sup>10</sup> Laclau, ‘Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America’, *NLR* 1/67 (1971), p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, p. 376.

<sup>12</sup> Blackburn, *Making*, p. 374.

<sup>13</sup> Blackburn, *Making*, pp. 379, 336, 343, 339.

<sup>14</sup> Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, p. xi.

<sup>15</sup> Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 55; the reference is Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 345.

<sup>16</sup> Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, vol. 1, p. 302.

<sup>17</sup> Barrington Moore Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, p. 121.

<sup>18</sup> Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross* (1974).

<sup>19</sup> Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, p. xiii.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, *Debating Slavery: Economy and Society in the Antebellum American South*, p. 24; Smith is a good introduction to these debates.

<sup>21</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, p. 450: ‘And yet the modern mode of production in its first period, that of manufacture, developed only where the conditions for it had been created in the Middle Ages’.

<sup>22</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 247: ‘World trade and the world market date from the sixteenth century, and from then on the modern history of capital starts to unfold’.

<sup>23</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 510–11.

<sup>24</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, pp. 875–6.

<sup>25</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 327.

<sup>26</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 916, stating, ‘Holland was the model capitalist nation of the seventeenth century’.

<sup>27</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 918.

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- <sup>28</sup> Mauro, *Le Portugal et l'Atlantique au XVIIe siècle (1570–1670)*, p. 231.
- <sup>29</sup> Pares, *Merchants and Planters*, p. 24.
- <sup>30</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, pp. 446–7.
- <sup>31</sup> Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914*, p. 403.
- <sup>32</sup> E.g., Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value*, 3, pp. 468–70.
- <sup>33</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, pp. 452–3.
- <sup>34</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 510.
- <sup>35</sup> Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820–1860*, pp. 6–7.
- <sup>36</sup> Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, p. 336.
- <sup>37</sup> Anderson, *Lineages*, p. 201.
- <sup>38</sup> Anderson, *Lineages*, p. 218. The subtext is clearly serfdom, but Anderson shows no awareness of Khlebnikov's crucial point that the Muscovite serf was more like a 'state worker through the intermediacy of the landlord' than a serf in the strictly European sense, cf. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, p.105.
- <sup>39</sup> Trotsky, *1905*, p. 8.
- <sup>40</sup> Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 25.
- <sup>41</sup> Trotsky, *1905*, p. 3: 'the Russian revolution bore a character wholly peculiar to itself, a character which was the outcome of the special features of our entire social and historical development'; written in 1907.
- <sup>42</sup> Anderson, *Lineages*, p. 402.
- <sup>43</sup> Cited Madariaga, 'The Russian Nobility in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', p. 223.
- <sup>44</sup> Marx, *Wage-Labour and Capital*: 'The relations of production in their totality constitute what are called the social relations, society... Ancient society, feudal society, bourgeois society are such totalities of production relations'.
- <sup>45</sup> Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, pp. 93–4.
- <sup>46</sup> Pipes, *Russia*, p. 94.
- <sup>47</sup> Guichard, *Les musulmans de Valence et la Reconquête, xie-xiiiè siècles*, 2 vols.
- <sup>48</sup> Haldon, *The State and the Tributary Mode of Production*.
- <sup>49</sup> Acién Almansa, *Entre el Feudalismo y el Islam*; Coulson, *History of Islamic Law*, p. 23.
- <sup>50</sup> Marx to Engels, 14/6/1853, in Avineri, *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization*, p. 457.
- <sup>51</sup> Miliukov, *Russia and its Crisis*, pp. 114–21.
- <sup>52</sup> Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 26.
- <sup>53</sup> Pavlov, 'Les réformes du milieu du XVIe siècle et l'évolution structurelle de la noblesse russe', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 46 (2005) p. 96.
- <sup>54</sup> The duality is best described in John F. Richards' classic monograph, *Mughal Administration in Golconda* (1975).
- <sup>55</sup> Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy*; Richards, 'Warriors and the State in Early Modern India', *JESHO* 47 (2004), pp. 390ff., reviewing Kolff.
- <sup>56</sup> Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*.
- <sup>57</sup> Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, p. 10.
- <sup>58</sup> Ch'ao-ting Chi, *Key Economic Areas in Chinese History*, pp. 135–9.

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- <sup>59</sup> Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value*, 3, p. 468.
- <sup>60</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, p. 452.
- <sup>61</sup> Dalton, ‘An Essay in the Deconstruction of Contract Doctrine’, *Yale Law Journal*, 94 (1985).
- <sup>62</sup> Atiyah, *An Introduction to the Law of Contract*, p. 17.
- <sup>63</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 682.
- <sup>64</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 719.
- <sup>65</sup> Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 683.
- <sup>66</sup> Orren, *Belated Feudalism: Labor, the Law, and Liberal Development in the United States*, p. 10.
- <sup>67</sup> Twitchett, *Financial Administration*, p. 12ff., 16ff.
- <sup>68</sup> Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, p. 27.
- <sup>69</sup> de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, p. 187.
- <sup>70</sup> Brunt, ‘Free Labour and Public Works at Rome’, *JRS* 1980; DeLaine, *The Baths of Caracalla: A Study in the Design, Construction, and Economics of Large-Scale Building Projects in Imperial Rome*.
- <sup>71</sup> Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*, p. 263.
- <sup>72</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 785, citing Tuckett.
- <sup>73</sup> Chanock, ‘South Africa, 1841–1924: Race, Contract, and Coercion’, in Hay and Craven, *Masters, Servants* (n. 79), p. 343.
- <sup>74</sup> Varro, *RR*, 1.xvii.3.
- <sup>75</sup> Behal and Mohapatra, ‘The Rise and Fall of the Indenture System in the Assam Tea Plantations, 1840–1908’, *J. of Peasant Studies*, 19 (1992) p. 157.
- <sup>76</sup> Steinfeld, *Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century*.
- <sup>77</sup> Zavala, *New Viewpoints on the Spanish Colonization of America*, p. 98.
- <sup>78</sup> Keegan, ‘The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa: A Reply’, *J. of Southern African Studies*, 15 (1989) pp. 677, 673–4.
- <sup>79</sup> See Hay and Craven, ‘Introduction’, in *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562–1955*, p. 29.
- <sup>80</sup> Steinfeld, *Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor*, p. 59.
- <sup>81</sup> Borah, *Justice by Insurance: The General Indian Court of Colonial Mexico and the Legal Aides of the Half-Real*, p. 177: ‘recruitment of wage labor bound by debt’. This view goes back, of course, to Silvio Zavala.
- <sup>82</sup> Herbert, *Hitler’s Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich*, pp. 248 (Volkswagen), 208 (all large enterprises).
- <sup>83</sup> Dusi, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps*.
- <sup>84</sup> Keegan, *Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa: The Southern Highveld to 1914*, pp. 124, 122.
- <sup>85</sup> Cheesman, *Landlord Power and Rural Indebtedness in Colonial Sind, 1865–1901*, pp. 60, 77.
- <sup>86</sup> Schissler, *Preussische Agrargesellschaft im Wandel*, p. 176ff.
- <sup>87</sup> Jacobsen, *Mirages of Transition*, p. 295ff., access to pastures for own livestock a key element of wages. Marx was quite clear that ‘whether the capitalist pays the worker in money or in means of subsistence does not affect (the definition of variable capital). It affects only the mode of existence of the value advanced by him’. ‘The creation of

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surplus-value, hence the capitalization of the sum of value advanced, arises neither from the money form nor from the natural form of wages...It arises from the exchange of value for value-creating power', Marx, *Capital*, vol. 2, pp. 297–8.

<sup>88</sup> Medici and Orlando, *Agricoltura e disoccupazione. I braccianti nella bassa padana*, p. 165ff., on *compartecipazione*.

<sup>89</sup> Engels, 'Preface' in Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3, pp.96–7.