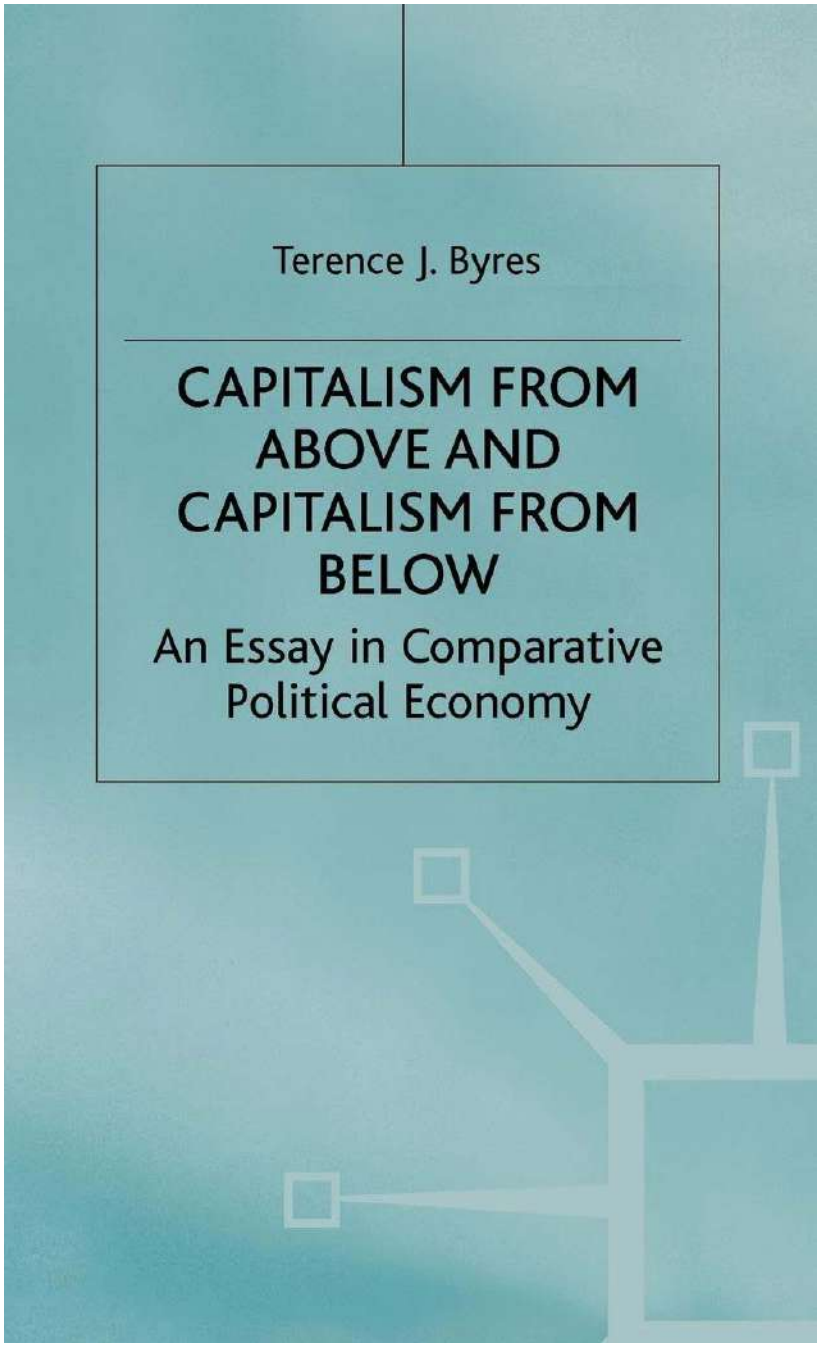


Capitalism from Above and Capitalism from Below

An Essay in Comparative Political Economy

Terence J. Byres
Professor of Political Economy
School of Oriental and African Studies
University of London

palgrave
macmillan

1996

Of course, infinitely diverse combinations of elements of this or that type of capitalist evolution are possible, and only hopeless pedants could set about solving the peculiar and complex problems arising merely by quoting this or that opinion of Marx about a different historical epoch.

[Lenin, 1964a: 33]

In the effort to understand the history of a specific country a comparative perspective can lead to asking very useful and sometimes new questions. There are further advantages. Comparisons can serve as a rough negative check on accepted historical explanations. And a comparative approach may lead to new historical generalizations.

[Barrington Moore, 1967: xiii]

There is a deep inner relationship between the agrarian question and industrial capital, which determines the characteristic structures of capitalism in the various countries. For our part, what the author of *Capital* wrote about his fatherland in 1867, in the preface to the first edition, still holds true, despite the different stage of world history: 'Alongside of modern evils, a whole series of inherited evils oppress us, arising from the passive survival of antiquated modes of production, with their inevitable train of social and political anachronism.'

[Takahashi, 1976: 96–7]

Contents

List of Tables

Preface

In certain quarters, these days, it is fashionable to assert that 'Marxism is dead'. If that were so, then, I suppose, the present study would be a voice from beyond the grave. For anyone who does believe that the Marxist corpse has been put to rest, what follows will either be of no interest, or will be profoundly annoying. After all, the dead should be burying their dead.

Clearly, my own belief is that Marxism is alive and well. It may be too much to believe that, imminently, the cry will go up: 'Come back Dr Marx. All is forgiven'. But, surely, the intellectual morass into which intellectuals have allowed themselves to be led by post-modernist excess, along with the clear irrelevance of much of modern neo-classical economics must, surely, provoke a reaction, which will include a revival of Marxist analysis.

Annoyance may be generated, in other quarters, for another reason. Some clarification of this essay's provenance may help explain why, lacking the competence of a professional historian, I should be so foolhardy as to venture headlong into the historian's terrain. That clarification I attempt in the Foreword. It is a foolhardiness, moreover, which needs special explanation, given the regional variety confronted in the broader comparative study of which the present book is a part, and which I explain in the Foreword; and given the vast stretches of time covered, and the sheer mass of sources to be trawled.

The distant origins of this essay – and the broader study – lie in my own long-standing concern with the agrarian question in India, which began very tentatively as long ago as 1963. How that came about, I tell elsewhere [Byres, 1995: 7–13]. That concern has broadened considerably with my activities as editor of the *Journal of Peasant Studies*, since 1973: a broadening which has made me aware of the writing on the agrarian question in a wide variety of contemporary poor countries, as well as some of scholarship relevant to past agrarian transitions.

I have leant very heavily on the work of professional historians. Or it might be more accurate to say that I have plundered that work. I have had to follow my instincts, and use my judgement, in deciding what work to draw upon, and how to interpret it. I may disagree, at times sharply, with some of the formulations of such historians, and even with some of their interpretations, but only on the basis that it is they who make possible informed judgement, it is they who have masterly control over the empirical material, and it is they who have an often awesome command of the relevant historiography, in a way that no comparativist can possibly have.

I have tried to indicate, with the greatest care, those upon whom I have drawn. Where an historian has himself/herself used other secondary sources, I have listed these as a way of suggesting, as fully as possible, the basis for a particular judgement. If nothing else, then, the very full set of References points to the

foundations upon which the study is built – foundations dug out and laid by others. To those others, I can only express my deepest gratitude, and express my admiration for their skills as craftsmen of the historian's art.

I have accumulated many intellectual debts in the writing of this book, often to scholars whom I have never met, and who may be only dimly aware of my existence, if they are aware of it at all. To those scholars, I offer my sincere thanks. It has been intellectually exciting and a great pleasure to spend time in their company, through their writing. If I have misread or misrepresented them, I seek their pardon. If I have dealt too freely with their careful scholarship, I apologise. If I irritate them beyond measure, I am repentant.

I must give special thanks to four scholars and comrades who are aware of my existence: my fellow-editors of the *Journal of Peasant Studies*. They have all shown a close interest in the progress of my work; perhaps wondering, on occasion, whether it would ever be completed – 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?'. I am glad to have been able to put their doubts at rest, at least on the score of completion.

The breadth of Henry Bernstein's analytical vision, and the penetration of his analytical gaze have been a great stimulus; while his rigour and his high scholarly standards have prevented at least some slipshod argument, and careless formulation. He has been immensely encouraging. The power and the range of Tom Brass's scholarship, his rigorous concern with class analysis, and his own comparative vision have been extremely helpful. His interest in the work has been unremitting. Gary Tiedemann's apparently endless, and certainly encyclopaedic, knowledge, not only on German history, but more generally, have been made constantly available; while the gallows humour which he and I share has cheered me much. Graham Dyer has, perhaps, seen my formulations at their rawest, both as a student (in the very earliest days of the project) and subsequently as a colleague; and has always responded to them helpfully and robustly, sometimes drawing my attention to references that I had missed, and sometimes questioning a particular interpretation. To them, I am most grateful.

Versions of the early, broader comparative study have been given in seminars at a variety of places: in Britain at the School of Oriental and African Studies, the University of Sussex, and the University of Glasgow; in India, at the University of Calcutta and at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; in The Netherlands, at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. I am grateful to the participants in all of these places. At no one of these seminars did I fail to come away wiser than I had entered.

I am grateful to my old friend, Patrick O'Brien, himself no mean comparativist, for asking me to act as a discussant for a most stimulating paper by Jeremy Adelman at the Institute of Historical Research, in a seminar series, 'Controversies in European Economic History', in January, 1992. The paper was entitled, 'European Miracles. Did They Exist?', and it stimulated me to think about the comparative method I had been deploying. In Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, M. Jourdain exclaims: 'Good Heavens! For more than forty years

I have been speaking prose without knowing it.' Similarly, I had been using the 'comparative method', if not without knowing it, certainly without thinking about it very much. I did, then, think about it.

I have been fortunate in being able to avail myself of the excellent United States collection in the University of London Library, at Senate House, and to use the facilities of the Institute of Historical Research, of the University of London. The staff at both places have been unfailingly helpful.

Among colleagues at the School of Oriental and African Studies, Richard Rathbone was most kind in lending me books on slavery in the United States; while Sudipta Kaviraj and Tom Young were helpful with references on John Locke. The cartographers at the School, Catherine Lawrence and Claire Ivison, kindly prepared the maps.

None of those mentioned above is in any way responsible for any of the book's shortcomings: for the errors, carelessness, misrepresentation or bloody-mindedness that may be detected. They are my very own sins.

To my wife, Anne, I owe an incalculable debt. Her forbearance, understanding, and willingness to tolerate lengthy absences in my study at the bottom of the garden, shame me. Quite literally, the book could never have been completed without her support, tolerance and patience.

St Albans TERENCE J. BYRES

Foreword

This book is an essay in comparative political economy, and part of a wider comparison. The variant of the comparative method pursued is that which proceeds via case-studies of a limited number of certain, important states (important in the context of the problem pursued), examined in depth, in order to permit a clearer understanding of the problem in question; rather than that based on cross-national data sets, covering a large number of countries. The merits and possible shortcomings of the two variants of the comparative method, the case-oriented and the variable-oriented approaches, are discussed briefly, in Chapter 1.

My initial interest in the comparative approach was awakened by Barrington Moore's remarkable book *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. When, in 1967, it was first published, I, as a young political economist, was, certainly, influenced and stimulated by it: partly because some of the issues he examined in his case-studies touched upon those I had begun to wrestle with in my work on post-1947 India; and partly because I was struck by the power of a comparative approach (at least in his hands). I recall vividly coming upon it quite by chance, never having heard of it (late in 1967, I think), in Dillons Bookshop in Bloomsbury. I was astonished and excited by what I read, and could barely put it down. Subsequently, I have continued to value that celebrated book, which is surely now a classic. I have returned to it on occasion, always profitably.

After 1967, and quite unrelated to Barrington Moore's book, I became involved in comparative work which was narrower in scope than his. This was, initially, in an MSc course on *Comparative Economic Systems: India and China Under Planning*, which was taught along with the late Kenneth R. Walker, in the Department of Economic and Political Studies, at the School of Oriental and African Studies. This was taught in the sessions 1968–9, 1969–70 and 1970–1 and for various reasons discontinued thereafter. I mention it because the course was the occasion for serious comparison of China and India, of a kind which had not been done previously: which we used to supply teaching material for those students who took the course.

Unfortunately, this work was never published in any full sense. But some of it was drawn upon later, in the work on China and India which I did with Peter Nolan [Byres and Nolan, 1976]. Peter Nolan had been a student on the MSc course of 1970–1, and has gone on to become a distinguished specialist on the Chinese economy and an outstanding development economist.

To pursue the chronology, the present study was embarked upon seriously, but almost casually, ten years ago, during 1985 (as I recall, around the spring of 1985). I was then engaged upon a piece of work (a book on *The Political Economy of Poor Nations*, which was never completed), for which I was poised

to write a chapter on the agrarian question in contemporary poor countries. Several chapters were already completed. Of all the chapters this was the one that would be done most quickly, I thought. After all, this was my major professional preoccupation. The chapter would write itself. I cannot imagine being more comprehensively wrong.

As a preliminary to composing the chapter in question, I sought to identify, in the briefest compass, the different forms taken, historically, by the agrarian question, and the different possible, broad paths of transition in the major cases of successful capitalist transformation. I indicate in Chapter 1 why those cases are important, but that was nothing like so clear in the spring of 1985. What might have seemed straightforward then, turned out to be complex, problematic, and controversial; and to require forbiddingly more reading and probing than anticipated. One outcome is the present book.

I had touched upon this briefly before [Byres, 1974: 240–2; 1977: 258–61; 1980: *passim*], but had become somewhat uneasy about the stylised versions of the major paths of transition – the major models – which were being brought to bear upon contemporary reality. That unease now translated into an effort to understand far more fully the historical record. What started seriously, as I recall, in the spring of 1985, resulted, by the autumn, in a substantial set of notes, from which some coherence began to emerge: enough coherence, at least, to allow the outlines of a preliminary sketch that was far more accurate than my previous gropings had produced.

My intention had been to convey the nature of agrarian transition in those countries from whose experience influential models had been abstracted, or whose history seemed especially relevant. My starting-point was England and Prussia – suggested by my reading in economic history and, of course, by my familiarity with the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin – but I wanted to extend the variety to France, the United States and Japan. I was aware of differences among these cases, and, in 1985, I set out seriously to identify them.

As it happens, these were cases which loomed large in Barrington Moore's book, although he chose not to cover Prussia in detail (of which, more below). It might, then, appear, to the superficial observer, that I was covering the ground already trodden by him. In fact, my choice of cases did not stem at all from Barrington Moore's influence. Rather, it was dictated by an awareness of substantive difference in agrarian transition (something of which, of course, may be detected in Barrington Moore), and a realisation that I needed to grasp, far more fully, the precise nature of that difference, the reasons for it, and its implications. That awareness derived from a variety of sources, often only from glimpses or suggestions: from the Marxist classics (Marx, Engels, Kautsky, Lenin), as clearly indicated elsewhere in this book; from various outstanding Marxist economic and social historians (for example, Rodney Hilton, Robert Brenner, G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, Eugene Genovese, Eric Hobsbawm, Perry Anderson); from reading of the standard economic and social histories of some of these countries; from some of the literature in the field of contemporary economic development; and from a variety of contributions to the *Journal of Peasant Studies*, which I had edited since its inception in 1973.

Then, with the outlines of my sketch established, late in 1985 I had begun writing a paper on 'The Agrarian Question and Differentiation of the Peasantry': an issue that had preoccupied me for some time. This paper had been started as a brief Introduction to a book on differentiation of the peasantry in Bangladesh [Rahman, 1986], which had grown out of a Phd thesis done by one of my students, Atiur Rahman. In the event, however, the Introduction finished as a more substantial piece than intended [Byres, 1986a]. It was completed in late January, 1986.

I had planned to include in it my new-found, if still somewhat sketchy, understanding of the historical experience of successful industrialisation. In the event, however, I concentrated on the layers of meaning associated with the notion of 'the agrarian question' and what I had chosen to call 'agrarian transition', with no reference to that historical experience. The writing of that paper, however, took me to a point where the questions addressed in the present study, and my inability to address them adequately, had begun to crystallise even more clearly. My sketch represented the beginnings of some understanding, but no more than that.

In that paper, I had identified the Kautsky–Lenin rendering of the agrarian question: which relates to the extent to which capitalism has developed in the countryside, the forms that it takes, and the barriers which may impede its development. I knew, from the work pursued from spring, 1985, that the manner of resolution of the agrarian question, in the Kautsky–Lenin sense, could vary dramatically, and I had reached a point where I wished to identify more seriously the nature of that variety: initially, variety in the class relationships which emerged in the countryside as overall capitalist transformation took place. I was by now confident that not only was there *dramatic* variety, which both Engels and Lenin had pointed to, as we have seen; but also a wide range of variety that needed to be captured, which was less widely recognised, at least in the Marxist literature, although Lenin had suggested such a possibility.

My 'sketch', based on my reading from the spring of 1985, contained some brief reference to capitalist industrialisation. I had, since the 1960s, been concerned with capitalist industrialisation, and the manner in which the countryside contributed to such industrialisation. Aspects of this I had explored in various papers, with respect to India [Byres, 1972a, 1974, 1979, 1981, 1982]. Indeed, my position was that capitalist industrialisation could not proceed without that contribution. I still take that position, and have suggested its logic elsewhere in this volume. What I now sought to explore systematically, in the context of the historical experience of successful industrialisation, was the precise ways in which class relationships in the countryside (the Kautsky–Lenin resolution of the agrarian question) influenced that industrialisation. In my paper on 'The Agrarian Question and Differentiation of the Peasantry' [Byres, 1986], I extended my definition of the 'agrarian question' to include this layer of meaning.

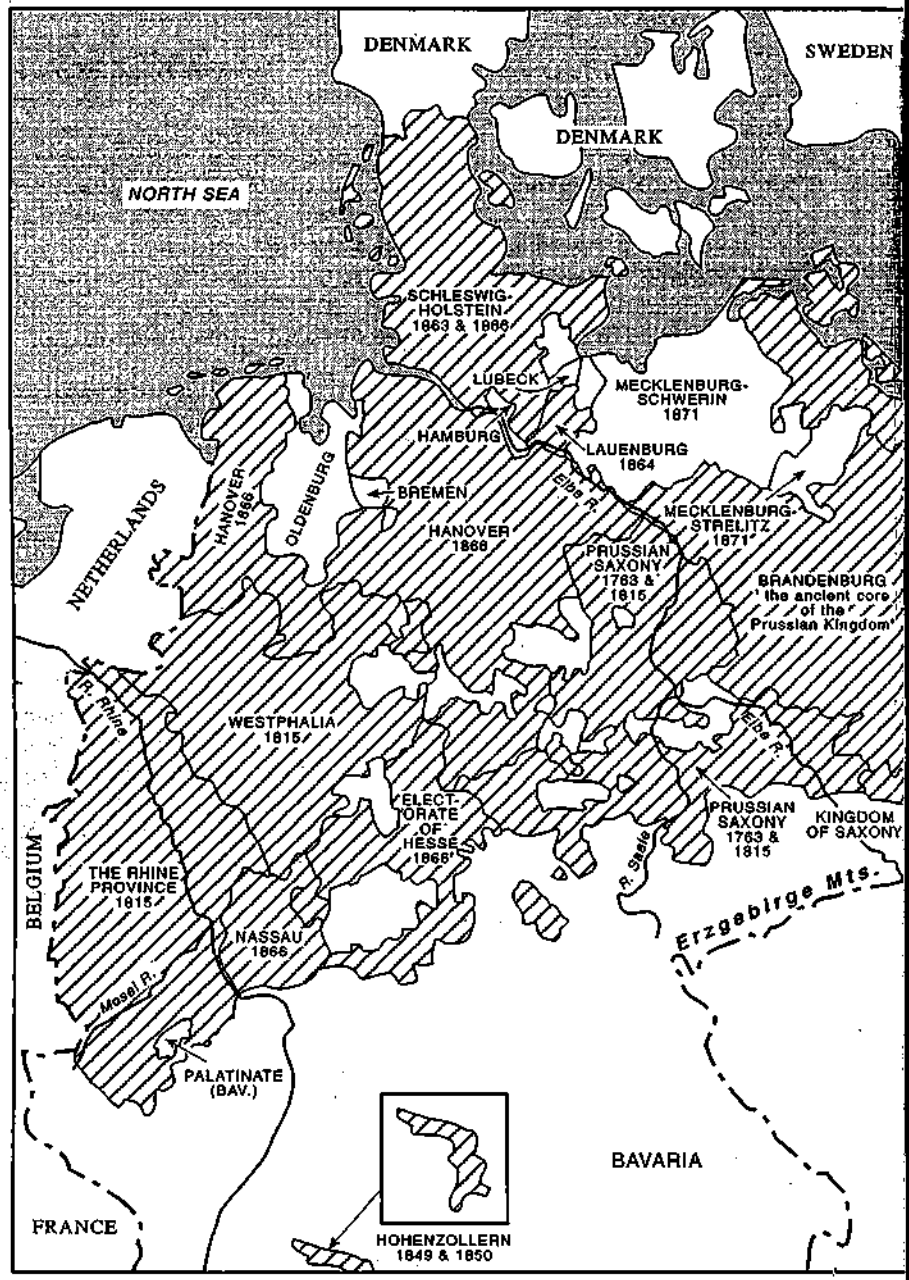
Then, I had been asked at some time in mid- to late-1985, by Mick Reed then of the University of Sussex, to address a seminar there, and to give my exposition substantial historical content. I had given as a title 'The Agrarian Question and Differentiation of the Peasantry', and had intended to present a version of my Introduction to the Rahman volume. Somewhat boldly – and, I realised at the time, rashly – I gave, on 7th March, 1986, a paper entitled 'The Agrarian Question and Different Forms of Agrarian Transition Under Capitalism', based on the notes and the 'sketch' already referred to; since this seemed to have some of the historical content which Mick Reed had requested. In it I attempted to communicate my 'sketch', and the kind of lessons which the historical exercise might have for the treatment of today's poor countries.

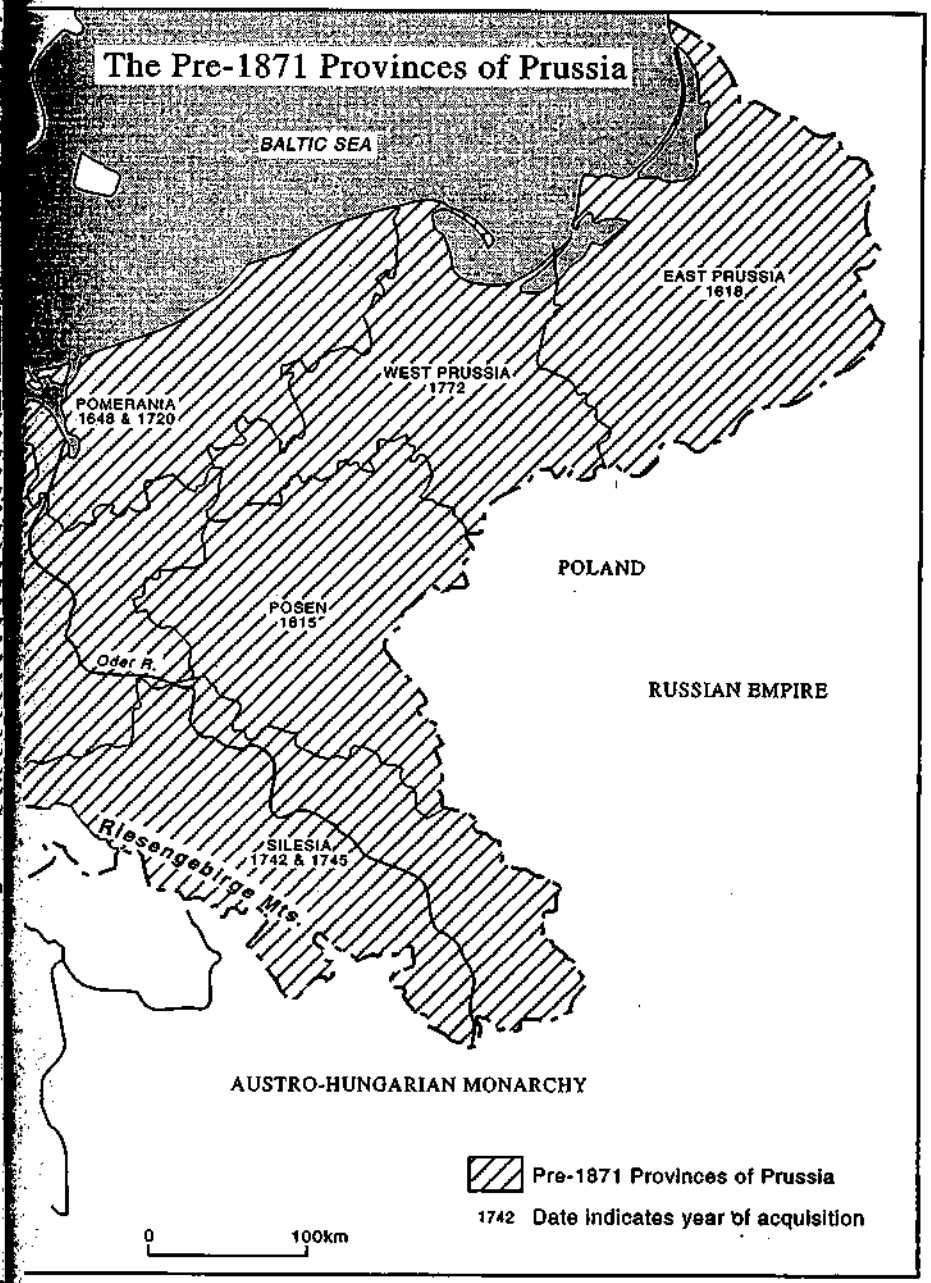
There the matter might have ended, since I had not intended to publish a full paper on this. The extent of my intent was to include a little of it in my chapter on 'The Agrarian Question' in the *Political Economy of Poor Nations* book. I had, however, received, in November, 1985, an invitation to present a paper at an international workshop on Rural Transformation in Asia, due to take place in Delhi, on October 2–4, 1986. I at first turned down the invitation, since I was anxious not to jeopardise the completion of the aforementioned book. But in January, 1986 I accepted the invitation, and eventually presented my 'sketch', albeit at considerable length (if a sketch can have considerable length). To it, for the purposes of the Delhi seminar, I added to my cases South Korea and Taiwan, as examples of apparently successful Asian agrarian transition. This was eventually published in two versions [Byres, 1986b and 1991].

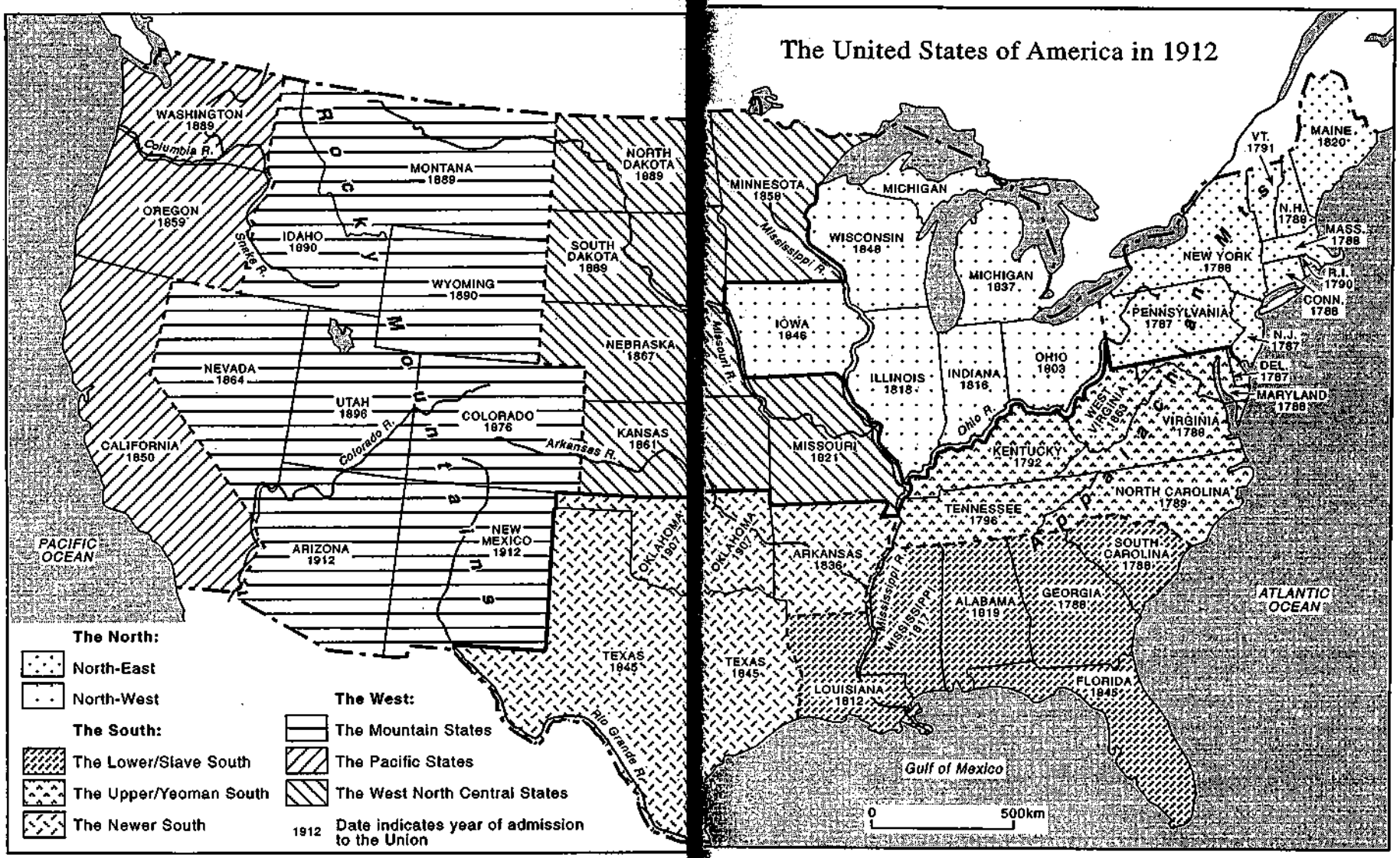
The sketch has now expanded into a wider comparative study, of which the present book is part. Again, that had not been my intention. But I realised the inadequacies of the 'sketch' and wished to overcome them by further reading and analysis. Various people had suggested a book-length study, but perhaps the decisive moment came when R.S. Sharma, the distinguished historian of Indian feudalism, visited me in London, I think in 1987. I gave him an off-print of the 1986 version of my 'sketch', which he read. His comment was: 'You have a book here'. He may have been referring, ironically, to the excessive length of the article. But I interpreted the comment more charitably, and was encouraged so to proceed.

I did proceed, but a heavy load of academic administration intervened, to prevent the intensity and continuity needed to complete such a study. In October, 1988, I became Acting Head of the Economics Section of the then Department of Economic and Political Studies, at the School of Oriental and African Studies. That was relatively time-consuming. But worse was to come. The Department divided and I was the first Head of the new Economics Department: from October, 1990 until July, 1994. I did manage to do some serious work, in the interstices of my administrative responsibilities, until October, 1991. But thereafter it became increasingly difficult, as the Department expanded significantly, and, apart from that, the demands placed upon Heads of Departments began to border on the ludicrous.

This present essay has been completed during a year's sabbatical leave. It was during that time that I decided, for reasons indicated in Chapter 1, to detach the case-studies of Prussia and North America, and publish them as a separate study. The fascination of the comparison of the two paths of agrarian transition, first identified by Lenin in 1907, 'capitalism from above' and 'capitalism from below', is of all the comparisons the most powerful; and the argument, here, for comparison at its most basic level, that of *two* case studies, is strong. Yet, I continue to see these two case studies as part of my wider comparative study. That I intend still to present within a single volume.


DENMARK
SWEDEN
DENMARK
NORTH SEA
SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN 1863 & 1866
LUBECK
MECKLENBURG-SCHWERIN 1871
HAMBURG
LAUENBURG 1864
BREMEN
Elbe R.
HANOVER 1866
OLDENBURG
HANOVER 1866
NETHERLANDS
MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ 1871
PRUSSIAN SAXONY 1763 & 1815
BRANDENBURG "the ancient core of the Prussian Kingdom"
R. Rhine
WESTPHALIA 1815
ELECTORATE OF HESSE 1866
PRUSSIAN SAXONY 1763 & 1815
KINGDOM OF SAXONY
BELGIUM
THE RHINE PROVINCE 1815
R. Saale
Erzgebirge Mts.
NASSAU 1866
Mosel R.
PALATINATE (BAV.)
BAVARIA
FRANCE
HOHENZOLLERN 1849 & 1850


The Pre-1871 Provinces of Prussia
BALTIC SEA
EAST PRUSSIA 1618
WEST PRUSSIA 1772
POMERANIA 1648 & 1720
POLAND
POSEN 1815
Oder R.
RUSSIAN EMPIRE
SILESIA 1742 & 1745
Riesengebirge Mts.
AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY
Pre-1871 Provinces of Prussia
1742 Date indicates year of acquisition
0
100km


The United States of America in 1912
WASHINGTON 1889
Columbia R.
OREGON 1859
CALIFORNIA 1850
PACIFIC OCEAN
NEVADA 1864
IDAHO 1890
Snake R.
MONTANA 1889
WYOMING 1890
UTAH 1896
COLORADO 1876
Colorado R.
ARIZONA 1912
NEW MEXICO 1912
NORTH DAKOTA 1889
SOUTH DAKOTA 1889
NEBRASKA 1867
KANSAS 1861
Arkansas R.
OKLAHOMA 1907
TEXAS 1845
Rio Grande R.
MINNESOTA 1858
Mississippi R.
WISCONSIN 1848
MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN 1837
IOWA 1846
Missouri R.
ILLINOIS 1818
INDIANA 1816
OHIO 1803
MISSOURI 1821
ARKANSAS 1836
LOUISIANA 1812
MISSISSIPPI 1817
ALABAMA 1819
GEORGIA 1788
FLORIDA 1845
Gulf of Mexico
Ohio R.
KENTUCKY 1792
TENNESSEE 1796
WEST VIRGINIA 1863
VIRGINIA 1788
NORTH CAROLINA 1789
SOUTH CAROLINA 1788
ATLANTIC OCEAN
VT. 1791
MAINE 1820
N.H. 1788
MASS. 1788
R.I. 1790
CONN. 1788
NEW YORK 1788
PENNSYLVANIA 1787
N.J. 1787
DEL. 1787
MARYLAND 1788
0
500km
The North:
North-East
North-West
The South:
The Lower/Slave South
The Upper/Yeoman South
The Newer South
The West:
The Mountain States
The Pacific States
The West North Central States
1912 Date indicates year of admission to the Union

PART I

The Problematic

1 Origins, Context and Method

1 MODELS TO ANALYSE THE AGRARIAN QUESTION IN CONTEMPORARY POOR COUNTRIES: TOO FEW, TOO STEREOTYPED AND TOO NARROW

This essay concerns the peasantry, petty commodity producers and the transition to capitalism. Its approach is that of Marxist political economy, which I shall refer to hereafter simply as 'political economy'. There are, of course, other methods of political economy, but these are not my concern here.

The central issue at stake is the nature of the agrarian question and the possible manner of its resolution in those contemporary poor countries in which a capitalist road is being attempted: if, indeed, it is to be resolved satisfactorily (there can be no guarantees issued in advance). Such a resolution – a successful 'capitalist agrarian transition' – I interpret broadly. I will define the relevant terms – 'agrarian question' and 'agrarian transition' – carefully, and in detail, in Chapter 2. They have several layers of meaning, all of them important. Let me here indicate the very broad sense of 'agrarian transition' which I will maintain.

By 'agrarian transition' I understand those changes in the countryside necessary to the overall development of capitalism and to the ultimate dominance of that mode of production in a particular national social formation. That is a deliberately broad reading. It is, however, the one which I find most useful. Any narrower rendering fails to capture crucial aspects of the problematic which I seek to address. It is given full treatment in Chapter 2.

The impulse to consider seriously the historical experience of capitalist agrarian transition derived, in fact, from a growing unease about the constricted, and analytically impoverishing, way in which the agrarian question in contemporary poor countries is handled within the political economy tradition. This has been as true of my own work, I hasten to add, as of the generality of work in this area [see, for example, Byres, 1972, 1974, 1977, 1981]. This is so in the following way.

The prospects, in contemporary poor countries, are often considered of a limited number of possible 'paths' of capitalist agrarian transition: a set of paths which have already been traversed successfully in the past. The apparently essential features of these historically traversed paths are identified and are made to constitute the elements of models of possible agrarian transition.

These 'models' have been influential in at least two significant senses. Firstly, certain crucial interventions have been made, both in the colonial past and in the post-colonial era, in apparent conformity with them; while some of them are at present used prescriptively. Then, secondly, current realities in poor countries

are often judged against them; they have become models which embody criteria by which one may judge whether, and in what form, a capitalist agrarian transition is being negotiated.

It has gradually seemed to me that practice in this respect is defective, and misleading, in two important ways. The first is that the paths in question – the 'models' being taken to contemporary reality – are too few. The full range of historical instances of successful transition is not referred to. Not only that, but, secondly, the conception of these paths is too stereotyped and too narrow. So it is that, with these models as reference points, the processes at work in contemporary poor countries may be seriously misunderstood: they may not be fully recognised, or they may even go wholly unrecognised, because a set of limited and rigid criteria are not met.

It appeared to me desirable to try and establish, more thoroughly than is usually the case, what was involved at least in certain major paths of agrarian transition, before bringing stylised versions of these paths (i.e. 'models') to bear upon contemporary poor countries as standards of judgement. If, explicitly or implicitly, we are to use such 'models' as embodying criteria by which to judge whether or not agrarian transition is proceeding and to establish the nature of that transition, then we incur a responsibility. It behoves us to try and determine the exact contours of the paths in question and to consider the processes which were at work in each case. Before committing oneself to conclusions about whether or not variants of a particular path are being followed, or are likely to be followed, we need to be sure that what we have in mind is not a caricature. We need, further, to avoid the analytical closure involved in assuming that the few 'models' we have in mind exhaust the relevant possibilities.

Such was the impulse which led to my embarking upon a broad comparative study, of which this book is a part, and from which it has been detached. The paths chosen for consideration suggested themselves easily enough. Apart from the existence of readily available secondary sources (in English) – an important consideration for a comparativist – analytical influence and possible relevance determined choice. Here were countries from whose apparent history influential models have been abstracted, or whose history seemed relevant.

The English path has had great analytical impact among Marxist scholars. It was the first successful capitalist agrarian transition. It was the one treated with such power by Marx in *Capital*. It was in relation to it that the relevant analytical categories were first seriously deployed. It was looked at longingly by certain intellectuals in other countries: for example, by the Physiocrats in eighteenth century France.[1] An apparent reading of it underpinned one great agrarian intervention by the state in eighteenth and nineteenth century, colonial India, which continues to have repercussions in South Asia.[2] The English path has been, and continues to be, the subject of intense debate. Any treatment of agrarian transition must start with it.

The Prussian path, one of our two central concerns in this book, was negotiated relatively early, and differed markedly from the English one. Unique in

Eastern Europe, by the late nineteenth century, it attracted the attention of Engels and Lenin, and figured prominently in Kautsky's classic text on the agrarian question, *Die Agrarfrage* [Kautsky, 1899, 1988]. Lenin identified it as 'capitalism from above'. It is portrayed, justifiably, as a reactionary way of negotiating agrarian transition. It has been influential among those seeking to chart possible transitions in contemporary poor countries. Variants of the Prussian path are often said to be in motion in certain poor countries (as we shall see), although knowledge of what actually transpired in Prussia seems, at best, to be shadowy.

The American path is another early one: clearly visible by the end of the nineteenth century, although not necessarily predictable in the course it would follow. It is our second major concern in the present essay. It is sometimes held out as a desirable model, as it was by Lenin for Russia (see below): far more desirable, it is postulated, than any possible modern variation of the reactionary Prussian path. For Lenin, it was 'capitalism from below'. The 'initial conditions' obtaining in North America were very different to anything seen in a poor country today. Nevertheless, the major characteristics of the North American path do need to be investigated. This path, perhaps, enters discourse on contemporary poor countries less frequently than does either the English or the Prussian path, but often enough, to be sure, to require examination. The idea of 'capitalism from below' has proved to be an influential formulation.

Both Marx and Engels displayed an interest in the realities of the French countryside, although not as part of an example of successful transition. On the contrary, it was what seemed to have failed to happen in France, rather than any transition that had obviously taken place, which attracted their attention. The French path has not been influential in the manner of the other paths already identified: i.e. analytically, prescriptively, and as a formal model taken to contemporary realities. It is, however, of considerable interest, and has been the subject of scrupulous investigation by French historians. It may, in fact, have a significance for some contemporary poor countries that needs emphasis.

The Japanese path was not one envisaged by Marx when he wrote *Capital*. It was the first case in Asia of thoroughgoing capitalist agrarian transition. It is, therefore, of very great interest. It is, also, frequently suggested, by orthodox development economists and by others, as a paradigm for Asian countries to follow. It is sometimes bracketed with the Prussian path, and may, indeed, be seen as reactionary in its characteristics. Its reactionary nature may not be in doubt, but it is, in fact, quite distinctive in its features. Its nature has been the subject of intensive investigation and powerful debate among Japanese scholars. That has long been available only in Japanese. Fortunately, some of it, at least, may now be seen in English.

More recently, in the post-1945 era, Japan has been joined by Taiwan and by South Korea as examples of successful Asian capitalist agrarian transition. Not only that, but these agrarian transitions were deeply marked by Japanese influence: especially by Japan's needs and action as a colonial power. The groundwork was

laid, in a colonial setting, before 1945. They, too, are held by some – especially by orthodox development economists – to contain important lessons for other poor countries. Whether such lessons can be so easily drawn must depend on what, precisely, the nature of the Taiwanese/South Korean path has been. That does not always seem to have been established clearly. It needs to be.

From this broad comparative study – a preliminary, skeletal statement of which appeared earlier [Byres, 1986b, 1991] – the present essay, a consideration of the Prussian and North American paths, has been detached. It is now nearly a century since Lenin first began to think about this, and the idea of two paths of capitalist development in the countryside has proved to be a lasting and a powerful one. The appeal of a direct comparison, with a potential historical sweep and a depth of treatment not possible if they were part of a single broad study, was great. That is not to deny the importance of the broad study, in pursuit of substantive diversity. On the contrary, that remains a major task. But the 'two paths' have their own fascination.

2 SOME CENTRAL PROPOSITIONS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY: THE PRIMACY OF CLASS ANALYSIS AND THE ROLE AND NATURE OF THE STATE

I have said that the framework of this essay is that of political economy. With respect to treatment of the agrarian question and agrarian transition, this embodies certain central propositions. These propositions suggest the lines within which the analysis runs: the questions we need to address, and the manner of their address. They do not suggest any predetermined answers. On the contrary, the analysis must remain as 'open' as possible. With this in mind, for example, the intention is not to privilege Lenin's depicting of the 'two paths', but, rather, to interrogate that depiction, as carefully as possible, against the mass of relevant historical writing to have appeared since he formulated it.

We may usefully identify certain propositions at the very outset, in the starkest possible way and without qualification. These relate to the whole broad study, but have clear relevance to the Prussian and American paths. The necessary qualifications will be entered as we proceed, in subsequent chapters.

There are two sets of inter-related propositions. The first concerns the primacy of class analysis within the political economy paradigm. The second turns on the role and nature of the state.

We note, then, the centrality of class analysis to political economy. An understanding of the agrarian question and of the differing forms that transition has taken historically (the differing national outcomes), may be taking now, and may take in future, depends critically upon class analysis. Within such a framework, particular elements are worthy of note.

Firstly, processes of class formation, and the precise nature of emerging classes, are crucial. These will be historically specific. Landlord classes, for example, differ among themselves quite fundamentally, and differ in their relative strengths. So, too, do the composition of peasantries and petty commodity producers, and the character of emerging landless classes, vary significantly. We cannot assume any particular set of characteristics. These need to be investigated, using the conceptual apparatus of political economy. There is no necessary presumption against substantive variety.

Secondly, I maintain that of central significance is analysis of differentiation of the peasantry. No outcomes are certain. The treatment of differentiation must address whether differentiation is proceeding and how; the factors influencing it; and whether, to the extent that it is proceeding, it embodies merely quantitative change, or more far-reaching, transforming, qualitative change. Such analysis illuminates, and helps to explain something of, historical diversity.

I further hold that, thirdly, class struggle is of critical significance to the final outcome. I am at one with Robert Brenner on this. This, in its turn, needs to be investigated most carefully. It is an investigation that requires close treatment of individual classes, to uncover their precise nature: their class-in-itself features (i.e. their structural characteristics) and class-for-itself action (i.e the manner in which class interests are pursued).[3]

The treatment must also entail, fourthly, clear specification of historical conjuncture. That is of considerable importance. Thus, for example, different historical conjunctures influence class formation; place limits upon or enable processes of differentiation; create possibilities for, or constrain, class struggle, and must contribute to the final outcome of any such struggle.

The second set of propositions derives from the postulate that class analysis must be accompanied by – must, indeed, include – treatment of the state. Class analysis requires this, inasmuch as dominant classes may need state intervention at certain decisive moments. Moreover, their dominance may have to be underpinned by the exercise of state power. There is a current neo-classical/World Bank/IMF orthodoxy, to the effect that 'development' requires that the state must be 'rolled back'; that all that is necessary is 'to get the prices right'. This seems unlikely from the perspective of political economy, both in the context of agrarian transition and more generally.

Firstly, political economy suggests that where agrarian transition has proceeded, it is likely that the mediation of the state will have influenced critically the manner of that transition. We note, then, that part of the concern of this essay is with the nature and activity of the state in relation to the agrarian question and agrarian transition. That, too, is crucial to an understanding the relevant issues. It is impossible to consider the relevant issues without reference to the state.

Secondly, however, there is a danger to be avoided. This is the trap of seeing the state as a kind of 'black box': a closed unit which can be studied by registering class input and reading off predetermined class output. Statements about the state may then reduce to simple tautologies. I do not here attempt any theorising of the state; nor do I even suggest any theoretical perspectives on the state. I simply seek to identify those situations where state action/inter-

vention has been critical and decisive. I do so in the spirit of resisting a view of the state as a kind of residuary hypothesis, to be resorted to in order to explain particular outcomes. The state needs to be examined, rather than simply resorted to analytically.[4]

3 THE COMPARATIVE METHOD WITHIN A POLITICAL ECONOMY FRAMEWORK AND SOME CAVEATS

A guiding principle of this essay is the belief that careful use of the comparative method can illuminate the nature of agrarian transformation in contemporary poor countries. That is a principle to which I strongly subscribe. This essay is an attempted exercise in the comparative method.

The essay is pursued within the framework of Marxist political economy. The comparative method is not, of course, confined to a political economy approach. It can be fruitfully deployed within any of the available paradigms. It is, however, my view that it is at its most powerful when pursued in political economy terms.

My aim is to explore some of the differing forms – differing not in a trivial or epiphenomenal, but in a substantive, sense – that capitalism may take in the countryside in poor countries. I take the logic or the 'laws' of capitalist development, which must be explored theoretically, as primary (and would proceed similarly if treating attempted socialist development). It is within that overall logic, or those 'laws', that differences are pursued. The nature of the relevant logic, or 'laws', will be specified as the argument develops.

I stress that in this book no attempt is made at an exhaustive treatment of the criteria by which one might assess whether or not capitalist agriculture was developing.[5] A separate, full-scale work would be necessary to do justice to such an undertaking. In the following chapters, I will draw, where appropriate, on the relevant criteria, and on some of the voluminous literature, but without detailed scrutiny.

The aim here is different. Within a comparative framework, I ask the following questions in the broader study. Given that capitalist agriculture has developed (in say, England or Prussia or France), or that a capitalist agrarian transition has taken place (in, say, the USA, or Japan, or Taiwan and South Korea), what precise form has this taken?[6] What particular configurations of the relations of production and forms of appropriation have emerged? Do these vary between cases? It is the attempt to capture and compare the *variety* that distinguishes the present study.

The possible relevance of the historical experience is examined in Chapter 9. I would stress that a comprehensive analysis of contemporary poor countries is not sought. That degree of detail and mastery of individual cases are probably well beyond the scope of even a single full-length study. They are certainly outwith the range of a single chapter. Rather, my aim there will be to consider

how useful the experience might be with respect to understanding the trajectories of today's poor countries.

My exposition centres upon two countries from whose apparent history influential models have been abstracted. In my observations, I shall try, in whatever small compass, to identify the actual broad contours of capitalist agrarian transition, as these emerge from the work of historians. These may differ in certain important respects from elements of the model that has been in use in the past and which may still be in use: elements sanctified by usage may be difficult to dislodge. It is, in part, the aim of the essay to transcend the sanctity of usage.

This comparative exercise has the effect of revealing more diversity of historical experience than is always acknowledged. One of the arguments of this essay, indeed, is the need to recognise and to come to terms with substantive diversity.

It is worth commenting on the chosen units of comparison. For present purposes, these are nation states, or, in political economy terms, national social formations. Marxist discussion of the agrarian question has always proceeded in such terms. There are, indeed, strong reasons for so proceeding. Modern nation states do each have a unity which invites comparison at that level.[7]

In the attempted capitalist case, that unity derives from several sources.[8] One is the existence of dominant classes, with a common set of interests, which operate at a national level. One such set of interests is given by the existence, increasingly, of national markets: product markets, capital markets, labour markets. Dominant classes, further, have a common opposition to subordinate classes, which may operate at supra-regional levels.

A second source of unity is the nature of the state and its activities. The state acts on behalf of dominant classes, often at a national level; it is sometimes involved in some form of national planning, which, however ineffective, does reinforce national priorities; its fiscal efforts are national in scope and have a unifying influence; its creation and operation of a public sector straddle regional influences; it controls subordinate classes, and where they threaten class-for-itself action, perhaps on a national scale, it may move decisively against them; it takes steps, sometimes apparently at variance with the interests of dominant classes, to keep the whole social formation from bursting asunder, and this may underpin the unity of the nation state. These influences operate as much with respect to the agrarian question and agrarian transition as in other spheres.

But the possible importance of sub-national, or regional, social formations is to be stressed. This will be especially, but not exclusively, so in large nation states. This sub-national, or regional, diversity should not be permitted to obscure the perhaps powerful existence of dominant tendencies within a particular national social formation. It is part of my concern to seek as carefully as possible any such dominant tendencies. But substantive diversity does need to be recognised and its implications require consideration.

It is necessary, indeed, to stress the desirability of employing the comparative method *within* nation states. This is especially so for large nation states: among

contemporary poor countries, say, India or China. It was certainly true of the United States experience, with quite distinct agrarian questions in the North and the South. Within such states substantive diversity exists (although this may be true, also, of smaller national social formations). Thus, I would submit, there is a sense in which, the postulated unity notwithstanding, it may be as unilluminating to proceed in terms of the agrarian question in, say, India or China, or, historically, in the United States. as it would have been so to conceive of the agrarian question in Europe in the late nineteenth century. One can, of course, define the agrarian question in general terms. At one level, then, there may well have been an agrarian question in Europe. But, at the heart of Marxist writing on the agrarian question in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was, precisely, an attempt to identify the relevant diversity. To that I shall come. In India and in China, as in Europe of that epoch, there are several agrarian questions. It is important to capture that diversity. That, I feel sure, has not yet been done rigorously. I will attempt to do so for the United States.

Attached to a 'comparative' approach, carelessly and crudely employed, are dangers of an insidious kind. These include, firstly, the positing of general 'lessons' from individual 'success' stories where no such general lesson exists; and, secondly, the extraction of a 'model' from apparent success which ignores critical features of the relevant experience. The specific country approach, carefully pursued, should permit one to guard against such practice. It is an attempt to take account of these dangers, in the context of agrarian transformation in poor countries, that has prompted this essay. If any conclusions that emerge are more cautionary than they are possessed of any startling new insight, that, nevertheless, may be salutary.

We may consider, further, the comparative method and some of its problems.[9] There is an established and constantly revitalised corpus of *comparative work* in the social sciences: including work by political economists, economists, political scientists, sociologists, and historians. It has many distinguished practitioners: Marc Bloch (certainly one of the greatest), Barrington Moore, Perry Anderson, Robert Brenner, Theda Skocpol, Immanuel Wallerstein; among economists, Colin Clark, Simon Kuznets, Hollis Chenery and Moises Syrquin, and my colleague, Massoud Karshenas (whose book has recently appeared[10]); not to mention Marx and Weber. And many others. Comparative *history* has, perhaps, been especially exciting and fruitful.

Systematic comparative analysis is a distinct branch of enquiry, with discernible general goals and identifiable, if debateable, methodological principles. It has distinct variants, whose procedures differ markedly: their particular espousal depending, in part, upon the discipline and the aims of the comparativist. Nevertheless, it entails, I think, a comparative method, given early powerful statement by Marc Bloch in 1928.[11] It is that comparative method I seek to deploy here. There exists a useful interpretive and critical literature on the comparative method.[12] That I will make no attempt to consider. Rather, on the principle of learning by doing, I will draw upon my own experience in trying to apply it.

The authors of an influential work on comparative economic development, two economists, Chenery and Syrquin, make part of the case for the practice of the comparative method – in economics – as follows:

> Intercountry comparisons play an essential part in understanding the processes of economic and social development. To generalize from the historical experience of a single country, we must compare it in some way to that of other countries. Through such comparisons, *uniform features of development* can be identified and alternative *hypotheses as to their causes* tested. [Chenery and Syrquin, 1975: 3, emphasis mine]

Barrington Moore, who has written one of the classics of the comparative approach, a magisterial and powerful work of comparative history[13] also argues the value of a systematic comparative approach:

> In the effort to understand the history of a specific country a comparative perspective can lead to asking *very useful* and sometimes new questions. There are further advantages. Comparisons can serve as a *rough negative check on accepted historical explanations*. And a comparative approach can lead to *new historical explanations*. [Barrington Moore, 1967: xiii, emphasis mine]

The arguments made in favour of the comparative method are very similar. Yet, they are made by exponents of two approaches to the comparative method which differ markedly in their analytical procedures.

We may identify the broad nature of the differences. Although there have been many, differing ways of pursuing comparison, among a variety of authors, I concentrate on these two approaches partly because of the exigencies of space; but also because one might argue that these are the two archetypes: of which we can find either examples, variants or attempted combinations.

Chenery and Syrquin, with structural change as their central concern,[14] practise a particular, and well-developed, form of comparative analysis: that based upon cross-national data sets, using econometric analysis in order to test, for a large number of countries (in their case, 101), various hypotheses, and to establish, rigorously, certain generalisations. This has been identified as the variable-oriented approach.[15] It is commonly practised in the social sciences: being part of 'the trend in mainstream social science towards the application of ever more sophisticated multivariate [statistical] techniques to all types of social data'.[16] That it can be powerful and illuminating is clear. It is especially valuable in establishing those 'uniform features of development' to which Chenery and Syrquin draw attention.

Barrington Moore 'discerns' and seeks to explain 'three major historical [political] routes from the preindustrial to the modern world'.[17] He proceeds via a limited series of carefully conducted case studies (in his case six[18]), each one taken separately, and he then makes the comparison carefully on a basis of the

case-studies. This, the case-oriented approach,[19] seeks significant depth of treatment. By its very nature, the number of case-studies is strictly limited. These must be appropriate to the questions being addressed. They need to be truly comparable. They need, therefore, to be chosen carefully. The potential analytical power of such an approach, and the immense insight that it may bring, are obvious. It is particularly suited to *qualitative* analysis, although it does lend itself, also, to rigorous quantitative/econometric treatment (as Karshenas's recent work shows).

Let me now return to the agrarian question. In considering it, we need to make certain analytical judgements. These – as we probe accumulation, class and state – fall into broad categories. They concern, firstly, the nature of *performance*, and what constitutes *satisfactory* productive performance. They relate, secondly, to the character of *change* (the point at which performance *transforms*) – crucially, *structural* change; to lack of change; and to what comprises *desirable*, or possible, change. They encompass, thirdly, what *determines* performance, change, or lack of change: they are about *causality*.

Clearly, such judgements cannot be simply empirical (I make a plea for the empirical but against empiricism). They need to be ordered by, and rooted in, theory: in the ideal types which theory establishes, and the hypotheses which theory suggests. That is essential. Treatment of the agrarian question is impossible without such theoretical foundations. But analysis, further, must be grounded, as Ben Fine has put it, 'in secure theoretical foundations that remain *sensitive both to diversity and historical contingency*' [Fine, 1993: 2]. That is crucial.

Comparison is essential. It is, in part, via comparison that one might make the relevant, sensitive judgements about performance (in the context of the agrarian question, or more generally). How might one judge the adequacy of performance without some comparative yardstick? Comparison suggests what is reasonable, and, even, necessary. It is, to a degree, in comparative terms that one might conceive of change in a suitably nuanced manner. How, otherwise, might one understand the nature, the scope, and the likely direction of change? Comparison, moreover, may point to the possibility of a substantive (non-trivial) diversity of outcome. It is in a comparative perspective that one might reach for possible lines of causality. Comparison has the power to widen the range of possible hypotheses. Comparison, can, suitably pursued, prevent analytical closure: by keeping one alive to the diversity and historical contingency insisted upon by Ben Fine. The sensitivity to diversity and historical contingency, I posit, must come, in part, from carefully pursued comparison. This is why I embarked upon my own work on paths of agrarian transition.

The claims made, by both Chenery and Syrquin and by Barrington Moore, are, I suggest, perfectly justified. Comparison can clarify and make more secure the analytical judgements which we make. It can, further, be a fertilising influence. It can open analytical perspectives. It can do so, when securely based theoretically, by extending our range of criteria independent of a particular context, and so allowing theory to be more nuanced in what it can reveal.

An absence of sensitivity to diversity and historical contingency means that analytical channels may be blocked. Comparison has the power to unblock those channels. To recapitulate somewhat, I have found that this it may do in four essential ways. Firstly, it may reveal significant historical regularities. It may, indeed, identify 'uniform features of development'. That, in itself, can be immensely valuable. Thus, in examining the agrarian question the kind of structural change identified by Simon Kuznets is of significance. Secondly, within those historical regularities, a *variety* of historical pattern may be demonstrated. That, too, is of great potential value. The detailed examination of differing paths of agrarian transition shows that clearly. Thirdly, it may, indeed, lead to the questioning of stereotypes: which, I hope, my own work does, in examining the real basis of historical/analytical models taken to treatment of the agrarian question in contemporary situations. Fourthly, it may generate exciting new hypotheses: and, abandoning the Eurocentrism to which I have fallen victim, I would here stress the enrichment of the study of European history by hypotheses taken from the rich and powerful literature on the agrarian question in, say, India (let us say, on sharecropping, the inter-sectoral terms of trade, or the inverse relationship between land size and productivity).

But what of the two archetypal variants which I have identified? Are they equally valuable in analysing the agrarian question? They are not. Of the two, the case-oriented approach is the more useful, and is the one I have adopted. It is not, however, without its difficulties.

I will make just two points about the variable-oriented approach as a possible major way of approaching the agrarian question. Each relates to complexity, but in a different way.

Firstly, by its very nature, it abstracts from complexity and diversity, in its search for the general. Its strengths are many,[20] and, as I have suggested, it can yield powerful insights. But, if one's aim is to capture complexity, historical contingency and substantive diversity, then it has clear deficiencies. It cuts a swathe through complexity, abhors historical contingency and discounts diversity. It seeks the general at the expense of the particular and the specific. Thus, it could not cope with the diversity of outcome characterising the case studies which constitute my examination of paths of agrarian transition: a diversity of class structure, of pattern of the productive forces, and of inter-relation between the two. As a major means of investigation, it is not, thus, appropriate to an analysis of the agrarian question of the kind which I am pursuing.

Secondly, there are certain kinds of issue which it simply cannot address. How could one capture the intricacies of class and class relationships thus? The evidence available cannot be manipulated or interrogated in this kind of way. Even if one wished to wield Occam's razor, one cannot via this approach. If you like, it is increasingly at a loss as causal complexity multiplies. That is to say, it would be unable to unravel the causes of the diversity of outcome found in the different cases. For example, if we hypothesise that class conflict is the major determinant of change, and that the outcome of such conflict is crucial to the

nature of the path of transition followed, the variable-oriented approach would not enable us to test either of those propositions. What is called for is a careful and sensitive qualitative treatment. Only a case-oriented strategy can allow that.[21]

The case-oriented comparative approach has its own problems.[22] One that I have encountered is the problem of the nature of the evidence used by the comparativist. Let me concentrate on that, and on my own experience. The comparativist must rely on secondary sources, and must get a satisfactory purchase on these. He, or she, must get it right in this respect. The following problems arise.

The first is that of ensuring that the same questions are asked and the same analytical categories used consistently, across the individual case-studies. There is the problem of the possibly limited nature of the evidence available. One then runs the danger of becoming the prisoner of those who do not ask questions relevant to one's concerns, or of being misled by those who use analytical categories inappropriately. In this instance, for example, one may search in vain for treatment of the nature and diversity of the landlord class; or, one which I have found especially trying, the course of the inter-sectoral terms of trade. Or, 'peasants' may be defined idiosyncratically; or peasant strata identified carelessly. Great vigilance is called for.

There may, however, secondly, be an abundance of evidence and a diversity of interpretation on particular issues. That, too, is a problem which I have met and struggled with. It is not surprising, then, that the comparativist, plundering as he must the work of specialists, encounters the reservations and suspicion of those specialists not themselves comparativists. Thus, for example, specialist historians may spend their whole life working on a particular country, or region, over a narrow range of time: perhaps to most excellent effect. Thoroughly familiar with their sources and with the literature relating to their period, they may question, and even resent, efforts to make what may seem to them to be unjustified, sweeping generalisations (although, from the viewpoint of the variable-oriented approach, they may be far from sweeping). As Eric Hobsbawm observed in his review of Perry Anderson's two volumes,[23] professional historians are 'increasingly shackled by the double fetters of primary research and specialised knowledge. Like animals outside their own territory, historians feel neither confident nor secure once they leave the shelter of "my period"'.[24] These feelings will, of course, be aroused by the comparativist; and they may translate into hostility when the comparative historian gets on to their individual territory, even if there is recognition of the possible value of comparative history outside of that territory.

I recall, in the 1960s, when Barrington Moore's book was being reviewed, the observation more than once that it was a remarkable piece of work, displaying immense historical/sociological imagination and so on, except that it got country x wrong – country x being the country on which the reviewer was a specialist. But there is a genuine predicament for the comparativist. We do have a real problem here. The comparativist must get it right.

That problem relates, in part, to the kind of evidence used by the comparativist, and whether it is representative; how, from a perhaps vast sea of evidence, the comparativist chooses; what the comparativist does with counter-evidence. Given an inevitable need to be selective, one wonders what working principles exist, or might be established, for comparativists, in this respect. Perhaps there are none, other than the exercise of mature judgement. One may mention an outstanding comparative historian, Robert Brenner. One notes Heide Wunder's waspish and dismissive comment on Brenner, and on comparative historians in general: 'It is the lot of the comparative historian to have to rely on textbooks and secondary literature, but unfortunately Brenner has fallen victim to the Prussian myth (*Hohenzollernlegende*) with all its contradictions and inconsistencies' [Wunder, 1985: 91]. I think that this is unfair on Brenner. But how, then, does the comparative historian cope with this problem? To which particular text-books and secondary literature does he or she resort? Above all else, I think, he or she must exercise the most scrupulous care in treating those secondary sources with respect. The best comparativists – Marc Bloch, Barrington Moore, Theda Skocpol, Perry Anderson, Robert Brenner, and many others – do, and their work is exciting, illuminating and often seminal.

It is a problem which demands immense vigilance on the part of the comparativist. It also requires certain qualities. The comparativist, having displayed, perhaps, the necessary 'foolhardiness' in confronting large themes, and having chosen to do so via a case-oriented approach, requires, as Hobsbawm has it, 'an enormous appetite for reading' and a 'notable capacity for synthesis' [Hobsbawm, 1975: 177 and 178]. The comparativist, then, may be doubly foolhardy: in not only addressing large themes, but in risking judgement according to such standards. Yet, the potential analytical rewards are great. As a way of investigating the agrarian question, via a comparative, historical political economy, it has much to offer.

4 HISTORICAL PUZZLES

From my treatment there emerges a number of 'historical puzzles' concerning the peasantry and the transition to capitalism. These I will identify and discuss as we proceed. Some preliminary comment is, however, called for. In what sense are they 'puzzles'?

The very diversity encountered itself, or, rather, its extent, constitutes the general historical puzzle. This is so at least within the rubrics of political economy. It is not that diversity has been ignored. On the contrary, it has, as I suggest in the next chapter, been part of the major Marxist writing on the agrarian question since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But the diversity encountered is unexpected in its complexity and in the plurality of forms which it encompasses. That will require our attention.

It is the individual 'puzzles' – the individual manifestations of diversity – which I wish to locate and consider as we proceed. They are 'puzzles' in two senses. Firstly, they do not conform to outcomes which political economy leads us to expect. To that extent they call for the most careful consideration. Secondly, they are 'puzzles' in that they diverge from what the realities of contemporary poor countries may suggest as 'normal'. For that reason, too, they attract our attention.

I would remind the reader of the precise viewpoint – given by my political economy orientation – from which I examine these 'historical puzzles', and within which they appear as 'puzzles'. Why I see them as 'puzzles' may be part of the problem. They may, after all, from another vantage point, appear not to be 'puzzles' at all. The agrarian, or other, historian of the instances considered, whose work I am using (or misusing), whether Marxist or non-Marxist, may simply regard them as the straightforward stuff of historical investigation.

These are, primarily, puzzles for the Marxist political economist: inasmuch as the historical exercise suggests a possible divergence from the standard rendering. But some of them, at least, must pose problems, too, for any critically-minded non-Marxist. There are here configurations and outcomes which, on almost any methodological reckoning, cry out for explanation.

I would stress that my point of departure is the present. I here look to the past in order to illuminate the present; or if not to illuminate it, at least to provide some perspective upon it. The 'puzzles' identified appear as 'puzzles' partly in the light of our knowledge of empirical realities of today's poor countries: 'puzzles' given by my starting-point in the present. Features of the past may take on apparent significance, and may seem to call for analytical consideration, in the light of our knowledge of contemporary circumstances. They emerge from a perhaps unexpected dialectic between past and present. The past may illuminate the present, but the present may, too, cast some light upon the past. If, as Marx once observed, *Le mort saisit le vif!* [Marx, 1976: 91], it may occasionally be illuminating if *Le vif saisit le mort!*

Notes

1. Cf. Meek [1963: 242, 247, 267, 333, 369].
2. There is nowhere, among poor countries today, and certainly not in Asia, any sign of a possible English path. Nowhere does a landlord class remotely like the English one, either in its idealised or its actual version, exist.

   An attempt to initiate such a path was tried by the British in India, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, via the famous Permanent Settlement. In 1793, the British created 'a strange group of great landlords, a class whose annual payments of land revenue to the State were fixed...at sums which were to remain unchanged for all time to come' [Thorner, 1955: 124]. These were the great zamindars of eastern India. It was a complete failure so far as generating capitalist agriculture was concerned. The British hoped that these zamindars would become a class akin to the great Whig landed aristocracy: a class of improving landlords, under whose aegis a prosperous capitalist agriculture would emerge. It was a hope that was rudely shattered. The Permanent Settlement simply brought into being a class of large, parasitic, mainly absentee, landlords, operating via semi-feudal relations, and a stagnant agriculture. As Guha has it:

   > After the first three decades or so of its existence as a policy it [the Permanent Settlement] was to turn back on its course to degenerate into an apologia for the quasi-feudal land system in Eastern India during the remainder of British rule...The Permanent Settlement assumed the character of a pre-capitalist system of land ownership, mocking its own original image as visualized by Philip Francis and Thomas Law. [Guha, 1963: 186]

   It was, as Marx observed 'a caricature of large-scale English landed estates' [Marx, 1962: 328]: a caricature of both their idealised and their actual forms.

   Attempts to transplant historical models, without regard for existing objective circumstances, can go grotesquely awry: can secure an outcome utterly at variance with that intended. In this case, other aspects of colonial policy dictated that it could not possibly succeed on the intended terms [cf. Guha, 1963: 186]. This stands in marked contrast to the outcome of Japanese colonial policies in Taiwan and South Korea: where the Japanese did fashion an agrarian structure in their own image, to serve the needs of Japanese capitalism. The landlord class created in India, indeed, and the deeply-rooted semi-feudal structures at whose apex it stood, constituted a massive obstacle to a successful capitalist agrarian transition. It would have to be extirpated, or fundamentally transformed, before a capitalist agrarian transition became possible.
3. For a treatment of class-in-itself and class-for-itself, see Byres [1980: 407–8].
4. For a detailed treatment of the state, in the context of post-1947 development planning in India, see Byres [1994]. An attempt is made there to place the treatment within the relevant theoretical perspectives. It is not wholly irrelevant to the present study.
5. These are examined, and resorted to, by historians, in, for example, the English 'transition debate' and the Brenner debate. On the former, see Hilton [introd, 1976], and on the latter, Aston and Philpin, eds [1985]. They are exhaustively treated in, say, the Indian 'mode of production debate' by Indian political economists. For a useful summary of that debate, see Thorner [1982], and for a representative selection of papers, see Patnaik [1990].
6. The distinction between the development of capitalist agriculture and the securing of capitalist agrarian transition will become clear in Chapter 2. I maintain the position that an *overall* capitalist transition may take place in a social formation as a whole without capitalist relations in the countryside. In that case, the 'agrarian question', broadly defined, has been resolved, without, however, capitalist relations of production being established in agriculture. It is an important distinction.
7. The following is a discussion in Marxist terms of the unity of nation states. For a non-Marxist treatment, see Kuznets [1951] and Kuznets [1966: 16–19].
8. For a brief, Marxist statement of the unity of one nation state – India – in which a capitalist road is being attempted, cf. Kosambi [1977: 2–7].
9. The remainder of this section uses material from my Inaugural lecture [Byres, 1995].
10. See Karshenas [1995].
11. See Bloch [1966]. As he himself tells us, he had several predecessors, including Henri Pirenne (whose influence on him was great) and the linguist, A. Meillet. He was especially interested in, and impressed by, the use of the comparative method in comparative linguistics. Scrutiny of this, he argued, had much to offer the historian [Bloch, 1966: 45, 67–8, 76]. See also his biographer [Fink, 1989: 106, 117–19].

12. See, for example, Bloch [1966], Ragin [1987], Sewell [1967] and Skocpol and Somers [1980].
13. While Barrington Moore's book is clearly a classic, and a work of some power, it is not without serious blemish. Thus, for example, the ignoring of colonialism and imperialism, in a work on the early industrialisers in Europe, and, of course on Japan, and on an ex-colony and a former semi-colony, like India and China, represents a significant shortcoming. But this, we must stress, is not a defect of the comparative method *per se*. It is, rather, a weakness in the manner of its pursuit.
14. In this respect, they follow, avowedly, in the tradition of Simon Kuznets. See Chenery and Syrquin [1975: 3]; and Kuznets [1956–1967], Kuznets [1966].
15. See Ragin [1987: ix and *passim*].
16. See Ragin [1987: viii].
17. See Barrington Moore [1966: xv].
18. His cases are England, France, America, China, Japan and India.
19. See Ragin [1987: ix and *passim*].
20. These strengths are identified and discussed in Ragin [1987: 53–68]. They are obvious enough. I will not repeat them here.
21. The approach is prey to an absence of data and to the problem of data of uneven quality. If a full data set does not exist, or if only data of very uneven quality are available, then it cannot proceed properly. At the very simplest level: 'A seemingly large set of more than one hundred nation-states can be reduced by half if there are problems with missing data. Often the remaining cases are not representative of the original hundred-plus nation states' [Ragin, 1987: 10].

    This is true of the historical record of the advanced capitalist countries; and it is true, also, of contemporary developing countries. If, in these circumstances, the method is deployed it will yield results of very limited value; or, worse, results which may be positively misleading. This is an obvious, but an important, point, which is not always recognised as fully as it should be.

    There are recognisable variants of this approaches, which do not, however, follow precisely the lines suggested. Without attempting to be exhaustive, we may take, for example, Michael Lipton's *Why Poor People Stay Poor* [Lipton, 1977], in which his thesis of 'urban bias' is expounded. This, one might say, is a non-rigorous variant of the variable-oriented approach. Here, a particular argument is expounded, and the evidence from a large number of countries is trawled in order to support it [see Byres, 1979: 217–18]. But there is no systematic use of a cross-national data set.

    If it is to be practised it needs to be comprehensive, systematic and rigorous. The Lipton version of the variable-oriented approach has clear deficiencies. It is not done sufficiently systematically or rigorously: partly, but not wholly, because of the data problem just noted. The argument, therefore, cannot be sustained. The moral seems obvious. The argument would have gained immeasurably, had it been supported either by a properly rigorous variable-oriented approach, or, failing that (perhaps because of the data problem), as I argued when I reviewed the book, 'had [it...proceeded]...on the basis of a few properly chosen case-studies placed within a careful comparative framework, along the lines, let us say, of Barrington Moore's famous work' [Byres, 1979: 217]. A full-blooded rendering of one or the other was called for. The Lipton variant does not commend itself as a desirable example of the comparative approach.
22. There are now many notable instances of the case-oriented approach directly in the Barrington Moore mould. One notes, in different traditions but using the case-study approach in broadly similar fashion, for example: Eric Wolf's *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* [Wolf, 1969] (six case-studies); Perry Anderson's outstanding *Lineages of the Absolutist State* [Anderson, 1974b] (ten cases); Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* [Skocpol, 1979] (three cases); Clive Trebilcock's *The Industrialization of the Continental Powers, 1780–1814* [Trebilcock, 1981] (three separate cases and three taken together); Colin Mooers's *The Making of Bourgeois Europe* [Mooers, 1991] (three cases).

    There are several variants of the approach. Peter Kolchin, for example, takes two cases, in his *Unfree Labor American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* [Kolchin, 1987]. He does not follow the Barrington Moore procedure of separate case studies. Rather, he takes his cases together and develops the comparative argument as he proceeds. He tells us that 'at the simplest level the comparative approach reduces the parochialism inherent in single-case studies by showing developments to be significant that would otherwise not appear to be so' (p. ix).

    Another example of a 'running comparison' – a straight comparison from start to finish – is Patrick O'Brien and Caglar Keyder's, *Economic Growth in Britain and France, 1780–1914* [O'Brien and Keyder, 1978]. Two cases are chosen and they are compared, as far as possible, indicator by indicator, before conclusions are drawn. The study by Byres and Nolan, *Inequality: China and India Compared, 1950–1970* [Byres and Nolan, 1976] is a further example of such a comparison.

    Robert Brenner's immensely stimulating writing on agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe is an important illustration of the comparative method [Brenner: 1976, 1977, 1978, 1982, 1989]. This is, surely, a powerful example of comparative history, which is case-oriented. But it differs from the examples of the case-oriented approach already cited. As with Lipton (if we make that comparison, see note 21), a particular argument is made, and runs through the whole presentation. Here, however, Brenner does not seek to bolster the argument by citing evidence from as large a number of countries as possible. But neither does he present discrete and separate case-studies, to provide the basis for an eventual set of conclusions and generalisations. Rather, the argument is presented at some length, and then illustrated by a reading of the evidence of a limited number of cases, back-to-back, so speak: now England, now France, now Germany; or now Eastern Europe and now Western Europe; and so on.

    E.L. Jones, in two works of comparative history that have attracted much attention, is different again [Jones, 1981, 1988]. He develops a wide-ranging argument, drawing examples from a bewildering variety of time and place, now and then focusing on a case-study that catches his attention. Jones is neither systematic nor rigorous.

    Attempts have been made to combine the two basic methods (as pointed out by Ragin [Ragin, 1987: xiii–xiv and 69–84]). These [Paige, 1975; Stephens, 1979; Shorter and Tilly, 1974], however, have not been especially successful as examples of a combined approach. To the extent that they have had strengths, they have been those of one or other of the two broad approaches: 'each tends to be dominated by one [research] strategy' [Ragin, 1987: xiv]. A 'more synthetic approach to comparative research' [Ragin, 1978: xiv] has not emerged in any decisive or useful sense.

    Other variants might certainly be identified. Space forbids such an exercise.
23. See Anderson [1974a, 1974b].
24. See Hobsbawm [1975: 177].

2 The Agrarian Question, Diversity of Agrarian Transition and the Two Paths: 'Capitalism From Above' and 'Capitalism From Below'

1 THE DIVERSITY OF SUCCESSFUL AGRARIAN TRANSITION

There was an awareness of the diversity of successful agrarian transition from the very outset of Marxist writing on the agrarian question. That awareness is worthy of note. It is consideration of part of the diversity that is the object of this book.

Marx had considered the English path of agrarian transition – the development of capitalist agriculture, in all its complexity – in *Capital*, and given it empirical substance and theoretical precision. In 1894, Engels, in the year before he died, wrote one of the classic Marxist texts on the agrarian question of the late nineteenth century, his 'The Peasant Question in France and Germany' (described, I think, accurately, by G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, as 'one of his most penetrating works' [Ste. Croix, 1981: 59]).[1] He there suggested that only in two regions of Europe had capitalism effectively eliminated the peasantry as a significant economic and political force: in Great Britain and Prussia east of the Elbe [Engels, 1970: 457].

Only in these two regions, Engels suggested, had a full transition to capitalist agriculture taken place. Peasantries might linger on in these regions, but not, he argued, as an effective force, which would have constituted an agrarian question for Marxist theoreticians and strategists. His was a political reading of the agrarian question. In those two regions, it was the opposition of capitalist farmers and wage labour that mattered. This was the contradiction upon which attention had to be concentrated.

In fact, although Engels did not stress this in the 1894 text, the nature of agrarian capitalism was markedly different in the two regions mentioned. Marx had provided detailed treatment of the British case. Engels himself had, in 1885, given an incisive sketch of the pre-history of Prussian capitalist agriculture [Engels, 1965]. I shall draw upon it below. His insights, based upon a deep knowledge of the peasantry which informs his historical judgements, are profound and always worthy of close attention.[2] Already, then, with, it seemed, but two resolutions of the agrarian question in evidence in Europe, diversity was in clear view.

Prussia, then, demanded attention: ideally of a kind that Marx had given England in *Capital*, but, failing such formidable treatment, certainly very serious consideration, for the Prussian path of agrarian transition was, indeed, in certain crucial respects, quite different from the English one. There were distinct paths of agrarian transition.

Lenin, certainly by 1907, was preoccupied with the Prussian road and concerned that this 'capitalism from above' might be the reactionary form taken by capitalist agriculture in Russia.[3] He stressed the possibility for Russia of a very different, and, as he argued, a far more progressive, path, 'capitalism from below', as exemplified in the United States. So here was a third variant of capitalism in agriculture, markedly different from the Prussian path, and distinct, too, from the British. Diversity was extending.

Engels drew attention, also, in 1894, to France, which he described as 'the classical land of small-peasant economy' [Engels, 1970: 460]. For Engels, a full resolution of the agrarian question had not yet taken place there. Yet, one might argue, this characteristic to which he drew attention – the persistence of 'small peasants' – was a crucial part of the French path. It signalled its long, drawn-out nature. Here, apparently, was a prolonged agrarian transition.

Even as Engels, and after him Kautsky and Lenin, were writing on the agrarian question, and suggesting a possible diversity of paths, yet another, quite distinct, path had been embarked upon: this one in Asia. Marx had observed, in volume 1 of *Capital*, that: 'Japan, with its purely feudal organization of landed property and its developed small-scale agriculture, gives a much truer picture of the European Middle Ages than all our history books' [Marx, 1976: 878]. That may have been so when Marx wrote those words, but in Meiji Japan the situation was to change dramatically.[4] It was, of course, Europe that was the essential concern of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Marxist writers on the agrarian question. Not surprisingly, Japan did not attract their attention. No agrarian transition had yet taken place there. There could have been, in Europe at that time, only the most fragmentary knowledge of any impending agrarian transition that might be under way. But one that would add significantly to the existing diversity was surely in motion.

In the wider study of which this book is a part, each of the five cases mentioned – England, Prussia, the United States, France and Japan – is examined within a framework of comparative political economy. Here we concentrate on Prussia and the United States.

In the rest of this chapter, I shall proceed at two levels. Firstly, I shall suggest the political economy framework appropriate to the treatment of the agrarian question and agrarian transition, two concepts that I would wish to keep quite separate: the latter being broader than the former, and, I believe, the appropriate one in the present study. Secondly, I shall give an account of Lenin's rendering of the Prussian and the American paths, his 'capitalism from above' and 'capitalism from below'. In the rest of the book I will consider, in detail, how those paths unfolded, with the Lenin representation in mind. As I

have said already, there is no intent to privilege Lenin's view. It has been influential, to be sure. We will wish to consider it scrupulously against the historical evidence.

2 THE AGRARIAN QUESTION: THE KAUTSKY–LENIN VIEW AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Immediately after the appearance of Engels' text, both Lenin and Kautsky were concerned with the precise forms that the development of capitalism would take in the countryside. Neither assumed that a single trajectory would be followed everywhere, nor that a single outcome would be secured. Lenin had added a third to the two identified by Engels, that of the United States, and it is his influential comparison between the Prussian and the American paths that is the object of this book. We need, however, to put it in context.

Five years after the writing of Engels' article, then, there appeared, in 1899, in response to the importance of the agrarian question in late nineteenth century Europe, two full-scale and remarkable Marxist analyses: Kautsky's *Die Agrarfrage* [Kautsky, 1899][5] and Lenin's *Development of Capitalism in Russia* [Lenin, 1964: chs 1–5]. Each had great significance in the domain of Marxist theory, extending Marx's treatment of the development of capitalism in the countryside.[6] Both had the considerable merit of pursuing their treatment of the agrarian question via careful empirical analysis (as, of course, had Marx himself, in *Capital*): Kautsky considering data from Germany, France, Britain and the USA; while Lenin's terrain was, of course, Russia.

Both Kautsky and Lenin were profoundly political in their concerns. Their decision to analyse the agrarian question in depth derived from the political considerations which persuaded Engels to write his article. Now, however, we see the agrarian question break into its component parts: a development which was to bring a shift in meaning, as one of the component parts became the intense focus of attention.

This is illustrated by the structure of Kautsky's book and the fate of that structure in subsequent translation and discourse. The book was divided into two parts: Part 1 on 'The Development of Agriculture in Capitalist Society' and Part 2 on 'Social-Democratic Agrarian Policy'. In the French translation, which appeared in 1900 [Kautsky, 1900], Part 2 was omitted. Subsequent discussion of Kautsky's analysis of the agrarian question seldom refers to it (an exception being Hussain and Tribe [1981: ch. 4]).

In his review of Kautsky's book, Lenin did, not surprisingly, discuss Kautsky's 'applying the results of his theoretical analysis to questions of agrarian policy' [Lenin, 1960: 98]. That came towards the end of the review. But the shift of focus was captured in the opening sentences of the review, where Lenin wrote: 'Kautsky's book is the most important event in present-day economic

literature since the third volume of *Capital*. Until now Marxism has lacked a systematic study of capitalism in agriculture. Kautsky has filled this gap' [Lenin, 1960: 94]. For Lenin, as we have noted, such a 'systematic study' would include a preoccupation with the contrast between the two paths of agrarian transition followed, respectively, by Prussia and the United States – 'capitalism from above' and 'capitalism from below'.

Now, however, the agrarian question refers to the following (in Banaji's words): 'Why does the development of capitalism proceed at a pace and take a form different from that of industry? Why does the capitalist mode of production, despite the dominance attributed to it, coexist with precapitalist social relations of production; and what is the effect of this coexistence on the social formation?' [Banaji, 1976, Editorial Note: 1]. Kautsky's concern is with the extent to which capitalism has developed in the countryside, the forms that it takes, the barriers which may impede its development. This rendering of the agrarian question is now, in Marxist discourse, detached from the more explicitly political sense in which Engels used it. It concerns both class relations and the forms taken by the productive forces. Kautsky gave careful heed to both, paying special attention to modern inputs in capitalist agriculture, and in particular machines.[7] The nature of accumulation in the countryside, and whether that accumulation could proceed, were crucial.

Engels had assumed that capitalism was sweeping all before it, but had not yet completed its work in the countryside. Kautsky proceeded similarly, but with close attention to the crucial differences between agriculture and manufacturing industry. Lenin's problematic was somewhat different. He felt compelled, in response to the arguments of the *narodniks*, to address the question of whether capitalism could, in the particular circumstances of economic backwardness which existed in Russia, develop; and to demonstrate that capitalism could and actually was developing in Russia. An important part of that argument related to a demonstration that, in Russia, as social differentiation of the peasantry proceeded apace, so a home market was created that could sustain both capitalist agriculture itself and a process of capitalist industrialisation.[8] So the possibility, the pattern and the pace of accumulation in agriculture were central.

The home market argument would take on considerable significance. It was stated in the following terms:

> The process of this *creation of* the home market proceeds in two directions: on the one hand the *means of production* from which the small producer is 'freed' are converted into capital in the hands of their new owner, serve to produce commodities and, consequently are themselves converted into commodities. Thus, even the simple reproduction of these means of production now requires that they be purchased (previously, these means of production were reproduced in greater part in the natural form and partly were made at

> home), i.e. provides a market for means of production, and then the product produced with these means of production is also converted into a commodity. On the other hand, the *means of subsistence* of the small producer become the material elements of the variable capital, i.e. of the sum of money expended by the employer (whether a landowner, contractor, lumber dealer, factory owner, etc, makes no difference) on hiring workers. Thus, these means of subsistence are now converted into commodities, i.e. create a home market for articles of consumption. [Lenin, 1964a: 68 emphasis in original]

Thus, with the development of capitalism, did accumulation proceed in agriculture. We will consider the extent to which this took place in each of the paths which we are considering.

We note that the form taken by the productive forces (the means of production) would be critical to the outcome. Both Kautsky and Lenin emphasised that. They stressed the importance of mechanisation. Mechanisation, it was insisted, was crucial to enhance agriculture's productive capacity. It would also stimulate, powerfully, industries producing the means of production – Marx's Department I industries – and so have a critical bearing on the pace of capitalist industrialisation. This, too, we will bear in mind in the paths in question. I would stress that it is important to identify, and where possible explain, the forms taken by the productive forces in the countryside. They are likely to be closely related to the nature of existing class relations.

There is no discussion of agrarian programmes in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. Lenin was deeply concerned with and did discuss agrarian programmes at various places in his writings of this era: in, for example, his *The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy* of 1902. Indeed, he there refers to the agrarian question, in precisely the terms used by Engels, as 'policy in relation to agriculture and the various classes, sections and groups of the rural population' [Lenin, 1961: 109]. The agrarian question, as with Kautsky, retained its component parts. But these could now be discussed separately, and the major focus of attention seems clearly to have become the issue of the development of capitalism in economically backward countries: the problematic of *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*.

This Kautsky–Lenin sense of the agrarian question is the one which is most widely accepted today, in those poor countries in which a capitalist path is being attempted. It is the one which, for example, informs the wide-ranging debate which has taken place in India, on the nature of the mode of production in Indian agriculture (a debate to which there are many contributions, some of them outstanding[9]), and similar debates elsewhere in poor countries (as, for example, in Latin America [De Janvry, 1981: ch. 6], Turkey [Seddon and Margulies, 1984] etc.). That sense is concerned with the development of capitalism in the countryside.

3 A NEW LAYER OF MEANING AND THE BROAD READING OF AGRARIAN TRANSITION

We have suggested that the agrarian question, in this Kautsky–Lenin sense, relates quintessentially to accumulation in agriculture. The Russian Revolution was to force another sense: that of the agrarian question in the context of the attempt to build socialism in a backward economy. Another set of issues had to be confronted. This different set of issues would, also, suggest a further important connotation with respect to capitalist development. It suggests, further, a broad reading of the notion of agrarian transition.

The debate in the Soviet Union, indeed, added another important layer to the conceptualisation of the agrarian question, in a heightened awareness of the countryside's role in allowing accumulation to proceed outside of agriculture. In the development of capitalism context, Marx, of course, had analysed this in his treatment of primitive accumulation: examining the countryside's role in the creation of the labour force necessary for capitalist industrialisation, that urban proletariat of free wage-labour so central to his analysis; and stressing the importance of the home market created in agriculture [Marx, 1961: Part VIII]. Both Kautsky and Lenin were abundantly aware of its significance with respect to capitalist industrialisation [Kautsky, 1988: ch. 2, in vol. 1; and ch. 9, in vol. 2] [Lenin, 1964].[10] As we have seen, Lenin had given close attention to the home market issue. To the centre of the agrarian question, in the context of an attempted socialist transition, there surfaced the significance of accumulation in the economy as a whole and the role of the countryside in allowing accumulation to proceed outside of agriculture, in ways quite distinct from the home market contribution. It was Preobrazhensky who expressed this most forcefully.

Preobrazhensky made an important distinction between '*socialist* accumulation' and '*primitive socialist* accumulation' (in both cases emphasis his) [Preobrazhensky, 1965: ch. 2]. In so doing, he was in significant part acknowledging the inheritance by the Soviet state of an unresolved agrarian question, in the Kautsky–Lenin sense, but adding to it, significantly, the crucial matter of accumulation in the economy as a whole, in an important sense. By '*socialist* accumulation' Preobrazhensky meant: 'the addition to the functioning means of production of a surplus product which has been created within the constituted socialist economy and which does not find its way into supplementary distribution among the agents of socialist production and the socialist state, but serves for expanded reproduction' (p. 84). But the 'constituted socialist economy' was, in those years, small. Accumulation/expanded reproduction, on anything other than a tiny scale, could not, therefore, proceed from that source.

Preobrazhensky stressed the urgency of the situation. Speed was essential, if the transition to socialism was not to be endangered. That transition, in the conditions of inherited economic backwardness and a small socialist sector, required

significant access to '*primitive socialist* accumulation'. This, said Preobrazhensky, 'means accumulation in the hands of the state of material resources mainly or partly from sources lying outside the complex of state economy. This accumulation must play an extremely important part in a backward peasant economy, hastening to a very great extent the arrival of the moment when the technical and scientific reconstruction of the state economy begins and when the economy at last achieves purely economic superiority over capitalism' [Preobrazhensky, 1965: 84]. Preobrazhensky provided a most penetrating treatment of the means by which the necessary material resources might be mobilised from agriculture: stressing, especially, taxation, on the one hand, and price policy, i.e. manipulating the inter-sectoral terms of trade, on the other [Preobrazhensky, 1965: ch. 2].

In later discussion, with respect to poor countries, taxation of the agricultural sector (especially taxation of dominant classes), and shifts in the inter-sectoral terms of trade (especially the net barter terms of trade, or the relationship between prices in the two sectors) took on considerable significance.[11] This has clear, potential relevance for the historical transitions we are considering. It directs attention towards agriculture's crucial role in supplying a real surplus, in the shape of both food and raw materials, as well as a financial surplus in the form of either savings or tax revenue. The importance of the two components of the real surplus derives from their crucial role in relation to accumulation: in the former case, as the 'means of subsistence' [Marx, 1976: 276–7, 1004–6], the 'physically existing form of variable capital' [Marx, 1976: 1004], whose price influences the level of money wages; and in the latter as 'a major component of constant capital' [Marx, 1981: 201], and critical in the process of production. The form taken by the real surplus is that of a marketed surplus. It is movements in the marketed surplus, and the terms of trade between the marketed surplus and industrial goods acquired by agriculture, that are crucial.[12] The financial surplus, we may say, represents a 'command over real resources', which can be transferred from countryside to town (from agriculture to manufacturing industry), at a time when 'normal accumulation of capital had hardly begun or was still too feeble to allow industry to expand from its own resources, that is from profits' [Deutscher, 1970: 43]; and, one might add, at a time when the necessary social overhead capital had not yet been created.

So it was that the agrarian question now came to have that connotation of agriculture's capacity to release the resources in question, and whether those resources would be released. The agrarian question now had acquired a layering of meaning, and agrarian transition might be defined in suitably broad terms. The agrarian question, on this reading, is constituted by the continued existence in the countryside, in a substantive sense, of obstacles to an unleashing of accumulation in both the countryside itself and more generally – in particular, the accumulation associated with and necessary for capitalist industrialisation.

The broad sense of the agrarian question, then, encompasses urban/industrial as well as rural/agricultural transformation. By an agrarian transition thus

broadly construed one envisages those changes in the countryside of a poor country necessary to the overall development of capitalism and its ultimate dominance in a particular national social formation. This is not, of course, to abandon the Kautsky–Lenin rendering. On the contrary, it remains essential to explore, with the greatest care, the agrarian question in that sense. But one notes the important possibility that the agrarian question in this broad sense may be partly, and even fully, resolved without the dominance of capitalist relations of production in the countryside. That is not a possibility contemplated by Lenin. But it is one of which we will be especially conscious when we come to consider the United States.

The possibility exists of resolving, or attempting to resolve, the agrarian question by one of certain distinct, broad routes, which we may refer to as paths. It is two of these paths, historically traversed, that are our concern in this book: the Prussian and the North American. We start with the former, and with Lenin's rendering of its major features.

4 THE PRUSSIAN PATH: A SECOND TRANSITION AND ITS SUGGESTED BROAD NATURE

Lenin, in examining the prospects for and the forms likely to be taken by the development of capitalism in Russia at the turn of the century and immediately thereafter, came to contrast two very different possible transitions to capitalism in the countryside; the first mention of this in his writing coming in 1907. One of these was via the Prussian path (Engels' Prussia east of the Elbe), and the other via the American path (that of the USA).[13] It is these paths that are scrutinised in the present study, nearly ninety years after Lenin's highlighting of them, even as they were unfolding.

The latter, which Lenin advocated passionately as the desirable model for a Russian capitalist agrarian transition, I will consider in the next section. The former, which was regarded as anathema by Lenin, is my concern now. It stood in sharp contrast to the English path. It is a form of agrarian transition seen by some as likely in certain contemporary poor countries, with powerful landlord classes. This we will bear in mind as our treatment unfolds.

In this Prussian path, as identified by Lenin, we confront 'capitalism from above'. It is 'capitalism from above' in two obvious senses.

The first is that it was the feudal landlord class that was transformed – or transformed itself – into a capitalist class. A particular kind of class-in-itself change – a particular structural outcome – emerged. This is clearly in direct contrast to the English case, where the landlord class survived, but as a capitalist landlord class and not as a class of capitalist farmers. It is in contrast, too, with all the other major cases of agrarian transition that are the object of the broader study.

Secondly, it is 'capitalism from above' inasmuch as the processes of agrarian capitalist transformation were controlled by the class of large feudal landlords:

in a manner which stifled any development of the peasant economy – analogous, for example, to its development in England – whereby a capitalist agriculture might emerge from an increasingly differentiating peasantry. That is to say, a specific form of class-for-itself action proved decisive. This, Lenin argued, marked the capital/wage labour form in rural Prussia, producing its own pattern of capitalist relations in the Prussian countryside and with clear implications for capitalist accumulation: for both the development of the productive forces in agriculture and the size of the home market; and, by extension (although Lenin did not develop this argument), for capitalist manufacturing industry.

Lenin (in the Preface to the second edition of *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, in July, 1907) summed up the distinctive nature of the Prussian path, as he saw it, as follows: 'the old landlord economy, bound as it is by thousands of threads to serfdom, is retained and turns slowly into purely capitalist "Junker" economy. The basis of the final transition...to capitalism is the internal metamorphosis of feudalist landlord economy. The entire agrarian system of the state becomes capitalist and for a long time retains feudalist features' [Lenin, 1964a: 32]. Thus, the transformation, though clearly capitalist in its outcome, was relatively slow – 'the *gradual* development of the landlord economy in the direction of capitalism' [Lenin, 1963b: 161, emphasis in original] – and 'the characteristic feature...is that medieval relations in landholding are not liquidated in one stroke, but are gradually adapted to capitalism, which because of this for a long time retains *semi-feudal* features' [Lenin, 1963a: 140, emphasis mine]. Further, the survival of 'Prussian landlordism', transformed into Prussian capitalist farming controlled by Junkers, ensured that 'the social and political domination of the Junkers was consolidated for many years after 1848' [Lenin, 1963a: 140]. Their power and influence survived the revolution of 1848.

This, he held, was a far more reactionary solution for the agrarian question than the English path or the North American, our other object of concern in this study. It was politically and socially reactionary. It was also 'economically reactionary' [Lenin, 1962: 423].

As far as the peasantry was concerned and its possible differentiation, the Prussian path did involve rich peasants being transformed into capitalist farmers; but only 'a small minority of *Grossbauern* ("big peasants")' [Lenin, 1962: 239] and in close alliance with landlords. It entailed, then, a limited, or constrained, differentiation of the peasantry. For the mass of the peasantry, the outcome was bleak. In that sense, it was socially reactionary.

Thus, argued Lenin, it meant 'the mass of the peasants being turned into landless husbandmen and Knechts'[14] [Lenin,1962: 422] and 'the degradation of the peasant masses' [Lenin, 1964a: 33]. The great bulk of the Prussian peasantry 'weighed down by the remnants of serfdom' [Lenin, 1963a: 140] was 'condemn[ed]... to decades of most harrowing expropriation and bondage' [Lenin, 1962: 239], and 'forcibly [kept]...down to a pauper standard of living' [Lenin, 1962: 422]. One clear implication of this was a significantly constricted home market. That followed inexorably from the continuing impoverishment of the rural masses. In this sense, it was economically reactionary. This contrasted, he argued, with the 'tremendous growth of the home market' [Lenin, 1961b: 423] associated with the American path.

This, in turn, had clearly negative implications (not drawn explicitly by Lenin) for the development of capitalist manufacturing industry. Its Department II branches (consumer good industries) would be constrained by a narrow and stagnant home market.

There was a further characteristic of the Prussian path, to which Lenin drew repeated attention. This, again, distinguished it from the American path and marked it as 'economically reactionary'. With Prussian agrarian capitalism 'the productive forces develop very slowly' [Lenin, 1963b: 160; see also, for example, Lenin, 1962: 240; Lenin, 1963a: 136, 139–40]. Thus, he posited, 'the development of technique and scientific cultivation' [Lenin, 1963b: 161] was far less likely than with the American path. He was especially concerned with the slow development of mechanisation in agriculture. This, too, if it were so, implied a constricted market for the products of capitalist manufacturing industry, in this instance especially those of Department I industries: be they chemical fertilisers or farm implements and machinery, in their different manifestations (which he would stress in his work on US agriculture written in 1915 [Lenin, 1964b]).

This constraint upon the 'free development of the productive forces' existed, he argued, because the retention of the 'landlord economy' 'inevitably means also the retention of the bonded peasant, of métayage, of the renting of small plots by the year, the cultivation of the "squire's" land with the implements of the peasants, i.e. the retention of the most backward methods' [Lenin, 1963a: 139]. So it was that the relations of production which emerged in Prussian agriculture – in Lenin's terms, those of a capitalism still marked powerfully by 'semi-feudal' features – constituted a powerful brake upon the productive forces.

The passage just quoted refers to possible developments in Russia, but he goes on immediately to identify the phenomena in question as constituting an integral part of the 'Prussian path'. He clearly regarded this as a crucial structural feature of Prussian agriculture in the nineteenth century.

Such, then, was the 'Prussian path', as presented by Lenin. It has had considerable influence in the analysis of the agrarian question. In Part 2 our concern is with the precise nature of the Prussian outcome, as it actually worked out. We will examine each of the features of the Prussian model identified by Lenin against the available evidence. We will further consider how the Prussian outcome came about – the processes which gave rise to it – and its implications. As with the English case, the outcome would be the result of long, slow and complex processes; and the intervention of the state would be crucial. These processes and that intervention I cannot pursue in great detail here. It is the broad outlines of the path that are my concern. Nevertheless, we will wish to consider enough of them to permit some understanding of the eventual outcome and its implications.

5 LENIN AND THE BROAD NATURE OF THE AMERICAN PATH: CAPITALISM FROM BELOW

Lenin's second form of transition he designated the American path. There was, he posited, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a dominant form of agrarian transition proceeding in the United States, with identifiable characteristics. This he contrasted with the Prussian path. They differed dramatically in nature and in implications, he maintained. For Lenin, the American path was, in every respect, preferable; and he hoped for a variant of it in the pre-Revolution Russia in which, he argued, capitalism was developing in the countryside.[15]

This path, indeed, as portrayed by Lenin, differed fundamentally from both the English and the Prussian paths, in the absence of a landlord class as an effective force. It differed, too, from the French example: certainly, in the conditions that existed before the French Revolution, when that class was powerful; and even after, when the strength of the French landlord class cannot be discounted. Lenin's portrayal diverged, also, from the Japanese path in this respect. His chosen contrast was, however, with the Prussian path.

Where the Prussian path represented 'capitalism from above', the American path, postulated Lenin, epitomised 'capitalism from below'. This was so inasmuch as it was overwhelmingly from the 'peasantry' that capitalism emerged, rather than from a preexisting landlord class. The class-in-itself change – the structural outcome – was that of the widespread transformation of 'peasants' into 'capitalists'.[16]

The essential feature was that: 'the peasant predominates, becomes the sole agent of agriculture, and evolves into a capitalist farmer...the main background is transformation of the patriarchal peasant into a bourgeois farmer' [Lenin, 1962: 239]. In this path, 'the basis of the final transition...to capitalism is the free development of small peasant farming' [Lenin, 1964a: 32–3]. To this Lenin gave great emphasis.

In contrast to the Prussian path, the peasant economy is not stifled. On the contrary, it flourishes – or, at least, parts of it do. The processes of transformation come from within the peasantry and are controlled by the peasantry, or sections of it (essentially by a rich peasantry which would become a capitalist class). These processes derive from a dynamically differentiating peasantry, with class-for-itself action pursued by rich peasants/capitalist farmers. As such differentiation proceeded, the capital/wage labour relationship would grow within the peasantry, and in a far freer form than in the Prussian case.

Such a transition is possible, he held, either where a landlord class does not exist at all, or where it is found in a weak form. But it is conceivable, too, where a strong landlord class is in evidence: if appropriate developments take place. These must weaken the landlord class sufficiently, and simultaneously strengthen the 'peasantry' and give it effective control over land and the instruments of production. Here, 'there is no landlord economy, or else it is broken up by revolution, which confiscates and breaks up the feudal estates' [Lenin, 1962: 239]. It

was this he hoped and worked for in early twentieth century Russia. That is not our concern here. We will bear in mind, however, possible implications for contemporary poor countries.

It was, he insisted, unmistakably a capitalist path: despite its emerging from the 'peasantry', despite the stress given by many to the supposed persistence of the family farm, and despite the espousal by some of the possibility and the desirability of a non-capitalist evolution in agriculture. We have already noted the stress upon the development of the capital/wage labour relationship. To that I will return presently. First, however, we may note the implications of the American path which he identified. These he expressed cogently.

It was, he argued, a far more progressive solution than the Prussian path: and this was so socially, politically and economically. It was 'the free economy of the free farmer working on free land' [Lenin, 1963a: 140]. It was 'the free economy of the free farmer', presumably, inasmuch as the cultivator owned the land (as opposed to renting it), and worked it according to his own decisions (rather than those of a landlord). He would stress, in an essay/monograph devoted exclusively to the United States and written in 1915 (his final, and his major, statement on the subject, before his energies were taken up with pressing political issues), 'the peculiar characteristic of the U.S.A...namely, the availability of unoccupied free land' [Lenin, 1964b: 88]. That abstracts from the previous necessity to appropriate the land from the Indians who occupied and possessed it – the latter stages of which are captured by Rosa Luxemburg, in her remarkable book *The Accumulation of Capital* (completed in 1912 and first published in 1913):

> In the wake of the railways, financed by European and in particular British capital, the American farmer crossed the Union from East to West and in his progress over vast areas killed off the Red Indians with fire-arms and bloodhounds, liquor and venereal disease, pushing the survivors to the West, in order to appropriate the land they had 'vacated', to clear it and bring it under the plough. [Luxemburg, 1963: 396]

Nevertheless, once the Indians had been cleared, that 'abundance of unoccupied, free land', if it were so, was a sharp contrast with nineteenth century Prussia (and, indeed, with all the other examples in our broader comparative study). To it Lenin attached considerable significance.

The American path, so constituted, had certain clear implications, to which he drew attention. It generated a 'rise in the standard of living, the energy, initiative and culture of the *entire* population' [Lenin, 1962: 423, emphasis in original]. This was, quite clearly, if it were an accurate representation, *socially* progressive. That it was, also, politically progressive he suggested when, in a later text, he insisted that it was unrivalled 'in the extent of the political liberty...of the mass of the population' [Lenin, 1964b: 17]. From our viewpoint, however, it is its economic implications that are of central interest.

To these Lenin gave particular attention. The American path was characterised by 'the most rapid development of productive forces under conditions which are more favourable for the mass of the people than any others under capitalism' [Lenin, 1963b: 160]. What was suggested here was that it was economically progressive in two distinct, if related, senses.

The first was that the productive forces were developing apace in the countryside. Thus, modern inputs were applied increasingly and there was a steady, and inexorable, advance of mechanisation. The productive forces were not, in the US path, in any way shackled. There were no powerful fetters constituted by semi-feudal relations of production (as in the Prussian case). The unleashing of the productive forces was obvious. This, in itself, was clearly a progressive feature, since it meant, as it proceeded, an agriculture that became vastly more productive. But it further implied, or was part of, a second progressive attribute.

For Lenin it was very important, secondly, that this path clearly entailed a 'tremendous growth of the home market' [Lenin, 1962: 423]. This was so for both Department I and Department II industries, for two well-defined sets of reasons. The first derived from the unleashing of the productive forces. This meant an expanding home market for those Department 1 industries supplying agricultural inputs and machinery. The source of the second was the rise in the standard of living of the entire rural population, alluded to above, this providing an impetus for Department II industries. Here, unlike the Prussian case, with its degraded and impoverished rural masses, was no constricted home market. The implications, for capitalist manufacturing industry, of such a doubly stimulated home market were most positive (although Lenin does not make this point explicitly, it is a clear corollary of his argument).

All of this was outlined in the texts written up to 1908. In the later text, written in 1915, and using data from the 1900 and 1910 US Censuses and from the 1911 US Statistical Abstract, Lenin further considered the American path.[17] In that essay, he reiterated some of the arguments already identified, and gave them statistical substance. But the central thrust was a forceful argument against the views of one Mr Himmer, who had published an article to which Lenin took exception.[18]

Himmer argued a case that Lenin heard often, and which he wished to refute. As quoted by Lenin, Himmer had stated:

> that 'the vast majority of farms in the United States employ only family labour'; that 'in the more highly developed areas agricultural capitalism is disintegrating'; that 'in the great majority of areas...small-scale farming by owner-operators is becoming ever-more dominant'; that it is precisely 'in the older cultivated areas with a higher level of economic development' that capitalist agriculture is disintegrating and production is breaking up into small units'; that 'there are no areas where colonisation is no longer continuing, or where large-scale agriculture is not decaying and is not being replaced by family-labour farms'. [Lenin, 1964b: 17–18]

To this Lenin took great exception, and, in the course of a detailed rebuttal, in which a range of data is examined, he focused upon the relations of production.

Lenin did draw attention to 'a remarkable diversity of relationships' in US agriculture [Lenin, 1964b: 101]. In a comprehensive and eloquent statement, he wrote, in 1915, of the United States:

> the U.S.A. has the largest size, the greatest diversity of relationships, and the greatest range of nuances and forms of capitalist agriculture...We find here, on the one hand, a transition from the slave-holding – or what is in this case the same, from the feudal – structure of agriculture to commercial and capitalist agriculture; and, on the other hand, capitalism developing with unusual breadth and speed in the freest and most advanced bourgeois country. We observe alongside of this remarkably extensive colonisation conducted on democratic-capitalist lines...We find here areas which have long been settled, highly industrialised, highly intensive and similar to most of the areas of civilised, old capitalist Western Europe; as well as areas of primitive, extensive cropping, and stock raising, like some of the outlying areas of Russia or parts of Siberia. We find large and small farms of the most diverse types: great latifundia, plantations of the former slave-holding South, and the homestead West, and the highly capitalist North of the Atlantic seaboard; the small farms of the Negro share-croppers, and the small capitalist farms producing milk and vegetables for the market in the industrial North or fruits on the Pacific coast; 'wheat factories' employing hired labour and the *homesteads* of 'independent' small farmers, still full of naive illusions about living by the 'labour of their own hands'...This is a remarkable diversity of relationships, embracing both past and future. [Lenin, 1964b: 100–1]

This points to diversity most vividly and captures it effectively.

But that diversity was not, for Lenin, substantive. Rather, it was structured by clear dominant tendencies which existed throughout US agriculture. These are the characteristics referred to already. They are clearly important. But the dominant tendency identified in his 1915 essay concerned the relations of production. It was at this level that Mr Himmer was to be confounded.

Lenin placed emphasis upon a particular dominant tendency to which he attached great significance:

> Hired labour is the chief sign and indicator of capitalism in agriculture. The development of hired labour, like the growing use of machinery, is evident in *all* parts of the country, and in every branch of agriculture. The growth in the number of hired labourers outstrips the growth of the country's rural and total population. The growth in the number of farmers lags behind that of the rural population. Class contradictions are intensified and sharpened. [Lenin, 1964b: 101, emphasis in original]

In so doing, he sought to refute 'the theory of the non-capitalist evolution of agriculture in capitalist society' [Lenin, 1964b: 18], to challenge the glorification of the 'family-labour farm', and to expose the extent to which small-scale family farms were being displaced by large-scale production.

There are two further aspects of the US path to which Lenin draws attention. The first, by no means unique to the United States, but clearly worthy of note, relates to the process of transition from 'peasant' to 'capitalist'. Thus:

> Under capitalism, the small farmer – whether he wants to or not, whether he is aware of it or not – becomes a commodity producer. And it is this change that is fundamental, for it alone, even when he does not as yet exploit hired labour, makes him a petty bourgeois and converts him into an antagonist of the proletariat. He sells his product, while the proletarian sells his labour-power. The small farmers, as a class, cannot but seek a rise in the prices of agricultural products, and this is tantamount to their joining the big landowners in sharing the ground rent, and siding with the landowners against the rest of society. As commodity production develops, the small farmer, in accordance with his class status, inevitably becomes a petty *landed proprietor*. [Lenin, 1964b: 95–6, emphasis in original]

Without becoming excessively schematic, we may note, in fact, two stages here identified in the transition to capitalist farming.

The first is that from 'small farmer', who is largely, but not wholly, independent from commodity production, whom we shall identify below as an 'early simple commodity producer', to 'commodity producer' (more accurately, 'simple' or 'petty commodity producer, whom we shall identify as an 'advanced simple commodity producer'). The second, which, Lenin argues, was well under way but by no means complete, and which, he predicts, will soon be complete, is that from petty commodity producer to capitalist farmer ('commodity producer' in a fully-developed form), who 'exploits hired labour' as an integral and central part of his labour process. It is part of his argument against Mr Himmer that this second stage is well under way. Such a dominant tendency is an essential feature of the American path, as portrayed by Lenin.

The second, and final, aspect of Lenin's depiction of the American path is:

> the peculiar characteristic of the U.S.A to which I have repeatedly referred, namely, the availability of unoccupied free land. This explains, on the one hand, the extremely rapid and extensive development of capitalism in America. The absence of private property in land in some parts of a vast country does not exclude capitalism...on the contrary it broadens its base and accelerates its development. Upon the other hand, this peculiarity, which is entirely unknown in the old, long-settled capitalist countries of Europe, serves in America to *cover up* the expropriation of the small farmers – a process under way in the settled and most industrialised parts of the country. [Lenin, 1964b: 88, emphasis in original]

This marks off the United States as most unusual. It helps, in part, explain the persistence of petty commodity production in the 'leading country of modern capitalism' [Lenin, 1964b: 17].

Such, then, is the model of the American path, as presented by Lenin. One should, however, note that while Lenin did stress its progressive nature and its clear superiority to the Prussian path, he did not romanticise it or ignore its ideological confusions. Thus, he was withering in his account of the 'former slave-owning South'. Here was no democratic, rural idyll, populated by farmers working their own land. Rather, the South was dominated by sharecropping tenancy, by 'semi-feudal or – which is the same thing in economic terms – semi-slave share-croppers' [Lenin, 1964b: 25]. Here was 'the most stagnant area, where the masses are subjected to the greatest degradation and oppression' [Lenin, 1964b: 26]; where very high proportions of the black population were illiterate (far higher than in other areas) [Lenin, 1964b: 25]. This, then, was a deviation from the dominant tendencies that characterised the American path. It was outside the South that those tendencies were in full flow.

We may examine Lenin's position here a little more closely. Anxious, as ever, to contest Mr Himmer, he refers the reader to Himmer's statement that the United States was a 'country which has never known feudalism and is free from its economic survivals' [Lenin, 1964b: 24]. Lenin does not, at this point in his monograph, contest the first part of the assertion: that the United States had never known feudalism. Indeed, he does not pursue it at all. In his consistent references to 'the former slave-owning South', its recent past as the home of slavery is clearly signalled. Nowhere is that equated, in its actual functioning, with feudalism.

But he does take strong exception to the second part of Himmer's observation: that the United States is free from feudal survivals. He declares that to be 'the very opposite of the truth' (loc. cit.), and insists that 'the economic survivals of *slavery* are not in any way distinguishable from those of feudalism, and in the former slave-owning South of the U.S.A. these survivals *are still very powerful*' (loc. cit. emphasis in original). Lenin's argument is that the system that replaced slavery, share-cropping, is the 'typically Russian, "purely Russian" labour-service system' (op. cit., p. 25), and hence his formulation 'semi-feudal/semi-slave'. He is not seeking to make a nuanced statement. What he is saying is that in the United States, as in Russia, there were, in the South, antiquated survivals from the past that needed to be swept away. A more nuanced treatment might, of course, seek to examine the way in which survivals from a slave past might differ from those from a feudal past, without, necessarily, departing from Lenin's essential point. That, to be sure, needs to be investigated.

At the end of his essay, however, when calling attention to the diversity to be found in the United States, still caught in the grip of his emphasis upon the post-bellum survivals, he comes dangerously close to equating slavery, as practised in the South, with feudalism:

> We find here, on the one hand, a transition from the slave-holding – or what is in this case the same, from the feudal – structure of agriculture to commercial and capitalist agriculture; and, on the other, capitalism developing with unusual breadth and speed in the freest and most bourgeois country. [Lenin, 1964b: 100]

But, while slavery and feudalism are, indeed, both pre-capitalist, they are also different. We will wish, below, to avoid collapsing the slavery of the southern states of the United States into feudalism.

Lenin also made passing observations on the West, and the ideological confusions to be found there. In the west, there were 'the *homesteads* of "independent" small farmers, still full of naive illusions about living by the "labour of their own hands"' [Lenin, 1964b: 101, emphasis in original]. They were destined, he argued, to become either wage labourers or capitalist farmers.

I shall concentrate, below, on what actually happened in North America: on whether and how 'the free development of small peasant farming' worked out in practice. In so doing, I shall concentrate more on the diversity to which Lenin drew attention than Lenin did himself. In particular, I shall direct attention to the American South and the manner of its agrarian transformation, as well as to the North and the West, which figure most prominently in his argument. That will involve a careful consideration of the political economy of slavery and of the legacy of slavery in the postbellum South.

How accurate is Lenin's rendering of the American path? Was there, in fact, an abundance of unoccupied free land? Was there really an absence of a landlord class as an effective force? To the extent that tenancy existed, what was its incidence? Did that increase over time? Do we, indeed, witness 'the free development of small peasant farming' and its transformation into capitalist agriculture? If we do, what gave rise to it? What are its historical origins? What its trajectory, the manner of its unfolding? Are the dominant tendencies as he identifies them? What are its contradictions? What were its implications for capitalist manufacturing industry in the US?

Notes

1. Ste. Croix tells us: 'One of the best analyses I know of a particular peasantry is that given by Engels in 1994 in an article entitled "The peasant question in France and Germany"' [Ste. Croix, 1981: 211].
2. Ste. Croix observes: 'Engels knew much more about peasants at first hand than most academic historians. As he wrote in some travel notes late in 1848, he had "spoken to hundreds of peasants in the most diverse regions of France"' [Ste. Croix, 1981: 211]. That was matched by a close knowledge of Prussian peasants.
3. See his Preface to the second edition of *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, written in 1907 [Lenin, 1964a: 32].
4. Volume 1 of *Capital* was published in 1867; the Meiji Restoration, which terminated the Tokugawa Shogunate, took place in 1868.

5. See also Kautsky [1900], Banaji [1976], and very belatedly, the first full English translation [Kautsky, 1988].

   Kautsky's book is, among those who work habitually in the English language, probably the most quoted and least read of all important Marxist texts. It is quite remarkable that the first full English translation appeared only in 1988 [Kautsky, 1988]. That, perhaps, tells us something about the ignoring of the agrarian question by Anglophone Marxists. It points, also, to their stifling insularity, for, even if the agrarian question were not on the agenda for them, a Marxist tradition which could simply ignore it, and fail to provide access to one of the outstanding texts to address it, is an impoverished one. Lenin's assessment of the book [Lenin, 1960], and the great importance he attached to it, are noteworthy.

   When the first edition of the avowedly authoritative *Dictionary of Marxist Thought* appeared in 1983 [Bottomore, ed., 1983] it had no separate entry on the Agrarian Question and no reference to the agrarian question in the index; some of the entries did deal with it, but in jejune fashion [see Byres, 1984: 1204]. The entry on Kautsky makes brief reference to the agrarian question, but gives no account of it. In the Dictionary's extensive bibliography, reference is, however, made to the French and Spanish translations, although not to the original German edition.

   For Anglophone scholars, the original German text [Kautsky, 1899] has remained more or less a closed book – quite literally. The French translation [Kautsky, 1900] has been used a little more, but still to a very limited degree: and that translation simply omits an important part of *Die Agrarfrage*, that dealing with Social Democratic Agrarian Policy. By far the most influential reference for Anglophone Marxists has been Jairus Banaji's excellent 'Summary of Selected Parts of Kautsky's *The Agrarian Question*' (based on the French translation) [Banaji, 1976]: a belated point of entry for those seeking access to Kautsky's argument. It hardly speaks well of Anglophone Marxists that they had to make do, until 1988, with a summary – albeit a very good one – of selected parts of a text first published in 1899. It is probably the case that the many references in English to Kautsky's *Agrarian Question* from 1976 to 1990 relied exclusively on Banaji's Summary. For a scholarly and perceptive review of the English translation, see Banaji [1990]
6. Lenin's *Development of Capitalism in Russia* has been described, by some, as constituting volume 4 of *Capital*. If this refers to his treatment of agriculture, then there is some justification, perhaps, in so characterising Kautsky's *Agrarian Question*. Certainly, Lenin, in his review of Kautsky's book (see above in text) referred to it as the most important event since the publication of volume 3 of *Capital*.
7. See Kautsky [1988, vol. 1: ch. 4].
8. See Lenin [1964a: 25–6, 37–9, 42–7, 53–8, 67–9, 70–2, 90–1, 111–12, 154–5, 164–7, 172, 181–2, 232, 258–9, 270, 284–5, 312–3, 317–8, 355, 382–3, 426–7, 551–600]. It is one of the central themes in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*.
9. These are most usefully surveyed in Thorner [1982]. For an important selection of the relevant contributions, see Patnaik, ed. [1990] and for a review of that, Byres [1992].
10. See the page references in note 8.
11. There is a large literature on each. For a classic treatment of agricultural taxation, in the general context of 'taxation for development', see Kaldor [1965]; and for an outstanding examination of the terms of trade, Mitra [1977].
12. As Maurice Dobb noted in his pioneering, and strangely neglected, Delhi lectures of 1951:

> Now if there is any one factor to be singled out as the fundamental limiting factor upon the pace of development, then I suggest it is this *marketable surplus* of agri-

culture: this rather than the total product, or the productivity, of agriculture in general. [Dobb, 1951: 45]

See also Dobb [1967: 78].

On the terms of trade, one recalls Lewis's warning, echoing Ricardo's apprehension, that there may be circumstances in which 'the expansion of the manufacturing sector will be brought to an end through adverse terms of trade' [Lewis, 1958: 433]. It was Ricardo, of course, who first brought analytical attention to the issue of the terms of trade, in the context of the debate over the Corn Laws. Ricardo favoured their abolition, since their operation acted to drive up the price of corn, and so shift the terms of trade against the capitalist manufacturing sector.

13. From the 1890s to about the outbreak of the First World War, Lenin was preoccupied with the agrarian question in Russia. Over that period he devoted great intellectual energy and analytical attention to the agrarian question: using Marx's writings to powerful effect; examining Russian data with care; and seeking insight into and understanding of developments in Russia from the experience of those countries in which agrarian transformation had taken place. In his writing between 1899 – when *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* was completed [Lenin, 1964a] and his review of Karl Kautsky's *Die Agrarfrage* was written and published [Lenin, 1960] – and just after the outbreak of the First World War the agrarian question looms large. The first explicit reference to the possibility of a Prussian and an American paths in Russia comes in 1907, in the Preface to the second edition of *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* [Lenin, 1964a: 32–3]. Thereafter it recurs, receiving some elaboration in his *The Agrarian Programme of Social Democracy in the First Russian Revolution 1905–1907*, written in 1907 [Lenin, 1962: especially 238–42, 342–50 and 421–6; Lenin, 1963b: 160–1] and in *The Agrarian Question in Russia Towards the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, written in 1908 [Lenin, 1963a: especially 135–47]. He continued to be concerned with this until 1915, and had intended a full-scale work in which the most recently available statistics would be used in an analysis of the development of capitalism in agriculture in the USA and in Germany. That would have allowed a full elaboration and comparison of the two paths, rather than the schematic (if insightful) presentation made previously. This work was entitled *New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture*. In the event, only Part One of that book was written, *Capitalism and Agriculture in the United States of America*. This was completed in 1915 and published in 1917 [Lenin, 1964b]. It is a penetrating treatment of US agriculture. It is a great pity that the second part, on Germany, was never written. But other events claimed Lenin's energy and attention.

14. The *Knechte*, or farm-servants, who, along with *Instleute* replaced serfs in Prussia 'were employed under contracts, usually renewed annually, and were boarded on the farm principally to work with draft animals' [Perkins, 1981: 101]. The nature of the labour force – the 'free wage labour' which emerged in the Prussian countryside – is discussed in detail below.

15. It is interesting to compare Lenin's enthusiasm for the United States with that of the Russian populist, Alexander Herzen (1812–1870). Herzen, 'the true founder of Populism' [Venturi, 1983: 2] saw great hope in the United States and, indeed, 'believed that the future belonged to the United States and Russia' [*Kucherov*, 1963: 35]. He exalted 'classless, democratic America' (loc. cit.). Lenin was clearly interested in the views of Herzen, and there are several references to him in his writing. Indeed, he published, on May 6, 1912, an article written on the hundredth anniversary of Herzen's birth – 'In Memory of Herzen'. [Lenin, 1963c]. It is not, perhaps, fanciful to hypothesise that Lenin responded to Herzen's enthusiasm for the United States as a desirable future model for Russia to emulate. Lenin shared that view. But, to the extent that Lenin did 'share' Herzen's view, he dismissed most strongly a populist reading of the United States path. We note below his withering dismissal of Mr Himmer's populist assertions. It was an example of capitalist development, and it was that model – a capitalist one – that Russia might best emulate. I am indebted to Tom Brass for bringing Kucherov's paper to my attention, and for suggesting the possible link with Herzen.

16. We will drop this terminology in subsequent treatment, since another is more appropriate. We retain it here since it is the one employed by Lenin. That a transformation took place – a dramatic transformation, in several respects – is, we shall see, not in question. But for reasons discussed below, the use of the categories 'peasant' and 'capitalist' are, in the context of the United States, analytically problematic.

17. This was Part One of his *New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture*. It is described by one of the outstanding Marxist historians of the USA as a 'penetrating essay' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 24]. That it surely is. The Genoveses go on to depict Lenin as 'too good a historian and political economist' to fall into certain errors 'even in the heat of polemics' (loc. cit.). Lenin's qualities in these respects – preeminently with respect to Russia, of course – are usually ignored by academic historians. Other Marxist historians have acknowledged their debt to Lenin: for example Rodney Hilton, in his work on mediaeval England [Hilton, 1978: 282, note 1]; Maurice Dobb in his seminal contribution to the famous transition to capitalism debate [Dobb, 1963: 198, 251, 253]; Eric Hobsbawm in his treatment of the 'general crisis' of the 17th century European economy [Hobsbawm, 1954: 51, note 24]. Rodney Hilton describes this influence as, in his case, 'immensely stimulating' (loc. cit.). That it has been fruitful can hardly be in doubt. Here, of course, our particular concern is with his 1915 essay on the USA. In a sense, all of our treatment of North America is a commentary on this essay.

18. This was in the June, 1913 issue of *Zavesty* a Russian monthly 'of a Socialist Revolutionary orientation' [Lenin, 1964b: 17–18 and 363 note 2].

PART II

The Prussian Path: Capitalism From Above

There is no way of finding out whether without the disaster of 1806 there would have been stabilisation and consolidation of the feudal order or whether the pressure from the peasants and the market would have led, in whatever way, to a capitalist solution. In the event, however, it is clear that the events of 1806/7 did indeed open the way towards a bourgeois solution.

[Harnisch, 1986: 66–7]

3 From 'One of Europe's Freest Peasantries' to Feudalism and the Eve of Abolition of Serfdom

...the free peasants east of the Elbe.

[Engels, 1965: 156]

...what had been, until then, one of Europe's freest peasantries.

[Brenner, 1976: 41]

the 'manorial' reaction shattered the free institutions of East Elbia and wrought a radical shift in class relationships.

[Rosenberg, 1958: 29]

1 PRUSSIA EAST OF THE ELBE, PRUSSIA AS A WHOLE, AND POST-1871 UNITED GERMANY

When Engels, in 1894, identified 'Prussia east of the Elbe' as one of only two instances in western Europe of peasants being totally displaced by capitalist agriculture, he was referring, in Prussia, to what was by then, of course, not an independent nation state but a crucial part of Germany. It was a Germany that had been united only since 1871. More precisely, the territory referred to by Engels is that of 'Germany east...of the River Elbe and its tributary the Saale, which together formed a line bisecting Germany from Hamburg to the modern Czechoslovakian frontier' [Perkins, 1986: 287]. It is this territory – 'Germany east of the Elbe and north of the Erzgebirge and Riesengebirge'[1] [Engels,1965: 155] – and the historical trajectory of its agrarian political economy that is our concern here.

Prussia's imprint lay decisively upon the whole German social formation. Within Germany, '*Prussia's* specific overlordship', and, within that, 'the domination of *Prussian Junkerdom*' [Engels, 1970: 475, emphasis mine] were obvious.[2] Before 1871, however, an overall capitalist transition had clearly taken place in the whole Prussian social formation. As Anderson observes, 'the fundamental structure of the new [German] State was unmistakably *capitalist*' [Anderson,1974b: 276, emphasis in original]. It is the agrarian roots of that capitalist transition and its accompanying accumulation, in both countryside and town, that we wish to uncover. We seek to establish the nature of the Prussian path of agrarian transition, Lenin's 'capitalism from above'. By 1871, were its

lineaments as suggested by Lenin? How did it compare with the so-called 'American path', Lenin's 'capitalism from below'? We may first identify Prussia's constituent elements, before embarking upon our historical odyssey. These are summarised in Table 3.1.

That Germany of 1871, in the words of an English economic historian, had been fashioned, through time, from 'the multitudinous principalities which, in the eighteenth century, occupied German ground space' [Trebilcock, 1981: 22]. This 'proliferation... [this] ramshackle amalgam of states...these pocket duchies' [Trebilcock, 1981 : 22 and 24] became a united Germany. Central to its fashioning was Prussia, and within Prussia the dominant influence was that of Prussian Junkers.

Germany had been finally united, under the Hohenzollerns (the ruling house of Brandenburg-Prussia from 1415 to 1918, and of imperial Germany from 1871 until 1918), by Bismarck, when the new German Empire – the Second Reich – was proclaimed in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles on January 18, 1871:[3] 'when Bismarck had finally cajoled the South German states into accepting a German Empire, with its barely veiled Prussian hegemony' [Stern, 1987: 146]. Bismarck, indeed, was himself a Prussian Junker 'who had once managed his own estates and always maintained a healthy appetite for greater profits and more land in his own possessions' [Stern, 1987: 25]:[4] a member of the class of aristocratic capitalist farmers which dominated Prussia, and whose emergence as a capitalist class is explored here.[5]

The broad, political significance of this is immense. In its historical exploration – in the unravelling of the 'complex causes of Brandenburg's ascent' – lies 'the answer to the central rebus of modern German history as a whole – why the national unification of Germany in the epoch of the industrial revolution was ultimately achieved under the political aegis of the agrarian junkerdom of Prussia' [Anderson,1974b: 237]. Our *quaesitum* must, however, be less ambitious.[6]

The implications of Prussian, and Junker, hegemony, with respect to agrarian development and to capitalist industrialisation and its progress in Germany as a whole after 1871, are crucial. Again, this we cannot pursue seriously, although it is not to be ignored completely. We must confine our attention essentially to the pre-1871 era.

Much of Part Two will be concerned with 'the Prussian path', in the narrower, Kautsky–Lenin, sense of an agrarian transformation to capitalist agriculture, in Prussia itself (east of the Elbe): a transformation that was complete, in its essentials, before 1871. We will also address the broader issue of the relationship of this outcome to capitalist industrialisation in Prussia (as a whole) before 1871. Some brief observations on the post-1871 implications will, however, be made.

Prussian post-1871 power was 'grounded... within the compact territory of the seven old Prussian provinces – that is one third of the entire territory of the Reich' [Engels, 1970: 475]. It is this area that is our concern here. It was an area consolidated during 'the rise of Brandenburg-Prussia from the ranks of a

Table 3.1 The pre-1871 provinces of Prussia

Altpreussen ('Old Prussia') Provinces East of the Elbe (1)	*Other Provinces East of the Elbe* (2)	*Provinces West of the Elbe* (3)
East Prussia	Mecklenburg-Schwerin	Westphalia
West Prussia	Mecklenburg-Strelitz	The Rhine Province
Pomerania		Schleswig-Holstein
Posen		Lauenburg
Brandenburg		Electorate of Hesse
Silesia		Nassau
Prussian Saxony		Hanover
		Hohenzollern

Source: See text and end-notes 7 and 8.

second-class German territory...when, after the ruin of the Palatinate in the Thirty Years War, it succeeded to the primacy among the German Protestant states' [Barraclough, 1988: 397].

These seven provinces, all east of the Elbe and its tributary the Saale, and constituting most of what had been, before 1871, the Kingdom of Prussia were: Brandenburg ('the ancient core of the Prussian kingdom' [Simon, 1978: 704], Pomerania (eastern Pomerania acquired at the peace of Westphalia in 1648; western Pomerania in 1720), Silesia (ceded by Maria Theresa of Austria to Frederick the Great first in 1742 and finally in 1745), East Prussia (absorbed in 1618), West Prussia (acquired from Poland in 1772), Posen (finally acquired in 1815), and the province of Saxony (acquired in 1763 and 1815). This was Engels' 'Prussia east of the Elbe'. To it, for our purposes, one must add Mecklenburg, east of the Elbe and until 1871 two independent duchies (Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz). It was a province noted for 'the presence of a powerful class of landowning Junkers' [Kramm and Mellor, 1978: 7], and must be seen as part of the 'Prussian path'.[7]

To the north-west, to the west and to the south, in 1871, lay the rest of the Reich territory: some of it formerly part of the Kingdom of Prussia and some of it formerly independent kingdoms, grand duchies, duchies, principalities and free cities.[8] Among Prussia's western provinces it included Westphalia and the Rhine Province, which had become part of Prussia in 1815, and which was 'a region destined to develop into the greatest industrial centre on the Continent' [Leyser *et al.*, 1978: 104]; with the 'growth of Rhine-Ruhr as the industrial heartland of Europe with its arteries and supporting organs running into Holland, France and Austria' [Trebilcock, 1981: 18].

We will wish, finally, if very briefly, to relate that pre-1871 capitalist industrialisation to Prussian agrarian capital in its ultimate form. This will involve consideration of the contradictions between the 'the two possessing classes of the Hohenzollern realm – Prussian junkerdom and Rhenish capital' [Anderson,1974b: 276]. But first we must trace the origins of Prussian agrarian capital, to the Prussian feudal landlord class.

2 FEUDALISM, CAPITALISM AND THE PRUSSIAN FEUDAL LANDLORD CLASS

The feudal landlord class in question was that of the Prussian Junkers. It is its transformation into a class of capitalist farmers that is our concern. To understand that we need first to consider its antecedents. That I will do in section 3 and thereafter. But let us start by recalling the essence of feudalism and how it differs from capitalism.

Following Rodney Hilton, we may define feudalism as follows. It is a mode of production in which

> the exploited class from which surplus is exacted is, though *servile*, in possession of its own means of subsistence. The serfs are an *unfree* peasantry. The ruling class consists of landowners/landlords who take the surplus of peasant production either in the form of labour on the demesne, rent in kind or in money. It is, of course, differentiated from the capitalist mode of production where the owners of capital exploit a free but powerless class of wage workers by the extraction of surplus value in the manufacturing process, by paying wages less than the full value of their labour. [Hilton, 1984: 85, emphasis mine]

This, indeed, captures the nature of the two great epochal modes of production which are central to the broad comparative study of which the present essay is a part.

It is often suggested that the classical form of feudal surplus appropriation is the first noted by Hilton: that of labour rent. As Hilton insists, it is not, of course, the only form of feudal rent. Nor, indeed, is it necessarily the major one.[9] But its presence to a substantial extent may well be an important constituent of feudalism.

Until the sixteenth century, this was rarely in evidence as a form of surplus appropriation east of the Elbe. More important, however, was that until the sixteenth century East Elbian landlords confronted a free peasantry. To that I will come in the next section. Before the sixteenth century, East Elbia was an outlier of feudalism. More precisely, it was part of a feudal social formation but not itself feudal. But it would assuredly become, in a very full sense, feudal.

When it did, the Prussian Junkers – 'the aristocratic group of large agricultural estate owners situated on the lands east of the Elbe river' [Gerschenkron, 1966: 21] – were the bastion of Prussian feudalism. They were 'a group of feudal lords closely linked by bonds of kinship, neighbourly tradition, and common economic and social interests' [Gerschenkron, 1966: 21]. They were 'a closely knit noble landlord class with great political and social ambitions, displaying solidarity and class-consciousness' [Rosenberg, 1943: 4]. More precisely, in Marxist terms, they were a feudal class in that they resorted to a particular mode of surplus appropriation: extracting surplus from an unfree peasantry, via extra-economic coercion.

This they did in the system of feudal enterprise, *Gutsherrschaft*: in which a large-scale farm enterprise (the *Gut*), or demesne farm, was run by a managing estate proprietor (*Gutsherr*), using servile labour, bound to the soil in various forms of bondage tenure [Rosenberg, 1944: 228–33]. In one formulation, 'under this system the lords ran their own large estates, aiming to enlarge them and have them worked completely, or to the largest possible degree, by enforced serf labour' [Harnisch, 1986: 40]. This had replaced 'the old rental system..., *Grundherrschaft*' [Rosenberg, 1944: 229], which has been described as a system 'in which the landlord practically did not undertake direct cultivation and leased

out all or part of the estate to peasants who paid rents in kind or cash' [Kay, 1974: 70].[10]

Rosenberg refers to the Junkers of this era – the Junkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – as having 'settled down to the job of organizing *capitalist* farming in a more systematic way' [Rosenberg, 1943: 2, emphasis mine]; they were '*capitalist* entrepreneurs' [Rosenberg, 1944: 228, emphasis mine], and their activities constituted '*capitalist* agricultural production' [Rosenberg, 1944: 234, emphasis mine]. Carsten, with seeming approval, cites Eileen Power's characterisation of their activities as constituting '*capitalistic* farming' [Carsten, 1947, as reprinted in 1985: 17, emphasis mine; citing Power, 1932: 736]. Clearly, in Marxist terms this is a nonsense. They were, qualitatively and fundamentally, distinct from capitalists. Referring back to Hilton's definition, they did not 'exploit a free but powerless class of wage workers by the extraction of surplus value in the manufacturing process, by paying wages less than the full value of their labour'.

Carsten, with greater circumspection, cites Hintze's more accurate representation of the activities of sixteenth and seventeenth century Junkers as constituting 'at least agrarian pre-capitalism' [Carsten, 1947, as reprinted in 1985: 17; citing Hintze, 1932: 328]. It is precisely the manner in which, eventually, they were transformed from an agrarian pre-capitalist class into a capitalist class, as defined by Hilton, and the complex processes that contributed to that transformation, that we seek to explore.

They had come to a full-blooded, classical feudalism relatively late: the process which would culminate in the complete enserfment of the peasantry – having started, gradually, in the fifteenth century – was completed only in the sixteenth century. Before then, they were powerfully constrained in their ability to impose feudal surplus appropriation. We may now consider their pre-capitalist phase, and first their 'pre-feudal' manifestation.

3 ONE OF EUROPE'S FREEST PEASANTRIES: THE FREE PEASANTS EAST OF THE ELBE, FROM THE LATE TENTH TO THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

(i) A Free Peasantry and the Relative Absence of Labour Rent

Let us first consider the freedom of the peasantry, and its associated characteristic, limited exactions/surplus appropriation. We may then point to the evidence on the relative absence of labour rent. In so proceeding we can identify the origins and early nature of the Junkers.

As we have suggested, the absence of labour rent does not, necessarily, indicate that feudalism is absent. But it is important in the present context, since labour rent does take on particular significance with the advent of full-blooded

feudalism. Its eventual presence does reveal a particular form of feudalism: one that is especially onerous for the subject peasantry east of the Elbe.

(ii) A Free Peasantry, with Limited Exactions/Surplus Appropriation

Prussia east of the Elbe was, until the first quarter of the sixteenth century, a region inhabited by free peasants: Engels' 'free peasants east of the Elbe' [Engels, 1965: 156], and, according to Brenner, 'one of Europe's freest peasantries' [Brenner, 1976: 41].[11] We must pause to consider the senses in which it was free. There are two.

The first, and more important sense, from the viewpoint of the strictly economic relationship with landlords, is that this peasantry was 'free' inasmuch as it was not tied to the soil, through extra-economic coercion: the peasant was not, in the classic phrase, *ascripticius glebae,* or bound to his holding [Hilton, 1983: 439]). The peasants in question, as we shall see, were free to move. To that extent it was not, in itself, a feudal peasantry. Clearly, however, it was a peasantry operating within a feudal social formation.

The second sense is suggested in a passage by Engels. A subsequent historian tells us that 'when [originally] the Germans...advanced eastwards across the Elbe and the Saale and converted the western Slavs to Christianity, German noblemen accompanied the margraves and other princes and received land as a reward for their military service' [Carsten, 1989: 1–2]. Abstracting from complexity and diversity, Engels gives the following account:

> The conquering German knights and barons who were given...land [in the original period of colonisation], acted as village 'founders' (Grunder), parcelled up their estates into village lots, each of which was broken up into a number of equal peasant parcels or hides (hufe). Each hide had a homestead and garden in the village itself. The Franconian (Rhine-Franconian and Netherland), Saxon and Frisian colonists drew lots for the hides, in return for which they were required to perform very moderate, strictly specified tributes and services to the founders, i.e. the knights and barons. So long as the peasants fulfilled their services, they remained hereditary masters of their hides. Furthermore, they enjoyed the same rights of using the founder's (the subsequent landowner's) woodlands for cutting wood, pasturage, feeding pigs on acorns etc., as the West-German peasants enjoyed in their communal mark...The fallow and stubble fields served as common pasturage for both the peasant's and the founder's cattle. All village affairs were settled by majority vote at village assemblies of hide owners. The rights of founder nobles did not go beyond the receipt of tributes and services and the use in common of the fallow and stubble pastures, the appropriation of surplus yield from the woodland, and chairmanship at village assemblies of hide owners, who were all *free men.* [Engels, 1965: 154–5, emphasis mine]

This description of the process of original settlement is useful in suggesting freedom in a second sense, within the system of *Grundherrschaft*. This was freedom of operation and decision-making on the holding, freedom to settle village affairs by voting, freedom to assume fixed tributes and services. Part of this kind of freedom was landlord exactions which were kept within limits.

How had this come about? How was it that the peasantry east of the Elbe came to be a free peasantry, in both of these senses?[12]

We are told that 'in the earlier Middle Ages', this territory was 'inhabited by Slavonic tribes', who had moved in 'at the time of the Barbaric invasions when the Germanic tribes [who had formerly occupied it] pushed westwards and southwards' [Carsten, 1954: 1]. According to Engels, the 'region [was] reconquered from the Slavs in the latter part of the Middle Ages, and re-Germanised by German colonists' [Engels, 1965: 154]. It was a process that started from 'about the middle of the tenth century' [Carsten, 1954: 2], continued in the eleventh, and exploded into full spate in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In those latter two centuries, 'German warriors wrested Brandenburg from the hands of pagan Slavic princes and settled it with Christian peasant colonists' [Hagen, 1985: 83].

It appears that 'the scanty data on life in Eastern Germany before the colonization indicate that the land belonged to men of the upper class and that the peasantry were *bound to the soil or were entirely unfree*' [Blum, 1957: 813, emphasis mine].[13] This would now change. At the outset of this 'colonisation and settlement' [Carsten, 1954: 11], 'very favourable terms had to be offered to attract immigrants into the eastern wilderness' [Carsten, 1954: 10]. In the tenth and the eleventh centuries, peasants, if they were to move, required the prospect of advantageous conditions upon which to hold land: limited exposure to surplus extraction, whether in the form of labour rent, produce rent or money rent (any of which might constitute feudal exploitation); and an ability to move on if they wished.

Thereafter, by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, conditions in the west worsened, but, still, movement required that 'more freedom, more space, and more wealth might be gained by emigration' [Carsten, 1954: 10–11]. This requirement, it seems, was met, and there was created an 'East Elbian frontier society' [Rosenberg, 1944: 228]. In one account:

> The history of Germany in the 12th and 13th centuries is one of ceaseless expansion. A conquering and colonising movement burst across the river frontiers into the swamps and forests from Holstein to Silesia and overwhelmed the Slav tribes between the Elbe and the Oder. Every force in German society took part: the princes, the prelates, new religious orders, knights, townsmen and peasant settlers. Agrarian conditions in the older lands of Germanic occupation seem to have favoured large-scale emigration. With a rising population, there was much experience in drainage and wood clearing but a diminishing fund of spare land to be attacked in the west. Excessive sub-division of holdings impoverished tenants and did not suit the interests of their lords. Sometimes also, seignorial oppression is said to have driven peasants to desert their master' estates. [Leyser *et al.*, 1978: 75–6][14]

Such a migrating peasantry, escaping increasing impoverishment and a form of worsening exploitation, would not submit easily to harsh conditions. Moreover, objective circumstances in the 'frontier society' of the east favoured them. The outcome was a free peasantry east of the Elbe. Thus, there is agreement among historians, it seems, that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there developed both a peasantry – in the stereotype a 'free and sturdy peasantry' [Hagen, 1985: 81] – and a cottager class, similarly free. On the one hand: 'the villagers obtained ample farms on good legal terms: the typical full peasant (*Vollbauer*), of whom there were some fifteen to twenty-five in a village, held two hides, or *Hufen*, of arable land, or altogether about 32 hectares (80 acres), along with a share in the communal pastures and woods. He was a hereditary leaseholder, secure in his patrimony so long as he paid the charges upon it, evictable only after legal process and free to sell out and quit the village if he chose' [Hagen, 1985: 83–4].[15] On the other: 'A class of cottagers (*Kossaten*) also arose during the colonization. They combined the yields of their small landholdings with earnings from seasonal labour or the income of an artisan trade. Their tenure too was hereditary and their personal status free' [Hagen, 1985: 83–4]. Such is the consensus among historians.

Both of these we might categorise as what we choose to term below (in our treatment of North America) 'early simple commodity producers'. As in the case of the American North and West, they permitted the settlement of a 'wilderness' (except that in the American case large numbers of native Americans – American Indians – had first to be cleared from the land they possessed) and constituted, for a period at least, a 'frontier society'.

It is, of course, possible to idealise this: to translate it into a 'medieval idyll' [Hagen, 1985: 84]. The construction of such idylls is all too common in certain writing on peasants. As Hagen comments dryly: 'Reading the literature, one might suppose that the peasant paid no rent worth mentioning' (loc. cit.). They did pay rent. But the rent was 'reasonable', and the existence of an essentially free peasantry (in the senses already indicated) incontrovertible.

The main income of noblemen who had come in from outside was peasant dues – 'annual dues in kind and money', i.e. rent [Carsten, 1989: 3] – which could not be excessive: the system of *Grundherrschaft*. These 'immigrating noblemen' [Carsten, 1989: 3] – and their successors – extracted surplus in the form of rent, from the free peasants east of the Elbe. But they were constrained in any impulse they may have had towards laying heavy exactions upon the colonising, and later settled, peasantry. The Slav rulers of Bohemia and Silesia, also, competed for immigrants: colonists who 'brought with them a disciplined routine of husbandry, an efficient plow, and orderly methods in siting and laying out their villages' [Leyser *et al.*, 1978: 76]. They, too, did not impose heavy exactions upon the peasantry.

Landlords did not extract maximum rent: i.e. they did not appropriate feudal rent, in the sense defined by Hilton, of 'the surplus produced by the peasant, above what the peasant needed to keep himself and his family alive, and to ensure the reproduction of the agricultural routine year in and year out' [Hilton, 1990: 50]. This was an important corollary of peasant freedom.

This continued into the fifteenth century. Thus, in Brandenburg, for example, which we may take as not untypical:

> The general position of the...peasants, whether German or Slav, remained very favourable during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Their dues and services could not be altered, their legal position remained the same, and they benefited from the general economic development. The Black Death and the many other outbreaks of plague strengthened the peasants' position, as the survivors became all the more valuable to the landlords. There was a surplus of land, and if they disliked the conditions on their village *they could move elsewhere*. In that case their only obligation to their landlord was to pay him the rent due and to plough and sow the fields of their farm. Then the peasant could sell it and leave with his goods and chattels. If he could not find a buyer, he could leave nevertheless, even if the landlord refused to take over; then the peasant could announce this to the village mayor and the other peasants and depart freely. [Carsten, 1954: 80–1, emphasis mine]

Here, indeed, was a free peasantry: and one with fixed and reasonable dues and services.[16] Already, in the fifteenth century, however, we see the beginnings of a seigneurial assault upon this. This we will pursue presently.

A further implication of what we have said, of course, is the relative absence of labour services. This we may now pursue. Before doing so, let us pause to consider a little more fully the origins of this landlord class, which, by the sixteenth century, presented itself as made up of 'members of a consolidated noble squirearchy' [Rosenberg, 1943: 2].

We have suggested, so far, a group of 'founder nobles', of 'immigrating noblemen' – the German knights and barons who accompanied the margraves and other princes in the original waves of colonisation. In addition to these 'knightly landlords', however, the landlord class was constituted, as time passed, by a motley collection of contractors, land-grabbers, adventurers and mercenaries: 'professional promoters of frontier settlements (*locatores*), and numerous noble *condottieri* immigrants...[along with] a few others, who in the pioneering days managed to enter the ranks of the "superior people", [who] had been horse and cattle thieves, dealers in stolen goods, smugglers, usurers, forgers of legal documents, oppressors of the poor and helpless, and appropriators of gifts made over to the Church' [Rosenberg, 1958: 30].[17] These men 'lived partly from land rents and the legitimate sale of agricultural commodities' [Rosenberg, 1943: 5], and partly from the proceeds of the activities suggested; before they crystallised fully as a landlord class, during the sixteenth century [Berdhal, 1988: 17].

(iii) Strictly Limited Labour Services, a Decline in Demesne Farming and a Free Labour Force

In Brandenburg and Pomerania, 'many large and compact estates were granted', as German colonization got under way; while, at the outset, 'demesne farming was undertaken not only by noblemen, but to a considerable extent also by the monasteries', and 'was probably rather widespread' [Carsten, 1947, as cited in 1985: 21–2]. Further east, in Prussia, 'in the so-called Wilderness', very large estates were, also, granted by the Teutonic Order in order to encourage settlement [Carsten, 1947, as cited in 1985: 27–8]: although many were split up quite quickly into smaller estates, which had the obligation of military service, so that the original grantees were themselves freed from that commitment to the Teutonic Order [Carsten, 1947, as cited in 1985: 28].

The size of estates was not, however, necessarily decisive with respect to whether labour services were imposed. The evidence seems to suggest that, even 'at a very early time', by and large noblemen and monasteries 'farmed small demesnes...and for their management *peasant services were hardly required*' [Carsten, 1989: 3, emphasis mine].[18] Labour services were, from the outset, limited, whatever the origins of the landlord [Carsten, 1954: 41–2].

By the fourteenth century, the system had settled to some kind of maturity (in Carsten's phrase, the era of 'medieval colonial society at its prime' [Carsten, 1954: chapter vi]). During that century, indeed, demesne farming, to the extent that it had existed on any scale previously, declined [Carsten, 1954: 77–9], and with it labour services diminished to yet smaller proportions.[19] In Brandenburg, for example, 'there was widespread commutation of labour services...which went on from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century' [Carsten, 1947, as cited in 1985: 23]. Quit rents were common, 'frequently mentioned in the documents, sometimes as late as the sixteenth century' [Carsten, 1954: 78–9]. In Prussia, 'in the fourteenth century...estates were divided into many smaller ones through sale, dereliction, division among heirs, separation among several joint owners, or settlement' and 'it can be fairly stated that, right up to the first half of the fifteenth century, there was a strong tendency in Prussia towards the splitting up of the large estates' [Carsten, 1947, as cited in 1985: 27–8 and 29]. With that went a decline in demesne farming.

Why demesne farming should have declined is not clear. At one point, Carsten tells us that 'the growth of towns and of money economy seems to have caused a decline of demesne farming' [Carsten, 1954: 75]. But this in itself is not convincing. It must have meant a growth in demand for agricultural surpluses. Why did such a subsequent growth not have the same effect? We need to postulate other influences at work: to explain first a decline and then a massive increase in demesne farming.

Carsten then tells us: 'The reasons for these transformations are unknown. Perhaps the steady revenues of peasant villages were more attractive than the efforts of demesne farming with its risks. Perhaps it was difficult to get the

necessary labour, especially after the Black Death and at a time when the colonization was still proceeding apace farther east and attracting many people' [Carsten, 1954: 76]. Again, the speculation needs some firm grounding.

If the first of these hypotheses has any validity, then we need to explain why there was a later reversion to demesne farming. Did the associated risks decline? Presumably, the greatest risk was whether or not sufficient labour could be obtained. The second hypothesis, indeed, is scarcity of labour, and it has seeming plausibility. But, again, why the later reaction of enserfment – which eliminates that risk, if it can be established on a firm basis – was not, at this juncture, reached for must be clarified. The third hypothesis – the possibility of flight to the frontier of new settlement – is also tenable. But again a determined attempt at enserfment might have minimised its significance. In the next section we will consider the changing objective circumstances which underpinned enserfment.

According to one source, in the fourteenth century, if a regular labour supply was required on the demesne, this was supplied by 'free agricultural labourers' [Carsten, 1954: 79]. These were 'free labourers and servants, perhaps peasants' children whose labour was not required at home, perhaps migratory labour... [and] above all the cottagers [the class of cottagers noted above], a numerous class of smallholders whose holdings were not sufficient for their maintenance, and who therefore had to seek work on peasant farms and demesnes' [Carsten, 1954: 79].[20] Another source tells us that 'in Brandenburg and Pomerania...long before the fifteenth century...small tenants and landless men function[ed] as hired labourers' [Rosenberg, 1944: 230] – one assumes free hired labourers. The same source points to the existence, to the very end of the fifteenth century, of Polish seasonal migrant labour [Rosenberg, 1944: 231].

(iv) The Seeds of Peasant Differentiation

Here was a peasantry, moreover, in which, surely, the seeds of differentiation had been planted. The prospects for a significantly differentiating peasantry must have been great; and some differentiation must have proceeded.

The predisposing factors – the favourable circumstances – are clear enough. We have already identified them.

Thus, the absence of labour rent and the existence of reasonable kind and money rents must, surely, have provided (to quote a phrase of Marx's) 'the *possibility* of accumulating a certain amount of wealth' [Marx, 162: 779, emphasis mine]. That possibility must have met opportunities in the increasing demand for agricultural surpluses that would have been generated by the growth of towns and of the money economy, especially in the fourteenth century, to which I have drawn attention. Those opportunities would have been grasped the more readily because of the freedom we have stressed: the relative freedom of manoeuvre and of decision-making to which I have drawn attention.

One should not exaggerate the extent to which differentiation could have proceeded. Obviously, there must have been powerful factors limiting any

processes of differentiation: levelling factors within the peasant community, rooted in corporate institutions and communal organisation. Such factors would have ensured that differences within the peasantry remained quantitative rather than qualitative (to use a happy phrase employed by Albert Soboul, to describe the French peasantry at the end of the old regime [Soboul, 1956: 84]). Yet, by comparison with the rest of Germany, the relative absence of common lands in the east, the less highly-evolved common field agriculture, the smaller amount of collaborative agricultural activity, the greater tendency towards individualistic agriculture (all of which, following Brenner [Brenner, 1976: 56–7] I will point to in section 5 – although Brenner, we will note, gives no attention to processes of differentiation in the east Elbian context) would have moderated any levelling tendencies, and allowed some differentiation to proceed.

We have seen, moreover, that a class of agricultural labourers, free to work for wages, existed, along with supplies of migrant labour; and that these 'free agricultural labourers' worked on peasant farms as well as on the lord's demesne. This suggests, to be sure, that differentiation had proceeded to some not insubstantial extent. Many of these, indeed, must have been hired by substantial peasants (Marx's 'more prosperous peasants' [Marx, 162: 779]).

To the extent that a stratum of 'more prosperous peasants', and strata of less prosperous ones, existed, along with a class of 'free agricultural labourers', they were very remote cousins of, on the one hand, capitalist farmers and, on the other, a true rural proletariat. Such 'prosperous tenants', indeed, would have been *kulaks* to only a limited degree. Yet, in section 5 I will have occasion to place further emphasis upon the likely fact of a differentiated peasantry in East Elbia.

(v) The Beginning of the End

The peasants who moved from the west, and their descendants, 'certainly found a better return for their labour in the colonial area: personal freedom, secure and hereditary leasehold tenures at moderate rents, and, in many places, quittance from services and the jurisdiction of the seignorial advocate' [Leyser *et al.*, 1978: 76]. But this would now be shattered, as Prussian junkerdom mounted a feudal offensive that would change fundamentally agrarian relationships east of the Elbe. Processes of peasant differentiation first would be brought to a severe halt, and then would be reversed and would have a tight rein placed upon them.

Already, in the fifteenth century, an erosion of peasant freedom had begun: as landlords attempted to cope with 'widespread flight from the land' [Carsten, 1989: 6], and consequent labour shortage, by tying formerly free peasants to the soil. The days of peasant freedom east of the Elbe were numbered. They disappeared completely before the end of the sixteenth century. By then, east Elbian peasants would have become, in a very full sense, *adscripti glebae*.

4 THE PRUSSIAN JUNKERS AND THE LONG-TERM RISE OF PRUSSIAN FEUDALISM: C. 1400 TO 1600

(i) A Seigneurial Offensive and Serfdom's Long-Time Rise

If the Black Death and other later visitations of the fourteenth century proved advantageous to the peasantry east of the Elbe, then, as the fifteenth century wore on, desertion of the land – totally deserted villages – brought, increasingly, a response from the Prussian nobility calculated to annul any such advantage. At the very beginning of the fifteenth century, they began to react to 'the depopulation of the country and...a grave shortage of labour and draught horses' [Carsten, 1954: 102–3] with, from the peasantry's viewpoint, an ominous seigneurial offensive.

We witness, as the century proceeds, a series of 'seigneurial attacks and the onset of seigneurial controls leading to serfdom' [Brenner, 1976: 57]. The outcome – seen in the historical literature, according to a recent historian of the region, 'as an axial event' – was 'the transformation of the feudal nobility of Brandenburg [and other parts of East Elbia] into masters of large-scale demesne farms geared to market production and worked by an enserfed peasantry' [Hagen, 1985: 81].

We may date serfdom's 'long-term rise in the East', in Germany east of the Elbe as well as other parts of Eastern Europe, as having taken place between about 1400 and 1600 [Brenner, 1976: 52]. Let us identify, briefly and schematically, the unfolding of the relevant processes, and consider the possible reasons for the East Elbian outcome. We may start in the fifteenth century.

(ii) The Acquisition of Deserted Peasant Holdings in the Fifteenth Century and Four Developments in the Seigneurial Offensive

There were, east of the Elbe, deserted villages before the fifteenth century, and even before the Black Death [Carsten, 1954: 101; 1989: 6]. But the situation then was quite different from that of the fifteenth century[21] – the century of 'agrarian crisis.'[22] In the fifteenth century the cumulative effects of plague, severe crop failures (in 1412, 1415–16, and especially 1437–9), and devastation wrought by 'feuds and frontier wars' made themselves felt: particularly, in terms of our present problematic, in 'widespread flight from the land' [Carsten, 1989: 6].[23]

In the fifteenth century, in the lands east of the Elbe, the Junkers themselves began to acquire and to farm deserted peasant holdings. But one important factor distinguished the fifteenth from the sixteenth century: 'The *fifteenth century* was a time of *low corn prices*, so that it was not particularly attractive for the Junkers to farm deserted peasant land; it was more an emergency measure until new peasants could be found, as actually happened in some cases. This was to change in the *sixteenth century*, which was a time of *rising corn prices and exports*' [Carsten, 1989: 8, emphasis mine]. This difference with respect to prices is obviously important in changing significantly the economic environment in which Junkers were operating. In the fifteenth century, the economic incentive was not sufficiently powerful to bring about drastic action. In the sixteenth century it would be. But, as we shall see, this, in itself, cannot have been decisive in determining the Prussian outcome, since in other contexts (in other parts of Europe) it produced a totally different outcome. To that we will return.

If, in the fifteenth century, the economic incentive was not so strong as to bring about, in the given objective circumstances, dramatic change, nevertheless the difficulties faced by Junkers were serious, and did bring a response. These difficulties had two major strands.

Thus, in the fifteenth century, as peasants deserted the land, the Junkers must have experienced, first, a problem over declining rent. Secondly, as they took over that deserted land for themselves and began to farm it, they confronted the further problem of an acute shortage of labour: whether in the form of the free wage labourers employed hitherto; or that of labour supplied via labour services (labour rent), which, as we have seen, was strictly limited. Early in the fifteenth century, for example in 1425 in Prussia, landlords and peasant employers alike were complaining 'that they had to pay wages which were unheard of...; that they could not get any labourers even at those rates, and that the country would be utterly ruined if the servants thus gained the upper hand' [Carsten, 1954: 104]. This was common throughout East Elbia.

We note, throughout East Elbia in the fifteenth century, four developments in the seigneurial offensive.[24] These were the harbingers of an East Elbian form of feudalism, which, in one formulation, embodied 'the legal and social degradation, political emasculation, moral crippling, and destruction of the chances of self-determination of the subject peasantry' ([Rosenberg, 1978: 82; cited in Hagen, 1985: 81]. We may take them in turn.

The first was an increasing curtailment of peasants' freedom to move. The Junkers, as early as 1412, in Prussia of the Teutonic Order (what would later become the provinces of East Prussia and West Prussia) 'demanded for the first time that no peasant or cottager should be received in any town who could not prove that he had left with his lord's consent; all those without fixed domicile should be driven out of the towns at harvest time' [Carsten, 1954: 103]. The demand was granted by the Grand Master. More such demands are recorded in the fifteenth century. What was true of Prussia, was so, also, in Brandenburg and Pomerania [Carsten, 1954: 110–11]. In addition, where a peasant left the land he was obliged to find a successor. As Carsten observes: 'The peasants were being tied to the soil, but so far they were allowed to leave if they found a suitable successor' [Carsten, 1989: 9]. That right would disappear in the sixteenth century.

Secondly, in response to requests by the nobility, 'mandatory maximum wage rates for farm workers were repeatedly fixed by legislative ordinance to keep down production costs and to prevent the hoarding of laborers' [Rosenberg,

1944: 231]. This was so, in Brandenburg for example, because 'the menials raised '"unreasonable" demands' [Carsten, 1989: 9, emphasis mine]. These decrees fixing compulsory maximum wage rates were binding upon both employers and upon labour. The first was passed in Prussia around 1407 [Carsten, 1954: 103]. This would become less necessary when labour could be obtained largely via labour rent.

Thirdly, there was 'a methodical attack on [the] fixed money rents' which, as we have seen, had accompanied peasant freedom. The burden of such rent became heavier. This, in its turn, 'weakened social ties' between lord and peasant, and eroded 'the respect for customary law' [Rosenberg, 1944: 231].

Finally, there was a move to 'extend the exaction of obligatory labor services' [Rosenberg, 1944: 231]. Where labour services existed, they were increased; and new obligations to render labour services were placed upon peasants [Carsten, 1954: 104–6, 109–10]. Among the services demanded were the carting of manure, ploughing, building work, carrying services in forestry and fishery, cutting of timber. In the fifteenth century, these labour services increased, but remained limited: in the middle of the fifteenth century, 'as yet the demand for labour services was not very strong but it was growing' [Carsten, 1989: 8]. In the sixteenth they multiplied and became the norm.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, it could be said that: 'within a hundred years the situation of the Prussian peasants and labourers had deteriorated decisively' [Carsten, 1989: 7]. They were now ripe for complete enserfment. In the sixteenth century, a free peasantry would disappear completely.

Already, in ordinances of 1494: 'a runaway peasant had to be handed over to his master who could have him hanged; a runaway servant was to be nailed to the pillory by one ear and to be given a knife to cut himself off' [Carsten, 1954: 106]. Then, 'after the prohibition in 1496 of the seasonal migration of Polish farm hands, a measure sponsored by the grain-exporting Polish nobility, the labour situation became even more acute' [Rosenberg, 1944: 231–2]. We note, in this burgeoning seigneurial offensive, the crucial mediation of the state.

(iii) The Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries: Complete Enserfment

We have noted already the rising corn prices and corn exports that characterised the sixteenth century. In fact it was a 'long sixteenth century', inasmuch as 'the secular price increase remained operative until the Thirty Years' War' [Rosenberg, 1944: 233]; but with 'the most intense and most important price increases' concentrated in the second half of the sixteenth century (loc. cit.).[25] The sixteenth century 'was a time of increasing economic prosperity, of steady growth of towns in the Netherlands and England...and – for the German north-east – a time of internal peace and prosperity' [Carsten, 1989: 10]. Thus, population grew and 'the upswing in price coincided with a sharp increase in the

demand of western Europe for the agricultural produce of the east' [Rosenberg, 1944: 233].

According to Carsten, 'the robber barons and feudal knights of the Middle Ages turned into peaceful agrarian entrepreneurs who exported their products and engaged in trade on a large scale' [Carsten, 1989: 10]. What emerges, under the powerful stimulus of the price rises, is 'the extension and progressive reorganisation of *Gutsherrschaft* during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, with its emphasis on large-scale production of grains and other money crops like hemp and flax, primarily for export' [Rosenberg, 1944: 233]. It is the fundamental changes in the relations of production that concern us: between the 'peaceful agrarian entrepreneurs' and the direct producers. What happened?

One notes, firstly, the 'quick expansion of noble demesne lands' in the sixteenth century' [Carsten, 1989: 10]. But, whereas in the fifteenth century the source of any increase was deserted land, now it was appropriation by the Junkers of 'the meadows used by the peasants to graze their cattle' [Carsten, 1989: 10] and, very important, peasant eviction: *Bauernlegen*, or dispossession of peasant tenants [Carsten, 1989: 10–11; [Rosenberg, 1944: 232]. In Brandenburg, for example, legislation of 1540, 1550, and 1572 confirmed the right of lords to dispossess and evict peasant tenants, 'even...hereditary tenants' [Rosenberg, 1944: 232]. The Junkers either took over peasant holdings and put the peasants on less valuable land, or bought them out: in Brandenburg, they were granted the right, in their own phrase, 'to buy out malicious peasants' [Carsten, 1989: 11].

The demesnes had to be worked. As they grew, the number of peasants fell. Given their decision to become 'agrarian entrepreneurs', to work commercial enterprises, the Junkers might have reached for a labour force of free wage labourers, as happened in England at the same time (although not via former landlords). They did not. We need to explain why, in this epoch, they did not. Such is the stuff of a comparative approach. That was an option that would be taken three centuries later. Now, it was via a dramatic increase in labour services that the 'labour problem' was resolved: a far more widespread use, and an intensification , of labour rent.

Among the examples of such increased labour services, one notes the following. In Brandenburg, a von Bredow in 1541 won the right in the *Kammergericht* in Berlin to have the peasants in six of his villages, in the Havelland, 'to serve him in the spring and the summer on three days a week, and during the winter on two days a week, from early morning till evening with cart, horses and plough or on foot, and in addition to wash and shear his sheep' [Carsten, 1989: 12]. By mid-century, services of two days a week were common in Brandenburg. Then, unlimited services – services 'on demand', peasants having to serve 'as often as they were told' – became widespread, with peasants, in some instances, having to work even on Sunday [Carsten, 1989: 12–13].

With these dramatically increased labour services went significant curtailment of movement. Thus, in, for example the duchy of Prussia:

> the ordinances of 1526 considerably worsened the situation of the peasantry. If a peasant or a peasant son wanted to move from one lordship to another, he was not to be accepted by any Junker without a written permit of leave. The ancient right of the German peasants to leave freely after finding a successor was no longer mentioned, nor was it said under what conditions the permit was to be granted. Apparently the master alone could decide whether and with what impositions he would release the peasant *and his sons*. For all peasant children the ordinances introduced obligatory service as menials; before they accepted any other place they had to report to their lord and serve him if he paid the customary wages. If a peasant did not work his land satisfactorily and disregarded his master's admonitions, the latter could give the holding to another peasant. But it was not mentioned whether the first one could leave freely: he had no legal protection. *The peasants and their sons were tied to the soil*, and their right to hereditary possession of the holding was abrogated in one important case. [Carsten, 1989: 13, first emphasis author's, second mine]

Here, indeed, was a peasantry that was thoroughly unfree: fully *ascripticius glebae*.

We note that in colonial America, in the seventeenth century, attempts were made to introduce feudalism into the colonies. Indeed, as we shall see, in 1669 John Locke drew up for the Carolinas a thoroughly feudal constitution, his famous Fundamental Constitution. Locke, and his patron, Lord Ashley (who would become the 1st Earl of Shaftesbury), confronted a labour problem, too. They would have liked nothing better than a Prussian solution of the above kind. Indeed, that is what was attempted, and, in a curious echo of Prussia, the feudal lords were to be called 'Landgraves'. Locke himself was granted the title 'Landgrave' (see below). They were unsuccessful. Another way of resolving the labour problem would be reached for in the Carolinas and throughout the colonies of the South: slavery. In the North the solution would be family farms – simple commodity producers.

(iv) Peasant Resistance

It is, indeed, the case that in Prussia 'the peasants did not accept the deterioration of their rights and conditions without resistance' [Carsten, 1989: 13–14]: i.e. there was class struggle, between peasants and lords. But the Junkers crushed that resistance.

Peasant resistance took various forms. Thus, peasants could appeal to princely authority, through the judicial process, by going to court against their Junker. This they could do – in Brandenburg, for example – by taking their case to the *Kammergericht*, or margrave's court, in Berlin [Carsten, 1954: 156–8]. They might also rise up in rebellion and so attempt to resist the increasing demands upon them and the erosion of their freedom.

As far as the first expedient was concerned, they did sometimes win a victory. But the class power which they confronted is illustrated by the successful demand of the noblemen, 'in 1540, that any peasant complaining without cause about his lord to the *Kammergericht* was to be put into the dungeon'. We are told that 'this request was granted by the margrave "in order to deter them from complaining wantonly"' [Carsten, 1954: 157].

Whatever battles were won were, anyway, of limited significance, in a war in which they were overwhelmed. Thus, in Brandenburg, peasants initially refused to see quitrents transformed into services, and, for example in 1540, were supported by the *Kammergericht* [Carsten, 1954: 156; 1989: 11]. The decision, however, was overturned by the elector. Other victories were won with respect to labour services – as late as 1605 [Carsten, 1989: 14]. But these represented minor, temporary and limited deflection of the powerful forces engulfing the peasantry east of the Elbe.

There were some peasant uprisings, but these assuredly did not stem the tide of enserfment. It has been suggested – by, for example, Engels [Engels, 1965: 156] and Rosenberg [Rosenberg, 1944: 233] – that 1525 was a probable turning-point. In fact, in only one region of east Elbia was there an active peasant movement in 1525 (during the German Peasant War) – in East Prussia [Engels, 1965: 156; Brenner, 1976: 58–9]. Thus: 'A long period of peasant unrest had come to an end with the crushing defeat suffered by the rebellious Prussian peasants in the uprising of 1525' [Rosenberg, 1944: 233]. Elsewhere east of the Elbe, the peasants 'left their insurgent brethren in the lurch, and were served their just deserts' [Engels, 1965: 156].

Thereafter, in the duchy of Prussia, a peasant uprising 'was cruelly suppressed by Duke Albrecht in alliance with the nobility' [Carsten, 1989: 14]; and one or two other such risings are recorded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: for example, in 1548 (in Lower Lusatia); in 1587 (in the same area), with fears of a countrywide rising; and in 1665 [Carsten, 1989: 14–15]. But, 'resistance was sporadic and never extended to the whole country so that it could be suppressed without any great difficulty' [Carsten, 1989: 15].

It has been pointed out that 'East German historians have energetically pursued the question of peasant resistance to the landlords... [but that] even as it brings to light considerable evidence of local conflict and friction between manor and village, this literature arrives at strongly pessimistic conclusions on the peasantry's ability to ward off domination and exploitation' [Hagen, 1985: 81–2, n.1].[26] There would seem to be no good reason to doubt those conclusions.[27]

(v) The Prussian Outcome: Prussian Fuedalism and the Consolidation and Victory of Gutsherrschaft

Where, in England, the peasantry had successfully resisted the seigneurial reaction, and so sounded feudalism's death knell, in Prussia the opposite happened.

There, 'the "manorial reaction" shattered the free institutions of East Elbia and wrought a radical shift in class relationships' [Rosenberg, 1958: 29]. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Prussian Junkers had succeeded, with the aid of state power, in enserfing to themselves 'the formerly free peasants of the German East...[in] an almost complete subjugation of large segments of the peasantry' [Gerschenkron, 1966: viii].[28] It was the enserfment of 'what had been, until then, one of Europe's freest peasantries' [Brenner, 1976: 41]. We see the 'lords entirely overwhelming the peasantry, gradually decreasing through legislation peasant personal freedom, and ultimately confiscating an important part of the peasant land and attaching it to their demesnes' [Brenner, 1976: 52].

It was the case that: 'Everywhere in north-east Germany, and equally in neighbouring Poland, there developed in the course of the sixteenth century the system of *Gutsherrschaft* consisting of demesne farming and serf labour, which was entirely different from the agrarian system of central, western, and southern Germany [*Grundherrschaft*] and even that of the Electorate of Saxony' [Carsten, 1989: 19]. The outcome was 'the classic Junker estate economy...as a form of seigneurial market production (*Teilbetrieb*) in which, by means of extra-economic coercion, the landlords forced the peasantry to shoulder the cost of the labour, horsepower and tools necessary to demesne farming' [Hagen, 1985: 111].[29] When feudalism had broken down irrevocably in England, here, in Prussia, it was established with a vengeance. Here was a classical form of feudalism, however late its arrival. The important role of the state in its emergence and its reproduction is worthy of emphasis. It would remain in place until the early nineteenth century. The colonial state would also be influential in the introduction and underpinning of slavery in colonial America.

5 WHY THE PRUSSIAN OUTCOME? A 'BALANCE OF CLASS FORCES' EXPLANATION

(i) The Need for an Explanation

We need to explain the Prussian outcome. We have distinguished the context in which a formerly free peasantry was so thoroughly subjugated: that of initially declining kind and money rents and an acute shortage of labour. We have identified the essential processes by which that outcome was secured: an increase in noble demesne land, the erosion of peasant rights, *Baurenlegen* (peasant dispossession), increasing imposition of labour services. We have seen some of the powerful economic stimuli to which the Junkers responded: rising prices, a strong export demand, an eventually rising population. But we have not yet explained the outcome.

We need to keep separate (a) context, process and economic stimulus and (b) the essential determining influence. The roots of (b) obviously are to be sought in (a). But, as Brenner has reminded us so cogently, the same context and the same economic stimuli have generated very different outcomes in eastern Europe and in western Europe. There must have been another factor at work. It is the great strength of a comparative approach that it alerts us to this. We cannot simply invoke the processes by which the outcome is secured as being causal factors. So to invoke the *explicandum* – that which we are seeking to explain – as an explication is a classic case of *petitio principii*. That we must avoid.

What remains somewhat mysterious – constituting a central 'historical puzzle' – is why, to use Brenner's phrase, 'one of Europe's freest peasantries' [Brenner, 1976: 41] should have been so completely defeated, while elsewhere (in Western Europe) the opposite was happening. We cannot fully understand the Prussian path unless we first grasp that.

(ii) The Existence of Several Explanations and Rejection of Petitio Principii Explanations

In the historical literature, several explanations have been suggested, both for the Prussian outcome specifically and, more generally, for 'the rise of serfdom in Eastern Europe' (the title of a well-known article [Blum, 1957]). Both Blum, and after him Brenner, have attempted *general* explanations, which subsume the Prussian case. We may briefly identify the major explanatory contenders. Each may have more than one strand, but it is convenient to bring together under one head explanations of a similar *genus*.

Before doing that let us clear out of the way 'explanations' which fall into the *petitio principii* error. Blum generates such 'explanations'. Thus, he tells us, the eastern European outcome (including the Prussian) can be explained by 'four developments...that went on contemporaneously and...were interrelated in a manner unique to this vast region' [Blum, 1957: 822]. These were: 'first, the increase in the political power of the nobility, and especially of the lesser nobility; second, the growth of seigneurial jurisdictiional powers over the peasantry living on their manors; third, the shift made by lords from being rent receivers to becoming producers for the market; and, finally, the decline of the cities and of the urban middle class' (loc. cit.). The first three of these – to the extent they are valid – cannot themselves be seen as explanations. Rather, they need to be explained.

First, the increase in political power of the Junkers was a necessary, but was not a sufficient condition for the cementing of the Prussian outcome. We have noted the existence, but the defeat, of peasant resistance. Why, when peasants elsewhere in Europe successfully resisted and defeated the seigneurial offensive, did the Prussian free peasantry experience defeat?

Secondly, the increase in jurisdictional powers of Junkers over peasants must be explained. If, indeed, the Junker became 'their judge, their police chief, their jailer, their tax collector, and sometimes [the chooser of the] clergyman in their church' [Blum, 1957: 826] that is important. But it is, most clearly, an explicandum rather than an explanation.

Thirdly, we note that while the Junkers did, indeed, 'become producers for the market' they did not cease to be rent-receivers. Rather, they continued to receive rent, but the *form* in which they received it changed: from kind and money rent to labour rent. This was seigneurial market production, based upon labour rent, secured through extra-economic coercion. We have to explain how and why they were able so to transform themselves, when elsewhere in Europe a very different transformation took place.

Finally, the decline of cities might be seen, in principle, as having some possible independent explanatory power, in a way that the first three suggested 'explanations' do not. But does this stand up? Let us turn to possible broad lines of explanation, which include this.

(iii) Four Sets of Explanations, and Three of Them Rejected

We may identify and consider four broad lines of argument. Brenner conveniently brings the first three of these – which he rejects – to our attention [Brenner, 1976: 53–6]. The fourth is Brenner's own explanation. These are as follows.

The first is an argument which runs in terms of 'the direct impact of forces of supply and demand' [Brenner, 1976: 53]. This has two variants. In one this impact is *commercial* in origin; in the second it is *demographic* in its roots. In the former, the sixteenth century price rise we have already noted might be seen as determining (as, for example, Rosenberg seems to imply [Rosenberg, 1944: 233–4]); while in the latter the increased demand consequent upon rising population in the sixteenth century might be singled out as critical.

The commercial variant is not convincing. We have suggested above that, while, indeed, the powerful economic stimulus provided by the price rise must have been important in inducing the Junkers to take up commercial agriculture, it could not be seen as finally determining: this on the grounds that response to the same factor had produced quite different outcomes elsewhere.

The demographic variant is no more persuasive. Brenner rejects it 'no matter how powerful' the stimulus so provided, on the following good grounds: 'Serfdom began its rise in the East (and its definitive downfall in the West) in the period of late medieval demographic decline; it was consolidated during the trans-European increase in population of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and it was further sharpened at the time of the demographic disasters of the later seventeenth centuries' [Brenner, 1976: 53]. Manifestly, then, demographic factors cannot be invoked as giving rise to consistent consequences. A particular outcome (the rise of serfdom) has proceeded in the face of changing demographic conditions. The same demographic situation, at particular times (in eastern and western Europe) has yielded totally different outcomes. To explain those outcomes, therefore, some other causal factor must be adduced.

Secondly, the 'pressure of trade' [Brenner, 1976: 53] is invoked: as, for example, by Wallerstein [Wallerstein, 1974: 90–6; cited by Brenner]. This, too, is effectively rejected by Brenner. Not to put too fine a point on it: 'ironically, the rise of large-scale export commerce has sometimes been invoked to explain the rise of serfdom in the East...as it has, analogously, the rise of capitalism in the West' [Brenner, 1976: 53]. Manifestly, the same 'pressure of trade' situation can give rise to very different outcomes. That will not do as an explanatory factor. Another must be invoked.

Thirdly, there is the classical argument that it was 'the weaker development of the towns in this region which made the entire area more vulnerable to seigneurial reaction' [Brenner, 1976: 54]. As we have seen, this is an argument used by Blum. It is 'perhaps the most widely accepted explanation of the divergence between East and West European development' [Brenner, 1976: 54].[30] This, too, is rejected, convincingly, by Brenner: 'because the actual mechanisms through which the towns had their reputedly dissolving effects on landlord control over the peasantry in Western Europe have still to be precisely specified' [Brenner, 1976: 54]. He notes that 'the viability of the towns as a potential alternative for the mass of unfree peasantry must be called into question simply in terms of their gross demographic weight' (loc. cit.). Quite simply, 'the significance of differing levels of urban development has been overstated in some explanations of the divergent socio-economic paths taken by Eastern and Western Europe' (p. 56).

Fourthly, Brenner's own argument stresses the centrality of class struggle, with different outcomes 'depending on the balance of forces between contending classes' [Brenner, 1976: 52]. This is altogether more plausible than any of the arguments so far considered, although, I shall suggest, it may need some caution and fuller specification.

(iv) The Brenner Argument: The Centrality of Class Struggle

Where, in England, the peasantry had successfully resisted the seigneurial reaction, in Prussia the opposite happened (as we have seen). In both England and Prussia, there had been an intensified class conflict, between peasantry and landlords, but with contrasting results: with 1525, perhaps, being a critical turning-point in Prussia. There is a contrast, also, between north-west and north-eastern Germany, with the peasantry of the former 'rich, grain- producing areas... largely successful in gaining command of grain output in precisely the period of developing enserfment in north-east Germany – and they appear to have done so after a prolonged period of anti-landlord resistance' [Brenner, 1976: 53]. This latter Brenner attributes to a contrast in 'peasant solidarity and strength' between western and eastern Germany [Brenner, 1976: 56–60]). On this dissimilarity between north-west and north-east Germany Brenner lays special stress.

Brenner argues an absence of 'peasant solidarity and strength ...especially as this was manifested in the peasants' organisation at the level of the village' (p. 56), by comparison with Western Europe. It is a weak 'institutionalization of the peasants' class power' which lies at the root of the inability to resist

'seigneurial reaction'. He emphasises, in eastern Germany, 'the relative failure to develop independent political institutions in the village'; and that 'this is perhaps most clearly indicated by the apparent inability of the eastern peasantry to displace the *locator* or *Schultheiss*, the village officer who originally organized the settlement as the representative of the lord and who retained his directing political role in the village (either as the lord's representative or as hereditary office-holder) throughout the medieval period' (p. 57).

This absence of village solidarity, he goes on to suggest, was the result of 'the entire evolution of the region as a colonial society...and especially the leadership of the landlords in the colonizing process' (p. 57). There was an absence of common lands and a less highly evolved common-field agriculture than in the west, because of late and 'rational' settlement; with a greater tendency towards individualistic farming, less collaborative agricultural activity, and less of a struggle for commons rights against landlords (pp. 57–8). This seems plausible. Indeed, these very conditions are ones which must have favoured differentiation, which, in its turn, could be the most potent single factor making for an absence of village solidarity.

Brenner does, in short compass, offer a fascinating treatment. There is, he insists, an 'element of "*indeterminacy*"...in relation to the different character and results of...conflicts in different regions' [Brenner, 1976: 52, emphasis mine]. That much any historian, presumably, would wish to insist upon. But, he stresses, 'indeterminacy' does not mean that outcomes were *arbitrary*. On the contrary: 'they tended to be bound up with certain *historically specific* patterns of the development of the contending agrarian classes and their relative strength in the different European societies: their relative levels of internal solidarity, their self-consciousness and organization, and their general political resources – especially their relationship to the non-agricultural classes (in particular, potential urban class allies) and to the state (in particular, whether or not the state developed as a "class-like" competitor of the lords for the peasants' surplus)' (loc. cit, emphasis in original). This has considerable *a priori* plausibility. He then considers the Prussian outcome.

(v) The Incomplete Nature of Brenner's Argument: The Need to Consider Peasant Differentiation

Brenner mounts a plausible argument, with an appealing sweep, in which an impressive effort is made to rescue human agency – class agency – from historical limbo. It has not escaped criticism, with respect to any of the historical contexts to which Brenner applies it. In our broader study we will consider something of that criticism with respect to England and France (two of our case-studies). Here Prussia is our concern. Does the Brenner argument survive the criticism levelled at it? I think that on the whole it does,[31] but that it is probably incomplete.

Certainly some doubts emerge. Before considering these, we note that in the passage just quoted Brenner appears to be straining towards Marx's distinction between class-in-itself and class-for-itself. I would argue that it is a failure to reach far enough in that direction that mars his analysis.

My own doubts are as follows. They are those of an 'outsider', bringing to this situation questions which derive both from other historical contexts (say, England and France), and from a concern with contemporary poor countries.

The first relates to the absence of any treatment, or even mention, of peasant differentiation: a curious omission for such a robustly Marxist exposition (we note, also, his neglect of peasant differentiation in the English case; the omission is one which Brenner repeats in his analysis of the French experience). I have suggested above that the conditions for some differentiation must have existed in east Elbia in the epoch of the free peasantry. To ignore this is to fail to address possible important class-in-itself characteristics within the peasantry. The assumption of a homogeneous peasantry needs to be defended. There is, surely, no *a priori* reason why one should accept it.

One notes that it is curious that a free peasantry, with, in its very freedom, far greater possibilities for developing village political institutions should (if Brenner is correct) have failed so manifestly to do so. Might this, in fact, have had to do with divisions within the peasantry? A less free peasantry (such as existed elsewhere) might have to struggle more in order to develop 'independent political institutions', to defend its common interests: and, indeed, in the very struggle, if it were not crushed, it might develop 'internal solidarity', 'self-consciousness' etc. But a more differentiated peasantry (than existed elsewhere, might one suggest?), with less obvious common interests would be less likely to develop such institutions, even if its potential for doing so was greater; or it might do so more weakly, under the aegis of richer peasants. Anyway, treatment of the Prussian outcome is marred by the absence of any serious examination of possible peasant differentiation.

I have noted that the absence of village solidarity postulated by Brenner was, according to him, predicated upon a lack of common lands in the east, less highly-evolved common field agriculture, a greater tendency towards individualistic farming, and less collaborative agricultural activity. This seems plausible enough. But these very conditions are ones which must have favoured differentiation; which, in its turn, could be the most potent single factor making for an absence of village solidarity.

Brenner, I have suggested, is reaching for Marx's distinction between class-for-itself and class-in-itself, but perhaps does not reach far enough. We need, I would hazard, to explore in far greater detail the Prussian peasantry's structural characteristics (class-in-itself), and, in this respect, especially the possibility of peasant differentiation; and also, with this in mind, its class consciousness and propensity for class action (class-for-itself); alongside similar treatment of the Junkers.

I have great sympathy for the Brenner argument. A 'balance of class forces explanation' seems to be the most fruitful one. But without such detailed treatment, analysis in terms of 'the balance of forces between contending classes' is likely to be at best incomplete; and at worst something of a residuary hypothesis, and possibly dangerous in its circularity – true because it must be true.

6 THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN FORCES AND RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION, 'NEW LEASE OF LIFE' FOR GUTSHERRSCHAFT, AND INTENSIFICATION OF LABOUR RENT

(i) A Dominant Class in Place, and a Particular Mode of Production

The enserfment of the peasantry east of the Elbe had been secured. During the sixteenth century, the Junkers had emerged as a strongly established, feudal dominant social class. Their class identity and their class behaviour were rooted in a common set of agrarian relationships: which embodied '[their] ownership of land and [their] direct involvement in the management of [their] landed estates' [Berdhal, 1988: 4]; a particular form of surplus appropriation, labour rent; and a domination of unfree peasants that was 'immediate and direct, personal and complete' (loc. cit.). During the sixteenth century, too, class identity and class behaviour were further consolidated by a common set of external antagonisms: 'a sense of collective interest... especially against the prince and against the towns' [Berdhal, 1988: 17].

This particular mode of production also entailed a particular, concrete set of productive forces. These we will note briefly below. The mode of production – its constitutive, articulated, relations of production and forces of production – would remain in place until the early nineteenth century. Before then it would come under the pressure of increasingly powerful contradictions, between forces and relations of production; as new, potentially more profitable, productive forces became available; and as peasant resistance grew. There was the pressure, too, of contradiction between state and Junkers. Such pressures, of course, do not inevitably generate transition. In the Prussian case they contributed to that transition.

Before considering the nature of the transition to capitalism in the countryside east of the Elbe, we may briefly trace the developments that took place between the sixteenth and early nineteenth century, and identify the contradictions which emerged. This will include, in sections 8, 9 and 10, as a prelude to our treatment of transition, consideration of developments within the peasantry: on the one hand the nature of and scope for peasant differentiation; and on the other peasant resistance. This will take us to the eve of the abolition of serfdom: a process which would run its course over more than fifty years, but which was initiated by the historic Emancipation Act of 1807.

(ii) The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A 'New Lease of Life' for Gutsherrschaft

The profitability of the Junkers' estates was enhanced by the price revolution of the sixteenth century [Gerschenkron, 1966: 21], which, as we have seen, extended into the seventeenth. We have considered how, in the sixteenth century, and through to the early seventeenth, the subjugation of the previously free peasantry east of the Elbe proceeded. These 'manorial entrepreneurs of East Elbia expanded and grew richer until the Thirty Years' War' [Rosenberg: 1958: 30]. The price revolution came to an end in 1618, at the onset of the Thirty Years' War [Rosenberg, 1944: 236].

In the seventeenth century, 'the picture of peaceful production for the market and exploitation of the peasantry was destroyed by the Thirty Years War [1618–48] which caused new severe crises and new serious losses of population' [Carsten, 1989: 192]. A new conjuncture was in place, and 'the long-run depression from 1618 to 1650, interrupted by intermittent spells of recovery, terminated the era of profitable agricultural expansion and checked the Junker's entrepreneurial career' [Rosenberg, 1944: 236].

The devastations of the Thirty Years' War, however, allowed further appropriation of peasant land – 'lands laid waste by the war' [Gerschenkron, 1966: viii]. These were years of 'dislocation of organized economic life... [and] chronic political instability', in which some Junkers lost their landed estates [Rosenberg, 1958: 33]. But for those who held on, addition to their dominiums and further enserfment proved possible. In Engels' words: 'The hardships of the Thirty Years' War enabled the nobles to consummate the subjugation of the peasants, and the devastation of countless peasant farmsteads enabled them freely to annex these to their own dominiums. The resettlement of the population, forced into vagabondage by the ravages of war, offered an excellent pretext for attaching it to the soil as serfs '[Engels, 1965: 158]. Enserfment continued on its relentless course.

The economic situation continued to worsen thereafter, during the rest of the seventeenth century:

> Cut-throat competition among the large grain producers and long-run contraction of the volume of grain exports continued through the reign of the Great Elector [1640–1688[32]]. The decline of Polish competition after the early 1650s, resulting from the Swedish–Polish war and the Tartar invasions, was more than offset by the shrinkage of western European demand and the emergence of Russia as an exporter of agricultural products. [Rosenberg, 1944: 239]

The Junkers' reaction to the worsening of the economic situation was to tighten the screws on an already servile peasantry. This they did without let or hindrance from the state:

> The stepping-up of the attack on the peasant population was the Junker's chief answer to the new market constellation, the depletion of the labor supply, the widespread desertion of the land, and the crystallization of a new price level, marked by low prices for agricultural commodities and land, rising real wages and high production costs. The strengthening of the servile elements within the labor force, the increase in *corvees*, the deterioration of peasant tenures, the more systematic pursuit of *Bauernlegen* [the process of dispossession and eviction of peasant tenants which we noted above, for the sixteenth century – T.J.B.], which frequently made possible the embezzlement of public taxes levied on peasant holdings, were some of the features which secured for *Gutsherrschaft* a new lease of life. [Rosenberg, 1944: 239]

A 'new lease of life' for *Gutsherrschaft* meant further subjugation of the east Elbian peasantry. These were not circumstances in which a dynamic social differentiation might proceed within the peasantry.

(iii) Correspondence Between Forces and Relations of Production

From the sixteenth through to the eighteenth century, there was a fit, or a correspondence, between forces and relations of production. They existed in articulated combination. They were compatible. In one formulation, 'the *raison d'être* for the extraction of labour services rested upon traditional agricultural methods and custom' [Perkins, 1986: 303]. These methods and customs related to the growing of grain and the raising of sheep and cattle. The Junkers, in the sixteenth century, 'as the architects of the manorial-serf system,... secured for themselves solid and even rich incomes from the grain, wool and livestock trade' [Hagen, 1985: 80].

The trade in cattle, in the 'servile lands' in eastern Europe, seems to have peaked in the second half of the sixteenth century and the first two decades of the seventeenth. Thereafter, it appears to have fallen off considerably by the middle of the eighteenth century [Blum, 1978: 152–4].

The grain was largely rye until the decade 1766–75, when, in response to rising grain prices, exports of wheat to Britain rose continuously [Harnisch, 1985: 50]. Wheat took on increasing significance. Even at the turn of the century, however, it was far less important than rye, as a proportion of total arable area [cf. Blum, 1978: 140–1]. Nevertheless, its rising importance, along with certain other new crops and new technology, was of considerable moment. That we will discuss presently.

Rye 'is the least demanding of the major cereals in its soil requirements' and requires less sunshine and less fertilizer than wheat; and, moreover, its quicker early growth makes the eradication of weeds easier. Thus, very important, 'rye requires less labor and less application of capital and still gives yields superior to those which wheat would give under similar circumstances' [Blum, 1978: 142]. It responds poorly to 'good cultivation practices, such as fertilizer' (loc. cit). It was the basis for an 'estate system [which]... proved to be "convenient and cheap" for the lords...for more than two centuries' [Harnisch, 1985: 50]; and which was adapted to the 'traditional agricultural methods' which it required, and which made rye 'easily...the single most important crop in most of the servile lands' of eastern Europe [Blum, 1978: 141].

7 THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THROUGH TO THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY: (i) BAUERNLEGEN, THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN STATE AND JUNKERS, AND BAUERNSCHUTZ

(i) Bauernlegen Continues and the Response of Bauernschutz

Bauernlegen continued into the eighteenth century. We note that it contributed significantly to the constrained differentiation of the East Elbian peasantry and its essentially undynamic nature. The full nature of that differentiation, and the particular form taken by the mid- to late eighteenth century, I will discuss in section 9. I will touch upon it, however, before then. The *modus operandi* of *Bauernlegen*, and its full significance and implications, cannot be adequately grasped without an awareness of the complexities of the differentiation of the East Elbian peasantry, to which it contributed.

Moreover, at last, *Bauernlegen* induced, in 1748–49, a reaction from the Prussian state: the Prussian Absolutist State of Frederick the Great (who had succeeded in 1740 and reigned until 1786). This was the policy of so-called *Bauernschutz*, or protection of the peasantry, which, for powerful reasons from the state's point of view, was designed to preserve the East Elbian peasantry.

Engels follows his comments on the years of the Thirty Years' War (cited above) thus:

> But that satisfied the nobles only for a short time. The terrible wounds of war were barely healed in the next fifty years [i.e. in the second half of the seventeenth century], the fields cultivated again, and the population increased, when the landlords felt a new hunger for peasant land and labour. The dominiums were not large enough to consume all the labour that could be knocked out of the serfs – the 'knocked out' being used here in its literal sense. The system of *turning peasants into cottars, or serf day labourers,*[33] had brilliantly justified itself. It gained increasingly in scope in the early eighteenth century, and acquired the name of *eviction of peasants (Bauernlegen).*[34] As many of the latter were evicted as circumstances permitted; at first a required number was retained for drayage services, and the rest turned into cottars (market gardeners [who had to perform numerous compulsory services, especially reaping and threshing, for the lord], cottagers, day labourers, and whatever else they were called) who toiled on the estate year in and year out for a hut and a potato patch and received a miserable day wage in grain, and even less in

money. Wherever the gracious lord was rich enough to provide for his own draught animals the spared peasants were also evicted and their farmsteads annexed to the manorial estate. [Engels, 1965: 158–9, first emphasis mine and second in original]

It was to this that the Prussian state reacted, with the policy of *Bauernschutz*, which was pursued throughout Frederick the Great's reign. We may now note the essential reasons for that policy, its broad outlines, and its outcome.

(ii) Bauernlegen and the Contradiction Between State and Junkers

We have noted already the continuing eviction of peasants in the early eighteenth century, and their transformation into cottars and day-labourers. This continued as the eighteenth century proceeded.

Thus, Junkers 'dislodged... full peasant[s] from [their]...holding[s] and divided [them] between two or three Budner or Hausler, who had inferior rights and were compelled to provide more labor service to the lord' [Berdhal, 1988: 93].[35] In addition, in areas where there were free peasants (*Kolmer*) – for example East Prussia, where they were most numerous[36] – Junkers bought up their holdings; while elsewhere hereditary leaseholds (*Erbpachten*) were turned into lifetime, or preferably (from the lord's viewpoint), temporary tenure (*Zeitpachten*), and the lord 'then proceeded to confiscate the land upon the death of the leaseholder' (loc. cit.).[37] This continued throughout the eighteenth century, and became particularly marked towards its end, 'as the expanding markets and higher prices for grain provided the noble owners with new opportunities for greater profits' (loc. cit.).

Engels captures the implications of this for the state, identifying a contradiction which centred on (a) the state's tax revenue and (b) its military needs:

> the princes of the land realised that this system, ever so profitable to the nobility, was by no means in their interests. The peasants *had paid taxes* before they were evicted, while their holdings incorporated in the tax-free dominium yielded the state nothing at all, and the newly settled cottars yielded scarcely a farthing. Some of the evicted peasants, superfluous on the estate, were simply driven away, and were thus free, i.e., free and outcast (*Vogelfrei*). The rural population of the lowlands began to thin out, and ever since the prince had been reinforcing his expensive mercenary host with the *much cheaper recruiting among peasants*, this was by no means indifferent to him. [Engels, 1965: 161, emphases mine]

As with much else in this Engels text, written in 1885, the relevant points are made with cogency, clarity and economy. They have been expanded upon and further clarified by subsequent historians. They are summed up tersely by Berdhal: 'Because the peasants contributed the bulk of the taxes and supplied the army with its recruits, the crown opposed this practice [of *Bauernlegen*]' [Berdhal, 1988: 93].[38] As the eighteenth century proceeded, the contradiction between the interests of Junkers and those of the state deepened and became more obvious, as the process of *Bauernlegen* continued on its course.

The Prussian state would later attempt to move, in the nineteenth century, to withdraw the Junkers' exemption from taxation and tax them appropriately. It would be a long, drawn-out battle. An ability to tax the Junkers would be an important *desideratum*, in the full transition to capitalism, which entailed capitalist industrialisation and a capacity to enable the necessary accumulation. We will discuss that in the next chapter. In the eighteenth century, however, no such move by the state was contemplated. Rather, the state moved within the feudal confines of absolutist Prussia, and attempted to protect its fiscal base and its source of cheap recruits for the Prussian army – i.e. resolve the contradiction in its favour – by 'preserving' the Prussian peasantry, via *Bauernschutz*.

(iii) The Policy of Bauernschutz and Its Outcome

Already, in March 1739, a circular was sent from Frederick William I, enjoining the authorities that no one 'should dare on his own accord to remove a peasant from his holding without good reason and without immediately reallocating the farm' [cited in Carsten, 1989: 49]. It had little effect. The Junkers insisted upon their right 'to remove inefficient servile peasants and make them labourers or gardeners (cottagers)', and it was agreed that 'the peasant holdings should only be reoccupied if an efficient peasant is available' (loc. cit.).

It was with Frederick the Great, however, who had succeeded in 1740, that the policy of *Bauernschutz* was seriously initiated, in 1748–49. He ordered the following:

(a) 'that all vacant peasant holdings be reported to the government and settled by landless soldiers returning from the war' [Berdhal, 1988: 94];
(b) that the number of days per week of service required by the lord be sharply reduced;
(c) that the heaviest form of serfdom, *Leibeigenschaft*, be abolished;[39]
(d) that estate owners who practised, and public officials who condoned, *Bauernlegen*, be fined.

Opposition from the Junkers was severe and overwhelming. The project came to nothing. *Bauernschutz* remained without foundation.[40]

A second attempt was made by Frederick the Great in 1763, the year in which the Seven Years' War ended. This time, effort was concentrated on Pomerania. Again resistance from the nobles was powerful and successful. On this occasion, however, *Leibeigenschaft* was abolished on the crown lands in Pomerania. Elsewhere in Pomerania, *Bauernlegen* continued unabated.

In Silesia, *Bauernlegen* had become especially widespread. Its governor, Ernst von Schlabrendorff, ordered in June, 1764 that all peasants' rights be restored to what they had been in 1723 (the first year of records being kept), and this order was reinforced by royal edict in 1765. Junker resistance was successful, however, and Schlabrendorff was ousted from office.

After Frederick the Great died, in 1786, Junker assertiveness grew even greater, and *Bauernlegen* on private estates became even more marked in the late eighteenth century. The Prussian state had produced 'enactment upon enactment throughout the eighteenth century which, notably in Prussia, sought to curb the peasant eviction' [Engels, 1965: 159–60].[41] But, as Engels comments laconically: 'They existed only on paper. The nobility paid little heed to them, and the eviction of peasants continued' [Engels, 1965: 160]. The contradiction between Junker and state generated by *Bauernlegen* remained.

To the extent that 'the much-acclaimed *Bauernschutz*' [Harnisch, 1986: 43] had any significance on *private estates*, that related only to those peasants who possessed legal property and hereditary rights over their land (loc. cit.). For the others – the vast bulk of the peasantry – such protection was scant, if it existed at all.

The most that could be said for *Bauernschutz* is that 'measures for the protection of the peasantry could be carried out more readily on the royal domains' [Carsten, 1989: 50].[42] The state could deal with the peasantry's subjugation on its own domains, and it did take the necessary action. Thus: 'After the Seven Years' War [1756–63], the Prussian state [during the reign of Frederick the Great], mindful of the economic and military value of a strong peasantry, abolished the peasants' subjection on *public domains*' [Gerschenkron, 1966: viii, emphasis mine]. Again, the numbers of peasants so affected were tiny.

But public domains were one thing. The lands of the Junkers were quite another. They 'successfully resisted extension of this policy to their lands, and all that could be achieved was a temporary barrier to a further passing of peasant land into the Junkers' hands' [Gerschenkron, 1966: viii].

Unlike the French absolutist state (as we will note in our study of the French path, in the wider comparative study), the Prussian state was unable to capture fully the peasantry as a source of tax revenue: as the Junkers pushed them out of the state's reach and continued themselves to enjoy immunity from taxation. Despite attempted action by the Prussian state with respect to the peasantry, its rural fiscal base was being eroded. This continued until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

There was no diminution in the class power of the Junkers over this whole period, from the sixteenth century to the early nineteenth, and no essential change in agrarian relationships in the Prussian countryside. Moreover, it seems clear that the particular contradiction between state and Junkers which we have considered in this section had become seriously antagonistic by the beginning of the nineteenth century, with respect to both taxation and the army. The events of 1806, which we will consider below, would reveal this with startling clarity, and

open the way to a resolution of the contradiction by state action: action which hastened a capitalist transition in the countryside. But this would not happen without fierce struggle by the Junkers. Moreover, the objective conditions in the Prussian countryside had ripened significantly by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. That ripening was critical for the capitalist transition that was to follow. Without it, and the powerful pressure which it exerted, such a transition would have been unlikely. We will examine it in the next section.

8 THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THROUGH TO THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY: (ii) THE DEVELOPING CONTRADICTION BETWEEN FORCES OF PRODUCTION AND PROPERTY RELATIONS/RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION

(i) Resumption of the Junker's Entrepreneurial Career and Emerging Contradictions

It was not until after the middle of the eighteenth century that 'the Junker's entrepreneurial career was resumed on a grand scale' [Rosenberg, 1944: 237]. The Junkers 'had suffered severely from the invasions and devastations of the Seven Years War [1756–63]', and after it came to an end 'the situation became worse by a decline of the yields on account of insufficient cultivation and falling corn prices' [Carsten, 1989: 69]. Many of the Junker estates became heavily encumbered with debt. But Frederick the Great's state came to their aid, through 'state subsidies…[and] cheap credit provided by the *Landschaften*'(loc. cit).[43]

Then, the economic situation changed in their favour, with an 'agrarian boom and rising corn prices', towards the end of the century [Carsten, 1989: 66 and 69].[44] At the same time, certain contradictions, already in existence earlier, manifested themselves powerfully.

There were two sets of contradictions, one of which we have considered in the previous section. These were (a) a contradiction which had emerged between the Prussian Absolutist State and the Junkers, the dominant class in Prussia, as a result of the latter's continuing action of *Bauernlegen*; and (b) one which derived from the irreconcilability of new productive forces (which were known, available and clearly more profitable than the old), on the one hand, and existing property relations and relations of production, hitherto clearly advantageous to the Junkers, on the other. We have already examined the first, briefly, and noted that it remained unresolved, and increasingly antagonistic at the beginning of the nineteenth century. We may now consider the second.

(ii) More Profitable Productive Forces: New Crops and New Technology

That second contradiction centred upon the incompatibility of new forces of production and existing relations of production.[45] We have suggested that from the

sixteenth to the eighteenth century, there was a correspondence, between forces and relations of production. It was the rising potential significance of wheat, and certain other new crops and new technology, that was critical.

The difference between the growing of rye and of wheat is significant. Wheat, by contrast with rye, is 'the most demanding [of all the] grain[s] in terms of soil and climate'; it requires, and responds well, to 'good farming practices' [Blum, 1978: 140 and 142]; it needs 'rich soils and so high inputs of fertiliser' [Harnisch, 1985: 52]. Its higher labour and capital requirements than rye were significant.

Developments in the productive forces presented themselves, further, in the shape of technical changes, coming especially from Britain, which 'offered the prospect of increased yields' [Perkins, 1986: 303] and, therefore, higher profits. The Junkers, or a few of them, reached for these new agricultural methods in the late eighteenth century. Frederick the Great was very interested in, and encouraged the introduction of, modern English, and other methods. New crops were introduced. This has been summed up as follows:

> important changes in agricultural production were introduced during the last decades of the century, *especially on the royal estates*. And *changes in one aspect of production often required changes in another*. The first innovations, which did not necessitate a redistribution of the land or a reorganisation of labor, were usually *merely improved versions of the three-field system*. New crops were planted in the fallow fields – above all clover and other fodder crops, the so-called green fallow. By 1800, the fallow land had disappeared in many parts of Prussia. The increased quantity of fodder produced by these new crops made possible the stall-feeding of cattle; the result was an increase in cattle production, and, equally important, greater quantities of manure. As the practice of stall-feeding spread, the need for pasture land declined, opening the possibility of the division of the commons. Division of the commons, however, proceeded slowly...More common than the division of the commons was the 'separation' of those portions of the estate that belonged to the lord from those belonging to the peasants. Some acts of separation had taken place already before mid-century...But the process of separating the lands was difficult and proceeded slowly. [Berdhal, 1988: 87, emphases mine][46]

We note that these changes were most common on the royal estates. They were far from universal in Prussia of the late eighteenth century. Moreover, those that were introduced could be introduced, just, within the confines of the existing property relations. Those property relations were subjected to great strain. The changes embodied a high degree of complementarity, and once embarked upon generated increasing pressures for change.

Other changes were afoot. As well as the spread of the more profitable, but far more demanding, wheat, one notes that new systems of crop rotation were

adopted, in some regions a four-field system, with the introduction of potatoes, and the greater cultivation of legumes. Merino sheep were introduced. Again, these were common on the royal estates, but by no means typical on Junker estates. They were hardly visible on peasant holdings.[47]

A powerful reason for their failure to spread lay in the existing production relations. To this we may turn.

(iii) The Barrier of Feudal Property Relations and the Mode of Surplus Appropriation

The 'traditional agricultural methods and custom...essentially precluded, or at least impeded, the imposition of novel tasks or modes of cultivating land on those obligated to perform them' [Perkins, 1986: 303]. The barrier so posed was doubly constituted.

It was rooted, firstly, in existing, feudal property relations, and was constituted by the way in which the land was held and worked in feudal Prussia. It was inherent, secondly, in existing relations of production, as these were determined by the dominant mode of surplus appropriation, labour rent: this determining, in ways which had become inappropriate in relation to the new technology, the quantum of labour time, its proportions (between hand labour and labour performed with draught services), the quality and effort of labour, and the nature of the instruments of production to which the Junkers had access, via labour rent. There had now emerged a non-correspondence between the (new) forces of production and the (existing, or old) relations of production.

(iv) Feudal Property Relations and the Limitations of 'Feudal Land Reform'

The feudal property relations part of the barrier lay in continued farming in scattered strips in the large open fields, some strips belonging to the lords and others parcelled out to peasants. This was extremely inefficient and constituted a powerful obstacle to change: to, for example, the introduction of new crops, or new crop rotations. The new crops we have mentioned – the potato, root fodder crops, clover, artificial grasses – simply could not be introduced efficiently within the open field system [Perkins, 1986: 303].

If they were to be grown effectively and profitably, the open field system would have to be drastically modified, or, preferably, swept away. A kind of 'feudal land reform', which altered property relations in a way that better suited the new requirements of the Junkers, was possible, with at least three strands. One was division of the commons, another planting in the fallow fields, and a third separation of the lord's from the peasant's land.

These, indeed, were pursued. But, as we have seen, they were not enough to allow full recourse to the new development in the productive forces. An irreconcilable contradiction had now emerged between existing property relations and

new, more productive, forces of production. They were now no longer compatible. Such expedients could alleviate but could not resolve this contradiction. Of this the Junkers themselves must have been aware, although this awareness did not necessarily bring about a widespread desire to sweep away existing property relations and replace them with something new (capitalist property relations). Certainly, many of the agricultural innovators who now proliferated in Prussia were acutely conscious of the contradiction. This we will pursue a little further below.

(v) The Labour Rent Part of the Barrier

Secondly, and quite distinctly, labour rent had now come to be seriously problematic, although this manifested itself unevenly in the territories East of the Elbe (the problem being greatest, obviously, in those regions where the new technology was most widespread in its impact). I say 'distinctly', since one might conceive of labour rent/serfdom (peasants tied to the land, with the particular obligation of having to pay labour rent) in conjunction with homogeneous, rather than scattered, plots (particularly for the Junker). An increase in the proportion of land added to the lord's demesne, it is true, would have diminished the land base necessary for a system of labour rent. Nevertheless, one might envisage the 'feudal' land reform already noted being pursued successfully, but with continuing labour rent/serfdom. One must distinguish the mode of surplus appropriation from the physical arrangements of plots. The proliferating agricultural innovators also 'considered serfdom a major obstacle to the improvement of agricultural productivity...[so that] serfdom came to be seen by many as too inefficient' [Berdhal, 1988: 88]. In what way was this so?

We can identify at least four sources of considerable tension and 'inefficiency'. Let us take them in turn.[48]

Firstly, the new technology, particularly that coming from Britain, imposed heavier demands for animal power/draught teams, and the labour that went with it. In circumstances in which peasants (especially richer peasants) were struggling increasingly to limit the amount of labour services which they rendered, and were resisting the imposition of any increase in such services (see section 9), Junkers found it extremely difficult to meet the new animal and labour needs via greater labour services (i.e. labour service with draught animals, or *Spanndienst*[49]). The necessary increased quantum of labour time, and the required expansion of draught power, could not be extracted within the existing mode of production.

Secondly, the same technology also required new implements. It has been suggested that 'the Junkers could not impose such acquisitions on their serfs nor could they expect the peasants to operate and maintain the equipment efficiently' [Perkins, 1986: 303]. In other words, the Junkers simply did not possess the class power to ensure purchase of such implements by those who paid labour rent; while, if they themselves were to acquire them, their maintenance could not be guaranteed. Within the existing mode of production, the Junkers could not easily have access to the more productive instruments of production that the new technology embodied.

Thirdly, the new crops, such as the potato, root fodder crops, clover, artificial grasses, as well as requiring changes in the open field system (as we have noted already), also 'necessitated a change in the ratio of services as between those performed by hand and those performed by teams' [Perkins, 1986: 303,]: between the different forms of labour rent, *Handdienst* (hand labour) and *Spanndienst* (labour service performed with draught animals).[50] Thus, for example, as we have noted, the cultivation of wheat entailed far greater weeding than rye, and this meant a significant increase in hand labour. This could not be easily secured under the existing system.

Fourthly, the necessary quality and effort of labour could not be secured within the prevailing mode of production. The new deep ploughing, high and conscientious application of fertiliser, and careful farming practices (necessary, for example, in wheat production, as compared with that of rye) were, within the existing mode of production, beyond the reach of Junkers who appropriated surplus via labour rent. Perkins cites a report of 1775 which captures the dilemma:

> Everyone with a practical understanding of economic affairs is well aware of how badly cultivated are the lands of manorial lords given over to the service plough. The peasants obligated to perform labour services do not give the furrow a sufficient depth and on strong land they leave a large proportion untouched by the plough. What sort of harvest can be expected from such badly-cultivated land? All attempts at supervision are useless, for the machinations and tricks of the peasants to avoid the proper performance of the services owing to the lord cannot be circumvented. As soon as the peasant sees his lord or the steward approaching from a distance, he starts to plough properly; but as soon as their backs are turned, he returns to skimming the land rather than plough it as he should. Who can be present to watch every furrow being turned?...No serf-peasant will ever do as much work as a day labourer paid with cash. [cited in Perkins, 1986: 304][51]

Another study (of a district of West-Elbian Hesse) pointed out that 'sowing definitely could not be left to serfs', but had to be entrusted to paid day labourers by the lord; while, in a memorable sentence, it was noted that 'when manure was carried from the Count's stalls to the fields, a large proportion was lost and manure was spread over the whole town of Budingen' [Perkins, 1986: 304].[52]

Here we have the classic dilemma of 'shirking', supervision costs and incentives: encountered with respect to a variety of modes of surplus appropriation, other than labour rent, from slavery (as we shall see), through sharecropping to collective agriculture in socialist countries. In this instance, a shift to appropria-

tion via wage labour, i.e. to capitalist relations of production, is the suggested solution.

Of course, the dilemma is not, as neoclassical economists would have one believe, timeless and absolute. It is mediated by class power, and will differ in its significance according to context. Indeed, if the power of the dominant class is sufficient, or if the requirements of a particular set of productive forces are not especially demanding, then it may not exist at all. Previously, East of the Elbe, such problems did not exist with anything like the seriousness that they did by the mid to late eighteenth century. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the necessary labour input and the draught power, and the requisite skill and the effort of labour, were far less than was now the case. Peasants were, also, more quiescent, and Junker power greater. Peasants were less able to oppose the demands of Junkers. If, however, the advent, or possibilities, of the new technology did not create the problems which we have identified, that new technology assuredly heightened them quite dramatically.

We may say that, for the reasons noted, the productive capacity of this mode of production had reached its limit. The potential of the new technology, and the profits which it might yield, could not be realised. The outcome was that 'over the course of the eighteenth century [and especially after the middle of the century, there]...was a shift from dependence upon the teams and implements of the peasant serfs to cultivate the demesnes to the use of teams and deadstock acquired by the Junkers themselves' [Perkins, 1986: 303].[53] This was more marked in some regions of East Elbia than in others. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that such a shift had anywhere displaced labour rent as the major mode of surplus appropriation. What does seem clear, however, is that the pressure deriving from this contradiction was considerable: inasmuch as the existing relations of production were clearly preventing the realising of the potential inherent in the new agricultural technology.

As we shall see below, the state would attempt to intervene in 1799, with reforms on crown lands: intervention calculated, at that conjuncture, to stabilise the feudal order, rather than secure conditions necessary for capitalist agriculture. As we shall also point out, the state would intervene more radically and purposively, from 1807 onwards, via agrarian reform, to force changes in relations of production, necessary for a capitalist transition. In Marxist terms, we may argue that the attempted agrarian reform was 'basically a superstructural reflection of developments in the economic base of agriculture' [Perkins, 1986: 302],[54] rather than 'an act of state carried out in response to political events and to meet political needs' (loc. cit.). Those 'developments in the base of agriculture' were assuredly there, but we will observe that it would take cataclysmic 'external events' to hasten the requisite state action; and that the reform in question would be bitterly opposed by the Junkers.

In the English case, differentiation of the peasantry, developing over a long stretch of time, had proved critical to the English outcome. What of peasant differentiation East of the Elbe?

9 PEASANT DIFFERENTIATION AND THE BURDEN OF SURPLUS APPROPRIATION: EAST OF THE ELBE IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

(i) Not a Homogeneous Peasantry

Between the sixteenth and the early nineteenth century, the Junkers expanded their demesne at the expense of peasants: all peasants, by and large, to the extent that differentiation within the peasantry existed. They, further, imposed ever new burdens on an enserfed peasantry, 'extending and intensifying labour rents' [Kay, 1974: 78].

Such a continued, twofold offensive did not proceed evenly throughout the territories east of the Elbe. Historians of the former German Democratic Republic have demonstrated this with great care.[55] One of their outstanding representatives, Hartmut Harnisch, points to 'a complex pattern that cannot be reduced to a simple formula' and stresses 'the regional differences in...[the] nature and extent' of *Gutsherrschaft* east of the Elbe' [Harnisch, 1986: 44]. We may say, nevertheless, that the offensive was a dominant tendency, and that by the eighteenth century certain broad structural characteristics can be discerned.

Nor was the offensive pursued without peasant resistance. This resistance, and its significance, we will examine in section 10.

But first we must consider divisions within the peasantry and the nature of the burden imposed by surplus appropriation upon different peasant strata. Which structural features, in this sense, had emerged by the second half of the eighteenth century?

The east Elbian peasantry of this era was by no means a homogeneous one. Differentiation did exist, in a quite complex way: in the sense that (if we may borrow Rodney Hilton's phrase relating to a different context) 'the peasantry was a markedly stratified class' [Hilton, 1978: 271][56] – a class within which significant inequalities existed. Let us first convey something of the nature of that differentiation, before commenting upon its origins and significance. It is of considerable interest.

(ii) The Lines of Division Within the East Elbian Peasantry

In fact, there were several lines of division within the peasantry.[57] Thus, firstly, one that had existed from the sixteenth century, and possibly before, was between

(1) the overwhelming majority of unfree peasants and
(2) a tiny minority of free peasants [Harnisch, 1986: 41 *et seq*; Berdhal, 1988: 29 *et seq*].

Here was a qualitative difference. One might further say, *a priori*, that it was of potential transforming significance. This was so inasmuch as, again to quote

Hilton (writing on the related but different context), 'the potential for the accumulation of land and moveable goods was greater among the free than among the unfree' [Hilton, 1978: 272]. That, surely, is so.

Then, secondly, within the unfree peasantry, there were significant differences. There were degrees of unfreedom. Within the *unfree peasantry* – the bound peasants, whether they were bound in *Leibeigenschaft* (as the lord's 'bodily property'), or in *Untertanigkeit* (subject to the authority of the lord) [Berdhal, 1988: 30–1] – there were several categories. If we define peasants in broad terms, most basically these differences were between true bauern (referred to, by Berdhal, as 'Bauern in the narrow sense' [Berdhal, 1988: 29]), or those with some rights over the land; and those who were not 'true Bauern' (encompassing 'Bauer in its broadest meaning'), or 'anyone who lived on the land...[and] made his living through agriculture', but who had no rights at all in the land [Berdhal, 1988: 28]). We need to pursue these categories in greater detail, to get at their social meaning, and to establish their significance with respect to our problematic.

'True bauern' were those 'who had property rights, inheritance rights, or at least some form of extended contractual rights over their land' [Berdhal, 1988: 28]. These were the *Hufenbauern* [Harnisch, 1986: 46–7], who had 'rights to a *Hufe*, a specified portion (varying in size according to region) of the *Flur*, the large open fields of the estate in which the strips of the noble lord were farmed in unison with those belonging to the Bauern' [Berdhal, 1988: 28–9, and 31]. They had strips of farm land on the open fields of the estate to which they were bound; and were able to support a team, or teams, of draught animals. They had holdings of between 20 and 70 hectares (i.e. 50 to 170 acres), and 'took advantage of the common pastures that were grazed by the whole commune' [Harnisch, 1986: 46].

These peasants are referred to by Harnisch as 'the middle and large peasants' [Harnisch, 1986: 56]. In the true bauern – and especially in particular categories of them – with their access to substantial quantities of land and their ownership of the means of production, another contender for a future capitalist role might have been thought possible. In their upper reaches, they constituted a rich peasantry: peasants who were distinguished from others in the villages east of the Elbe, by dint of their possession of sizeable amounts of land and of the instruments of production. But they were a feudal rich peasantry: inasmuch as they were heavily constrained by feudal obligations. These we will identify presently. Our interest is in the extent to which these obligations limited their possible transforming role.

The class of peasantry beneath the Bauern – the great majority of the rural population – had far less favourable property rights (if they had any at all), seldom had strips of land on the estate, and were unable to support a team of animals. If any capitalist transformation were to emerge, their fate would be to join the proletariat, whether rural or urban.

There were differences, too, within these categories, often of some significance. These we will pursue.

(iii) The Free Peasants

Let us take, first, the free peasants. These were 'a small group of peasants in the Prussian provinces [which] was completely free of obligations or subservience to the noble estates and formed a middle stratum of *free farmers* between the larger estate owners on the one side and the *servile peasantry* on the other' [Berdhal, 1988: 29, emphases mine]. Most numerous in East Prussia (the so-called *Kollmer*), they 'were subject to the sovereign himself' [Harnisch, 1986: 41], and rejected the description *Bauèr*.

Where they existed elsewhere (variously entitled *Lehnschulzen*, *Freischulzen*, or *Erbschulzen*), they frequently served the Junkers' interests: often working closely with the Junkers; serving as chief administrative and police officers (*Schulzen*); directing the village's labour force. These peasants 'virtually ran the village' [Berdhal, 1988: 29]. Referred to by one eighteenth century agronomist as 'little Junkers' (loc. cit.), they were as close to real rich peasants as one might find in Prussia east of the Elbe. They were 'large peasants with especially favourable conditions' [Harnisch, 1986: 41].

They were certainly possible candidates for transformation into capitalist farmers. But their relationship with the Junker was close, so that a possible independent role was, perhaps, unlikely. Any transformation would be likely to be in concert with, rather than in competition with, the Junkers. Moreover, they 'comprised a very small percentage of the rural population' [Berdhal, 1988: 29], and alone could not have been responsible for a capitalist transformation. Both in terms of necessary independence and in terms of sheer control of a sufficient quantum of resources within the village their transforming significance was very limited. As Harnisch observes, 'we can more or less discount the comparatively small number' of free peasants [Harnisch, 1986: 41].

(iv) The Unfree Peasantry: The True Bauern

Moving, next, to the unfree peasantry, among the true Bauern there were, first, differentiated 'property rights'. This has been given particular stress by Harnisch, as having economic significance [Harnisch, 1986: 41–2 and 45]. This we will draw upon when considering, below, the service obligations of the peasantry.

A small privileged group (the *Erbzinsbauern* or *Erbpachtbauern*) had the right to sell their land, with the permission of the lord, and had hereditary rights in their land, although the lord could deny inheritance to anyone deemed unsuitable. These, we may say, were the bauern 'with property in their holdings' [Harnisch, 1986: 41].

A far larger category (the *Lassbauern* or *Lassiten*) had less favourable status, sometimes with hereditary rights (although far more circumscribed than those of the *Erbzinsbauern*) and sometimes not. This latter category had significant variety in tenurial rights. Usually, however, 'they were granted only a temporary

or life-time use, without any right of disposal at all' [Harnisch, 1986: 41]. These were the bauern without property in their holdings (loc. cit.).[58]

There was a similar category of peasants, the *Zeitpachter*, with analogous rights but a less than life-time tenure. They held land for a limited period of time [Berdhal, 1988: 32–3, 93]. As Berdhal stresses: 'Because the lord could exercise greater control over Zeitpachter, there was constant pressure by the lord to transform hereditary or lifetime rights into fixed-term leaseholds...[a] pressure [which] became especially pronounced in the last half of the eighteenth century' [Berdhal, 1988: 32–3].

Then, among these true Bauern we find further differentiation: according to, secondly, size of holding and, thirdly, number of draught animals which peasants might support. These first three lines of differentiation, in turn, determined and were determined by, fourthly, the kind and extent of labour service which might be rendered to or required by the lord. The number of draught animals kept would be determined, often to a considerable degree, by the amount of labour services which the lord extracted.

On these criteria, one found identified the following within the true-bauern:

(1) full-Bauern, who had at least four teams (*Spannen*) of two horses or oxen each;
(2) half-Bauern (*Halbbauern*), who had two teams; and
(3) quarter-Bauern (*Viertelbauern*), with one team.

Such peasants, with teams of draught animals, were liable to perform labour service with draught animals (*Spanndienst*) for the lord, with those teams – those services varying from region to region east of the Elbe. They would be responsible for ploughing, harrowing, transporting grain to market, and any other tasks requiring draught power. Those with larger holdings might hire wage labourers, from classes which we will note below: either to work on their own land, or to perform some of the labour services owed to the lord.[59]

Were there here further candidates for a *primum mobile* role? There were, surely, among the full-Bauern and half-Bauern, potential kulaks. They were substantial peasants, with large holdings and in possession of two to four teams of draught animals (or more). They hired wage labourers, and sold commercial surpluses on the market. One must, however, resist the temptation to see them as teetering on the edge of a capitalist transition. They were peasants who were powerfully subject to the logic of feudalism. These characteristics need to be seen in that light. The full-Bauern and half-Bauern were in the grip of strongly binding constraints.

Before a capitalist transformation might be envisaged, they would need to be freed from the constrictions of heavy labour services. They employed wage labour. But before seeing this as evidence of a possible 'nursery of capitalism' we need to place it in the perspective of their relationship with the Junkers. A large proportion of the wage labour which they hired was to meet their labour

service obligations. Some of the wage labour was to meet their own needs. But it was not wage labour primarily associated with production on their own land, or which was mainly a possible source of accumulation on that land.

Their ownership of draught animals needs to be qualified, as we have suggested, by the reality that 'the labor obligation required peasants to keep far more draft animals than they needed for their own operation' [Blum, 1978: 150]. Thus, a full peasant, for example, with heavy labour obligations, and with 12 horses, might need 8 for his labour obligations and 4 for his own needs (loc. cit.). Or a peasant with two teams – often, 'to simplify feeding and reduce costs...one team of horses and one of oxen' [Harnisch, 1986: 45] – would have one of the teams to meet his labour services. Such peasants 'had to maintain one team, with a farm servant (*Knecht*) and quite often also a maid, merely to be able to meet their dues' (loc. cit.). In turn, this 'excessive number of draft animals reduced the ability of the peasants to take proper care of their animals, and also reduced their ability to keep other animals' [Blum, 1978: 150]

More generally, as Harnisch captures succinctly and tellingly, surplus appropriation via labour rent was intrinsically very heavy, in what it required of the serf:

> On estates with enforced labour the highest possible portion of the operating costs was shifted on to the peasants. This included the care of the draught animals, upkeep of the pigsties, cowsheds and stables, and even the lodging, boarding and the pay of the farm-hands. This was indeed the major reason for the enormous profitability of these estates and doubtless also a prime cause of their longevity. As the head of the provincial government of Pomerania, *Kammerprasident* von Ingersleben, wrote in 1799, managing an estate with enforced labour might not lead to the highest possible yields and would certainly cause a lot of irritation and annoyance (especially, one might add, among its reluctant subjects), but it was 'convenient and cheap'. [Harnisch, 1986: 45]

This represented an immense extraction of surplus from the feudal rich peasants: surplus which was not available for accumulation on their own land. Just how heavy would depend on the extent of labour services required. To that I shall come presently.

They would need, further, to be unrestricted in their access to land and in their accumulation. Only then might they participate, untrammelled, in production for the market, and respond fully to commodity production.

This is not to say that, as some authorities have suggested – for example [Blum, 1978: 171] – the *Hufenbauern* did not produce for the market. On the contrary, as Harnisch has demonstrated, by the second half of the eighteenth century, they 'produced remarkable quantities for the market' [Harnisch, 1986: 47]. But the nature of their marketed surplus is important. It was not a true commercial surplus, of the kind that market-oriented rich peasants in a non-feudal

situation, or capitalist farmers, set out to market regularly. It was more akin to the kind of distress surplus which poor peasants have been shown to market in today's poor countries [cf. Byres, 1974: 237–9; Narain, 1961: 36; Bhaduri, 1983: 17–27]. Theirs was a kind of 'forced commerce': 'These peasants did produce for the market. Indeed, they *had to*, if only to pay their farm-hands and the taxes' [Harnisch, 1986: 46, emphasis mine]. But this was not the 'forced commercialisation of a poor peasant economy in the grip of merchant's and usurer's capital' [Bhaduri, 1983: 21], in circumstances of semi-feudalism. Rather, it was the compulsive market involvement of rich peasants within a fully feudal mode of production: an involvement secured through heavy surplus appropriation via labour rent.

The outcome was not a growing source of accumulation. Rather, it was that 'their net proceeds were minimal, which meant that they could only keep their farmsteads going through the utmost exertions' [Harnisch, 1986: 47]. A contemporary observer, Friedrich Eberhard von Rochow, a big landlord in the Mark Brandenburg, in 1798 'found it almost impossible to explain how the peasants were able to keep their farms running with all the burdens that the lords and the government put upon them' [Harnisch, 1986: 48]. Despite a variety of off-farm employment (such as carting timber), 'it seems quite likely that the average peasant holding was run at a deficit' (loc. cit).

(v) Beneath the Bauern

If we move to those who were beneath the Bauern, we come to the great majority of the rural population. Compared to the true Bauern, they 'stood on a lower rung of the social structure, commanded less respect, and had virtually no voice in village affairs' [Berdhal, 1988: 33]. Some had land, some had not. But among them, too, where they had any access to land, there was significant variation in 'the size of their holdings, the security of their tenures, and the level of their subsistence' (loc. cit.).

Immediately beneath the Bauern, in, for example, the Mark Brandenburg, there was a class of smallholders (*Kossaten*): 'a group of self-sufficient peasants' [Harnisch, 1986: 47], who 'were almost always excluded from the Flur and leased smaller holdings from the estate owner for a fixed period of time' [Berdhal, 1988: 33]. The land in question would be adjacent to the open fields: holdings of between 5 and 10 hectares (12 to 25 acres), and perhaps, even 15 hectares (37 acres). These serfs were without teams of draught animals and 'were usually bound to perform substantial hand labour [*Handdienst*] for the lord' [Berdhal, 1988: 33]. Their responsibility would be for sowing, weeding of root crops, spreading of dung, harvesting and threshing [Berdhal, 1988: 37]. They cultivated largely to meet their own needs, but might have 'a modest surplus production in years of normal cropping' [Harnisch, 1986: 47].[60]

Then, further down the rural hierarchy, in order of the amount of land that they had, ranging from small plots to no land at all were three groups: cottagers

with small plots, garden cottagers, and day-labourers. Each group was created, or had emerged, to meet growing labour needs, which could not be secured by the lords through enforced labour. They represented 'successive phases of the settlement of labourers' [Harnisch, 1986: 47]. All three produced only a portion of their own food supply, or perhaps none of it at all.

The cottagers with small plots (*Budner*) had a farmhouse and between 1 and 3 hectares (2.5 to 5 acres). The garden cottagers (*Hausler*) or gardeners (*Gartner*) had small gardens on which they grew vegetables for their own use. Each group worked as wage labour for the more substantial peasants, and, increasingly as the eighteenth century progressed, as increased labour needs could not be met by enforced labour, for the Junkers.[61]

Then there were the day-labourers (*Tagelohner*): 'the multitude of peasants who possessed no land whatsoever' [Berdhal, 1988: 34], who would rent accommodation from the peasants. Some of them were personally free (*Einlieger*), most were not. They might work as day-labourers for the lord or on the land of the substantial *Bauern*; they would often be hired by the *Bauern* to meet their obligations on the lord's land; they would supplement their wages with spinning and weaving. And below them were the servants of the peasants (*Knechte* or *Magde*), living in abject misery, who would sleep in stalls or barns. It seems that in the second half of the eighteenth century there was a significant growth in the numbers of landless labourers – much more rapid than the growth of landowning peasants.[62]

(vi) The Service Obligations

The service obligations of peasants varied regionally east of the Elbe: being heaviest in Silesia and lightest in East Prussia and Brandenburg [Berdhal, 1988: 35]. 'Enforced serf labour' was lighter for peasants with property in land: for them not exceeding 2–3 days per week [Harnisch, 1986: 45]. For those without property in land, however, they could be '4, 5 or even 6 days per peasant-homestead', and, 'as the great majority of peasants in large parts of the Kurmark Brandenburg, the northern Neumark, Pomerania, East Prussia and in Upper Silesia had no property rights in their land we can quite confidently say that enforced labour for more than 3 days per week was very widespread in these areas' (loc. cit.).

The fact of 'diverse burdens of enforced labour' [Harnisch, 1986: 49] – anything from 2 to 6 days per homestead, although with most peasants, perhaps, nearer the top than the bottom of the scale – should not lead one to suppose that those with lighter labour obligations were necessarily that much better off than those with heavy obligations. They might be somewhat better off, because of the need to maintain fewer draught animals and farmhands. But, the lighter the burden of labour obligations, the heavier the feudal dues in kind: with, for example, recorded instances of dues in grain constituting, say, 20% of an average harvest where only one day of service was due [Harnisch, 1986: 49].

Each was subject to feudal rent. Whatever the form of feudal rent, the Junkers came close to extracting the maximum surplus.

For the late eighteenth century, the following picture has been given:

> Peasants with substantial rent obligations [money or kind rent] as a rule owed only *one or two days service per week*, whereas those who paid less worked more. Service obligations were tied to the land held by the peasant; thus, full peasants were frequently required to provide *daily service* to the estate owner. This they rarely performed themselves but gave instead to the Einlieger or Tagelohner [daily wage-labourer] in their employ. Peasants lower on the scale often fulfilled their obligations themselves. [Berdhal, 1988: 35, emphases mine]

Until the eighteenth century, in many parts of east Elbia (and especially in Silesia), peasants were subject to the arbitrary authority of the Junker to increase his demands for labour services, with the peasant 'frequently liable for "unspecified service" to the lord... [who] could virtually demand service of the peasants whenever he wished' [Berdhal, 1988: 37].

During the eighteenth century, however, although by no means universally and in many regions only at the end of the century, 'an important change in lord-peasant relations' [Berdhal, 1988: 36] came: in the shape of the *Urbaren*, or labour contracts, in which labour services were precisely defined. These were the result of 'numerous conflicts between lords and serfs concerning work obligations' [Berdhal, 1988: 36]. In 1783, Frederick II had ordered the provincial bureaucracy in Silesia, in the wake of widespread unrest and conflict in that province, to draw up registers (*Urbaria*) for each seigneurial jurisdiction, 'in which all peasant labours and rents, together with the Junkers' obligations towards the subjects, were to be unambiguously fixed once and for all' [Hagen, 1986: 85]. In 1784 they had been required generally of estate owners by Frederick II, although two years later the requirement was changed to read 'where conflicts over services or debts...are present' [Berdhal, 1988: 36]). In such an *urbar*, the services stipulated were by no means necessarily light: for example, in one instance, in 1790, 'the full-peasants were each obligated to provide, without compensation, the daily service of four draft teams with their equipment throughout the year' [Berdhal, 1988: 35–6]. But where these were introduced, the arbitrary powers of the Junker were circumscribed; and peasants obtained the basis for legal action against the lords.[63]

It is probable that it was the more substantial, full-Bauern and half-Bauern who were most prominent in conflicts over labour services and who benefited most from the coming of *urbaren*. Yet, even with an agreed *urbar* labour services must have weighed heavily upon them.

It has been suggested of sixteenth century Brandenburg that 'in practice the full peasants' labour obligations did not exhaust their teams and so undermine the productivity of their farms, whose profitability cannot have been unaffected by the great rise in farm prices' [Hagen, 1985: 111]. There is, surely, some small element of plausibility in this for both sixteenth century and for eighteenth century east Elbia. In the late eighteenth century, prices rose again [Harnisch, 1986: 56–8]. But one should not exaggerate the freedom of manoeuvre and capacity for expansion that even a full-bauer might have. Nor should one forget the heavy feudal dues in kind, where labour obligations were lighter. At the extreme, the obligation, upon, say, full-Bauern to supply daily service of four draught-teams and equipment to the Junker must have acted as a powerful constraint upon substantial peasants and constituted a barrier to possible accumulation, by eating into their surpluses. Even an obligation to supply three days must have constituted a heavy burden – a burden compounded by liability to dues in kind. Freed from these shackles, the full-Bauern might well have taken to capitalist agriculture. But the burden upon them was such that Junkers so minded would have started with a significant advantage.

(vii) The Unlikelihood of Capitalism From Below

Some of the differentiation we have noted may, perhaps, be traced to 'participation in production for the market' [Hilton, 1978: 66]: the classic source of differentiating tendencies. Even in the most unpropitious circumstances (in this instance, the smothering, exploitative embrace of the Junkers), we may say, differentiating impulses from such a source may be detected and may be seen to elicit some response. Indeed, some differentiation, so fuelled, may be tolerated, and even encouraged, by a powerful dominant landlord class, where it accords with its interests and does not threaten its class authority. Some limited growth of the true-Bauern, and with it an associated increased ability to own draught teams (to which the Junker would wish to gain access, through labour rent), would be consistent with this.

But, to use Kosminsky's formulation, made in the context of his study of thirteenth century England, 'it would be wrong to attribute all stratification to the development of commodity and money relationships' [Kosminsky, 1956: 207].[64] Thus, some differentiation may be necessary if landlord power is to be maintained and if the administration of power is to be secured: as, for example, in the existence of the substantial free peasants, who clearly served the Junker's interests; and who would, also, be rich peasants.

In such unpropitious circumstances, however, such differentiation, from the viewpoint of a possible development of capitalism (our problematic), is likely to be limited, in that the divisions do not widen significantly, and do not become cumulative. It will be static rather than dynamic in its essential nature, inasmuch as the divisions tend to reproduce themselves and do not generate qualitative change.

Even in such circumstances – circumstances, let us recall, of intensification and extension of labour rents – some rich peasants did emerge, from the suggested sources, of free peasants and true-bauern, and would be transformed,

eventually, into capitalist farmers. But they were exceptional, 'a small minority of Grossbauern ("big peasants")' [Lenin, 1962: 239], in close alliance with landlords.

The Prussian eighteenth century outcome, in terms of the configuration of class forces in the countryside and the relationship between Junkers and state, is the historical base from which the ultimate Prussian capitalist agrarian transition proceeds. In that outcome, the scope for an unleashing of processes of peasant social differentiation, which might bring significant qualitative change, was severely constrained. There was an absence, within the peasantry, of a significant pool of serious contenders for a *primum mobile* role with respect to the possible development of capitalist agriculture.

A capitalist transition 'from below' in the countryside, from the ranks of the peasantry, was unlikely, but not impossible. It would have required, as a *sine qua non*, the retention of land by bigger peasants, and subsequent further accumulation of land by them. It would have been secured only by a severe weakening, or expropriation, of the Junker landlord class. In the event, neither of these conditions was satisfied. One factor that might have contributed to their being met could have been peasant struggle – essentially spearheaded by bigger, or rich, peasants. We may next look at peasant struggle before 1807 for clues as to why they were not met.

10 PEASANT STRUGGLE: ITS NATURE AND IMPLICATIONS

(i) Peasant Reaction to Exactions and Different Forms of Peasant Resistance

It is clear that the peasantry resisted the new exactions which the Junkers attempted to make upon them. A few were able to buy their freedom, or freedom for their sons and daughters [Berdhal, 1988: 38]. But for the great majority, any action to improve their lot, or prevent its deterioration, had to take the form of protest and struggle of one kind or another.

There had been peasant resistance, too, to the sixteenth century seigneurial offensive. Then, as we have seen, it was crushed, as an effective transforming force, by superior class power.

Thereafter, peasants did not cease completely to be in conflict with Junkers. Quite the contrary was the case. Thus, Wernicke [Wernicke, 1962], for example, has documented 'the East Elbian peasantry's resistance to their seigneurial overlords in the period 1648 to 1789...adduc[ing] a mass of examples of peasant self-defence, from shoddy labour to harvest strikes and minor uprisings' [Hagen, 1986: 75].[65]

Such resistance, I would say, was the limited variety of 'everyday forms of resistance' which James Scott has stressed as characteristic of rural communities throughout history, and in the Third World today [Scott, 1986; Scott and Kerkvliet, eds, 1986]: in which, to use Scott's phrase, the 'weapons of the weak' are deployed in 'the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labour, food, taxes, rents and interest from them' [Scott, 1986: xvi].

Scott himself, of course, does not see it as limited. It 'may', he tells us, 'in the end, make an utter shambles of the policies dreamed up by their superiors in the capital' [Scott, 1986: xvii]. It will, he says, in most instances, 'stop well short of outright collective defiance' [Scott, 1986: xvi]. But it represents 'a form of individual self-help' and 'much of what the peasantry has historically done to defend its interests against both conservative and progressive orders' (loc. cit.).

Such resistance, indeed, is important. It represents, I would say, the survival strategy, pursued on a daily basis, through which subaltern classes cope with exploitation and a possible worsening of their condition. Its inherent bloody-mindedness may well, on occasion, have the effect suggested by Scott. But one should not overstate its power.

It may, occasionally, erupt into a minor uprising, but it will seek, for the most part, to avoid direct confrontation – in this instance, with Junker or state. It does not question the existing order (although the exploited may well have a very clear perception of the nature of their exploitation). It serves, at best, to hold the ring. It does not seek to change the rules of the game, nor, necessarily, even to moderate the degree of exploitation. It may simply represent an effort to prevent a deterioration of the situation.[66] Wernicke, indeed, concludes that, in the East Elbian case, it was 'usually ineffective in preventing a worsening of the protestors' conditions at their own pugnacious Junkers' hands' [Hagen, 1986: 75].

Scott distinguishes these 'everday forms of resistance', which he seeks to rescue from the limbo of history, from 'peasant rebellions and revolutions... organized, large-scale protest movements that appear, if only momentarily, to pose a threat to the state' [Scott, 1986: xv]. These, as he rightly insists, are most unusual among peasants. Far more usual are 'everyday forms of resistance', which, by their very nature, are ubiquitous: part of the fabric of peasant life. But in so posing these two extremes, the daily or the banal and the momentary or the exceptional, Scott excludes protest and struggle which is captured by neither of his categories, and which, pursued over long stretches of time, has a transforming potential.

Less unusual than dramatic 'moments' of peasant rebellion or revolution, and of a quite different character to 'everyday forms of resistance' of the kind examined by Scott, are other forms of protest and struggle: class struggle of the kind examined, for example, by Brenner. These are lost in the polarity suggested by Scott.

They represent a kind of middle-ground struggle. Such struggle may be waged over long periods of time: if not on a daily basis, then at least persistently and relentlessly. Its outcome is not predetermined. It will encounter many defeats. But it is capable of rupturing the continuities between past and present, in a way that 'everyday forms of resistance' are not. If it does not overthrow the

existing social order in one cataclysmic spasm, it has the capacity, over time, gradually to create the contradictions which contribute to the transition from one dominant mode of production to another. It is such a transition – in the Prussian countryside – that is our concern here, and we will wish to consider the role of peasant struggle in securing that transition.

In the late eighteenth century, as in the sixteenth century, 'the villages were again overcrowded, while favourable markets tempted the landlords to confront the landed peasantry with heightened claims upon their labour' [Hagen, 1985: 116]. The stage was set for a possible, renewed seigneurial offensive. This the peasants resisted.

By the late eighteenth century, while continuing to confront a powerful dominant class, resistance had taken on a growing determination and resilience. As Harnisch has pointed out: 'There was nothing new about struggles between lords and peasants, of course. Conflicts on questions of feudal duties, rights of tending and driving herds, the use of forests, and so on, were part of the everyday life of the estate system' [Harnisch, 1986: 60]. But, by the second half of the eighteenth century these conflicts seem to have increased in number and in intensity. One writer refers to 'the gathering force of peasant unrest in late eighteenth-century Brandenburg-Prussia' [Hagen, 1986: 72] and to 'a rising tide of manor/village lawsuits and sporadic local uprisings...engulfing the Silesian countryside' [Hagen, 1986: 84,] at that time.[67] They seem, also, to have changed their character: from Scottian 'everday forms of resistance' to something more akin to Brennerian middle-ground class struggle. All of this seems clear enough, although we will caution below the need for care in placing it in due perspective.

They centred upon feudal dues, and especially on their crucial manifestation east of the Elbe, labour services. The most prominent peasant proponents of such struggle must have been rich and substantial peasants: the full- and half-bauern who were particularly burdened by labour services, and from whom the Junkers were attempting to extract even heavier services.

It seems certain that 'everday forms of resistance' continued, in the second half of the eighteenth century, as they had done east of the Elbe since the sixteenth century. But, equally clearly, we now see more than this. Forms of resistance and protest which are more than can be captured in the notion of 'weapons of the weak' are obvious. It is not the weaker, but the strongest, members of the village who wield them. What were they?

We may consider briefly the different forms of struggle and assess the significance of each.

(ii) Direct Conflict Over Labour Obligations and the *Urbaren*

We have seen, firstly, that part of the struggle was direct conflict between lord and serf over labour obligations, and that the outcome of this was the introduction, quite commonly by the end of the eighteenth century, of *urbaren*, or labour contracts. To that extent, peasant struggle achieved some success. This was not

the outcome of 'everyday forms of resistance'. The resistance in question was more concerted and more confrontational than that.

We have noted the qualifying of Frederick II's requirement that these be introduced. Nevertheless, the Junkers were placed under some pressure, although this does not seem to have become overwhelming. There was always the possibility of another powerful seigneurial reaction, with the aid of the state, if the Junkers so chose.

We have also suggested that the most likely participants in, and beneficiaries of, this form of struggle were the full-bauern: the substantial peasants who, along with the free peasants, were closest to constituting a rich and middle peasantry in eighteenth century east Elbia. That is worth some emphasis.

(iii) Legal Action

As we have also pointed out, the very existence of the urbaren provided a basis for a particular form of peasant resistance: legal action. Legal action does not turn the world upside down. But it is clearly confrontational, albeit within institutionalised limits. Moreover, it is not a 'weapon of the weak'. In the context of *urbaren*, it relates to the interests of rich and substantial peasants. It may be protracted and is likely to be expensive. This is not an arena in which the weak are likely to appear.

Legal action, related to more than the *urbaren*. Much of it, however, seems to have centred on limitation of labour services. For example, where there was resistance to attempts by Junkers to increase such services, then they might 'attempt to evict rebellious peasants' [Harnisch, 1986: 43]. In that instance, peasants with property in land had to be paid the estimated price of their holding, and such cases would go to court, with 'peasant communities...not seldom appealing to the High Court (*Kammergericht*)' over the adjudicated price (loc. cit.). Some of these might drag on for years, requiring considerable sums of money, 'which the peasants raised by "collections"' [Harnisch, 1986: 43].[68] We are not told among whom the 'collections' were made. One might speculate that it was the substantial peasants who were the major contributors, since it was their interests that were being pursued.

Quite how extensive such legal action was is not clear. According to one source, in the eighteenth century, 'the number of lawsuits in which the peasants demanded a limitation of their services increased constantly' [Carsten, 1989: 61]; Another source tells us, '*Occasionally*, as a result of brutal mistreatment, the extension of work obligations beyond those permitted in the Urbar, or the appropriation of peasant holdings, peasants submitted protests to authorities' [Berdhal, 1988: 38, emphasis mine]. This, however, seems to relate not necessarily to lawsuits but to appeals directly to the ruler.

Perhaps, the implied level of activity in the first source is exaggerated somewhat. Certainly, however, lawsuits did take place, and seem to have increased in number in the last two decades of the eighteenth century [cf. Berdhal, 1988: 38].

Again, we note that it is the more substantial peasants who are the most likely exponents of this form of protest – whether in the form of lawsuits or petitions to the ruler.[69]

It must, certainly, have exercised pressure upon the Junkers: a pressure greater than that of any 'everyday form of resistance'. But one should not, perhaps, overstress this in itself. In the descriptions we have of lawsuits and their outcomes, the disproportionate power of the Junkers is clear. Victories were won by the peasants, but that the dice were loaded heavily against them is obvious. This is suggested in the inordinate time that these lawsuits might drag on for, and the costliness that this implies; and in the clear disproportion of power, when, for example, peasants pursuing lawsuits were imprisoned, beaten and put in chains [Hagen, 1986: 82–4] (in one instance escaping to confront the *Kammergericht* with their chains [Carsten, 1988: 61–2]).

(iv) Flight

Another peasant response was flight [Carsten, 1988: 61; Berdhal, 1988: 37–8]. One might distinguish temporary from permanent flight: the former under particular, powerful duress for which redress might be sought; the latter an attempt to escape permanently 'from hereditary servitude, incessant and overwhelming work obligations, meager subsistences, miserable living conditions' [Berdhal, 1988: 37].

The latter, one supposes, must have been more common among non-bauern than among bauern: since the former had far less to lose through flight. Such permanent flight, where possible, was the ultimate 'weapon of the weak'. But, as Berdhal observes: 'Runaway peasants, however, appear to have been few; unless they lived near the border they had nowhere to go, since the law prohibited anyone from giving refuge. Their whereabouts were not difficult to ascertain and the machinery of the state cooperated in their return' [Berdhal, 1988: 37–8]. Landlord domination was cemented by the ultimate power of the state.

We have at least one example of the former. In 1766, four full-bauern in Lower Lusatia fled over the Saxon border and petitioned the king from their place of refuge. They pointed out that their landlord had 'confiscated [from one of us] 4 horses, an ox, a wagon, a plow and farrow, and declared that when we returned it would and should be more terrible for us' [Berdhal, 1988: 38]. The state did intervene on their behalf, but it is not recorded whether they benefited from this. It is perfectly conceivable that they did not.

(v) Strikes and Open Rebellion

Discontent did, also, erupt into strikes, or, more seriously, open rebellion. Both often attracted brutal reprisals.

As far as the former were concerned, these would 'occasionally [take place] against the feudal dues...which the peasants refused to render to their lords'.

This would result in 'arrest and ill-treatment, especially of the peasants' spokesmen, temporary sequestration of the draught cattle and – the ultimate sanction – eviction' [Harnisch, 1986: 61].[70]

Rebellions sometimes happened when recourse to the law clearly had either not produced decisions in favour of the peasants, or, when they did, were defied by the landlords; sometimes, in response to heavy exactions, as an alternative to attempted legal action; sometimes as a reaction to news of events elsewhere. There was open rebellion, for example, in Polish Silesia, in 1765 and 1766; in Silesia, again, after the emancipation of the Austrian serfs in, 1781, and at the outbreak of the French Revolution; in East Prussia and in Brandenburg; and with the abolition of serfdom in Poland in 1791.[71]

These rebellions were put down brutally, with clear intervention by the state. Thus, for example, of the rebellion in Upper Silesia in 1765, we read: 'The peasants only returned to work when soldiers were sent to the villages. The leaders were arrested and taken to the fortress of Brieg to be tried' [Carsten, 1988: 63]. That was not untypical.[72]

(vi) Peasant Struggle in Due Perspective

The broad changes in the nature of peasant struggle in late eighteenth century Prussia identified above (increasing incidence and intensity and a change of character towards clear Brennerian class struggle) appear undeniable. But one should beware of inflating their extent or attributing a triumphalist character to them which they did not possess. Hagen, for example, veers in that direction [Hagen, 1985; Hagen, 1986].

There was significant regional variation, and there were some regions in which peasant struggle was far less marked than in others.[73] There is a danger of concentrating on the areas of greatest incidence and intensity (Hagen for example, makes no mention of this). Such action, moreover, proceeded within the tight confines of estate and village: confronting powerful seigneurial coercion; and, ultimately, subject to state power. We should not exaggerate the freedom with which it proceeded, nor minimise the difficulties which it encountered.

Nor should we assume that all classes within East Elbian feudal structures were equally capable of resistance; or that they resisted together; or that they derived equal benefit from resistance. Sometimes that impression is given. But it is important to note that, as we have suggested, because of their varying material circumstances (their differing relationship to the means of production), the distinct strata of the stratified society we have described must have had resort to different forms of resistance and protest. It is curious that this does not find much emphasis in the secondary, English-language literature, when resistance is discussed.

That there was increased pressure from the peasantry in the second half of the eighteenth century is, as we have seen, clear. That the representatives of the

Prussian state were aware of this, and were made apprehensive by it, is equally manifest. When, on 14 May, 1798, Baron Friedrich von Schroetter, the provincial minister for East and West Prussia, who would later be active in the post-1807 reforms, wrote to Cabinet Councillor Beyme, he referred to a 'dull rumbling' among the peasants [Harnisch, 1986: 63]. This was more than everyday resistance. It was struggle – class struggle – which centred upon the need for abolition of feudal dues [Harnisch, 1986: 64].

Harnisch goes further, and suggests that by that time 'the tensions between the peasants and the feudal authorities were reaching a dangerous crisis point' [Harnisch, 1986: 62]. By 'feudal authorities' Harnisch means the Prussian state. By the end of the century, increasingly aware of peasant pressure and fearful of revolutionary activity such as had erupted in France, 'an influential group among the Prussian leaders of state now realised that [abolition of feudal dues]...had become an urgent necessity' [Harnisch, 1986: 64]. This led to action in 1799, and that action was surely induced, in part, by peasant pressure over previous decades, at least in some parts of Prussia.

We note that just as the English peasantry's successful resistance to the seigneurial reaction was followed by defeat, so the emerging, 'free' Prussian peasantry were no match for the organised economic and political power of the Junkers. In England the poor peasantry was transformed, ultimately, into a class of free wage labour, which constituted both the rural and, to a degree, the urban proletariat: whose employers, where they remained as wage labour in the countryside, had evolved, over a vast stretch of time, from the ranks of the peasantry. In Prussia, it was the former feudal landlords who became capitalist farmers and the employers of erstwhile poor peasants. The abolition of serfdom in 1807 proved to be a turning point.

Notes

1. The Erzgebirge and Riesengebirge are in English, respectively, the Ore Mountains, which stretch along the German–Czechoslovakian border; and the Giant Mountains, which are part of the modern western Czechoslovak–Polish frontier.
2. Cf. Barraclough's observation: 'The new Reich of 1871 – whatever the theory – was in practice a Prussian Reich, shaped to accord with Prussian interests, constructed in conformity with Prussian traditions, ruled by the dynasty of Hohenzollern, and dominated by the Prussian Junker class' [Barraclough, 1988: 422–3].
3. The story of 'Bismarck and the unification of Germany' has been told many times. See, for example, Taylor [1978] for the bare outlines; and, for greater detail, Taylor [1985], Stern [1987: Part 1].
4. On this aspect of Bismarck, as manifested after 1871, see Stern [1987: 289–303, especially 289–92 and 300].
5. Although, indeed, Bismarck had himself once managed the family estates, he was not a typical capitalist farmer. He was born in 1815: 'on the ancestral estate of Schonhausen in the old Mark Brandenburg [province of Prussia]. The Bismarcks had lived in the Mark for centuries, long before the Hohenzollerns came to rule it' [Stern, 1987: 3]. His father died in 1845, bequeathing large debts. Bismarck 'inherited [the family estates of] Schonhausen and Kniephof' and at that point gave up his bureaucratic career for 'the management of ancestral and debt-ridden estates' [Stern, 1987: 97]. But he 'leased Kniephof to a tenant, and after his entry into politics he leased Schonhausen as well' (loc. cit.). We are told that, certainly after 1871, he was *not* 'a Junker at home on his estates, his vision limited to the nearest church steeple or to the prospects of the next harvest' [Stern, 1987: 289]. On the three large estates that he owned by then (at Schonhausen west of Berlin, Varzin in Pomerania, and Friedrichsruh near Hamburg) – which together amounted to 40,000 acres – he had 'vast and stately forests...[and] one of the largest holdings of uncut timber in Germany' (loc. cit). Bismarck, then, 'did not engage in the traditional ways of agriculture; his income did not depend on grain growing and cattle, but on the sale of timber and on manufacturing enterprises that were run on his estate' [Stern, 1987: 291]. He also leased out land, leaving it to Bleichroder, his financial manager, to 'negotiate with troublesome tenants' [Stern, 1987: 291]. Bismarck, then, was certainly a capitalist, but not an archetypal Junker capitalist farmer, of the kind I identify in the next chapter.
6. For a brief, incisive and cogent account, see Anderson [1974b: ch. 3].
7. On the rise of Brandenburg-Prussia and its consolidation after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, see Barraclough [1988: 397–402]. For details on all of these parts of Prussia east of the Elbe, the individual entries in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1978: Micropaedia] are useful. See also Leyser *et al.*, [1978: *passim*].
8. These territories were as follows:

   (i) Already part of the Kingdom of Prussia were Schleswig-Holstein (annexed from Denmark in 1863 jointly by Prussia and Austria, and taken over by Prussia in 1866) and Lauenburg in the north-west; and in the west and the south, Hanover (annexed in 1866), Westphalia and the Rhine Province (which became Hohenzollern provinces in 1815), the Electorate of Hesse, and Nassau (annexed in 1866).
   (ii) The non-Prussian states which became part of the Reich were Oldenburg, in the north-west; in the west and the south, Anhalt, Brunswick, the Grand Duchy of Hesse, Lippe-Detmold, the Palatinate (Bavarian), Reuss, the Thuringian States, the Kingdom of Saxony, Bavaria, Alsace-Lorraine (ceded by the French in 1871), the kingdom of Saxony, Wurttemberg, and Baden.
   (iii) There were three free cities: Hamburg, Lubeck and Bremen.

   For a brief account of Prussia's rise after 1815, see Barraclough [1988: 413–24]. As with Prussia east of the Elbe, for details on all of these territories see the individual entries in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1978: Micropaedia]; and Leyser *et al.*, [1978: *passim*].
9. In an essay on 'Feudalism in Europe', written in 1983, Hilton tells us the following:

   > 'Feudal rent', the term describing the levy on feudal producers, could take many forms: Labour rent was one, but not the most important form. (Nor was the large demesne using servile labour a necessary or major form of estate organization. Its importance is to some extent a documentary illusion.) Rent in kind, money rent and payments for the use of seigneurial monopolies were more important than labour rent. [Hilton, 1984: 87]

   That we may take as an authoritative statement.
10. Cf. Carsten [1947, as reprinted in 1985: 18], who describes *Grundherrschaft* as 'consisting of peasants paying dues, side by side with landlords who did not have a considerable demesne'. On the distinctions between the two systems, see also Maddalena [1974: 287], Harnisch [1986: 40].

The term *Gutsherrschaft* was, in fact, introduced by Georg Friedrich Knapp in 1891 [Knapp, 1891], 'in order to discriminate between the agrarian structure that had developed east of the Elbe in the sixteenth century and the older peasant agriculture (*Grundherrschaft*), predominant in western and central Germany' [Harnisch, 1986: 40]. The distinction is a useful one. In Knapp's treatment, it was pursued in legal/juridical terms. It has, also, been the subject of investigation within other methodological frameworks. But it clearly can be viewed in political economy terms: i.e. in terms of a class analysis. On Knapp, and his school, and on other writing on Prussian agrarian history, see the Note at the end of Part 2.

11. Brenner cites Carsten [1954: 80–4, 101–16]. See also Carsten [1947, as reprinted in 1985: 17], and Carsten [1989: 19], where the peasants' freedom is stressed.
12. In establishing the following account, quite obviously I have found Carsten [1954: chs. 1–6] especially useful. The story is told more briefly and somewhat differently – and, from the viewpoint of the present argument, less usefully – in Aubin [1966].
13. Blum bases this on Aubin [1966: 449–50].
14. Cf. Carsten [1954: 10–11]. The story is told in full in Carsten [1954: chs. 1–6].
15. Hagen cites as the best treatment of 'the colonization question' Schulze [1979].
16. Hagen, in his interesting article, wishes to distance himself from the 'medieval idyll' in which the condition of these peasants might be romanticised. He stresses, quite rightly, that these free peasants did pay rent. But, from the perspective of the argument being developed here, the issue is not whether rent was *paid*. The secondary sources I have cited are perfectly clear that it was. Rather it is the *amount* of rent. Hagen seems to wish to imply that the rent taken in the period in question was not especially light. But he is not convincing.

    He tells us that 'the earliest Brandenburg colonists' rents [presumably in the early twelfth century] were low...the equivalent of a few bushels of rye' (p. 85). That, certainly, accords with the position that I take above. He then goes to the end of the thirteenth century, by which time, it seems, in one village in Brandenburg, one might say of a full peasant's holding 'it is evident that...[the] lord collected a fat share of his marketable surplus' (p. 87). But the elements in his reasoning are so vague as to make the statement at the very least doubtful; and at worst meaningless. It is not at all clear, indeed, what might constitute a 'fat share' and what a 'thin share'.

    He goes on to argue that 'undoubtedly, farm rents rose in the thirteenth century' (p. 87). But the evidence he presents with respect to money or kind rent (pp. 87–8) is curiously vague, and surely not sufficient to sustain the argument. Nor is he much more convincing for the fourteenth century (pp. 87–8, 90). Indeed, curiously for his argument, he suggests that 'it seems fair to conclude that between 1282 and 1375 peasant rents not only did not rise, but in some cases fell distinctly' (p. 91).

    All in all, Hagen does not do serious damage to the proposition that full feudal rent was not extracted over the period in question.

    He tells us that from the beginning of colonisation until emancipation of the serfs in the nineteenth century, 'rent varied according to the peasants' ability and willingness to pay' [Hagen, 1985: 85]. He might have added to that 'and according to the coercive power of the landlord, and the nature and outcome of struggle between peasant and landlord'.
17. See also Rosenberg [1943: 1–2, 5], and Berdhal [1988: 16].
18. Carsten quotes 'treaties on the land tax concluded between the margraves and their vassals in 1283' as evidence of the early farming of small demesnes [Carsten, 1989: 3]. On the farming of small demesnes, he cites Schulze [1979].
19. For examples of the very limited nature of labour services, where they existed at all, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Carsten [1954: 77–8]. These include commitments of having to serve once a year, twice a year, four times a year, three days in a year, and so on. Indeed, in some instances 'even these few services...the peasants apparently refused to render' (p. 78).
20. On these cottagers, see Carsten [1954: 79–80].
21. Carsten points out that in, for example, the New Mark (in Brandenburg), there were at least 80 completely deserted villages in 1337. He tells us that the sources do not reveal the causes of the desertion, but speculates as follows: 'Presumably the inhabitants had migrated into one of the many small towns which were founded in this area at that time, or into Pomerania, Prussia, or Poland which were colonized in the fourteenth century' [Carsten, 1954: 100].
22. The title of chapter viii of Carsten's remarkable book (according to a recent historian his 'formidable book' [Hagen, 1985: 80]) [Carsten, 1954], upon which I have relied so heavily, is 'The Agrarian Crisis'.
23. Carsten cites his own earlier work [Carsten, 1954: 102–3, 106] and [Burleigh, 1984: 77, 87].
24. On the details of these four developments, see especially Carsten [1954: 108–11; 1989: 7–9].
25. According to Rosenberg, in the second half of the sixteenth century, the following price increases were recorded: rye, 247%, barley 187%, oats 185%, firewood, 247%; and with the wages of unskilled labour rising by only 86% [Rosenberg, 1944: 233].
26. Hagen cites the following sources: Harnisch [1969, 1975, 1980]; Schultz [1982]; Vogler [1974]; Cistozvonov and Heitz [1975].
27. Hagen seems to wish to do so.
28. The following incisive and evocative account by Engels retains its force and, in the light of subsequent historical research, needs to be modified only in part:

> [After the Peasant War of 1525] the peasants east of the Elbe...were forthwith turned into serfs subject to arbitrary corvee and burdens, and their free marks were simply turned into the lord's property, where they retained only the usufructs granted by mercy of their master. The same ideal conditions of feudal ownership, for which the German nobility had vainly yearned throughout the Middle Ages, and which it had finally achieved at a time when the feudal economy was disintegrating, were now gradually extended to the lands east of the Elbe. Matters went further than the conversion of the contracted rights of the peasants to the use of the landowner's wood, wherever these had not already previously been curtailed, into usufruct by grace of the landowner, which the latter could at any time withdraw; they went further than unlawful increases in services and tributes. New burdens were imposed, such as relief (a duty payable to the lord by heirs of a deceased peasant landholder) which were regarded as characteristic of serfdom, while the old customary services obtained the nature of services performed only by serfs, and not free men. Thus within less than a hundred years the free peasants east of the Elbe were turned into serfs, first in fact, and then juridically as well...
>
> [A]fter the country was pacified it became possible to go in for large-scale farming everywhere, and...such farming was increasingly necessitated by the growing need for money. The cultivation of big estates by means of compulsory serf labour at the lord's account thus gradually provided a source of income to compensate the nobility for the highway robberies that had outlived their time. But where to get the required land? The noblemen, indeed, were owners of bigger or smaller estates, but these were with but a few exceptions parcelled out to hereditary tribute-paying peasants, who, provided they produced the stipulated services, had just as much right to their homesteads and hides as the gracious lords themselves. *A way had to be found: above all it was necessary to turn the peasants into serfs.* For even if the eviction of serfs from house and home was not less illegal

and outrageous than that of free tenants, it was nevertheless easier justified by the prevailing Roman law. In a word, after the peasants were propitiously turned into serfs, the required number of them was driven off the soil, or resettled on the lord's land as cottars, or day labourers with hut and garden. The former fortified castle of the noble gave place to his new, more or less open country seat, and, for that very reason, the former free peasant's homestead gave place to a far greater extent to the wretched hut of the serf.

Once the manorial estate – the dominium, as it was called in Silesia – was established, it was only a matter of getting the peasants to cultivate it. And that was where the *second advantage of serfdom came to the fore*. The former services of peasants fixed by contract were by no means adequate. In most cases they did not go beyond services for the common weal, such as road- and bridge-building etc., building work on the manorial castle, and services by women and girls at the manor in various branches of industry and as domestics. But as soon as the peasant was turned serf...the gracious lord struck up a new tune. With the acquiescence of the jurists in the courts, *he now commanded the peasant to labour for him as much, as often and as long as it suited him*. The peasant was obliged to work, cart, plough, sow and harvest for his lord at his first behest, even if his own field went untended and his own harvest perished in the rain. His dues in kind and money were similarly inflated to the utmost.

But that was not all. The no less noble prince of the land – available everywhere east of the Elbe – was also in need of money, much money. In return for letting them subjugate his peasants, the nobles – who were themselves exempt from taxation – allowed him to tax the said peasants. And to top it all the prince sanctioned the factually prevailing conversion of the lord's former right to preside at the long time suspended free feudal peasant tribunals, into the right of patrimonial jurisdiction and manorial police, whereby the lord of the manor became police chief and, what was more, the sole judge of his peasants, even in cases involving his own person, so that the peasants could complain of the lord only to the lord himself. Thus he was legislator, magistrate and bailiff *all in one*, and unlimited lord of the manner.

[Engels, 1965: 156–8, emphases mine, except for the last one]

29. This is not Hagen's own position, but his rendering of the view of the German 'Marxist historical literature'. Among that literature he cites Harnisch [1968, 1969, 1972, 1975, 1980] and Heitz [1964, 1972]. Hagen argues another position, or at least he wishes to qualify the Marxist position, which he takes to be 'historically sounder' than the 'conservative and neo-classical analyses [which] interpret peasant farm rents as payments for goods that the noble lords could legitimately proffer, notably physical protection, legal jurisdiction and the peasant farm itself' (p. 111). He seems to wish to occupy a position somewhere between the Marxist and the conservative/neo-classical views.

Hagen attempts to minimise the implications of labour rent: 'the economic cost to the peasant of labour rent' (p. 107). With regard to one Brandenburg estate, he does concede that 'whether cash or natural farm rents stayed fixed at late fifteenth-century rates or whether the villagers' bargaining with their lords drove them down even lower, the fact remains that the peasants could not evade the Junkers' demands for heightened manorial service' (p. 107). It was the case, by 1601, that 'the value of the new labour obligations far outweighed the older forms of peasant dues' (loc. cit.). But, he avers, 'the full peasants could perform their labour services without having to keep more horses or servants than they required in the operation of their own farms, provided they worked on the manor no more than three days weekly' (p. 107). He adds: 'They did not begrudge the manpower lost in manorial service so much as they resented (and resisted) abuse of their horsepower in its performance' (loc. cit.). Quite how he knows that is not clear.

He admits some dispute here. Harnisch, for example, a leading Marxist scholar, 'places the limit at two days' (loc. cit.: see [Harnisch, 1980: 190]. If we take two days as the limit, then, in East Elbia as a whole, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, a large number of peasants must have had obligations in excess of that. A majority must have had obligations of more than three days per week; and, as we have argued in the text, even greater labour obligations were common.

Hagen tells us: 'The profits of Junker manorialism were real enough, but it is hard to argue that they were gained at the cost of the ruin of the peasantry' (p. 108). The significance of this statement turns on what is meant by 'the ruin of the peasantry'. He further argues (p. 111), in support of his position, that heightened labour services were accompanied by 'a freeze or a reduction in pre-existing cash and grain rents'. The latter observation is not necessarily significant. It is, after all, the net outcome that is important. Moreover, as we have seen, Hagen does point out that this did worsen considerably for the peasantry.

Was the peasantry 'ruined'? Well, extraction obviously did not proceed beyond a meeting of the peasants' needs and the reproduction of their daily routine, year in and year out. To that extent, the peasantry was not annihilated. But it was, surely, powerfully constrained by these obligations. Whether we term this 'ruin' or not is a matter of semantics. There may well, further, have been some *grossbauern* in many villages. But the essential point, surely, is that we here see a subject peasantry, essentially unfree: tied to the soil and for the most part paying a full feudal rent.

30. Brenner cites both Blum [1957: 833–5] and Carsten [1954: 115–16, 135].

31. One notes the criticism levelled at Brenner, in this context, by his fellow-historian, Heide Wunder. Wunder, after a polemical sally concerning Brenner's resort to 'textbooks and secondary literature' [Wunder, 1985: 91] (which I have already commented on in Chapter 2, in my observations on the pitfalls inherent in the comparative approach – and which is quite unfair) contests Brenner's comparison between 'east Elbian peasant communities' and those of western Germany. She insists that in east Elbia interference by the landlord was very limited, that communal organisation was well-developed, that 'independent political institutions at village level' did emerge, that agriculture in some parts of east Elbia was organised on a communal basis [Wunder, 1985: 92–4]. She also argues that 'on the crucial test of peasant solidarity... [i.e.] the strength of peasant resistance to seigneurial influence and exploitation', east Elbia did generate such resistance: she draws attention to two examples of such peasant action, the rising of the Warmian peasants in 1440 and the Samland rising of 1525 [Wunder, 1985: 94–6]. In fact, for one who is dismissive because of use of 'secondary sources', she produces remarkably little evidence to support her argument (one is certainly not overwhelmed by it); while her reference to only two instances of peasant action hardly does much damage to the thrust of Brenner's argument on that score. Clearly, in east Elbia, something of what Wunder points to could be found. But, the evidence she adduces does not effectively dispose of the *dominant tendencies* which Brenner suggests. Brenner responds in some detail, and convincingly, to Wunder's criticisms [Brenner, 1985: 277–82], but space, unhappily, forbids treatment of the Brenner response. Brenner's argument, I think, survives the Wunder attack.

32. Frederick William I, the Great Elector (1620–88), who founded the state of Brandenburg-Prussia and built it into a centrally administered state, reigned from 1640 to 1688. He was succeeded by his second son, Frederick (1657–1713), Frederick III, elector of Brandenburg (1688–1701), later Frederick I, king of Prussia (1701–1713), who continued the policy of territorial acquisition begun by his father. He was followed by his son, Frederick William I (1688–1740), the second Prussian

king, who ruled from 1713 to 1740 and presided over Prussia's rise to a prosperous and efficient state, acquiring Swedish Pomerania, through the Treaties of Stockholm in 1719–20. His son, Frederick II, Frederick the Great (1712–86), succeeded him in 1740, and reigned until his death in 1786: conquering Silesia and establishing Prussia's leadership of the German states.

33. These are the *Budner* (cottagers with small plots) and *Hausler* (garden cottagers) on the one hand, and *Tagelohner* (day labourers) on the other. See section 9 for a brief treatment, in the context of the agrarian structure/peasant differentiation of East Elbia in the mid to late eighteenth century.
34. In fact, the term *Bauernlegen* appears to pre-date this, and to have been applied to the process of dispossession of the peasantry in the sixteenth century, which we have noted in section 5.
35. See section 9 for these German terms.
36. See section 9 for a brief account of the free peasantry.
37. See section 9 for the different kinds of tenure.
38. On the Prussian state's need for 'peasants as soldiers', cf. Carsten [1989: 49–50]. For a more detailed and informative account of the close relationship between the Prussian absolute state, the army and the Prussian social structure (which the Junkers were transforming through *Bauernlegen*), see Berdhal [1988: 92–3]. On this, Berdhal cites Busch [1962].

    Berdhal points out that 'the power of the [Prussian] absolutistic state was based on the presence of the army', while 'the organisation of the army and the structure of authority in the countryside were mutually reinforcing' (p. 92). An individual regiment drew its recruits from its canton, with army recruits coming from the unfree peasantry, non-commissioned officers frequently from the free peasantry (the *Kolmers*), and officers from the landowning class. Soldiers were furloughed for nine or ten months per year to work the fields in peacetime, and runaway serfs were regarded as military deserters. *Bauernlegen* seriously interfered with these arrangements, reducing the numbers of potential captive recruits and undermining the structure of military authority which the system provided.
39. See section 9 for the different forms of serfdom.
40. On this and the next two paragraphs, see Berdhal [1988: 93–4].
41. For a full treatment of these, based upon a wide variety of sources, see Carsten [1989: ch. 4, 49–73].
42. For the details see Carsten [1989: 50].
43. On the *Landschaften*, created by Frederick the Great, see Berdhal [1988: 78–80].
44. On the upswing of economic life, after the long period of stagnation, see Berdhal [1988: 77–8].
45. The importance of such a contradiction has been stressed by Marxist historians in East Germany: for example by Berthold [see Berthold, 1978: 14, cited in Perkins, 1986: 303].
46. Berdhal draws on the following sources: Muller [1965: 96–99, 113–21]; Abel [1967a: 306–10, 406–14]; Thaer [1799, vol. 1: 233 ff]; Goltz [1902, vol. 1: 450].
47. On this paragraph see Perkins [1986: 303]; Berdhal [1988: 84–88]; Clapham [1936: 51].
48. For the next four paragraphs I have drawn upon Perkins [1986: 303–4].
49. See section 9 on the different forms of labour service.
50. See section 9 for a brief treatment of the different forms of labour rent.
51. Perkins is here citing Huschenbrett [1934: 34].
52. Perkins is here citing Thudicum [1867, quoted in Katz, 1904: 5].
53. Perkins here cites Abel [1966b: 298].
54. As argued by Berthold [Berthold, 1978: 14].

55. See, for example, Harnisch [1986: 41–5 and *passim*]. Harnisch draws upon the considerable research on agrarian history of scholars in the German Democratic Republic, pursued increasingly from the late 1960s onwards, to make this point.
56. When using the phrase, Hilton is considering the 'reasons for inequality among medieval peasants'. He does refer to eastern Europe, but, obviously, not Prussia in the eighteenth century.
57. The information on these categories is derived from the excellent Berdhal [1988: 28–43]. I have drawn, also, on the equally excellent Harnisch [1986].
58. On this and the previous three paragraphs, see Berdhal [1988: 32–3]; Harnisch [1986: 41–2 and 45].
59. On this paragraph see Berdhal [1988: 28, 31, 33, 37].
60. On this paragraph see Berdhal [1988: 33]; Harnisch [1988: 47].
61. On this paragraph see Berdhal [1988: 33–4, 37].
62. On this paragraph see Berdhal [1988:30, 34–5].
63. On this paragraph see Berdhal [1988: 35–7]. Berdhal provides a fascinating summary of an *urbar* from Silesia of 1790.
64. Cited by Hilton [Hilton, 1978: 272].
65. Hagen draws our attention to Wernicke's work and provides a brief account of it [Hagen, 1986: 75–6].
66. Scott [Scott, 1986] shows how the poor (in his village in Malaysia in the 1970s) used character assassination, gossip, arson, sabotage, boycotts, disguised strikes, theft, murder of livestock, and various forms of 'routine resistance' over wages, tenancy, rent and distribution of paddy, in their daily resistance against the rich. He even suggests, in a more recent book, that farting might constitute a 'weapon of the weak', citing on the frontispiece an Ethiopian proverb: 'When the great lord passes the wise peasant bows deeply and silently farts' [Scott, 1990]. If, as has been attributed to Mao, 'A fart does not fertilise a field', it most certainly does not moderate exploitation. The 'weak' are, indeed, without power if their weaponry must, perforce, include farting.
67. The same writer provides a detailed account of one such struggle on an estate in the Prignitz district of Brandenburg in the half century after 1763. It was a struggle which involved thirty years of litigation.
68. On these lawsuits see Carsten [1988: 61–3].
69. In a case of protest to the king, in Lower Lusatia, described in some detail by Berdhal, the four complainants are obviously full-bauern, with teams of draught animals [Berdhal, 1988: 38–40].
70. Hagen gives an example of a rent strike, which took place in the Prignitz district of Brandenburg between 1781 and 1785, when the full peasants on the Stavenow estate refused to pay their labour service commutation fees. Three of its leaders were imprisoned by the estate owner, escaped, and delivered their chains to the *Kammergericht* in Berlin [Hagen, 1986: 84].
71. On this paragraph see Berdhal [1988: 40] and Carsten [1988: 61–5].
72. See previous note for references on this paragraph.
73. Something of the diversity may be seen in Dipper [1980].

4 The Prussian Transition: Full-Blooded Capitalism From Above and Its Consequences

1 THE PRUSSIAN STATE, THE ABOLITION OF SERFDOM, AND THE AFTERMATH

(i) The 1799 Reforms on the Crown Land: An Attempt to Stabilise the Feudal Order

In 1799, in response to 'the distant effect of the French Revolution and the increasing ferment among the peasant population' [Harnisch, 1986: 65], in all provinces peasants on the royal demesnes were given the opportunity to commute labour services into annual money rents; while in a few provinces peasants were allowed to purchase holdings by paying the so-called *Erbstandsgeld* [Harnisch, 1986: 64]. But the Junkers resisted successfully attempts to abolish hereditary serfdom or commute feudal dues (especially labour obligations) into money rents on private land: such attempts failing to proceed beyond the stage of preliminary negotiations (loc. cit.).

Clearly, peasant struggle did force action by the state, with respect to the crown lands; and did create an intent by the state to secure an outcome that was far wider in scope. Equally clearly, however, as Harnisch has suggested, the failure to extend action to private land reveals the limits of the power of the Prussian state, *vis-à-vis* the Junkers, at this juncture [Harnisch, 1986: 64].

We need, however, to consider more closely the nature, scope and significance of the 1799 reforms. They had certain important characteristics and some clear implications.

Firstly, they were limited in scope, and they were hardly pursued vigorously. They proceeded quite slowly, and certainly were not completed by October, 1807, when the complete abolition of serfdom was set in motion. Moreover, peasants in some areas were clearly not able to secure property rights in land.

Secondly, the annual money rents which the peasants were now to pay on royal lands constituted 'no capitalist rent', but were 'calculated as the sum of the former, minor duties in payment and the new additional expenditures arising from running the farms of royal demesnes with paid hands instead of farm hand rendering feudal dues' [Harnisch, 1986: 64]. In other words, they were still feudal rent.

Not only that, but, thirdly, peasants who bought their land had no unlimited right of free disposal over it, but had to seek permission from the demesne office to stop producing or to sell part of it; while children of peasants could not work

outside of agriculture without approval of the authorities. No free market in land or in labour emerged, as a result of the measures on the royal demesnes.

From this we may conclude, fourthly, that 'it seems that these measures were not aimed at overcoming the feudal order so much as at stabilising it' [Harnisch, 1986: 65,]. As has been observed, 'in spite of the universally-recognised tensions, all measures actually begun before 1807 still remained within the framework of feudal legality' [Harnisch, 1986: 66]. There is no evidence of any intent to create a capitalist agrarian order.[1]

The Prussian state – Prussian Absolutism – set out to reform feudalism, by easing its contradictions. It had no intent to overturn it. It continued to represent the interests of the class of feudal Junkers, and that class was strongly opposed to any such reform. It was also sufficiently strong, at the end of the eighteenth century, to oppose successfully and to frustrate the intent of the state to secure such reform on its lands.

If agrarian capitalism was to come, then the old relations of production would have to be uprooted and replaced throughout the Prussian countryside. This was realised by the Prussian bureaucracy, or parts of it, before 1807. But it took the events of 1806 to hasten the outcome. That outcome would be secured via the removal of 'feudal bonds and burdens...by way of agrarian reforms, consisting of legislation combined with compensations to the old feudal lords' [Harnisch, 1986: 37]: legislation initiated by the Act of 1807. As we shall see, the manner of its securing would be of considerable significance in determining the nature of the outcome, by contrast with England or France. Serious steps to initiate abolition of serfdom would come in 1807, but only after the cataclysm of 1806. That cataclysm both exposed starkly the need for reform and created the necessary space for its initiation.

(ii) 1806: A Cataclysmic External Event

In 1806, whatever fears had been induced by the French Revolution were translated into an unexpected reality; and 'the distant effect of the French Revolution' suddenly took on immediate and dramatic form. The French Revolution threatened 'the viability of every *ancien regime* in Europe' [Anderson, 1974: 269]. The spectre of the French Revolution, which haunted all of Europe, now became real in Prussia: but not in the guise of a peasant revolution from below, encouraged by news from France, which would overthrow the old order. It took the form of Napoleon's armies, which invaded Prussia and inflicted a crushing military defeat. It was that defeat that proved crucial, and which induced reform from above: reform that was not contained within feudal legality; reform that was qualitatively different from the reforms of 1799. It was that defeat and the reform which it engendered which 'did indeed open the way towards a bourgeois development' [Harnisch, 1986: 67].

We here confront the issue of the Prussian state: the Prussian Absolutist State as it existed until 1806, and as it would now change. As Engels observed: 'On

October 14, 1806, the entire Prussian state was smashed in a single day at Jena and Auerstadt' [Engels, 1965: 160]. So it was that 'the defeat of the Prussian army...brought to an end the ancien regime in Prussia' [Berdhal, 1988: 107]. Before the end of October most of the army had surrendered, with 'astonishing alacrity' (loc. cit.); the king and his court had fled; and Napoleon had occupied Berlin. The Treaty of Tilsit, which Prussia was forced to accept in 1807, stripped her of most of the Polish provinces and all territory west of the Elbe. Prussia was reduced to the four eastern provinces of Brandenburg, Pomerania, Silesia and Prussia. A substantial indemnity was imposed 'amounting to more than the total annual income of the truncated Prussian state' [Simon, 1971: 14] – and French troops occupied the entire territory west of the Vistula, pending payment of that indemnity.[2]

More than that, the crushing military defeat was accompanied by 'economic disorder...and administrative disintegration' [Berdhal, 1988: 107]. The land was devastated by the war; villages were destroyed and livestock killed or requisitioned. The price of grain collapsed, with the elimination of the English market; land prices plummeted. There were 'hunger, epidemics and poverty' in the cities [Berdhal, 1988: 108]. The Prussian state was 'economically prostrate' (loc. cit.). The Prussian state collapsed.[3]

At this conjuncture, whatever previous impetus there had been for reform – as a result, as we have seen, of peasant pressure – was given a more compelling rationale. Between 1799 and 1807, awareness of the intensification of peasant unrest over the previous half century could not have diminished. Whether and when such pressure, alone, would have given rise to abolition of serfdom by the Prussian state must remain a matter for inconclusive speculation. We note that a similar problem exists with respect to the abolition of slavery in the United States. There are those who argue that this, indeed, was the decisive influence [for example, Hagen, 1986: 77; 1985: 116]. That it contributed to the decision to abolish serfdom appears clear. But now, it seemed, there was a conjuncture which called for a decisive break with the past, if the Prussian social formation were to be rescued: a break which required determined action by the state, primarily in the countryside – action which would depart conclusively from 'feudal legality', and which would defy Junker resistance. The needs of the situation seemed to demand reform. This was so in at least two senses. The two contradictions noted in the previous chapter – centring on (a) the state's tax revenues and (b) its military needs – had become acute. These financial and military imperatives were overwhelming.

First, there was an obvious crisis with respect to state revenues. The French indemnities imposed a massive financial burden, and it was argued by the reformers that 'a free economy would be more productive and efficient... [and] would provide greater revenues for the state' [Berdhal, 1988: 109]. This was held to be especially true in the countryside, still held tight in the grip of serfdom.

Secondly, the defeat at Jena and Auerstadt, in Engels' words, brought in upon the Prussian government 'that the free landowning sons of French peasants could never be vanquished by sons of serfs daily in fear of banishment from house and home' [Engels, 1965: 160]. The army needed to be reformed and part of that reform required access to suitable recruits in the countryside.[4]

Not only were the needs of the situation apparently compelling, but the way was open for reform, in a manner that it had not been previously. Whatever opposition the Junkers had pursued successfully in the past was now diluted in the dire circumstances of 1806–7. It is true that when, in 1807, the drafting of an Emancipation Edict was being discussed, at the behest of King Frederick William III, the East Prussian Junkers petitioned the king: seeking free disposition over peasant plots, without interference; and, fearful for their labour supply, asking for assurances and action over the freedom of peasants to move [Berdhal, 1988: 116]. The king reassured them, but the Junkers were weakened by the circumstances of 1806–7, and, at least temporarily, there was a rupture between state and dominant class.

On October 9, 1807, within a year of the defeat at Jena and Auerstadt, the Emancipation Edict, which ushered in the era of reform, had been passed. The abolition of serfdom had been set in motion. The serfs would not be the victors, however. Reform would take a good half century to run its full course, but by the 1820s it would turn decisively in favour of the Junkers.

The collapse of the Prussian state in 1806, following the overwhelming defeat of the Prussian army, is stressed by many historians.[5] Our concern is its significance with respect to the abolition of serfdom in Prussia, and, more broadly, with respect to Prussia's agrarian transition, both in the narrow sense (of the emergence of capitalist relations of production in the countryside) and the broader sense (of agriculture's contribution to capitalist industrialisation). We need to proceed with some care.

In one formulation, the following is suggested:

> The Prussian reform movement was made possible by the Prussian collapse in the wars against Napoleon. The catastrophe of Jena and Auerstadt in 1806 dispelled overnight the inhibitions that had confined earlier attempts at reform to sporadic and local success. On those battlefields lay displayed, for all to see, the inherent weaknesses and anachronisms that riddled the Prussian state. Precisely because the two great eighteenth century kings [Frederick William I and his son Frederick William II, the Great[6]] had made the army the foundation and the focal point of the state, Jena and Auerstadt meant the collapse not only of the army itself, but of the whole civil superstructure of society. Equally, it was not merely the army but the entire nation that had to be rebuilt. [Simon, 1971: 6,]

It is instructive to scrutinise this statement critically: both for the valuable insight which it provides and for what it fails to specify.

The Prussian collapse and the weaknesses which it highlighted were, obviously, crucial. Moreover, they did, certainly, open the way for reform and

strengthen the resolve of the reformers. But what we must not lose sight of is the class nature of the Prussian state and the defence of Junker interests by that state. This would continue, and with it the contradictions which it embodied: contradictions which were especially marked during a process of transition. The weakening of Junker resistance to reform was only temporary. Such resistance would reemerge – 'vehement opposition' [Anderson, 1974: 270] to the agrarian and fiscal reforms attempted. If the Junker feudal landlord class was transformed into a class of capitalist landlords, in part as a result of agrarian reforms, then this did not happen without resistance from members of that class. The Junkers themselves were by no means resigned to change. As Berdhal has observed, they were 'caught in the contradiction of participating in the advance of capitalist agriculture while trying to maintain a formal ideology that would retain precapitalist forms of domination...a contradiction [that] was overcome only as conservatism gradually accommodated itself to the changed political and economic climate in the 1840s' [Berdhal, 1988: 6].[7]

But, then, one would not expect this most complex and fundamental of 'epochal' changes – that of a transition from one dominant mode of production to another – to occur without conflict, contradiction and profound ambivalence.

The reform movement is, of course, broader than the abolition of serfdom. But reform had to start in the countryside, and, indeed, 'the Emancipation Edict of October 9, 1807, was the first and most important legislative decree of the reform era in Prussia' [Berdhal, 1988: 115].[8]

We note that a cataclysmic 'external' event contributed to the agrarian transition. It was that which opened the way for the edict of 1807. As Engels observed: 'The time was ripe for action' [Engels, 1965: 160]. We may now examine that action and consider its repercussions.

(iii) The Act of 1807, Subsequent Legislation and the Implications

The transformation of Prussian Junkers into a class of capitalist farmers was hastened by the abolition of serfdom on private estates in Prussia, in 1807. That abolition was precipitated by the events of 1806. But it had been discussed seriously at least since the emancipation of serfs on crown lands in 1799.[9] Now it became both a perceived necessity and a possibility.

The abolition was not completed in 1807. Rather, it was a process that spread over more than half a century, with the Emancipation Edict of 1807, introduced by Stein, starting the process, and followed by an Ordinance of February 14, 1808; with further legislation, brought in by his successor as prime minister (or chancellor, as he became), Hardenberg, in 1811, 1816, and 1821; with another piece of legislation in 1850; and with the process initiated by the so-called Stein-Hardenberg reforms not finally complete until 1867 (with the Freedom of Movement Act).[10] Let us briefly consider this legislation, its progress and its implications.

The Emancipation Edict of 1807 was drawn up by Theodor von Schon and Frederick von Schroetter, on the orders of King Frederick William III. Schon and Schroetter had been responsible for reforms in New East Prussia. They were ideologues of capitalism, and not only capitalism but 'capitalism from above'. It was, they argued, the Junkers who would be the agents of economic change, and who, whether they liked it or not, must be freed from the shackles of feudalism.

They were followers of Adam Smith, and each favoured emancipation 'primarily [for]...strictly economic rather than [for]...humanitarian, political or social reasons' [Simon, 1971: 19]. Those economic reasons centred on the argument that 'increased productivity, so essential to the country in its parlous state, could best be achieved by removing all restrictions from free exploitation of the land. Serfdom was in their view to be ended mainly because it was inefficient' (loc. cit.). Significantly, 'when Schroetter first prompted the move towards emancipation, he did so because, as minister responsible for the sole province remaining under the king's rule, he was hard pressed to pay the French occupation costs, and he thought that more taxes could be collected only if the rural economy were improved' (loc. cit.).

Each drew up a report, and each favoured the abolition of *Bauernschutz*, or protection of the peasantry – the 'limited protection which the peasants had hitherto enjoyed' [Carsten, 1989: 75], and which we have noted above – since that conflicted with the requirements of 'a free and natural economy' [Simon, 1971: 19]. It might be justified where serfdom existed, but with the abolition of the latter 'there should be no unnecessary hindrance placed in the way of those from whom most of the increased productivity was expected – the lords of the large estates' (loc. cit.). If we may be allowed an anachronism, feudal landlords must become capitalist farmers.

Schroetter and Schon differed, however, over the speed with which *Bauernschutz* should go: the former, with relentless economic logic, favouring its immediate abolition, and the latter arguing for a more gradual phasing out. Schon, it seems, was concerned that 'unrestricted freedom of transaction in land would result in a wholesale acquisition of peasant land by the owners of large estates' [Simon, 1971: 20]. He was apprehensive of the impact this might have upon peasants and he wished to moderate that impact. This might be seen to conflict with 'strict logic', and, indeed, Schon admitted 'that from the point of view of scientific agriculture very small peasant holdings were unproductive' (loc. cit.). But he had a solution. Such small holdings should not be allowed to continue: 'instead of being absorbed into the estates of the nobility...[they] should be combined into large peasant farms' (loc. cit.). It seems that capitalism from above (the primary route) might be combined with movement from below (a secondary, or minor, route).[11] Stein favoured Schon's strategy: believing in the desirability of a 'strong peasant class' [Simon, 1971: 20].

Schon and Stein, presumably, were the most prominent of those 'liberal reformers...who had hoped to create a class of fiercely independent yeoman farmers from a servile peasantry' [Kitchen, 1978: 12]. It was their viewpoint

that prevailed, although not necessarily, with it, a strong peasant class. Determined Junker resistance saw to that.

The Emancipation Edict of October 9, 1807, had three major provisions:

(a) 'all peasants were declared free men as of November 11, 1810' (St. Martin's Day) [Simon, 1971: 21], i.e. hereditary bondage was at an end; this, along with
(b) the opening of all occupations to all classes, meant that, in principle, a free market in labour was created; while
(c) the ending of restrictions on commoners owning noble estates created a free market in land.

Some of the conditions necessary for the development of capitalism in the countryside appeared to be in place. Moreover, the Edict 'allowed estate owners to absorb the small individual holdings of peasants who did not have hereditary claims to their plots' [Berdhal, 1988: 117]. But there was considerable ambiguity arising from a 'failure to distinguish clearly between those aspects of agrarian feudalism which, owing to the abolition of serfdom as the personal status of the peasants, were to be discontinued and those aspects which, being based upon tenure of land, were to remain in force' [Simon, 1971: 21]. The scope for Junker agitation in pursuit of their class interests was considerable.

One thing that did happen was that Junkers took advantage of the provision which allowed them to seize the land of peasants without hereditary rights. This happened to such an extent, and threatened to continue on such a scale, that on February 14, 1808 an Ordinance was issued 'elaborating limitations on the conditions under which peasant farms could be taken by the landlords' [Berdhal, 1988: 119]: only half of a peasant's land could be attached to the lord's estate, the other half had to be combined with other peasant holdings. This, it seems, was in part an effort by Schon to create a class of substantial peasants, able to secure high yields.[12]

A great wave of protest came from the Junkers: who argued that land worked by peasants without hereditary rights was the property of the lords, who should have free disposition of such land. Moreover, it was argued by some that appropriation of peasant land was justified on grounds of efficiency.[13] The protest continued between 1808 and 1811. It included argument over whether 'compulsory labor service could be continued after emancipation, and, if so, for which peasants' [Berdhal, 1988: 146].

On September 14, 1811 an Edict of Regulation was published. In it concessions were made to the estate owners, inasmuch as non-hereditary peasants (both *Lassbauern* and *Zeitpachter*) were to give up half of their holdings to their lords and retain half for themselves.[14] But the nobility were not pleased with the compromise, and disliked the regulation of *Zeitpachter* contained in the Edict of Regulation. The struggle to secure mastery of the situation continued. The Junkers demanded three changes: that all *Zeitpachter* be excluded from regulation, that all smallholders (regardless of the terms of their tenure) should be similarly excluded, and that compulsory work obligation should continue.[15]

In The Declaration of May 29, 1816, state protection of peasant holdings (*Bauernschutz*) was formally ended and the way was open for engrossment of peasant land.[16] Two other statutes effectively completed the lengthy emancipation process:[17] the Dissolution Ordinance of June 7, 1821 and on the same day the Ordinance on the Division of Commons. There would be later legislation (in 1850) and the full emancipation of the peasantry could not be said to be complete until 1867 (with the Freedom of Movement Act). But these statutes of 1821 may be seen as decisive. In the former, the service obligations of those peasants with superior property rights were abolished, on payment of compensation to their lords; and in the latter, the lord was 'permitted...to claim most of the commons, enclose them, and separate his holdings from those of the peasants' [Berdhal, 1988: 153].

It was claimed that this latter 'was essential for the development of rational [for which read 'capitalist' TJB] agriculture on the lord's lands' [Berdhal, 1988: 153]. It certainly contributed significantly to the final transformation of Junkers into capitalist farmers. Berdhal observes:

> The division of the commons was a serious loss for the peasantry; many small peasants could not sustain themselves without a share of common land on which to graze their livestock, so they were forced to sell their holdings and become wage laborers. However, the loss of land does not tell the whole story; in the process of separation, the peasants frequently received the poorest soil on the estate. Small holding, poor soil, the loss of the commons, all of these factors contributed to the declining number of peasants holding substantial farms and the growing number of poor peasants forced to become wage laborers during the first half of the nineteenth century. [Berdhal, 1988: 154][18]

The possibilities for capitalism from below were, if not extinguished, certainly severely curtailed. A process of proletarianisation was set powerfully in motion. Victory for the Junkers was complete. They had gained dominating access to the land. Now they needed a labour force. The Junkers had won out. The way was now clear for capitalism from above. But that would not come overnight.

(iv) The Outcome

Let us make a comparison. In the south and west of Germany, it has been suggested, abolition 'produced, or further improved, the independent status of farmers or tenants of fixed tenure' [Gerschenkron, 1966: 23]. It thereby helped quicken differentiation of the peasantry, and contributed to the emergence of capitalist farmers from within the German peasantry ('capitalism from below'), in those regions of Germany.

This was not so in Prussia east of the Elbe. There, the Junkers survived. Indeed, 'they came through the mortal storm of 1806–7 and reappeared in a stronger position than they held before, both economically and politically' [Rosenberg, 194: 242]. They 'managed to turn the agrarian reform designed to cut the economic ties between peasants and Junkers into a large-scale operation of engrossing additional peasant land' [Gerschenkron, 1966: viii]. That the peasants lost out massively is clear.[19]

The land of both poor and richer peasants was appropriated. This took place in the following way. First, we may consider the larger peasants:

> the Prussian Edict of 1807...eliminated the personal status of serf, and proceeded through the regulation of relations between the Junkers and the former serf peasantry. The latter involved the removal of the obligation of peasants to perform labour services on Junker farms, in exchange for the surrender of a proportion of their land. In the process the Junkers realised a substantial increase in the area of their holdings from the proportion of their land surrendered by the *larger peasants*, whose holdings were of sufficient size to support *at least one plough team.* [Perkins, 1984: 6, emphases mine]

Removal of the land of small peasants proceeded on a different basis. The Junkers benefited, too,

> from the addition of holdings of *small peasants* who were *excluded from the regulation process*...The incorporation of the latter holdings into *Junker* farms occurred not only because the law permitted such expropriation and denied the small peasant ownership of his land. As a legacy of serfdom such peasants were generally *unwilling to work on Junker holdings*, once compulsion resting upon their personal status as serfs had been removed. [Perkins, 1984: 6, emphases mine]

We shall see that freed slaves in the South of the United States had a precisely similar reaction to their former masters.

The Junker had gained a large amount of land, but, with the disappearance of obligatory labour services, had lost his captive labour supply. An alternative labour supply had to be created. At first, 'peasant labour services and the compulsory farm service of peasant youth on Junker farms were replaced by contractually hired farm servants and the cottager system...the latter [involving] the exchange of labour for an allocation of the land' [Perkins, 1984: 5]. It was wage labour, free in Marx's double sense, but not without the vestigial traces of feudalism. Prussia's distinctive transition to capitalism in the countryside was under way. It was a capitalism marked deeply by Prussia's immediate feudal past and the powerful subjugation of the peasantry which it entailed.

There are those who suggest that the Act of 1807 was motivated, in the minds of those who were responsible for it, by a clear intent to ensure the development of agrarian capitalism [Kitchen, 1978: 10–11] (or, in another vocabulary, the 'modernisation of agriculture'). This must remain doubtful as a general proposition. Clearly, in the minds of some, such an agenda existed. But, intention, agency and effect are seldom so clearly demonstrable, in logical sequence, in complex historical situations. We have suggested, indeed, that the 1799 action was intended to stabilise the feudal order, and no more. If this is so, then the Act of 1807, if agrarian capitalism was now intended, would have represented a qualitative change by comparison with the actions of 1799. Engels, indeed, commented of the whole line of legislation which we have noted: 'the far-famed enlightened agrarian legislation of the "state of reason" had but a single purpose: to save as much of feudalism as could be saved' [Engels, 1965: 162]. But feudalism could not be saved. Its death throes were merely prolonged.

(iv) Capitalism From Above and a Particular Kind of Landlord Class

What emerges clearly is the initial, and subsequent, opposition, of the Junker class (although not necessarily all Junkers) to the abolition of serfdom; and their ultimate ability to bend the reform to their own ends. Here was class struggle, in which, again, they proved victors. They emerged as the clear beneficiaries, but as a class transformed: from feudal landlords to capitalist farmers. That transformation was precipitated by (a) peasant struggle, and (b) the increasingly antagonistic contradiction between the new and more profitable productive forces and the existing relations of production. The state acted as midwife, while continuing to represent the interests of the Junkers, and was given sufficient autonomy so to act by the events of 1806. These manifestly hastened whatever processes might have worked themselves out more slowly.

We must note, also, the particular characteristics – or circumstances – of this dominant landlord class which were important to their transformation. Of critical importance were their character as takers of labour rent; the fact that they took decisions with respect to the form that production would take (which crops would be grown, the quality of draught animals, whether livestock would be kept etc.); and the fact that, therefore, before 1807 they were not totally divorced from the process of production and from active concern with accumulation.

Such a landlord class – takers of labour rent – is more likely to be poised for possible transformation to hirers of wage labour than is one which appropriates surplus via kind or money rent. A landlord class which hires out land to sharecroppers may also be so poised – especially if it takes an active interest in the nature of the crops grown, labour input etc. That we will see in the case of the belated transition from sharecropping to capitalist agriculture – capitalism from above – in the South of the United States.

But the transition to kind, and, even more, money rent, constitutes an important change for a landlord class (where, indeed, it has shifted from labour rent). Such a transition represents a severing of links with production and with accumulation. It is not inconceivable that such a landlord class might take to 'land-

lord capitalism' – directly hiring wage labour, and appropriating surplus thus. But – and this is a point which we must bear in mind when considering the possibility of a 'Prussian path' in contemporary poor countries – landlord capitalism is far more likely where the landlord class has a direct relationship with labour (through labour rent) and has links with the process of production and the cycle of accumulation.

What is significant, in their transformed state, is their non-parasitic nature: i.e. they did reinvest productively part of the surplus which they appropriated now through the wage relation. This was not a Ricardian wastrel class. The Japanese case offers another example of a landlord class which was non-wastrel, although one which took a quite different route towards agrarian transition. The Japanese transition, we note, despite assertions to the contrary, was not an example of the Prussian path, since Japanese landlords did not become capitalist farmers.

2 THE POST-EMANCIPATION CLASS STRUCTURE: 1807–71

(i) The Evolving Class Structure

We may now identify the rural class structure that emerged in the Prussian countryside after 1806. Our concern is with the period up to 1871, which is as far as our problematic extends, although clearly there are critical developments thereafter that relate to the Prussian path. Our preoccupation, in the next two sections, with the productive forces and with capitalist industrialisation, also, relates to that era, and not, substantively, beyond. In each case, however, we will signal some of those developments.

We may take, first, the class of Junker capitalist farmers, and, then, that of free wage labour. So to take them separately is useful expositionally, but, clearly, they exist in an evolving relationship, one of capitalist exploitation, and we seek to clarify the nature of that relationship.

(ii) The Nature of the Junker Class of Capitalist Farmers

We have nowhere yet formally defined the term 'Junker'. That is deliberate. It is obvious from context what the term means, operationally. Yet it may be useful, at this juncture, to enter a definition, since we here reach a most critical point in our treatment: the 'moment' of transformation of a feudal into a capitalist class that is critical to the notion of a 'Prussian path'.

The author of a recent comparative history of mid-nineteenth-century US planters and Prussian Junkers tells us: 'The terms Junker and Junkerdom (*Junkerdom*) derive from the Middle High German *juncherre*, meaning young lord or nobleman. In the nineteenth century they became generally opprobrious epithets for the supposedly feudal and reactionary and proprietors of East Elbian

Prussia's legally privileged "knights' estates" (*Rittergutter*) and their many relations in the Prussian officers' corps and royal bureaucracy' [Bowman, 1993: 6].[20] Of course, Junkers were, by and large, reactionary; they did have many relations in the Prussian officers' corps;[21] and, indeed, to a significant extent, they manned the royal bureaucracy.[22] But these are not our concerns here.

Their nobility is of significance. As of 1807, one might say that, indeed, they were the Prussian nobility, and full of stiff-necked pride in their aristocratic status and what went with it. But in the late eighteenth century they had accumulated much debt. There was a severe depression in the 1820s (described by Berdhal as 'a searing agricultural depression' [Berdhal, 1988: 264]), during which the market for cereal grains virtually collapsed. Berdhal argues, that 'if the Stein-Hardenberg reforms opened the door to capitalist agriculture the depression of the twenties pushed the nobility over the threshold' [Berdhal, 1988: 264].[23] It was during this period that decisive change came as depression 'hastened the process by which large numbers of noble estates passed out of the hands of nobles into the hands of commoners' [Berdhal, 1988: 264]. Debt now translated into bankruptcy and forced sales.[24] As Berdhal observes: 'The large-scale transfers of landownership broke down more than the basis for the traditional paternalistic ideology of the nobility. The new estate owners, less dominated by tradition, more willing to introduce new agricultural methods, and above all equipped with fresh capital, led the way in the transformation of Prussian agriculture' [Berdhal, 1988: 282]. [25] But it was not only the new owners who were receptive to new methods: 'those who survived the crisis did so by cultivating entrepreneurial instincts and employing the methods of rational agriculture' [Berdhal, 1988: 265]. The nature of that 'transformation of Prussian agriculture' we will consider below.

By the 1850s, then, the proportion of Junker estates owned by those without title – commoners – had tripled or quadrupled since 1807. The figure in 1856 was 45%. In one formulation, 'it was only during the first half of the nineteenth century that Junkerdom became...a socially mixed elite of landed businessmen' [Bowman, 1993: 33].[26] More appropriately, it was during the nineteenth century that Junkerdom ceased to be a feudal landlord class and became a class of capitalist farmers.

In 1858, we note, *Rittergut* owners and their families, along with many noble families that did not own knightly estates, amounted to 168,000, or under 1% of the total population of Prussia of 17.7 million. The estates varied in size: from one tiny, and completely atypical Silesian estate of less than an acre, to an estate in East Prussia of 46,000 acres. The great majority, however, were larger than the 379 acres (600 Prussian *morgen*) stipulated as the minimum size of a 'large landed estate', with the average between 1,300 and 1,400 acres.[27]

After 1806, despite concerted efforts to cling to the practices of the past, they were, however, no longer feudal. They might be categorised, for some time after 1807, as 'semi-feudal', but just how acceptable that is as a hard analytical category is open to debate. I believe it to be useful in signalling that this class ceased

to be feudal after the abolition of serfdom, but did not overnight become capitalist. There was a long period of transition. The term 'semi-capitalist' might be used. But there is a subtle difference between the two. 'Semi-feudal', on my reading, suggests powerful remnants, or vestigial traces of feudalism; while 'semi-capitalism' signifies a significant shift towards capitalism. It is more than a merely semantic difference. At some point, the state of being 'semi-feudal' progresses to that of being 'semi-capitalist'. In the nineteenth century, the Junkers took that step, and by 1871 were, in every useful sense, fully capitalist.

As Harnisch points out, 'the landowning families [the Junkers] stayed in full possession of their large estates as well as their often extensive forests' [Harnisch, 1986: 37]. As we have seen, the Junkers retained ownership of most of the land, engrossing large quantities of peasant land. But they ceased to be landlords.

They had, previously, through their taking of labour rent, made decisions with respect to the production process (the form of production , the kind of crops grown, the nature of draught animals etc.), and had been actively involved in accumulation. They continued to take such decisions, and to be so involved, but not as landlords. They were transformed into a class of capitalist farmers. They no longer appropriated surplus through feudal rent (labour rent, for the most part). They would appropriate surplus value through the wage relationship, but, as we shall see, it would take to the end of our chosen period before a fully capitalist wage relationship was the norm, and before an institutionalising of the tying of labour had been abandoned. This we explore in the next sub-section.

We have noted that, with the abolition of serfdom, the Junkers, the erstwhile feudal landlords, lost a captive labour force. True to their feudal instincts, which did not disappear overnight but which lingered on for a considerable period, they agitated to retain labour services for as long as possible. But that was a battle they could not win. Those labour services had become, as we have seen, increasingly irksome to serfs, and they had struggled against them. Not only that, but, as we have noted, such a form of production relations had taken the productive capacity of Prussian agriculture about as far it could go with their continuing existence. They were incompatible with those new forms of the productive forces, tried and tested in England, which were necessary for a more productive agriculture. They had to go.

The relationship with the new forms of labour, however, as we shall see, was not immediately fully capitalist. It involved, initially and for some time, transitional forms, which were semi-feudal in nature. The Junkers, then, did not spring fully-caparisoned as capitalist farmers from the belly of feudalism. They would take time to slough off their feudal skins.

When, eventually, they did, by the end of our period, they maintained a considerable distance between themselves and labour. Not only that, but by comparison with Britain or capitalist farms in the United States (which, in fact, were by no means dominant, as we shall see), by the end of our period, when Junkers had adopted capitalist criteria in most areas of their decision-making,[28] '*Junker*

farming in Germany remained characterized...by a high ratio of supervisory personnel to actual workers' [Perkins, 1984: 22], with a remarkable proliferation of 'officials', apart from the Junker himself.[29] By then, they had become, in a full sense, in Hanna Schlisser's phrase, 'a relatively homogeneous class of noble and commoner agrarian capitalists' [Schlissler, 1978: 199, cited in Bowman, 1993: 66].

(iii) The Changing Nature of the Class of Prussian 'Free Wage Labour'

(a) Farm Servants and Cottagers: Transitional, Semi-Feudal Forms and The Formal Subsumption of Labour

Perkins observes that 'landless labourers ['free labourers' or day labourers] existed in...eastern Germany as early as the sixteenth century' [Perkins, 1984: 18]. In fact, as we have seen, ever since the fourteenth century a class of 'free agricultural labourers' had existed in Prussia. These were totally landless men who functioned as hired labourers. There were, also, supplies of largely Polish migrant labour. Certainly, however, their 'number began to increase significantly from the 1750s onwards, with the onset of secular population growth' [Perkins, 1984: 18].[30] With Junkers engrossing large amounts of peasant land, one might have expected their numbers to grow even more after 1807, and for them to constitute the labour-force on Junker estates: in the 'ideal' situation, earning money wages as free wage-labour and constituting an integral part of that stark opposition of wage-labour and capitalist farmer that identifies a fully-formed capitalist agriculture.

There was a severe depression in the 1820s, when the market for cereals more or less collapsed. The Junkers themselves were badly hit, and this is the era of forced sales of noble estates to commoners. It was then, however, that the Junkers cemented their hold over a subject labour force. Thus:

> Their precarious existence made the lords especially grasping in their settlements with their peasants. The depression deprived the new landholding peasantry of the monetary credit it required for the maintenance and improvement of its holdings, now reduced by the settlements with the lords. As the market for grain collapsed, the landless peasants had trouble finding work, even at seriously reduced wages; their misery deepened. Bitter and disillusioned over the meager and sour fruit they had obtained from the reforms, the poorer peasants found themselves slipping into the status of daily wage labourers, or what was coming to be called the rural proletariat. Their rage increased as their subsistence declined over the next two decades until, with the harvest failures of the mid-1840s, their situation became desperate. [Berdhal, 1988: 265]

Their transformation into a class of free wage labour might, then, have been expected.

Changes in that direction were, indeed, afoot. But, the transition to such a situation was long and complex. As Perkins points out, 'until the later nineteenth century landless labourers, and day labourers in general, accounted for only a small fraction of the total labour force on *Junker* holdings in the eastern territories' [Perkins, 1984: 18–19]. How, then, did Junkers cope with the 'labour problem' in the immediate aftermath of Emancipation? We have noted the reluctance of small peasants to work on Junker holdings. What forms, then, did the new labour force take?

We have indicated that, at first, the Junkers replaced peasant labour services and the compulsory farm service of labour youth with a form of contractually hired farm servants and the cottager system. These, in fact, were transitional forms, which bore deep vestigial traces of feudalism, and went only a small part of the way towards fully free wage labour. They, in their turn, would give way to new forms of wage labour. Let us first consider those initial ways of resolving the labour problem.

The former, contractually hired farm servants, were, for the most part, unmarried young males, who, to start off with, were available, in sizeable amounts, in the circumstances of fairly rapid population growth in Prussia east of the Elbe in the first fifty years of the nineteenth century. They

> were boarded on the farmsteads to work during the years prior to military service or before marriage. With agrarian reform the duties of farm servants, who had been hired earlier to look after the limited number of livestock maintained on Junker farms, were extended to fieldwork: especially to the operation and care of the Junker draft animals that replaced the teams of serf peasants in the work of cultivation. [Perkins, 1984: 7] [31]

Here was a clear continuity with the past, in the continuance of a particular practice. There is a semi-feudal element in the relationship. Feudal remnants remained, yet feudalism had gone. These farm servants were hired under contract, and were technically free, and yet they were not fully free, inasmuch as there continued to be restriction on their movement (this did not go, finally, until 1867).

More important, however, was the cottager system, which, in essence, 'superseded formal serfdom as a source of labour on *Junker* holdings in the early nineteenth century' [Perkins, 1984: 8], and which 'took the form of a creation of cottager holdings on *Junker* estates' [Perkins, 1984: 7]. Here, 'cottagers were allocated a small holding and, in return, were obligated to provide labour for the *Junker* farm' [Perkins, 1984: 7].[32]

These cottagers, the *Instleute* (also known as the *Drescher*, = 'thresher', and the *Gutstagelohner*), in fact derived much of their income from the land on the Junker estate given to them, which they farmed directly: keeping a cow, pigs, goats, and poultry; growing potatoes for family subsistence, flax for spinning and weaving into linen; and producing a grain surplus for sale in the market.

There was a virtual absence of a money wage, with that being paid only minimally, outside the harvesting and threshing seasons. The *Instleute*, then, were simple commodity producers (for a full analytical treatment of simple commodity production see the relevant sections in Part 3 on the North and the West of the Unites States). They would thresh the Junker's grain in the autumn and winter, and receive a share of the sheaves (one in every ten to twelve); and they retained a share of the straw and grain.[33]

Of central significance for the Junker was the obligation placed upon the cottager 'to furnish and support at least two additional workers to labour on the Junker's farm. These *hofganger* or *Scharwerker*, consisted of the cottager's wife and a second, and in some areas a third, supplementary worker '[Perkins, 1984: 7]. That labour was considerable: consisting, in the case of the cottager's wife, of, as well as her own domestic work, a variety of tasks, such as milking, harvest work, washing, slaughtering, gardening, sheep-shearing, feather plucking;[34] and, in that of the second or third *Hofganger*, working with the cottager when employed on the Junker's farm. The *Hofganger*, indeed, at least in the early post-Emancipation years, would usually be a member of the cottager's family. The cottager, then, was 'a direct employer of labour in the form of his *Hofganger*, whom he employed to labour on his own and his employer's holding...[Here was the case of the] exploited, who in order to be able to live was also compelled to exploit' [Perkins, 1984: 8]. But this was no potential capitalist. Capitalism from below, or even advanced petty commodity production from below (see the chapter on the North and the West of the United States for this notion) would not come from this source. The cottagers were too stifled, too constrained, for that possibility to exist.

Clearly, the cottager system, in its heyday, had considerable advantages for the Junker. Initially, land was relatively abundant for the Junker, and his form of extensive farming meant that there was little disadvantage in granting land to cottagers. It has been suggested, moreover, there was a minimum of class conflict, since cottager and Junker at least shared an interest in the harvest and market prices of commodities, while the Junker could dispense with any supervisory role. But the central appeal, given the availability of land and absence of cash, was the guarantee of a labour supply at the necessary times in the agricultural cycle, with a small cash outlay.[35] Thus might accumulation proceed unhindered.

If there was a minimum of class conflict, we note the dependence of the cottager upon the Junker: 'the cottager was dependent upon his employer for the provision of medical aid and most ended up subsisting on the minimal poor law provision furnished by the *Junkers'* [Perkins, 1984: 9]. Lenin's phrase describing the Prussian peasant masses as being 'forcibly [kept]...down to a pauper standard of living' [Lenin, 1962: 422] is, perhaps, not far from the mark.

The cottager system, we may say, was a transitional form. It has been described as 'effectively, a form of quasi-serfdom, with the worker being obligated to perform labour services on account of holding certain lands on his

employer's estate: and often being effectively tied to the land by being indebted to his employer' [Perkins, 1984: 8–9].[36] Like the farm servants, it is semi-feudal in nature: Hanna Schissler describes it as 'a kind of semi-feudal sharecropping system' [Schissler, 1986: 48 n. 66]. Sharecropping in the American South we discuss fully below. The analogy is fanciful. This was no sharecropping relationship in any useful sense.

Winson suggests that it might usefully be seen in terms of Marx's now well-known distinction between formal and real subsumption of labour. We need not pursue here the details of that distinction, but note, simply, that for Marx this was a way of analysing the complexity of transition from the dominance of a pre-capitalist mode of production to that of a fully-fledged capitalism (from the dominance of absolute surplus value to that of relative surplus value). It suggests, first, how capital takes over an existing labour process, as it finds it, subsumes it in formal terms, but does not, initially, change it; thus creating the potential for future development of the productive forces. It is only with fully-developed capitalist relations of production that real subsumption comes, that 'this formal subsumption is...replaced by a real subsumption' [Marx, 1976: 645].[37] Winson argues that

> With this type of development capital as personified by the modernising Junker, extended its sway without transforming the objective conditions of production. On the contrary, it is because certain conditions do not obtain, in particular the existence of a developed market for labour power in the countryside that, for a long time, one can only speak of the formal subsumption under capital in this case...On the other hand, this development does...lay the basis for...the real subsumption of labour and the resultant transformation of estate production. [Winson, 1982: 390–1]

There is, I think, some merit in so identifying the cottager system. It raises problems, perhaps, inasmuch as there *was* some change in the labour process (see below), but that the nature of exploitation suggested formal rather than real subsumption is plausible. Certainly, the identification is correct in stressing the essentially transitional nature of that system.

In another formulation, we have the following: 'While it guaranteed personal "freedom", the economic and political serfdom of the labouring population on the land was maintained' [Herzfeld, 1905: 24].[38] But, of course, serfdom is here used more as a metaphor than an accurate analytical category. It was not serfdom, in any analytically useful sense. Nevertheless, if we maintain that terminology, as Perkins observes, appositely: 'Such a form of "serfdom", however, was far more productive than its predecessor and facilitated to a greater extent the introduction of new techniques and technology: not least because the *Junker* was no longer dependent upon the ploughs and draft animals of his serfs' [Perkins, 1984: 9]. He did depend on their labour, however, and by the 1850s this way of gaining access to labour was proving to be problematic.

A crucial element in this was that land had become scarcer, as agriculture entered a less extensive phase. As new techniques brought more intensive farming, so this development raised the opportunity cost of land, and made Junkers think carefully about the land allotted to cottagers. Effectively, the cost of labour was now increased. At the same time, there was, locked into the cottager system, labour power, used in the cultivation of cottagers' plots, that the Junkers wished to appropriate; while the method of paying a share of the harvest came to be seen as wasteful. This had profound implications for the cottager system. This has been summed up as follows. The increased scarcity of land

> substantially increased the opportunity cost of the land allocated to cottagers and, thereby, indirectly, the cost of the labour furnished by the system. In other words, *Junkers* became more and more aware that the land of their cottagers could more effectively and profitably be utilized as part of their own farms and through the process of incorporating cottager land into their holdings they could prospectively reduce labour costs. The system of paying the worker in the form of share of the harvest came to be viewed as occasioning a serious loss of income from grain sales. It also resulted in a serious loss of straw from the *Junker's* holding, which was required for livestock fodder to produce manure as a means of raising grain yields. Finally...in some areas, such as the sugar-beet districts...it would seem that efforts were made to reduce and even eliminate the landholding of agricultural workers as a means of increasing the amount of female and child labour available for large-scale farming. The tasks of hoeing, thinning and harvesting root crops absorbed a considerable amount of female and child labour and they coincide seasonally with equally pressing tasks on cottager holdings. [Perkins, 1984: 9] [39]

Yet again, the form taken by production relations had come into conflict with the productive forces. These now became, once more, a fetter, whereas previously they had permitted some advance. Accumulation was hindered. A new form was called for.

In addition, the other form of labour adopted, in the wake of Emancipation, that of farm servants, was also subject to strain. The demand for labour rose. As yet, there was little by way of labour-saving mechanisation. But Junkers found the system of farm servants too costly, while there was, too, increasing reluctance among youths to become farm servants. Thus:

> The expansion of the area of holdings under tillage and the adoption of machinery, such as seed-drills, brought an increased demand for labour to operate teams of draft animals. On the other hand, a widening social gulf between the *Junkers* and the agricultural working class, and the increasing cost of providing board on farmsteads, tended to make the former more and more reluctant to employ farm servants. This attitude was reinforced in turn by a growing reluctance of youths in rural areas to enter farm service, where

> they were subject to conditions of employment, such as corporal punishment for misdemeanours, exceptionally long hours and annual payment of wages, which did not apply in other occupations. [Perkins, 1984: 11]

That, too, would have to go.

(b) Confined Labourers (Deputatisten): On the Way to Real Subsumption of Labour

In place of these forms, as the dominant way of securing labour, the Junkers introduced the system of confined labourers (*Deputatisten*). By the late 1860s, this had become the predominant form of agricultural labour on the Junkers' holdings in the eastern territories.[40] We were on the way to a full real subsumption of labour [Winson, 1982: 396]. Or, if you like, if, previously, we confronted semi-feudal relations of production, now they might be described as semi-capitalist, if that is not too schematically fanciful.

The confined labourer, like the cottager, had the obligation to supply *Hofganger*; he was hired on a written short-term contract (usually six months); he did not receive a share of the grain threshed, or did so to a very limited extent (he received, rather, a fixed quantity of grain, and other goods, as a wage); and he received not an allotment, of the kind given to cottagers, but only a small potato patch (less than an acre). Essentially, the worker was provided with rent-free accommodation on the Junker farmstead. This dispensed with the need to supply a significant amount of land in order to ensure the supply of labour, and was, also, a means of allowing summary eviction where the Junker so chose (where rent was paid there was legal protection).[41] Effectively, the Junker continued to guarantee access to a labour force, but at lower cost; while a sizeable area of land was made available for cultivation by the Junker. Indeed, while the confined labourer's income was more secure than that of the cottager, it continued to be largely in kind and to be kept, by the Junker, to the barest minimum. It was a system characterised by 'increased dependency' of labourer upon Junker and 'a lowering of worker morale' [Perkins, 1984: 12].[42] Lenin's postulate of 'the degradation of the peasant masses' [Lenin, 1964a: 33] rings true.

But this system, too, had significant deficiencies. While the Junker was freed from the obligation to supply large allotments, where *Deputatisten* were hired, he did have to erect and maintain cottages, however mean these might be. This was felt to be 'a substantial financial burden' [Perkins, 1984: 13]. More serious, was the problem over incentives, a problem shared with the cottager system: of relating reward to effort, a classic problem for the capitalist producer. As the Junkers applied increasingly capitalist criteria, so they felt that *Deputisten* system was profoundly flawed in this respect.[43]

Moreover, there was another problem associated with payment in kind. As commodity production expanded significantly, and as new crops were introduced (crops other than subsistence crops), so the system became increasingly

anachronistic. Where the crop was grain, such a system might work. It could be consumed. But where, as it was increasingly, it was sugar-beet, then it ceased to make sense. As one farmer put it: 'Where beet are grown payment of labour cannot be in kind: it's just as impossible, for example, as paying coalminers in coal' [cited in Perkins, 1984: 15].[44]

The system, further, lacked flexibility. It had one serious disadvantage. Production was increasingly intensified, and the mechanisation of threshing was introduced. The seasonality of demand for labour increased. With intensification came a substantial rise in demand during the summer season (from early March to the end of October); while with the mechanisation of threshing came a significant decline in winter. Thus: 'In these circumstances...the employment of confined labourers on year-round contracts became ill-adapted for an increasing proportion of the total labour needs of German farming' [Perkins: 1984: 15]. Yet again, there was powerful pressure to change, as accumulation came into conflict with the relations of production. The Junkers wished to dispense with it.[45]

(c) Day Labourers/'Free Labourers' (Freie Arbeiter): Money Wages and Real Subsumption of Labour

As the confined labour system ceased to meet the needs of Junkers, an alternative was 'increasing resort to the employment of day labourers, or what were referred to as "free labourers" (*frei Arbeiter*)' [Perkins, 1984: 18]. The hiring of day labourers as the major solution to the labour problem had been resisted resolutely by Junkers ever since Emancipation.

Such labour began to be employed most extensively in the areas growing sugar-beet, but, even there, by comparison with other parts of Germany 'in the eastern territories...the process was relatively delayed and retarded' [Perkins, 1984: 19]. There appeared to be a desire, on the part of Junkers, 'to retain as much as possible of the "traditional patriarchal relationship" with those who worked on their farms' [Perkins, 1984: 19, inverted commas mine]. It was the control associated with the 'traditional patriarchal relationship' that they wished to retain. They were opposed to payment of wages in money, which would erode such control. In the words of one farmer: 'One cannot tie the workers with cash: only with payment in kind' [cited in Perkins, 1984: 19]. They were fearful that money wages would simply be used to finance emigration.[46]

Workers became increasingly active in demanding money wages. A fully-formed rural proletariat, a free wage-labour force, was forced upon the *Junkers*. Thus: 'Reluctant as many Junkers were to increase their dependence upon day labourers receiving money wages, the logic of circumstances [the logic of capital – TJB] dictated that an increasing proportion of the labour force on large holdings consist of that category of workers' [Perkins, 1984: 20]. So it was, at last, that Prussian Junkers became thoroughly capitalist farmers. It was only now that real subsumption of labour had truly arrived. It was, however, after 1871 that this change took place in any full sense.[47]

When it did, indeed, the Junkers addressed the incentives problem that had dogged both the cottager and the confined labourer systems: availing themselves of the facility it provided 'for increasing the intensity of exploitation of the existing labour supply, by means of adopting piece rates to stimulate work effort and productivity' [Perkins, 1984: 20]. At last, the link between effort and results might be forged. The Junkers might, on this score at least, at last sleep well in their capitalist beds. A piece-rate system, we note, 'presupposed a detailed and comprehensive knowledge on the part of the farmer of the tasks performed by labour in agriculture' [Perkins, 1984: 21]. That the Junkers had. They had had it for a long time. They had had needed it throughout the feudal era. Now they deployed it in a throughly capitalist way. The transition to capitalism in the Prussian countryside was complete.[48]

These changes, which take us into the post-1871 era, were fundamental. They were forced, yet again, by the advance of the productive forces, which met the obstacle of inappropriate production relations. Perkins observes: 'In part the employment of day labourers, and the application of piece rates, was a natural response of farmers to the increasing intensity of seasonal variations of demand for labour consequent upon the adoption of rootcrop cultivation and the threshing machine' [Perkins, 1984: 23].[49] 'Natural', perhaps, is not quite the word. It was not 'natural' for Junkers so to respond. They did so with a heavy heart. 'Inevitable' captures the situation more accurately: 'inevitable' because their survival depended on it.

Meanwhile, capitalist industrialisation was proceeding apace. The relationship of Prussian agriculture to that we will discuss later in the chapter. Here we note that it was fuelled, especially from the 1870s on, by 'flight from the land' (*Landflucht*), rural–urban migration. Adoption of the piece-rate system, and payment in cash, hastened this:

> by approximating the conditions of agricultural employment to those of industry, [and so facilitating and stimulating] the agricultural worker to seek industrial employment. Merely by receiving his income in cash, the agricultural worker acquired a means of comparing his earnings with those of industrial workers: a comparison that usually produced adverse results in respect of agricultural work, even where piece rates were paid. [Perkins, 1984: 23]

Capitalism, in the broadest sense, had, indeed, arrived.[50]

(d) Migrant Labour

There is one last development that we must note, although it was a feature, essentially, of the post-1871 years. That is the use of migrant labour. This had been resorted to, as we have seen, since long before the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century itself, it had been an increasing feature since the 1850s, at first the use largely of German migrant labour. It was from the 1870s that labour

from outwith the boundaries of Germany, largely from Russia and Austrian Poland, took on a prominent role. Indeed, Perkins goes so far as to say: 'The extent to which German agriculture became dependent upon foreign migratory workers, who accounted for almost a third of all agricultural employees by the eve of the First World War, represents the really distinctive feature of the German transition from feudalism to capitalism in the countryside' [Perkins, 1984: 24].[51] German labour was fleeing the land. Foreign labour, to a large extent, took its place: 'in spite of efforts to substitute capital for labour in the form of machinery, the intensification of agricultural production in Germany created additional demand for labour, at a time of increasing pressure on supply through "flight from the land"' [Perkins, 1984: 4]. Such labour was cheap, malleable and available in large quantities.

By now, as we have pointed out repeatedly, Prussian agriculture was thoroughly capitalist. Max Weber observed: 'The introduction of Poles is here a weapon in the anticipated class struggle which is directed against the growing consciousness of the workers, and it is obvious that in this connection it is a very effective weapon' [Weber, 1979: 199]. The comment is apposite.
A recent writer has argued:

> insofar as these migrant Polish laborers were subject to physical abuse, deemed racially and culturally inferior, enjoyed no political rights, and were not permitted to change employers during the agricultural season (April to November), the label 'free labor' seems as inappropriate for them as for contemporaneous black sharecroppers. It was not until the German revolution of 1918–19 and the Weimar Republic that agricultural workers achieved a civil and political status equal to that of industrial workers. [Bowman, 1993: 111][52]

That is simply to confuse concepts and misunderstand the meaning and nature of the notion of free wage labour. Such migrant labour was free of the means of production, and, despite restrictions during the agricultural season (a phenomenon not uncommon among agricultural labourers, and, indeed other forms of labour, where capitalist relations prevail) free to move between seasons. 'Free', in this sense, does not carry the necessary connotation of political and civil rights. The class struggle was being waged effectively by *capitalist* Junkers, and by the state on their behalf. We shall examine black sharecroppers below.

(iv) The Character of the Outcome

How might we characterise the outcome? Hartmut Harnisch, with considerable insight and cogency, places the Prussian outcome in comparative perspective, and suggests that we need to seek the nature of the Prussian path in the manner and determinants of its unfolding. He captures the essence of that path, and clarifies, also, something of the English, the French and the Dutch paths (the first two of which are our concern in our wider study while the third is not).

Harnisch points out that 'in England and the Netherlands the ancient feudal order of the countryside gradually vanished in a slow process of disintegration and disruption which led to the gradual transition into modern capitalist agriculture' [Harnisch, 1986: 37]. In the broader comparative study, of which the present essay is part, we examine the manner in which this happened in England, and consider its determinants and the nature of the outcome. A new capitalist agrarian order emerged, possessed of few continuities with that past.

Then, 'in France [the ancient feudal order]...was abolished by the revolutionary forces which operated between 1789 and 1793' [Harnisch, 1986: 37]. As we note in the broader study, the French Revolution did, indeed, mark a sharp rupture with the past. That it was crucial to the manner of unfolding of French agrarian transition is incontrovertible, although part of its legacy was a delayed transition to capitalism in the French countryside.

By contrast with these instances, however, in Prussia east of the Elbe, the following was the outcome:

> feudal bonds and burdens were...removed by way of agrarian reforms, consisting of legislation combined with compensations to the old feudal lords...[B]y contrast to England, France and the Netherlands, traditional feudal agrarian structures changed, at varying speeds and with varying completeness, into capitalist agrarian systems which eventually dispensed with all the old legal and economic ties between peasants and lords, once the latter had received their indemnities. Clearly this procedure allowed a greater continuity between the old and the new orders than was the case when feudal agrarian structures were destroyed through revolutionary activities: essential features of the old order were either preserved or only modified a little. [Harnisch, 1986: 37]

We have noted the manifestations of this continuity. In so doing we have seen the specificities of the final outcome, as these were determined by the manner of transition.

3 CAPITALISM FROM ABOVE AND THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES: 1807–71

(i) Lenin versus Clapham

We recall Lenin's position on the retardative effect of production relations in the Prussian path with respect to the productive forces. Lenin was especially concerned with the record with respect to mechanisation of agriculture: that having implications both for agriculture's productive capacity and for Department I industries. We need not repeat the details. It was, of course, a highly stylised view, presented in 'model'/summary form. Lenin, as we have seen, would be able to consider the American path in some detail, but not the Prussian experience.

By contrast, we find a far more positive picture painted by, for example, a traditional economic historian, J.H. Clapham, in a book first published in 1921, which went to several editions (see, for example, [Clapham, 1921, 1936] for the first and fourth editions), and which one still finds cited. Clapham gave to one of the two relevant sections in his book the title 'Agricultural Progress' (for the period from 1815 to 1848) [Clapham, 1936: 47–52], and to the other 'Technical Progress' (for the period 1848 to 1914) [Clapham, 1936: 214–21]. He paints a picture of more or less unrelieved 'progress' of the productive forces in Prussian agriculture up to 1914.

Who was right? Of course, both may have been right, inasmuch as Lenin, concentrating on the later nineteenth century, focused upon mechanisation, while Clapham had little to say on that, and gave far greater attention to non-mechanised inputs. That, however, is hardly a satisfactory position. We now have the benefit of more detailed empirical work relating to this issue. There is no other way to resolve the problem. What does it show?

(ii) The Immediate Post-1807 Era: To the 1850S

Let us start with Clapham's unqualified hymn of praise. He gives the following account for the period from 1815 to 1848. Prussia, he argues, had taken to 'rational agriculture' (for which one might read 'capitalist agriculture', although there is little mention of the relations of production). The Junkers, we are told, were 'spirited cultivators' and immensely industrious:

> The rational agriculture [advocated by Albrecht Thaer and a number of others[53]]...was certainly making progress [in the German states] between 1815 and 1850. The progress was fastest on the manors of the east. The tradition of leadership, the tradition of serving their families and their country, the cruder incentives afforded by the growth of corn and wool exports from eastern Germany...helped to make eastern squires spirited cultivators. Like Bismarck in 1839, when he threw up the civil service in disgust, many of them worked furiously at their estates. [Clapham, 1936: 50]

They took to Thaer's recommendations, if a little belatedly – say by the 1830s:

> Thaer had pointed out the right lines of work, though Prussia was so hard hit by the wars that in Thaer's lifetime (he died in 1828) few had capital enough to follow them up. They were – deep ploughing and improved implements after the English fashion; stall feeding of capital after the Flemish fashion; careful attention, in suitable localities, to the merino sheep introduced into eastern Germany at the end of the eighteenth century; extensive growth of the oil seeds, rape, linseed, hemp; a better rotation of crops with clover or grasses

> on the fallow and roots as a field crop; finally, and here the school of Thaer went ahead of contemporary England, a close attention to agricultural book-keeping...[There was also] the potato. It had been making headway long before 1800...By 1815 it was grown everywhere, east and west, by squire and peasant; and within a few years spirit was being distilled from it extensively. In 1831 there were 23,000 distilleries in Prussia, of which between a half and two-thirds used potatoes. [Clapham, 1936: 50–1]

In other words, those improved forms of the productive forces, that were available in the late eighteenth century, but whose adoption had been powerfully impeded by the then existing relations of production (serfdom), were now, with new relations of production (which we have just considered), adopted.

There were, also, new developments in the productive forces used in the Prussian countryside. Most notably, there was sugar beet:

> Among the roots was the sugar beet, whose possibilities had first been made clear by a German chemist. The first boom in beet farming and sugar factories came in Silesia and Saxony in the thirties. It stimulated the use of better machinery, because the beet requires deep cultivation and drilling: it cannot well be sown broadcast. About this time, therefore, Germany began to make the new types of machinery for herself. [Clapham, 1936: 51]

Here, it seemed, was a stimulus to Department I industries deriving from Prussia (of which more below). But, whether it can, in effect, be claimed as a development whose source lay in the eastern provinces is most doubtful.

Clapham makes reference, also, more generally to mechanisation. He tell us: 'In 1837 exhibitions of machinery were started' [Clapham, 1936: 51]. But, no evidence is presented of any significant upsurge in mechanisation before 1850 (unlike, say, the American mid-west – see below). There were other innovations: 'From England – still leading – came knowledge of guano and the earthenware drainpipe; from the German universities, that modern chemistry of agriculture connected with the name of Justus von Liebig' [Clapham, 1936: 52]. That concludes a veritable panegyric, in which Prussian Junkers are transformed, almost, into English squires (high praise, indeed; what better?). There is no mention of the continued tying of labour in semi-feudal conditions, or of abysmally low levels of living . That would have spoiled the picture.

What do we make of it? A recent, careful assessment [Berdhal, 1988: 282–6] gives us a more extended and nuanced treatment, set within the context of what the author, appropriately, terms 'the emergence of capitalist agriculture' (p. 286).[54]

Let us start with that set of productive forces that were available in the late eighteenth century and which, we argued, were in contradiction with the then existing feudal relations of production. We recall that the new set of productive forces whose adoption was prevented by the existence of serfdom was the

growing of wheat, potatoes, root fodder crops, clover and artificial grasses; these new crops, along with deep ploughing and various improved implements, and heavy inputs of fertilizer, replacing rye. Indeed, these were introduced in the first half of the nineteenth century, and in some provinces, sugar-beet cultivation emerged relatively early.[55]

What, indeed, was under way was the 'transformation of Prussian agriculture' [Berdhal, 1988: 282]. The agents of that transformation were not the old unreconstituted landlord class, but a class itself recast in terms of its membership, as we have seen, and one whose new members brought with them new attitudes, a willingness to innovate, and, very important, capital. What, then, was the nature of this 'transformation'?

As Berdhal points out, 'gradually, the traditional three-field system began to give way to more complex and productive systems of crop rotation' [Berdhal, 1988: 283]. There was an initial stage, in which a new, or 'improved', three-field system was introduced, with fallow fields planted with forage crops; and then more sophisticated rotation schemes. The pre-1807 possibilities were beginning to be realised more fully, although 'it did not happen simultaneously everywhere, and peasants everywhere, lacking the capital or the education, lagged far behind the large estate owners in adopting new methods' [Berdhal, 1988: 283].[56] There was no evidence, in other words, of any strong impulses from below being realised in the form a vibrant 'peasant capitalism'. Harnisch, the outstanding social and economic historian of Prussia of this and the preceding era, argues a convincing case that in the pre-1807 era many rich peasants did have an interest in new methods, but were prevented from adopting them because of an absence of capital [Harnisch, 1984: 48–51].[57] That continued to be the case after 1807, and through to 1848.

As we have seen, during the severe depression of the 1820s the market for cereals virtually collapsed.[58] Grain prices fell dramatically: between 1817 and 1833 to 48% of their original level.[59] There was an inevitable shift away from heavy dependence on cereals. Firstly, there was the abandonment of the three-field system, but far more than that:

> The modernization of Prussian agriculture during Vormarz [the period up to March of 1848] was a complex process that involved much more than abandoning most of the three-field system. It depended on a number of highly interrelated factors. For example, the elimination of fallow and planting of 'green fallow' crops, such as clover, required a shift to the stall-feeding of cattle, which in turn depended on adequate capital for construction of barns and stalls for the livestock. [Berdhal, 1988: 283]

Livestock, then, took on considerable significance. Sheep were very important:

> The shift away from the heavy dependence on cereal grains, whose market had collapsed during the depression, to alternative forms of production, espe-

> cially high-quality sheep, also required substantial amounts of capital to build up the herds. The shift towards animal husbandry depended on the division and enclosure of the commons, through which the lords received the lion's share of the land, in order to provide fields for the grazing of sheep. Sheep production and wool export increased enormously during the 1820s and 1830s; many saw it as the primary means of surviving the depression. [Berdhal, 1988: 283]

Especially important, in some regions, however, was the shift towards sugar beet:

> The extensive cultivation of root crops, such as sugar beets or potatoes was possible only after the facilities were developed to process them on the land. The bulkiness of sugar beets or potatoes prohibited their transport over long distances, so sugar refineries and distilleries had to be built in rural areas to transform the produce into transportable and marketable commodities. This too required both capital and an entrepreneurial spirit. Between 1841 and 1848, the number of sugar refineries in Prussia increased from 99 to 125; between 1840 and 1850, the amount of sugar beets refined grew from 160,714 tons to 390,845 tons. [Berdhal, 1988: 283]

We will have more to say about sugar beet, presently.

This was not an era of mechanisation. The age of 'mechanized and chemical agriculture' was to come later. Even so,

> some mechanization was already under way in Vormarz. Horse-driven threshing machines, reapers, and some crude sowing machines were utilized. Steam-driven machinery appeared first in the distilleries and sugar refineries before 1848. In addition improved plows and better draft animals increased the productivity of the soil. [Berdhal, 1988: 284]

One notes, again, the apparent significance of sugar beet.

How may we sum up this period? In this era, farming was 'relatively extensive' [Perkins, 1984: 8], i.e. land-using. That is to say, a major source of growth was, probably, extension of the arable acreage, since Prussia had not yet reached the 'arable frontier'. It was, in a sense, an 'internal' arable frontier, inasmuch as a considerable area of land became available as a result of 'the gradual elimination of the three-field system' [Berdhal, 1988; 285]. Thus, 'the amount of land devoted to agriculture increased, and the gradual elimination of the three-field system meant that a larger proportion of the agricultural land became productive' [Berdhal, 1988: 285]. Indeed, 'simply abandoning the the three-field system, in which roughly one-third of the fields were left fallow each year, increased the amount of land under cultivation by 50 per cent' [Berdhal, 1988: 287]. That is a remarkable increase. Effectively, there was a striking extension of the arable acreage.

At the same time, it was labour-intensive. Berdhal observes, with accuracy, that 'although we are accustomed to thinking that agricultural modernization becomes less labor-intensive and therefore releases a labor force to be employed in industrial development, the first stages of such an agricultural transformation are much more labor-intensive' [Berdahl, 1988: 285]. That is so, given the absence, to a significant extent, of mechanisation. In the Prussian case, during this period, most of the innovations (with the exception of sheep farming) were labour-intensive. That was true of the stall-feeding of cattle–involving much more labour input than when the cattle were left to graze on the fallow, with fodder having to be brought to the stalls, and dung taken away, and spread on the fields; the cultivation of root crops – turnips requiring more hoeing, and potatoes involving very labour-intensive harvesting; clover – which had to be cut twice per season, and dried and stored.[60]

On a basis of the evidence considered here, it seems clear that during Vormarz there was a qualitative change in the productive forces – that a new labour process was introduced. There was, it is true, an extension of the arable acreage (an internal shift to the limit of the 'arable frontier'), but the forces of production changed, too. The change was largely in methods of production and biochemical inputs, and was, essentially, labour-intensive. There was some limited shift towards mechanical inputs, but mechanisation was not a major feature of the labour process in this era.

One should not, however, necessarily conclude that there might be an element of truth in Clapham's panegyric. It was a panegyric, anyway, which, even if containing some element of validity, would have needed to be heavily qualified by treatment of the strains to which the system was subject, and the abject conditions of rural labour – that 'rural proletariat' that had not yet become a force of free wage labour. For this period, Lenin's stress upon both the 'degradation of the peasant masses' and the absence of mechanisation was accurate. Lenin, indeed, was probably correct in his emphasis upon the tardiness with which the productive forces developed. As yet there was no dramatic growth. It was hardly a situation of stasis, but we need to note that:

> In the 1840s farming was amongst the most backward in Europe. The extensive contemporary testimony of foreign observers with agricultural knowledge supports this observation. For example, a Dutch farmer who migrated to Germany in the late 1840s was amazed at the relative inefficiency of farming in the latter country and in particular he was amazed at the poor quality of ploughs and ploughing. Improved farming at that time and for...a decade or so afterwards largely consisted of the imitation of British and then American innovations. [Perkins, 1981: 114]

The statement applies to 'Germany', but it clearly is valid *a fortiori* for Prussia.

We have suggested above that the subsumption of labour was not yet in the realm of real subsumption; that capital, as yet, was in a relationship of formal

subsumption with labour. But, we noted, as the arable frontier was approached and land became scarce, as new techniques brought more labour-intensive farming, and the cottager system, with its granting of land to direct producers, became uneconomical, so there was pressure to change. The new labour process needed new relations of production. In particular, we have suggested, sugar beet production faced the problem of labour power (especially female and child labour) being locked up during periods when the Junkers needed it. Yet further changes in the labour process – in the productive forces – were in the offing.

(iii) From the 1850s to the 1870s (and Thereafter): 'The Age of Chemical and Mechanized Agriculture'?

Robert Berdhal refers to the 1848–1914 years as 'the age of mechanized and chemical agriculture' [Berdhal, 1988: 285]. Certainly, these were years of change. There was a secular boom between the 1850s and 1870s, with demand and prices rising. This was a period during which there was 'an improvement of agricultural techniques that was concentrated on larger holdings' [Perkins, 1984: 9]. Whether, however, Berdhal's epithet is an accurate one for Prussia east of the Elbe, in our period, is doubtful.

If we return to Clapham, we find his enthusiasm undiminished. He writes of 'the broad fields of the *Rittergut*, for the most part not hedged, bur otherwise resembling those of an English farm in a district of nineteenth century inclosures, like south Cambridgeshire or the Lincoln Wolds. These were the fields in which the fight for scientific agriculture was won' [Clapham, 1936: 215–16]. Lenin, writing in 1908, could doubt 'the development of technique and scientific cultivation' [Lenin, 1963b: 161]. Who was right?

Clapham continues. Unfortunately, much of his treatment relates to a united Germany. Yet, he clearly means some of it to relate to Prussia. He now waxes lyrical on the chemist Justus von Liebig (1803–73), who

> lived long enough...to see his teaching put into practice on many of those fields, and to foresee its spread to the whole country. The chief books in which he expounded the chemistry of agriculture as now understood appeared in 1840 and 1842. They laid the foundations of for the chemical study of soils, and for the use of 'artificials' – chemical manures – to rectify soils, or replace the constituents abstracted from them by various crops. [Clapham, 1936: 216]

Clapham's gaze fixes upon sugar beet:

> it is generally agreed that the sugar beet industry did more than anything else to make German agriculturalists welcome this knowledge...Beet growing requires deep ploughing and the seed must be drilled if the crop is to be successful. Therefore it called for the best and most powerful implements. Beet is an exhausting crop; therefore its place in a rotation and the problem of maintaining the fertility of the soil on which it is grown required careful attention. The production of a type of beet with a maximum sugar yield, and the chemical problems raised by its treatment in the factories, invited scientific research. The beet pulp furnished an excellent cattle food. So on every side the industry touched fundamental questions in agriculture. [Clapham, 1936: 216–17]

Certainly, sugar beet was important in parts of Prussia. That it grew remarkably in Germany, more broadly, is beyond dispute. But we need to be careful in equating 'Germany', the post-1871 total entity, with Prussia, and especially careful in equating it with Prussia east of the Elbe. Clapham stressed, too, the importance of the potato, and its use in distilling and as a cattle food. He pointed to the spread of surface and subsoil drainage on a large scale, the application of nitrates and phosphates, and 'green manuring' (the ploughing in of crops such as the clovers). Again, he clearly intended this to be seen as relevant to Prussia. There was an increase, too, in livestock: in horses, cattle, pigs and goats, although not in sheep (which showed a remarkable decline).[61]

Clapham's eulogistic vignette cannot, of course, be taken seriously as an adequate representation of the course of Prussian agriculture in this period. I cite it as an extreme contrast with Lenin's view. But Lenin's 'model', too, needs empirical rendering. Lenin, however, was not writing, as a university professor, at his leisure (in those distant days when university professors had scholarly leisure), what purported to be an economic history of France and Germany. He had other concerns.

Both, of course, take us beyond the chosen time-span of this study, into the Imperial period of united Germany – that most contentious period when a tariff on imported grain was applied (first in 1879, and with increases in 1885 and 1887; with an easing in 1892 and 1894; and then the reestablishment of a highly protectionist tariff in 1902). It has been pointed out that the tariff and its repercussions became 'the fundamental theme of the historiography of Imperial German agriculture' [Perkins, 1981: 71], an historiography now riddled with 'contradictions and...confusion' (op. cit., 74). It is not, I hope, intellectual cowardice that leads me to refrain from considering that contentious issue. It is partly to avoid the immense controversy that surrounds the tariff and its implications that it might seem wise to cut the story short before 1879. That, I think, is discretion rather than cowardice. But, by then, anyway, the Prussian agrarian transition had taken place. So to restrict the treatment, then, is valid rather than unsound.[62] Having decided so to restrict our treatment, where appropriate we will signal the implications for the future of developments in the period before the 1870s.

By 1850, the era of extending the arable acreage was over. 'Extensification' had come to an end. We enter a period of intensification, when there were increased inputs of capital and labour 'to a more or less fixed area of agricultural land' [Perkins, 1981: 75].[63] There can be no doubt that intensification accelerated at some point in the 1870s.[64] That is beyond our present concerns. But, as

Perkins observes, 'the continued intensification of farming in *Germany* from the 1870s was closely related to the substantial improvements in the techniques and technology that had occurred over previous decades' [Perkins, 1981: 78, emphasis mine]. It is those previous decades that concern us: more precisely, in this section, the 1850s and 1860s into the 1870s. And the advances in question related, in essence, to intensive arable farming.[65]

Within arable farming, it was root crops that were the basis for intensification after 1850. That root crops, and especially sugar beet, played a remarkable transforming role, both in agriculture itself and with respect to manufacturing industry, seems indisputable. We will touch on the latter aspect of their significance in this section, but develop it a little more fully in the next. Here we will concentrate on their impact upon Prussian agriculture's productive capacity.

We may start by putting root crops in some perspective with respect to cereals. It is likely that the proportion of the arable acreage under cereals declined between 1850 and the 1870s (a decline that had started long before 1850), but still, in 1878, in Germany as a whole, it accounted for more than half (53%, to be precise).[66] If we assume that the Prussian figure was of this order, then, clearly, we cannot ignore cereals. On the contrary, they loomed large in the total picture. Table 4.1 shows the growth of production of wheat, rye, barley and oats between 1852 and 1870 (and before). We need to bear that in mind, and not be wholly captured by a kind of 'root crop determinism'. Root crops were important, but not wholly determining. By 1878, they occupied 14% of the total arable acreage of Germany as a whole [Perkins, 1981: 80]. It is not clear how much of the acreage east of the Elbe they occupied. It may well have been less.

It has been argued that they 'formed the basis of the intensification of agricultural production in *Germany* from the 1850s onwards' [Perkins, 1981: 81, emphasis mine]. We again need to avoid slipping into the assumption that Germany = Prussia east of the Elbe. Not only that, but, of course, non-root crop production is likely to have been considerably less intensive, and to have had less (perhaps far less) of their favourable characteristics. That may have been true of cereal production. With this perspective in mind, we may proceed.

Table 4.1 Grain production in Prussia (pre-1866 area) (tons)

Year	*Wheat*	*Rye*	*Barley*	*Oats*
1816	392,000	1,798,000	895,000	1,541,000
1831	527,000	2,437,000	1,056,000	1,916,00
1852	818,000	3,017,000	1,040,000	1,832,000
1870	847,000	4,353,000	1,335,000	2,371,000

Source: Milward and Saul [1973: 393]. Taken from Finckenstein [1960: 313].

As Perkins stresses, 'the expansion of rootcrop cultivation...from the 1850s was intimately linked with the origins and subsequent rapid growth of artificial fertilizer consumption, which became an outstanding feature of... agriculture...and an integral part of the process of intensification of farming' [Perkins, 1981: 84]. Already by 1878, fertilizer application per hectare was significant in Germany. It would increase dramatically thereafter.[67] The base was laid before 1870. Root crops require large amounts of fertiliser. At first, these inputs were supplied by farmyard manures, but supply of these was insufficient, and so the production potential was limited. The answer proved to lie in artificial fertilisers. We note the importance of scientific research in developing the fertilisers in question.[68] That research began in the period under review.

As these root crops grew in importance, so other developments in the productive forces were stimulated. First, there was a significant improvement in the design and quality of ploughs. In the 1860s the stubble-ploughs were developed, to allow the ploughing of preceding grain crops. The land for roots, in fact, had to be ploughed to a depth double that of cereal crops. And so, in the 1860s, too, came steam-ploughing. As has been noted, 'steam-ploughs, in fact, became far more extensively used in Germany, especially on the large sugar-beet holdings, than in Britain where that technology was first developed' [Perkins, 1981: 90]. These allowed the land to be ploughed in wet conditions, and at far greater speed than with traditional plough teams.[69]

There was significant improvement, too, in other instruments of production, as a result of the needs of root crop cultivation. Thus, 'the expansion of the root-crop area contributed more than any other factor towards extending the range and improving the quality of harrows, cultivators and, and these implements spread to cereal cultivation, at first on root-crop holdings'. Moreover, harvesting needs 'stimulated efforts to overcome the complex technical problems involved in developing potato and beet harvesters' [Perkins, 1981: 91]. The full solution did not come until after the end of our period, but efforts to solve the problem had been set in motion.

As Perkins stresses, 'the expansion of rootcrop cultivation, with its extraordinarily heavy demand for labour and pronounced seasonality of employment, had a profound effect upon the form and structure of the agricultural labour force' [Perkins, 1981: 101]. Another outcome, eventually, in relation to the instruments of production, was 'the diffusion of the threshing machine displacing winter hand labour with the flail' [Perkins, 1981: 100]. We have seen, in the previous section, how the changes discussed led, eventually, to the real subsumption of labour. That did not come fully until after 1870, but by that time the pressures had built up to a marked degree.

We do, however, note the important point that 'from its basis in the sugar-beet districts, especially those of central Germany, the wage-labour system was gradually diffused in the eastern territories during the later 19th-century, but not without opposition' [Perkins, 1981: 104]. But, what needs to be noted of Perkins' discussion of the importance of root crops in this period is that it is

couched in terms of Germany. He veers between central Germany and the eastern provinces of Prussia, but what is striking is the frequency with which the central regions recur as being of critical importance in all these developments. The eastern Prussian provinces were certainly not all significantly involved in sugar beet production, while those that were seemed to have been 'followers' rather than 'leaders'.[70] It appears that potatoes were more important root crops there.[71] Potatoes were, one would suggest, a less dynamic element than sugar beet.

John Perkins concludes, with some justification, that 'overall and primarily as a consequence of the expansion of the root crop area, the transformation of German agriculture during the second half of the nineteenth century amounted to an agricultural revolution' [Perkins, 1981: 114]. That this was true, more narrowly, for Prussian agriculture is not, however, proven. In fundamental contrast with the 1840s, Perkins continues: 'By the 1900s...German agriculturalists could claim that farming in their country was the most advanced in Europe, with the possible exception of that in Denmark' (loc. cit.). The basis for this was laid in the period from the 1850s to the 1870s. Something of that may have been true for Prussia. But one must be careful.

If we can extend the Perkins argument, in full, to Prussia east of the Elbe, then it sits ill with Lenin's view of the 'Prussian path'. It might, still, well be that the 'American path' was preferable, although that would apply only to the North and the West of the United States and certainly not to the South, as we shall see. It is, perhaps, difficult to sustain the proposition that as the Prussian path unfolded in the second half of the nineteenth century it was characterised by quite the technical backwardness and absence of scientific cultivation on the large capitalist farms of Junkers that Lenin suggested. On the other hand, one should not exaggerate the dynamism of those farms. In so attributing technological dynamism to them, one may be confusing central Germany with Prussia east of the Elbe, or with all of it rather than part of it.

In Prussia east of the Elbe, mechanisation, apart from the mechanical thresher, did not get under way seriously until after 1890: with only threshers and sowing machines spreading significantly.[72] If we concentrate on cereal production, we note that mechanisation there was seriously backward, by comparison with Great Britain and France. Figures are given in Table 4.2, for Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain and Holland. The following observation places in perspective our treatment of root crops:

> Efficient reaping machines became available in Europe...after 1850...[but as Table 4.2] demonstrates their subsequent progress was slow and unimpressive...Predictably the reaping machine gained ground faster in Britain than elsewhere in Europe because of the higher average size of farm and earlier decline of the harvest workforce. Even so, less than 30 per cent of the British harvest was mechanized in 1871...In France the reaping machine was a great deal slower to take command...In view of the high average farm size east and north of the Elbe the German [i.e. Prussian – TJB] performance was if anything less impressive than the French [with only 3.6% of the corn harvest mechanised in 1881], but even though numbers of reaping machines grew dramatically after 1895 it was none the less significant [that the figure had grown to only 6% by 1895]. [Collins, 1969: 74–5]

Table 4.2 Harvest mechanisation in Western Europe: 1861–92

Year	*Country*	*Numbers of reaping machines*	*Corn area mechanised (millions of acres)*	*Percentage of corn area mechanised*
1880	Belgium	1,500	0.09	4.1
1862	France	18,000	1.08	3.4
1882	France	35,000	2.10	6.8
1892	France	62,000	3.72	11.5
1882	Germany	20,000	1.20	3.6
1895	Germany	35,000	2.10	6.0
1861	Great Britain	10,000	0.60	6.8
1871	Great Britain	40,000	2.40	27.7
1874	Great Britain	80,000	4.80	56.4
1882	Holland	239	0.01	1.1

Source: Collins [1969: 75]. The figures are taken from a variety of sources, including personal communication and an unpublished paper.

We note that in Great Britain 7% of the corn area was mechanised in 1861, 28% in 1871, and 56% by 1874. In France the figures were 3% in 1862 and 12% by 1892. In the United States, by comparison, already, by 1858, the mechanical reaper was in *general* use;[73] while by 1880 80% of American wheat was being harvested by machine.[74] There is more to Lenin's view than concentration on root crops might suggest.

4 CAPITALIST INDUSTRIALISATION AND PRUSSIAN AGRARIAN TRANSITION

(i) De Te Fabula Narratur

In 1867, in his Preface to the first edition of volume 1 of *Capital*, the German edition, Marx deliberately addressed his German readers. The timing is, from our viewpoint, peculiarly appropriate, inasmuch as the year is very close to the end of our chosen period: by which time the Prussian agrarian transition had been all but traversed. Prussian Junkers were by then capitalist farmers in a full

sense, more or less; real subsumption of labour was all but fully established; and a class of free wage labourers had been created.

Marx, of course, wrote as the process unfolded, in all its ambiguity, complexity and uncertainty. It was a process far less advanced in Prussia than in the country of exile in which he composed his Preface. Of one thing he was sure, however: of 'the natural laws of capitalist production...winning through and working themselves out with iron necessity' [Marx, 1976: 91]. Drawing on his deeply-ingrained classical learning, he quoted, to his prospective 'German reader' (within whom is subsumed his 'Prussian reader'), a famous line from Horace's *Satires: De te fabula narratur!* He examines, he says, in *Capital*, 'the capitalist mode of production, and the relations of production and forms of intercourse that correspond to it' (op. cit., p. 90). He continues: 'Until now, their *locus classicus* has been England. This is the reason why England is used as the main illustration of the theoretical developments I make' (loc. cit.). But, said Horace's line, 'Change but the name and it is of yourself that tale is told'.[75] In England, capitalist industrialisation had long since swept all before it. Marx continued: 'The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future' (op. cit., p. 91). Our final task, indeed, is to consider the implications of the Prussian path for capitalist industrialisation.

In that same Preface, Marx, again with his 'German reader' in mind, referred to those situations 'where capitalist production has made itself fully at home amongst us [i.e. amongst the Germans/Prussians], for instance in the factories properly so called' (op. cit., p. 91). Clearly, capitalist industrialisation was well under way by then. But, he cautioned:

> In all other spheres, and just like the rest of Continental Western Europe, we [the Germans/Prussians] suffer not only from the development of capitalist production, but also from the incompleteness of that development. Alongside the modern evils, we are oppressed by a whole series of inherited evils, arising from the passive survival of archaic and outmoded modes of production, with their accompanying train of anachronistic social and political relations. We suffer not only from the living, but from the dead. *Le mort saisit le vif!* ['The dead man clutches on to the living!']. (loc. cit.)

We have encountered, already, in the rural context, many of those 'passive survivals of archaic and outmoded modes of production'. But, did they constitute a barrier to capitalist industrialisation? Lenin, although he did not consider this explicitly, implied that, in the Prussian path, they did.

We have identified above crucial ways in which a broadly defined agrarian transition relates, intimately, to the possibility and the nature of capitalist industrialisation: through the creation of a home market, for both Department I and Department II industries; through the formation of an urban proletariat, a class of free wage labour in the cities; and through the release of surplus (a real surplus, in the form of food at reasonable prices and on appropriate terms of trade, and a financial surplus, whether appropriated via savings flows or via taxation) to permit the accumulation that is central to capitalist industrialisation. What were the implications, then, of the Prussian path of agrarian transition, in these respects? Already, we have touched upon this critical issue at several points. Already, we have encountered possible implications. Let us now consider the issue explicitly.

(ii) The Course of Prussian/German Industrialisation

Anderson observes that 'Prussia presents the classical case in Europe of an *uneven and combined development*, which eventually produced the largest industrialized capitalist state in the continent from one of the smallest and most backward feudal territories in the Baltic' [Anderson, 1974: 236 emphasis in original]. Or, putting more precise dates to it, in Tilly's words:

> At the close of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 Prussia was an industrial backwater. By the mid-1860s Prussia had achieved a considerable degree of industrialisation...The turning point dates from around 1840 and was closely related to railway building...[with] large-scale government support...Before 1840 industrial investment grew haltingly...In the 1850s...[there was] a great flood of investment in mining and metallurgical enterprise, much of this induced no doubt by railroad building. By the 1860s the basic framework of Prussian industry, with its distinctive emphasis on heavy industry and large-scale organisation, was truly laid. [Tilly, 1966: 484–6] [76]

That is as succinct a statement as one might get.

The figures in Table 4.3 show the profound structural change associated with Prussia's/Germany's industrialisation. In 1849 25% of the German workforce was employed in industry; that had risen to 29% by 1861, and went on to 31% in 1882. It was, then, 30% by 1871. It went to 43% by 1907. By contrast, the figure for agriculture fell from 56% in 1849, to 52% in 1861, and just under 50% by 1882. In 1870, then, the agriculture proportion was down to 50%. It had fallen to 35% by 1907. Within industry, the rise of heavy industry is obvious, with the 'metals' category rising impressively (from less than 11% in 1849 to around 17% by 1870, and rising to 25% by 1907) and textiles declining significantly (from 26% in 1849 to under 20% in 1870, and by 1905 13%).[77]

The complex processes which produced this outcome were powerfully in evidence before 1871, and it is the pre-1871 era that is our concern here. We cannot explore this in other than the most summary fashion. The story of German industrialisation has been told in many places, and in several different ways.[78] Our concern is with one aspect of Prussia's capitalist industrialisation, that of its relationship to Prussia's capitalist agrarian transformation: the 'Prussian path' whose nature we have considered in previous sections. Even that we must treat most cursorily.

Table 4.3 Distribution of employment in Germany as a whole, 1841–1907

Category	*1849*	*1861*	*1882*	*1895*	*1907*
Total employment (000)	14,820	15,960	21,302	24,047	28,081
%ge distribution					
Agriculture	56.0	51.7	49.6	42.6	35.2
Industry	24.5	28.8	31.4	36.3	42.7
Services	19.4	19.6	19.0	21.1	22.0
Industrial employment (000)			6,691	8,714	12,016
%ge distribution					
Mining		7.6*	6.8	6.4	7.4
Manufacturing		75.0*	76.6	73.7	70.3
Construction		8.9*	9.7	12.5	13.5
Transportation		8.3*	6.9	7.4	8.8
Manufacturing employment (000)	3,050	3,700	4,858	6,170	8,173
%ge distribution					
Metals	10.9	12.4	17.2	19.8	25.1
Clay, glass,sand	4.6	6.6	7.8	9.0	9.4
Woods	11.6	11.7	9.9	9.7	9.4
Textiles	25.8	21.9	18.8	16.1	13.3
Clothing	26.7	26.1	22.9	19.8	16.0
Food, drink	16.1	15.8	14.3	15.4	15.2
Other	4.2	5.8	19.1	10.2	11.6
Manufacturing as %ge of population	8.7	9.7			

* Based on incomplete data.
Source: Tipton [1976: 37, 40, 82]. The detailed statistical sources used may be seen there. See Tipton's Statistical Appendix.

Still, even in such a constricted framework, we need say rather more about the course of Prussian industrialisation. Firstly, the state could not but be actively involved. Thus 'As leading Prussian entrepreneurs argued, the country's industrial development required public investment in river improvements, roads, canals, railroads, banks, and other facilities which would generate external economies and make private investment, for example in metalworking enterprise more profitable' [Tilly, 1966: 484–5]. The state's role in railway building from the 1830s onwards was crucial. The Prussian state's fiscal policies, then, and its revenue base, would be important. One aspect of that revenue base concerns us here: the taxation of agriculture, and, in particular the taxation of the dominant class in the Prussian countryside, the Junkers.

We must stress that it was in Prussia's Western provinces that the industrial development largely took place: aided by a Customs Union, the *Zollverein* (created between 1818 and 1836, and extended in the 1850s), which helped solve the market problem; and with railway construction from the 1830s under the aegis of the state [Anderson, 1974: 274]. It is there that we see 'the tempestuous industrial growth of the Ruhr, within the Western provinces of Prussia itself' [Anderson, 1974: 275]. Already, by the 1860s, much in evidence was 'the vertical increase in the weight of heavy industry within the Prussian social formation as a whole' [Anderson, 1974: 275]. By 1865, 'Prussia contained nine-tenths of the coal and iron production, two-thirds of steam engines, half of textile output and two-thirds of industrial labour in Germany' [Anderson, 1974: 275].[79] That was very predominantly in Prussia's western provinces.

After 1850, and up to 1881, there is remarkably little change in the structure of the eastern provinces, with the share of agriculture and of industry in the working population remaining virtually the same. Tipton refers to the region as 'the Agricultural East' [Tipton, 1976: 53]. It was destined to remain so. A pattern, it seems, had set. This contrasts dramatically with other regions of Germany. The building of railways in the east, which started in the 1850s, was of considerable significance, but not as a stimulus to industrialisation. Rather, it allowed the escape of labour from the East to seek industrial employment in other part of Germany.

The 1861 census sponsored by the *Zollverein* revealed two regions in Germany that stood out as unusual, in deviating from the national average. These were, on the one hand, the Kingdom of Saxony, mostly west of the Elbe (to be distinguished from Prussian Saxony, also mostly west of the Elbe), and, on the other, the eastern Prussian provinces of East and West Prussia, Pomerania and Posen. The former had a very high proportion of its labour force in industry in general and manufacturing industry in particular (respectively, 51% and 20%) and a low proportion in agriculture (29%); while the opposite was the case in the latter (respectively 15%, 5% and 68%).[80] The other Prussian provinces (Silesia, Brandenburg, Saxony, Westphalia and the Rhineland) had around 50% of their labour force in agriculture and 30% in industry. See Table 4.4.

It was, overall but not for the eastern provinces, a successful capitalist industrialisation. But what was the agrarian contribution from the East? Was the Prussian path one that fed into vigorous capitalist industrialisation? Or were the conclusions implicit in Lenin's rendering of that path valid?

(iii) Creation of an Urban Proletariat, the Price of Food, and the Inter-Sectoral Terms of Trade

First, we may consider the creation of a proletariat. The role of the abolition of serfdom (see above) has been stressed by some. But it is denied by others. Borchardt [1973: 98], for example, observes: 'The emancipation of the peasantry did not rapidly set free a proletariat for urban industry, as is sometimes mistakenly assumed' (loc. cit.).

Is he convincing? To start off with, complex historical processes, such as the creation of an urban proletariat, do not work themselves out overnight, in a sudden flash. Borchardt stresses that abolition of serfdom was a long drawn-out business, stretching over fifty years (p. 98). That we have seen above. Might

Table 4.4 Distribution of employment in 1861 in the eastern provinces of Prussia, the Kingdom of Saxony and Germany as a whole

Category	*East And West Prussia*	*Pomerania*	*Posen*	*Kingdom of Saxony*	*Germany*
Total employment (000)		581	605	875	15,960
%ge distribution					
Agriculture	69.8	62.7	70.3	37.4	51.7
Industry	13.4	19.1	13.0	45.6	28.8
Services	16.7	18.2	16.7	17.0	19.6
Manufacturing employment (000)	122	78.6	60.8	337	3,700
%ge distribution					
Metals	19.2	21.9	9.4	6.5	12.4
Clay, glass,sand	7.5	7.3	9.5	1.5	6.6
Wood	13.4	12.2	10.5	5.6	11.7
Textiles	4.3	6.2	6.6	56.3	21.9
Clothing	30.4	27.9	34.2	19.3	26.1
Foods	18.1	18.8	24.0	7.7	15.8
Other	6.1	5.7	5.6	3.0	5.8
Manufacturing as %ge of population	4.2	5.7	4.1	17.8	9.7

Source: Tipton [1976: 27 and 37]. The detailed statistical sources used may be seen there. See Tipton's Statistical Appendix.

one expect the formation, in any full sense, of an urban proletariat to take any less? It would be a curious position for an historian to take. That is not, however, to suggest that, even with a suitably long perspective, such class formation took place smoothly or without contradiction.

It may well be that 'in most German states local communities could obstruct the immigration of poor persons with the help of a reinforced law of settlement' (loc. cit.). There is nothing surprising in that. Quite the contrary. One would expect local communities to defend what they see to be their own interests. This is not inconsistent with the proposition that abolition of serfdom, in the longer run, created the conditions necessary to the emergence of an urban proletariat: a workforce for industry. But that would take time.

It is not necessarily at variance with the creation of an urban proletariat hypothesis that 'industries based on the factory could not provide employment for the excess of rural population until after mid-century', and that 'until then domestic industry, organised on a putting-out basis, took on large numbers of this cheap agrarian labour which could be flexibly employed' (loc. cit.). It is a

doubtful reading (or, perhaps, someone reading economic models literally – say, the Lewis model – which is a manifestly dangerous activity) that might suggest any such foreshortening of historical processes, any such sudden transformation, as is implied by Borchardt.

Crucially, in the longer run, abolition of serfdom did establish that most important precondition for the creation of a capitalist workforce (not only in industry, but also in agriculture): a class free in the double sense, free of the means of production, and free to sell its labour power. This was a crucial part of the Prussian agrarian transition, in the broad sense. Capitalist industrialisation could not have proceeded without it. But there needed to be a suitably long period of transition. Borchardt, to that extent, has a valid point.

We have seen that, after Emancipation, the Junkers made determined attempts to tie direct producers to the soil. Guaranteed access to a subject labour force was important, and, indeed, must have contributed to an absence of any powerful impulse towards mechanisation (we will encounter a very different outcome in the North and the West of the United States, although not in the South). We have observed the labour-intensive nature of agricultural development east of the Elbe. But there is no evidence to suggest that such tying east of Elbe, or the labour-intensive nature of agricultural production, constituted a significant barrier to the creation of a factory proletariat.

Of the period up to 1850, Berdhal suggests that 'a labour supply became available for industrial work as a result of the agricultural revolution because the increased productivity allowed for rapid population increase, not because the new methods *immediately* released large numbers of people from agricultural occupations' [Berdhal, 1988: 285–6, emphasis mine]. Agriculture, it is suggested, permitted that early formation of a labour force in industry through its ability to supply the wage-good *par excellence*, food. But what, precisely, was the record in this respect?

An historian writing on agriculture and development in Prussian Upper Silesia between 1846 and 1914, suggests: 'Local agriculture...helped to fulfil one of its most vital tasks during development: it supplied food at relatively constant prices or only slowly rising prices and thus allowed productivity gains to improve the purchasing power of wages for other goods' [Haines, 1982].[81] If this were so, one might, perhaps, extend the generalisation to all of Prussia east of the Elbe, and hypothesise that this might have made possible favourable terms of trade for industry. Unfortunately, while the figures presented by Haines lend some support for this for the years from 1876 to 1913,[82] between 1846 and 1875 the index of local grain prices rose quite steadily.[83]

This, in fact, is consistent with Richard Tilly's representation of the period from the 1840s to the 1870s. These years, he points out, were 'associated with food prices which tended to rise over the period and which accompanied a considerable rise in the terms of trade of agricultural *vis à vis* industrial prices' [Tilly, 1991: 185].[84] So, capitalist industrialisation was not helped in this respect. On the contrary, this must be seen as a negative factor.

Haines insists that Silesian agriculture did make an important contribution, in 'the provision of manpower for the nonagrarian sector – particularly in the early stages of development when the nonagrarian sector was small and its natural increase could not supply its own labour needs' [Haines, 1981: 377]. This is not necessarily inconsistent with Berdhal's argument, just noted. The Berdhal argument relates to the period up to 1850. Thereafter, agriculture's contribution to the making of an urban working class took on significance.

The railway building we have noted above (from the 1850s onwards in the Eastern provinces), as far as agricultural labour was concerned, made 'escape easier for the dissatisfied' [Tipton, 1976: 53]. There was a steady trickle in the 1860s and 1870s. Thus:

> Between 1865 and 1870 about eighty per cent of the immigrants to the Ruhr came from other districts of the Rhineland and Westphalia, and most of the remainder from neighbouring Hesse. Only two per cent came from the eastern provinces. This pattern remained constant throughout the 1870s. [Tipton, 1976: 89]

That changed in the 1880s, when far greater numbers began to leave the East, 'predominantly young, unmarried and propertyless agricultural laborers, both male and female...[the] males migrat[ing] to find employment in factories and mines, [the] females to take more or less temporary employment as domestic servants in urban centers' [Tipton, 1976: 91].[85] In the 1850s they had gone as seasonal labour to work in the sugar industry in central Germany. Now they went permanently, and further afield, in search of other employment. There was a determination to find employment outside of agriculture.[86]

It was only after 1870 that 'large-scale migration of labour from the land, in search of employment in urban industry' [Perkins, 1984: 4] – 'flight from the land' (*Landflucht*) – became a major issue. To that extent, Borchardt is correct. We may pursue that briefly, since it reveals something of the longer-term legacy of the Prussian path.

By then, the East's ability to deliver an urban workforce – what Tipton calls 'the proletarian reserve army building in the East' [Tipton, 1974: 56] – was not in doubt. We note that that 'proletarian reserve army' did not march in the East, but 'was fated to be thrown into battle elsewhere' (loc. cit.). The East, Tipton argues, 'was now locked into the pattern of slow growth which dominated its development well into the twentieth century' (loc. cit.). Such was the legacy of the Prussian path in the East itself. The 1871 figures reveal a large concentration of 'miscellaneous labourers' in the East, i.e. labourers not employed in agriculture. Tipton continues:

> The unspecialized miscellaneous laborers of 1871 were first reabsorbed into agriculture and then drained off with increasing rapidity to the growing urban and industrial and urban centers...[They went primarily] to new factories in the West. These workers may have been especially prone to migrate to those factories; certainly they did not form the nucleus of an industrial labor force in the East. Their loss may have made the East more exclusively dependent upon agriculture in 1882 than it had been in 1861. [Tipton, 1976: 55]

If there was any technical dynamism in the agriculture of the East, that did not translate into an upsurge of Department I industries there. That took place in the West. But a significant part of the West's labour force did come from the East.

As Perkins points out, 'the "flight from the land" in Germany was viewed by many contemporaries, and subsequently by historians, as being synonymous with migration from the eastern territories' [Perkins, 1984: 4]. That was the view, for example, of Max Sering, Max Weber and Theodor von der Goltz, 'who attributed the migration to the concentration of landownership in that region of Germany' (loc. cit.). There even emerged what came to known as Goltz's Law: the proposition that there was a 'correlation of migration with concentrated ownership and [an]...inverse relationship with dispersed landownership' (loc. cit.).[87] Whether Goltz's Law might be included in any rendering of the Prussian path is open to doubt. But it is certainly the case that Prussian labour wished to leave the oppressive conditions of the Junker holdings of the East. That, certainly, was an important feature of the Prussian path. That migration did not, of course, mean a dramatic change in the structure of the working population in the East. Those who left, we have seen, were replaced by incoming migrant labour.

If, as Richard Tilly suggests, there may be 'sense in viewing German industrialization as a case of rapid industrialization with abundant elastic labour supplies' [Tilly, 1991: 187], that was not simply because of accelerating population growth from the second half of the eighteenth century, and high growth thereafter (which Tilly stresses). The *Landflucht* from the 'Eastern agrarian provinces' was of considerable significance, quite independently of population growth. It was, however, a long-term process.

(iv) Contribution to the Creation of the Home Market?

The home market is usefully divided into two: the market for consumer goods (Department II industries) and that for capital goods, the means of production (Department I) industries. We may take them in turn.

(a) Department II Industries

We recall the implication of Lenin's rendering of the Prussian path, that the pauperised living standards of the mass of the rural population would mean a severely constricted home market for consumer goods. In our treatment above, indeed, it seems to be confirmed that until the 1870s, certainly, and, indeed, thereafter, especially with respect to the large numbers of migrant labourers, there was a relentless downward pressure on real wages, or, more broadly, real

income, in agriculture. It would appear that these were kept to a bare subsistence minimum. Not only that, but there was a marked reluctance among Junker employers to pay money wages, and a continuing payment in kind down to the 1870s.

Perkins, with respect to the confined labourer system, points to the 'high degree of employer control over the worker's pattern of consumption...[and] the minimizing of the income available for the purchase of beer, spirits and tobacco' [Perkins, 1984: 12]. The employers preferred to dispense liberal quantities of beer and Schnapps themselves, often from their own distillations, at harvest time as a spur to effort, or, more generally, as a way of controlling labour.[88] Such low real income, the absence of money wages and the control over consumption must, certainly, have exercised a significant constraint upon the demand for consumer goods, and so upon the size of the home market.

For the whole of the post-1807 period, for the century right through to the outbreak of the First World War, it is possible to point to the 'extremely low level of living in the East' [Tipton, 1976: 112]. If we go as far forward as exactly one hundred years after the Emancipation Edict, we may say that

> Per capita income in the East was only sixty-seven per cent of the national average in 1907, and though this represented a slight relative improvement (from sixty per cent) over 1882, the gap between the East and the national average had risen from one hundred and fifty-two marks in 1882 to two hundred sixty-five marks in 1907. In 1914 the province of East Prussia stood at about the same level as the average for all Prussia in 1892 in terms of personal income. Income received by residents of Berlin in 1907 was almost three times that received by persons in the East. Qualitative evidence colors the picture painted by income data. A survey in the 1890s revealed that three-quarters of the buildings in East Prussia and sixty per cent of those in West Prussia and Posen, were roofed with either wood or straw. Working conditions, even when they did not involve outright fraud or physical brutality, were indefensibly bad. Death rates, and particularly infant mortality rates, lay consistently above the national average. Low income and poor living conditions were the most commonly cited reasons for emigration from the region. [Tipton, 1976: 112] [89]

These later figures show the continuity of very low real incomes and living standards in the East right through to the First World War. That this was so until the 1870s seems clear. All in all, it is a telling vindication of part of Lenin's depiction of the Prussian path.

From this it has been concluded that 'by *limiting the local market* low income contributed to its own preservation' [Tipton, 1976: 112, emphasis mine]. Certainly, we may draw the strong conclusion that the contribution to the home market, of either the eastern provinces themselves or, more broadly, that of all of

Prussia, or, after 1871, Germany, via demand for Department II goods was most weak. Lenin was correct on this score.

We recall Anderson's stress on 'uneven and combined development'. If there had been a powerful stimulus to the home market, it would not necessarily have had its impact in the eastern provinces. The industries in question might well have been located elsewhere. Nevertheless, it is significant that the figures in the Prussian census of 1861 (see Table 4.4) revealed that for the three most easterly provinces – East and West Prussia, Pomerania and Posen

> the shares of 'factory-wholesale' employment and large establishments were much smaller than in the remaining provinces...The most striking feature of factory employment in the East was the almost complete absence of the textile industry...In the East textile output was mainly linen, produced in the home by part-time labour...[M]anufacturing employment in the East...[was] considerably below the national average. [Tipton, 1976: 28].

That, surely, was, in part, a reflection of a 'very shallow local market' [Tipton, 1976: 29].

Richard Tilly draws attention to Hartmut Harnisch's argument 'on the basis of largely non-quantitative evidence...that agrarian households were far and away the most important source of increased demand for domestically produced non-agricultural goods and services in Germany 1800–50' [Tilly, 1991: 178–9].[90] That is hardly surprising, considering agriculture's dominance during that period. Nor is it necessarily inconsistent with the view expressed here with respect to the implications of the Prussian path for the creation of a home market for manufactures. Agrarian households may well have occupied such a dominating position, but that does not mean that they were an especially dynamic element. Nor does it signify, if they were, that such a dynamism lay in the East. Tilly further argues: 'This view is supported by old and new estimates of the demand of agricultural producers for iron products (implements, machinery – a demand which turns out to be approximately equal in aggregate to that of the railroads in the 1840s and 1850s...And further support comes from a recent reassessment of users of early pre-railway nineteenth-century transportation facilities: agricultural products clearly dominated' [Tilly, 1991: 179].[91] Again, the evidence does no necessary damage to our argument.

We need to recall, after all, the important point made by Tilly himself, when discussing the abysmal living standards that characterised the years right up to the 1880s [see Tilly, 1991: 185–8], that the period 'from the 1840s to the 1870s...[was one] of rapid industrial growth dominated by *investment goods production*' [Tilly, 1991: 185, emphasis mine]. However dominating 'agrarian households' were they did not constitute a dynamic home market for consumer goods. What, then, of the stimulus to investment goods industries?

(b) Department I Industries

Assessing the implications for Department I industries is rather more problematic. If one were to accept a Clapham-type panegyric, or what I have termed a root-crop determinism, of the kind espoused by John Perkins, then one might estimate a possibly significant impact emanating from east of the Elbe. But, I have expressed doubts on this. Certainly, the Clapham vignette tells us little of significance. The problem with the Perkins view is that while it has a certain validity, that validity may apply to only a limited extent east of the Elbe. I have suggested above that the impact of root crops may have derived far more from its heartland in central Germany (in provinces like Hanover) than in Prussia, and that the initiatives derived from there. It is probable that sugar beet production was far more important there than in the east.

Certainly, the development in the productive forces we have identified above (as a result of Perkins' work) must have provided a significant stimulus to Department I industries. Especially important was the artificial fertilizer industry. According to Perkins:

> It would be no exaggeration to say that the phenomenal growth of the artificial fertilizer industry in Germany, with its intimate links with both the chemical and heavy-industrial growth sectors of the economy as a whole, was primarily attributable to the expansion of rootcrop cultivation in German agriculture. In particular, the role of potatoes and sugar beet as the raw materials of processing industries, which yielded starch, alcohol and sugar, contributed substantially to the progress of knowledge on the efficacy of various artificial fertilizers. [Perkins, 1981: 87].

If we accept that conclusion, we may, however, qualify it severely in the Prussian context (Prussia east of the Elbe) by suggesting that the primary impulse came not from east of the Elbe, but from central Germany. Moreover, these industries were certainly not located in the east. Still, some of the dynamism deriving from root crop cultivation may, perhaps, be attributed to eastern Prussia.

If we concentrate, more certainly, on Prussia east of the Elbe, we recall that until 1850 mechanisation was rare. Thereafter, it was not until the 1880s that mechanisation began to spread significantly. We remember, indeed, that right through to the end of the nineteenth century, Prussia was very backward in, for example, the mechanising of the grain harvest: far more backward than Britain, more backward than France, and, by comparison with the North and the West of the United States (which we will consider below), using, almost, a palaeotechnology. There was little dynamism in this respect. One could hardly attribute a major impulse towards capitalist industrialisation from this source.

(v) The State, Surplus Transfer, and Taxing Dominant Classes in the Countryside

In circumstances in which the state plays a prominent part in laying the foundations for industrialisation, it is crucial that the dominant class, or classes, in agriculture be adequately taxed. It is thus that the state gains access to a financial surplus that allows the necessary accumulation to proceed. Classic examples in which this has happened were two of the cases in our wider comparative study, Britain[92] and Japan.[93] It is important that the state be able to tax agriculture directly, either through a land tax (as in Japan) or an income tax (as in England, where income tax was introduced in addition to the land tax). In both instances, the state succeeded in taxing the dominant classes in the countryside: indeed, it succeeded in taxing agriculture disproportionately (by comparison with industry and urban areas).

In Prussia, this certainly did not happen before 1871. The Prussian state had not acquired sufficient autonomy from the Junkers to make that possible. It was, certainly until 1871, our chosen terminal date, a Junker state. Thus, as one comparative historian has put it: 'The great majority of knight's estates were legally privileged not only because their owners wielded personal control over local government, but because by law they held a preponderance of seats in the county and provincial assemblies (*Kreistage* und *Landtage*)' [Bowman, 1993: 31].[94] In other words, their control of the legal machinery of the state was decisive.

The state, then, so penetrated by the Junkers, represented Junker interests to a significant degree. That is not inconsistent with a realisation of the need to tax the Junkers, or, indeed, attempts to do so, with the needs of industrial capital in mind. One of the great historical puzzles, indeed, is how a state gains the autonomy to act in favour of a class that is not yet dominant, as was clearly the case here.[95]

In this instance, Junker penetration of the state secured for the Junkers a remarkable exemption from direct taxation. As early as 1810–11, Hardenburg, hard-pressed by the exigencies of Napoleonic War finances, and the need for enlarged revenues,[96] had attempted to subject the *Ritterguter* to a land tax.[97] He was bitterly and successfully resisted.[98] Another attempt was made, in August of 1848, when a bill was introduced in the Prussian National Assembly, to impose a land tax on the *Ritterguter*. On this occasion 'almost four hundred Junkers convened in Berlin as the so-called "Junker Parliament" to protest' [Bowman, 1993: 186] this, as well as another bill (which sought to end servile obligations on hitherto 'unregulated' peasants). They were again successful in stopping the land tax.[99] Indeed, Tilly points out: 'The potency of the land tax as a political issue can be seen in the fact that the liberal Hansemann ministry of 1848 was replaced by the Crown, owing in large part to its insistence on a redistribution of the tax's burden' [Tilly, 1966: 494].[100] This was not a nut that was going to be cracked easily.

This ability to resist efforts by the state to introduce a land tax meant that: '*Rittergut* owners in Brandenburg, Pomerania, and provincial Saxony paid *no*

taxes on most of their land until 1861. At mid-century about half of all *Rittergut* land in the Kingdom of Prussia was *exempted from land taxes*; and even when taxed Junkers enjoyed a *lower rate than peasants*' [Bowman, 1993: 32, emphases mine].[101] Given the large proportion of the land owned by Junkers, the Junkers were clearly heavily favoured. They were not wholly exempt, but certainly, until mid-century, the 'Eastern agrarian provinces' were especially favoured by comparison with the 'Western industrial provinces'. In 1821–38 the former paid only 25% of the total land tax yield, and the latter 75% (see Table 4.5). As Tilly observes, 'the land tax...fell relatively heavily on Prussia's newer and most progressive provinces of Rhineland and Westphalia' [Tilly, 1966: 494]. There was no question of industrialisation in these latter regions being financed by taxation of the Junkers of the East. On the contrary, it was the former who were heavily subsidising the latter.

It was after 1848 that some progress was made in taxation, with a new income tax introduced in 1851. But, it was not until 1861 that 'the old land tax, long a bone of contention was modernised after extended public debate and its burden redistributed in favor of the more industrialised parts of Prussia' [Tilly, 1966: 494]. Even so, a shift to the 'Eastern agrarian provinces' paying 39% of the land tax revenue (from only 25% earlier) and the 'Western industrial provinces' paying 61% (from the earlier 75%) was hardly a full righting of the balance. It was still the case that, as our period comes to an end, the Junkers east of the Elbe maintained a capacity to resist taxation. They were certainly not taxed disproportionately.

Such a privileged fiscal position is, as we have suggested, in marked contrast with English landlords and capitalist farmers and with Japanese landlords, at the comparable stage in their history, when capitalist accumulation associated with industrialisation was actively supported by the state. It has been suggested that it is also quite different from that of the antebellum planter, slaveowning class in the American South, where 'the owners of land and slaves bore the brunt of state taxation' [Bowman, 1993: 32].[102] As we shall see, the state in the South did not use its fiscal surplus, so appropriated from the dominant class, to pursue industrialisation. But that it did tax the planter class is of significance.

Table 4.5 Distribution of Prussian land tax, 1821–38 and 1864 (per cent of tax yield)

	1821–38	*1864*
Eastern agrarian provinces*	25	39
Western industrial provinces**	75	61

* Pomerania, Posen, Brandenburg, and Prussia.
** Silesia, Saxony, Rhineland, and Westphalia.
Source: Tilly [1966: 494]. Tilly draws on Hoffmann [1840: 129] and Schwartz and Strutz [1901–1904, vol. I, Book 4: 1114].

(vi) Conclusion

On a basis of the foregoing evidence, we surely must conclude that the Prussian path was not one which gave especially powerful sustenance to capitalist industrialisation. That industrialisation, in Prussia and later in a united Germany, had other nutrient sources. The 'Eastern agrarian provinces' did not make a major contribution to the creation of a home market, either for Department II industries or those of Department I. Nor did they release a significant surplus to ease capitalist accumulation in manufacturing industry, or the accumulation necessary for that industry. The one major contribution lay in releasing the labour power necessary for that industry, albeit over a long period. But, even here, between the 1840s and 1870s, it did not supply on particularly reasonable terms the essential wage good, food.

In a speech to the Budget Committee of the Lower House of the Prussian Diet on 30 September, 1862, the Prussian Junker, Bismarck, recently appointed chief minister, insisted that Prussia's destiny would be decided by 'iron and blood'.[103] That phrase, inverted in popular usage to 'blood and iron', became, in the minds of many, the *leitmotiv* of his Chancellorship of a united Germany. His critics, after 1879, when the grain-tariff was introduced,[104] and protection was given to a number of industrial products,[105] referred to this as the 'alliance of rye and iron'.[106] If, in 1879, that class alliance was cemented by these tariffs, then before 1879, 'rye', in the shape of the Junkers, and the articulation of class and productive forces that they had brought about, could not be seen as having been a dynamic element in the capitalist industrialisation that 'iron' represented. What happened after 1879 is quite another story. But that it is a story whose roots lie in the Prussian path is beyond doubt.

Maurice Dobb, with his usual insight, noted: 'In Germany the conflict of interest between industrial capital and the large estates of East Prussia was an important factor in retarding the development of the former in the days of the monarchy, and in forcing that compromise between the capitalist class and the Prussian aristocracy which was the peculiarity of German development prior to 1918' [Dobb, 1963: 194–5, n. 2]. Yet, as we have seen, capitalist industrialisation did proceed. That was in spite of, rather than because of, the contribution of Prussian agriculture.

Notes

1. On this and the previous three paragraphs see Harnisch [1986: 65–6]. The reforms on the crown lands are examined in detail in Harnisch [1974] and Harnisch [1984].
2. On this paragraph, see Berdhal [1988: 107], Simon [1971: 14, 18–19]. See also Anderson [1974: 269].
3. On this paragraph, see Berdhal [198: 108–9].
4. On the army, see Craig [1964].
5. See, for example, Engels [1965: 160], Simon [1971: 6], Berdhal [1988: 107–8], Carsten [1989: 74]. The most cautious of these is Carsten, who suggests that 'the Prussian state threatened to collapse'.
6. See above, end-note 32, pp. 101–2.

7. Berdhal's excellent book documents this in detail.
8. The reform movement in Prussia included, as well as agrarian reform, efforts to secure constitutional, military and educational reform. A treatment of the agrarian reforms – which centred on abolition of serfdom – may be seen in Berdhal [1988: *passim*, but especially ch. 4]. For a more general, detailed treatment of the reform movement, see, for example, Simon [1971]. On the military reforms, see Craig [1964: 38–53, 69–70].
9. See Berdhal [1988: 115].
10. For a brief account of the abolition, and the relevant legislation see, for example, Borchardt [1973: 95–8], Perkins [1984: 6–7], Kemp [1969: 86–8], [Kitchen 1978: 9–15]. A more detailed treatment of the legislation up to 1821 may be seen in Berdhal [1988: 115–23, 144–57].

    Heinrich Friedrich Karl Freiherr vom und zum Stein (1757–1831), a Rhinelander by birth, entered the Prussian service in 1780; was made Prussian Minister of Trade in 1804 and first minister in 1807; and was dismissed in 1808, under French pressure. Karl (August, Furst) von Hardenberg (1750–1822), was born near Brunswick; served as foreign minister from 1804 to 1806; and was prime minister briefly in 1808 and then chancellor from 1810 until his death in 1822.
11. For rather more detail on Schon's reasoning, see Berdhal [1988: 116–17].
12. On this paragraph, see Berdhal [1988: 119].
13. On this paragraph, see Berdhal [1988: 119–20].
14. On this, see Berdhal [1988: 145–9, especially 149].
15. See Berdhal [1988: 149–51, especially 151].
16. See Berdhal [1988: 152].
17. See Berdhal [1988: 153].
18. Berdhal draws on Koselleck [1967: 498–9] to substantiate this.
19. There is, in fact, a debate over the amount of land actually lost by the Prussian peasantry. This is summarised in Berdhal [1988: 153–4, n. 134]. The participants in the debate and their arguments are identified there. But the 'substantial loss of land suffered by peasants' (p. 153) is clear. This is demonstrated effectively in Harnisch, [1974], Berthold [1978a: 70 ff] and Schissler [1978: 109–12]. These references are given by Berdhal, along with other references to those involved in the debate.
20. Cf. that formidable historian of the Junkers, F.L. Carsten, upon whose writing we have drawn so freely above, who tells us: 'Many historians and social scientists have argued about the Prussian Junkers and their achievements, and in the course time the very word "Junker" has become a political byword. Originally, however the word meant nothing but "Young Lord" and was by no means used only in the German East...But in general since the later Middle Ages it described a member of the East German nobility without any political undertone and was also used frequently by its own members' [Carsten, 1989: 1].
21. As Lysbeth Walker Muncy, the author of a thorough study of the Junker and the bureaucracy (see next note) observes, historically: 'Altho at first an unwelcome privilege apd indeed even a very heavy and burdensome duty, service in the Prussian Officers Corps rapidly became a customary occupation and a cherished privilege for Junkers' sons...[T]he Officers Corps, with it largely Junker personnel, became a central pillar in the structure of the Prussian state' [Muncy, 1970: 16–17]. By Bismarck's time: 'The Junkers' way to support of Bismarck and the Empire was made easier for them by the fact that Bismarck's victories, particularly his great military victories, were also triumph for the Junkers. It was an army led in large measure by Junker officers which defeated the Austrians and the French' [1970: 31].
22. For a study of the Junker in the Prussian administration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Muncy [1970].

23. On this position he claims the support of Hanna Schissler [Schissler,1978: 145]. He points out that Koselleck places greater stress on the reforms [Koselleck, 1967: 487 ff].
24. See Berdhal [1988: 264–5 ff].
25. Berdhal cites a statement from the 1829 report on agricultural conditions in the governmental district of Marienwerder, West Prussia, by President Eduard von Flottwell: 'The numerous noble estates that have been forced into sale are already to be found in the hands of owners who combine sufficient capital with insight and good intentions; they hold the promise of bringing about a much better status of agriculture on these possessions in the course of a few years' [Berdhal, 1988: 282].
26. For this paragraph, see Bowman [1993: 32–3].
27. On this paragraph, see Bowman [1993: 33].
28. See Perkins [1984: 19].
29. See Perkins [1984: 22]. Perkins cites a fascinating passage, illustrating this, for the 1890s, from Backhaus [1903: 936].
30. Perkins cites Gutmann [1908: 13].
31. Perkins refers to the following sources on this: Kohler [1896: 1–3], Guttman [1908: 11], Breinlinger [1903: 25].
32. The reference given is Goltz [1874: 14].
33. See Perkins [1984: 7]. The reference here are Goltz [1874: 14], Hoppenstedt [1897: 228], Aereboe [1920: 13], Christiani [1855: 32–3], Guttman [1908: 29].
34. See Perkins [1984: 7]. Perkins draws upon Goltz [1874: 27], Wittenberg [1893: 12], Guttmann [1908: 43].
35. See Perkins [1984: 8]. He here draws on Goltz [1874: 15], Weber [1984: 441], Hoppenstedt [1897: 239].
36. Perkins directs us here to Goltz [1874: 28].
37. The distinction between formal and real subsumption of labour is discussed in full in Marx's *Resultate*, a text originally designed as Part VII of volume 1 of *Capital*. This is discussed below in the section on slavery (the *Resultate* contains an important discussion of slavery). For formal and real subsumption of labour, see Marx [1976: 1019–38]. There is something of an exposition of this in Winson [1982: 388–90].
38. Cited in Perkins [1984: 9].
39. Perkins draws upon an array of sources, to establish the argument: Skalweit [1911: 1,355], Weber [1894: 447, 452], Aereboe [1920: 7–8], ZdlC-VdPS [xiv, 1857; x, 1873], Wygodzinksi [1917: 26].
40. The system is discussed in detail in Perkins [1984: 11–18].
41. See Perkins [1984: 11]. He draws upon ZdlC-VdPS [xxxi, 1874: 227].
42. On this paragraph see Perkins [1984: 11–12]. The following sources are cited: Aereboe [1920: 5], Breilinger [1903: 25], Weber [1894: 446], ZdlC-VdPS [xxxi, 1874: 227], Goltz [1874: 44, 14], Goltz [1875: 455], Knapp [1893: 15].
43. On this paragraph see Perkins [1984: 13–15]. The sources used are: Aereboe [1920: 49], Goldschmidt [1899: 119, 42], Weber [1894: 453], Bericht [1873: 30], Goltz [1874: 44–5], Goltz [1875: 447].
44. On this paragraph see Perkins [1984: 15]. He draws on Hoppenstedt [1897: 240], ZdlC-VdPS [xxix, 1872: 215].
45. On this paragraph see Perkins [1984: 15]. The source used is Fischer [1910: 14].
46. On this paragraph see Perkins [1984: 19]. He draws on: Goltz [1842: 14], ZdlC-VdPS [xxix, 1872: 215].
47. On this paragraph see Perkins [1984: 19–20] He draws on ZdlC-VdPS [xxix, 1872: 214–15]
48. On this paragraph see Perkins [1984: 20–3]. He draws on Waterstradt [1912: 110], ZdlC-VdPS [xxvi, 1869: 214], Aereboe [1920: 13], Hofgangerleben [1896: 32–3], Wittenberg [1893: 54–5].

49. Perkins cites Bielefeldt [1911: 31].
50. See Perkins [1984:3–5, 23]. Perkins cites Wittenberg [1893: 54–5].
51. Perkins cites Herzfeld [1905: 39].
52. Bowman here draws upon Wunderlich [1961: 24] and Herbert [1990, 32–45, 16].
53. Clapham, somewhat proudly (proud Englishman that he was), tells us: 'It is common in Germany to date the agricultural, as distinguished from the legal reforms of the nineteenth century from the appearance in 1798 of Albrecht Thaer's *Introduction to the Knowledge of English Agriculture*'. He continues, revealing obvious admiration for things Prussian: 'Thaer was a Hanoverian who had at one time been a physician at the Hanoverian court. Called to Prussia, where brains were valued, he founded the first Prussian school of agriculture in 1804, and subsequently he became a professor in the new University of Berlin, from which he issued his great work the *Principles of Rational Agriculture* in 1809–12' [Clapham, 1936: 47]. Hence the notion of 'rational agriculture' that pervaded certain intellectual circles in Prussia at the time. On Thaer see also, for example, Berdhal [1988: 88–90]. Berdhal writes (p. 89):

> Thaer considered it imperative that agriculture be viewed from a new perspective. He began his major study of rational agriculture with the words: 'Agriculture is a trade [*Gewerbe*] whose purpose is to earn a profit through the production of vegetables and livestock. The greater the profit the more completely is its purpose fulfilled. The most successful agriculture is that which extracts from the operation the highest, most sustained possible profit according to the relationship of wealth, labor and circumstance' [Thaer, 1831, vol. 1: 1]. To achieve this goal agriculture must be brought under the chastening rationalism of the market economy...Thaer stressed that the successful farmer could expect as much return on his capital invested in land as he would from any other form of investment. To do that he would have to adopt a more scientific approach; he would have to understand the nature of his soil, the systems and function of crop rotation, animal husbandry, fertilization, drainage and irrigation, and, not least, bookkeeping.

His vision, indeed, was that of a healthily functioning capitalist agriculture.

54. Yet again the very high quality of the work by Harmut Harnisch becomes clear. Berdhal bases his account closely on that work, and tells us: 'By far the best and most detailed account of the process by which Prussian agriculture was transformed is Harnisch, *Kapitalistische Agrarreform und Industrielle Revolution*'. See Harnisch [1984]. Berdhal, in his excellent account, draws also upon Schlissler [1978: 153–7, 169], Herre [1914: 25–7, 460–1], Kotelmann [1853: 186 ff, 320–5], Meitzen [1869, vol. 2: 25–86, 378–420], Haushofer [1972: 111–17], Jordan [1914: 19–20, 11–13], Ciriacy-Antrup [1936: 52–60].
55. See above, and Perkins [1984: 10].
56. As far as regional differences were concerned, Berdhal points out that Brandenburg was probably the most advanced of the Prussian provinces, while East Prussia, Silesia and Posen remained backward until the 1830s. See Berdhal [1988: 283].
57. Our attention is drawn to this by Berdhal [Berdhal, 1988: 88].
58. For a discussion of the causes of this depression, see Berdhal [1988: 264 ff].
59. See Berdhal [1988: 266].
60. On this see Berdhal [1988: 286].
61. See Clapham [1936: 217–20].
62. On the tariff see Perkins [1981: 71–9].
63. Perkins cites on this, Berthold [1972: 261–7, especially 261] and Roth [1892: 5–6].
64. See Perkins [1981: 76–8].

65. See Perkins [1981: 79].
66. See Perkins [1981: 79].
67. For figures see Perkins [1981: 84–6].
68. See Perkins [1981: 87]
69. See Perkins [1981: 90].
70. Cf. Perkins [1981: 89] where, very clearly, the spreading of advanced cultivating practices associated with sugar-beet production is from central Germany to the east (in this instance, to the province of Posen).
71. Cf. Perkins [1981: 92].
72. See Haines [1981: 370–1] on Upper Silesia.
73. See Atack and Passell [1994: 283].
74. See Bailyn *et al.* [1985: 557].
75. The full line reads: 'Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.' Horace, *Satires*, Book I, Satire I, 24.
76. Tilly draws our attention to Benaerts [1933: 456 ff], Cameron [1961: 369 ff], Blumberg [1960]. The story, of course, is told in many other places.
77. There are no figures for 1870. The figures I have given are interpolations.
78. Among summary views, each with its own (sometimes idiosyncratic) distinctive character, see, for example: Trebilcock [1981: ch. 2], Tilly [1991], Lee [1991], Kemp [1969: ch. 4]. For an excellent account of the processes associated with industrialisation, written with contemporary poor countries in mind, see Sutcliffe [1971]. See especially chs 1–3, in which the context and pattern of industrialisation are considered and the arguments for industrialisation examined.
79. Anderson cites Aycoberry [1971: 90].
80. See Tipton [1976:19–20].
81. See Haines [1981: table 1, column 8, 362] for the index of local grain prices from 1846 to 1913.
82. The index of local grain prices actually declined during 1871–5 and 1901–10, and was less in 1911–13 than it had been in 1871–5.
83. It rose from 100 in 1846–50 to 139 in 1871–5.
84. Unfortunately, Tilly does give any data or provide any sources upon which he makes this judgement.
85. Tipton draws on the following sources: Neuhaus [1911–1913, vol 1: 171 ff], Rogmann [1937: 106), Hansen [1916: 61–71], Konopatzki [1936: 28–31], Schurmann [1929], Jantke [1955: 152–3], Allendorf [1901: 25–6].
86. See Tipton [1976: 91 and 94]. The sources used by Tipton are: Bielefeldt [1911: 10–15, 59], Schuchart [1908: 234–7], Brennecke [1909: 102–3], Nichtweiss [1959: 10–12], Wirminghaus [1895: 14].
87. Perkins refers to Goltz [1893: 142], Sering [1893: 135–50], Weber [1893: 68–72], Waterstradt [1912: 97].
88. See Perkins [1984: 12–13]. Perkins quotes one statement to the effect that: 'What one could not achieve by pleading or threatening, one could often get with a Schnaps.'
89. Tipton draws on the following sources to establish this view of the eastern provinces. On income: Orsagh [1968], Germany Statistisches Reichsamt [1932: 32–3, 72], Goeldel [1917: 24.] On buildings: Vallentin [1893: 38]. On working conditions: Nichtweiss [1959: 224–8], Vallentin [1893: 40], Hoffmeister [1908], Weber [1892]. On death rates: Rogmann [1937: 62–3, 68–9]. On emigration: Schumann [1890: 516–19], Golding [1930: 221, 223], Broesicke [1907: 25–6].
90. See Harnisch [1977a]
91. Tilly cites, respectively, Fremdling [1986: 335–7] and Muller [1987] on the demand of agricultural producers for iron products, and Kunz [1989] on users of pre-railway, nineteenth century transportation facilities.
92. On Britain, for example, Phyllis Deane tells us the following with respect to British agriculture and the Industrial Revolution:

> the agricultural industry carried much of the burden of the State. The land-tax was the traditional stand-by of government revenue throughout the eighteenth century. Even when the strains of total war forced Pitt to impose an income tax, it was still the agricultural sector that footed most of the bill, partly because of its size and partly because it was easier to assess and to collect tax for a stable agricultural community than for an urban group. Between 1803/4 and 1814/15 gross incomes for tax under Schedule D (the trade and industry sector) rose by under 10 per cent despite a galloping inflation, whereas the increase for schedules A and B (agricultural and land incomes) was nearly 60 per cent. Had the commerce and industry sectors paid their 'fair share' of the mounting cost of the French wars it is likely that the industrial revolution then in its early stages, would have suffered a severe setback. [Deane, 1979: 51–2]

Such is the case for not only taxing agriculture, or the dominant classes in agriculture, on a par with other sectors, but taxing it, or them, disproportionately. It is a strong case in the context of processes of capitalist industrialisation.

It is worth noting, further, Deane's observations on British agriculture's broad contribution to capitalist industrialisation in Britain (the so-called Industrial Revolution):

> Briefly, then, the agricultural revolution in England can be said to have contributed to the effectiveness of the first industrial revolution in four main ways: (1) by feeding the growing population and particularly the populations of the industrial centres, (2) by inflating purchasing power for the products of British industry [i.e. creating the home market for British manufactures], (3) by providing a substantial part of the capital required to finance industrialization and to keep it going even through a major war [both directly and via taxation], and (4) by releasing the surplus labour for employment in industry. [Deane, 1979: 52]

These, indeed, are the very contributions we are assessing is this section with respect to the Prussian path and German industrialisation.

93. On the heavily disproportionate taxation of agriculture in Japan during the early years of capitalist industrialisation, see, for example, Ohkawa and Rosovsky [1964: 63–4]. Rosovsky and Ohkawa stress, also, other of agriculture's contributions to Japan's successful industrialisation, including steady rice prices and virtually constant terms of trade for industry (p. 49). For a useful account of the Japanese land tax, see Bird [1974: 113–22]. Ishikawa has argued – with a battery of data – that, in fact, there was no net resource flow out of agriculture [Ishikawa, 1967: ch. 4]. That is open to dispute. But the important point in the present context is the clear capacity of the Japanese state to tax agriculture. No one questions that.
94. Bowman cites the authority of Viebahn [1858–68, vol. 2: 553].
95. Cf. Poulantzas [1973: 161–7], where this is discussed in the context of the French absolutist state.
96. See Tilly [1966: 487–8] on this issue.
97. See Bowman [1993: 37]. Bowman directs our attention to various documents in Baxa (ed.) [1966, vol. 1: 608–21].
98. See Bowman [1993: 124]. The contrast with the success of the British state in dealing with its exigencies of Napoleonic War finance through taxing agriculture is striking. See note 13 above.
99. See Bowman [1993: 186]. Bowman cites Klatte [1974: 262–5].
100. Tilly draws on Hamerow [1958: 177], Croon [1918: 182].
101. Bowman cites Koselleck [1967: 525–6, 549].
102. On this, Bowman draws upon Eaton [1975: 328–9], Ambler [1910: 267–8], Thornton [1978: 100–1], Ford [1988: 312], Campbell [1989: 94–5].

103. See Stern [1987: 28], Palmer [1976: 77].
104. Perkins [1981: 72].
105. Gerschenkron [1966: 44–5].
106. Webb [1982: 309].

A Note on Writing on Prussian Agrarian History

Knapp was the great pioneer of agrarian history (*Agrargeschichte*) in Germany. His work, with its 'fundamentally juridical approach', and that of his pupils, dominated agrarian historiography in Germany for six or seven decades after the publication, in 1887, of his celebrated *Die Bauernbefreiung und der Ursprung der Landarbeiter in den alteren Teilen Preussens* (*The Emancipation of the Serfs and the Origins of the Rural Labourers in the Older Parts of Prussia*) [Knapp, 1887]. His other works include [Knapp, 1891]. In Knapp's approach, agrarian history is preoccupied with 'interest in property rights, laws of inheritance, and in the changing legal basis of the relationship between peasant and lord' [Farr, 1986: 4]. His most famous disciple is, perhaps, Friedrich Lutge [Lutge, 1949; 1963], 'who devoted a lifetime to clarifying the complex mosaic of laws, obligations, customs and inheritance patterns which was Germany's *Agrarverfassung* ['agrarian constitution]' [Farr, 1986: 4]. See Harnisch [1986: 38 and 40], Farr [1986: 3–5].

Knapp and his disciples have been taken to task for concentrating on 'the legal status of the peasant, and in particular on the relationship between the peasantry and their feudal lords', while ignoring 'the management of the farms, holdings and estates, their relations with the market, and the effects of the market on them and the agrarian order' [Harnisch, 1986: 38]. Or, in another formulation, they interpreted German rural history 'in excessively legalistic terms' at the cost of ignoring the underlying social reality, and especially 'the real social impact of different forms of exploitation and domination' [Farr, 1986: 3–5]. See also Rosenberg [1944: 228] and Rosenberg [1969].

In Febvre's withering phrase – coined in relation to French rural history, as written before 1930 – 'their peasants always plough with cartularies, using charters for ploughshares' [Febvre, 1966: xix]. Such an approach, although it may yield useful insight, 'despite [its] legalism and aridity' (loc. cit.) is, of course, in marked contrast to the political economy espoused here. It has no class content.

An implicit challenge to the 'Knapp school' was made by Wilhelm Abel, in the 1930s, in his *Agrarkrisen und Agrarkonjunktur in Mitteleuropa vom 13. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, which was published in 1935 [Abel, 1935a]. [See Farr, 1986: 5–6; Harnisch, 1986: 38]. The third edition of this book was published in German in 1978, and then in English in 1980, with the title *Agricultural Fluctuations in Europe. From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* [Abel, 1980].

Abel sought to write an 'orthodox' economic history, by focusing on economic cycles and crises and seeking to identify 'the major landmarks in the movement of agricultural prices, wages, rents, population and agricultural production' [Thirsk, 1980: ix]. [See also the following: Abel, 1935b, 1936, 1937, 1955,

1961a, 1961b, 1962, 1964, 1967a, 1967b, 1973, 1974, 1976a, 1976b, 1978, 1980; and Riemann and Welling, eds, 1954.] Brenner is taken to task by both Le Roy Ladurie and Wunder for failing even to mention Abel's work in his influential – and provocative – article [Le Roy Ladurie, 1985: 101; Wunder, 1985: 97]: a hardly damning criticism, in view of the range of sources cited by Brenner and the fact that Brenner does cite the work of other, major neo-Malthusians, such as Le Roy Ladurie himself and Postan.

Much work has been done under Abel's influence. The 'Abel approach' obviously represents a significant advance on that of Knapp, from the viewpoint of this book's concerns. But it, too, is limited in political economy terms. It does not use the categories of political economy. It attempts no class analysis. Like Brenner, I do not cite it. As Brenner is, I *am* aware of it.

Of far greater value to the problematic of this book than either of these two approaches has been the considerable work done in the former German Democratic Republic, especially since the late 1960s, which, with its clear focus upon 'the overall transition from feudalism to capitalism in Germany' compares favourably with 'the narrow focus and limited theoretical ambition of much conventional *Agrargeschichte*' [Farr, 1986: 7]. Such work, of course, having escaped the tight confines of a juristic approach, runs the danger of being 'reconfined within the bounds of a dogmatic Marxism' [Farr, 1986: 7]. No doubt, some of the work in question does not escape this trap. Such of it that is thus limited is stultified and unhelpful. But not all of it falls into this category. It is usefully introduced in Berthold [1978; cited in Farr, 1986: 27, note 20].

As has been pointed out, one can see clearly the 'determination of East German historians to refine Lenin's conception of the particularly "Prussian path" of agriculture by elucidating what they see as the important "variations" to be found on Prussia's road to capitalism' [Farr, 1986: 7]. In this respect, Farr cites the following: Heitz [1969], Bleiber [1965], Moll [1978], Berthold, Harnisch and Muller [1970]. At its best – as, for example, in the excellent work of Hartmut Harnisch (see his writing listed in the References) – this is undogmatic, exciting and illuminating; and of a quality comparable to the very best agrarian history written in the west (if that is not to be hopelessly patronising). In addition to the references cited, see also the following, which cover, *inter alia*, interpretaion of the agrarian reforms in East Prussia, class differentiation within the peasantry, class conflict and changing class relations in the countryside: Harnisch [1984], Moll [1982], Harnisch [1968], Harnisch [1974], Harnisch [1977], Moll [1968], Solta [1968], Berthold [1974], Berthold [1977], Plaul [1979], Plaul [1986], Rach and Weissel (eds) [1978], Rach and Weissel (eds) [1982]; all cited in Farr [1986: 27–8, notes 22, 23, 24]. Other references are given in the text. A glimpse of the East German work may be seen in the useful, if somewhat limited and wooden [Dorpalen, 1985].

In this essay, I have been able to draw but slightly – and opportunistically – on the wealth of existing material on Prussian agrarian history, in what can only be a schematic and unnuanced account of the period from the tenth to the nineteenth century; an account in which I seek to establish no more than the major lines of a political economy treatment of the Prussian path to agrarian capitalism. I regret, in particular, my inability to take full account of the East German writing.

PART III

The American Paths

...the U.S.A. has the largest size, the greatest diversity of relationships, and the greatest range of nuances and forms of capitalist agriculture...

[Lenin, 1964b: 100–1]

Capitalism came in the first ships.

[Degler, 1984:2]

5 Attempted Feudalism, Primitive Accumulation and Eradication of Native Populations

In the wake of the railways, financed by European and in particular British capital, the American farmer crossed the Union from East to West and in his progress over vast areas killed off the Red Indians with fire-arms and bloodhounds, liquor and venereal disease, pushing the survivors to the West, in order to appropriate the land they had 'vacated', to clear it and bring it under the plough.

[Luxemburg, 1963: 396]

The United States did not face the problem of dismounting a complex and well-established agrarian society of either the feudal or the bureaucratic forms.

[Moore, 1967: 111]

By 1630, after the commercial corporation had demonstrated the unprofitability of founding colonies, proprietary projects on a feudal model dominated virtually all seventeenth century attempts to plant English settlements in the New World. By the end of the century all of them had failed quite decisively.

[Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 264]

1 LENIN, DIVERSITY, AND THE DIVISION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

Lenin, we recall, pointed to the diversity to be found in the United States. He captured that most vividly and effectively. But, for Lenin, it was a diversity that, while noteworthy, did not need to be identified analytically. It was a diversity structured by particular dominant tendencies: those of a capitalist agriculture, which had emerged from petty commodity production; with petty commodity producers as the essential agents of change; speedy expansion of the productive forces and especially of mechanisation; a rapidly expanding home market; and, above all, the growing preponderance of wage labour. These tendencies, he argued, regulated and controlled the diversity noted. The diversity to which he draws attention he does not consider substantive.

Yet, in the 1915 text in which he places such great stress upon the powerful emergence of wage labour [Lenin, 1964b], he does say enough to suggest the need for a more agnostic view with respect to substantive diversity. Not only that, but while arguing strongly for the existence of dominant tendencies he finds it useful to proceed in terms of three key regional groupings of the American states, which the American Census statisticians had introduced in 1910 to bring some order to the previous 'patchwork' of divisions.

Using the Census divisions he labels the regions as follows: (1) the industrial North, encompassing 21 states;[1] (2) the former slave-owning South, which includes 17 states;[2] and (3) the homestead West, covering 11 states[3] [Lenin, 1964b: 20,]. See Table 5.1 and the map at the beginning of the book. It is useful to reproduce these, since they identify the Census regional divisions. This seemed appropriate when he wrote in 1915. In so doing, he does, in effect, seek to distinguish them analytically, although this he does not pursue; and, indeed, in his categorisation, there is the hint of significant difference in the agrarian social landscape and in the manner of transition, even if, as he argued, by 1915 certain dominant tendencies might be discerned.

In his pursuit of powerful dominant tendencies, Lenin does not carry the treatment of this far. Here it is central to our treatment. We do proceed in terms of such a division, although with the regional groupings constituted rather differently from those identified by Lenin (who followed the Census definitions). We may identify these before suggesting why we pursue this diversity. The outcome may be seen in Table 5.2 and the map.

Thus, the Census definition of North, used by Lenin, is too wide, and includes states which should, properly, be included in Lenin's 'homestead West'. This, the 'free-labour North' or the 'industrial North' reduces to 11 states. It may, further, be usefully sub-divided into the Northeast and the Northwest.[4] The West is too narrow and needs to be extended – to 17 states.[5] The South covers 16 of the 17 states suggested by Lenin (it excludes District of Columbia); and, in turn, needs to be sub-divided into at least two groupings, and more usefully three: the 'Plantation South' (also referred to as 'the Old South' or the 'Slave South');[6] the 'Yeoman South' (or the 'Upper South');[7] and the 'Newer South'.[8] These were all 'slave states', but with a lower incidence of slavery in the Yeoman South and in the Newer South than in the Plantation South. We will not deploy these divisions, other than 'casually', in what follows. But they would surely be important in a full treatment.

Whether or not one identifies dominant tendencies across the whole, broad social formation (and that remains to be considered), it is useful to proceed in terms of these regions, suitably constituted, and consider the manner of agrarian transition in each broad case. We must take account, especially, of the great North–South divide, whose essence turns on fundamental differences of agrarian system/mode of production. No treatment of the United States, in our chosen context, can ignore this. It was their relevant and clashing contradictions which, in part, gave rise to the Civil War. Those differences, moreover, were decisive in

Table 5.1 The regions of the United States, by groupings of states: according to Lenin

The North (21 states)	*The South (17 states)*	*The West (11 states)*
(a) The New England states (6)	*(a) The South Atlantic states (9)*	*(a) The Mountain states (8)*
Maine	Delaware	Montana
New Hampshire	Maryland	Idaho
Vermont	District of Columbia	Wyoming
Massachusetts	Virginia	Colorado
Rhode Island	West Virginia	New Mexico
Connecticut	North Carolina	Arizona
	South Carolina	Utah
	Georgia	Nevada
	Florida	
(b) The Middle Atlantic states (3)	*(b) The East South Central states (4)*	*(b) The Pacific states (3)*
New York	Kentucky	Washington
New Jersey	Tennessee	Oregon
Pennsylvania	Alabama	California
	Mississippi	
(c) The East North Central states (5)	*(c) The West South Central states (4)*	
Ohio	Arkansas	
Indiana	Oklahoma	
Illinois	Louisiana	
Michigan	Texas	
Wisconsin		
(c) The West North Central states (7)		
Minnesota		
Iowa		
Missouri		
North Dakota		
South Dakota		
Nebraska		
Kansas		

Source: Lenin [1964b: 19–20]. These are the divisions employed by Census statisticians in 1910.

the quite distinct postbellum transformations that took place in North and South. The West, too, needs distinct treatment, because of its peculiar trajectory. We shall, however, treat it along with the North.

We consider, then, that, since there are clear and decisive differences, whose impact was powerful, if we are to avoid oversimplifying and are to grasp something of the existing complexity, when analysing agrarian transition in the

Table 5.2 An analytical ordering of the regions of the United States in 1912, by groupings of states

The North (15 states)	*The South (16 states)*	*The West (17 states)*
(a) The North-East (9)	*(a) The Lower/Slave South (6)*	*The Mountain states (8)*
Maine	Georgia	Montana
New Hampshire	South Carolina	Idaho
Vermont	Alabama	Wyoming
Massachusetts	Mississippi	Colorado
Rhode Island	Louisiana	New Mexico
Connecticut[1]	Florida[2]	Arizona
New York		Utah
New Jersey	*(b) The Upper\Yeoman South(7)*	Nevada
Pennsylvania[3]	Maryland	*The Pacific states (3)*
(b) The North-west (6)	Virginia	Washington
Ohio	West Virginia	Oregon
Indiana	North Carolina	California
Illinois	Delaware	
Michigan	Kentucky	*The West North Central states (6)*
Wisconsin[5]	Tennessee[4]	Minnesota
Iowa		North Dakota
	(c) The Newer South (3)	South Dakota
	Arkansas	Nebraska
	Oklahoma	Kansas
	Texas[6]	Missouri[7]

Source: See text *passim* for sources; and also for differing terminology in this respect.

1 These are the six New England states.
2 These are states in the South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central Census groupings. North Carolina we have included in the Upper/Yeoman sub-region of the South.
3 These three are the Middle Atlantic states.
4 These are South Atlantic and East South Central states.
5 These are the five North Central states. Iowa is a West North Central state, which we included here in the North-West.
6 These are all West South Central states.
7 These are six of the seven West North Central states. The seventh, Iowa, is included in the North region (in the North-West sub-region).

United States, such a procedure is necessary. Thus the process of transition from a slave-holding system, dominated by large and powerful plantation owners, is likely to need quite distinct treatment from that from a homestead system of 'family farms' (to use, for the moment, 'orthodox' categories). The contradictions of one system are likely to be different from those of the other.

Here, we argue, diversity was clearly substantive: to the extent that there were differing rural class structures, differing transitional forms, differing dominant tendencies and differing outcomes. There was more than a single broad path of agrarian transformation which we can label the 'American path'. We shall distinguish, and examine, two: that of the South, and that of the North. Having said that, one may also stress that one of the distinctive American paths, and, perhaps, the most dynamic, may very well have been a path 'from below'.

With respect to dominant tendencies, we may, moreover, question, at least in the North and the West, that dominant tendency to which Lenin attached such significance: the rapid development and preponderance of wage labour. It has been widely suggested that one of the peculiarities of the American case – a true 'historical puzzle', if this is so – is that farm units persisted for so long, without the dominance of wage labour ('family farms'). That will be one of the central issues which we confront. Which representation is valid? Moreover, we may question the absence of tenancy and a landlord class there. That needs to be investigated.

One might suggest that, ironically, it was in the South that Lenin proved correct, with respect to a transition to the dominance of wage labour – eventually (it took far longer than he anticipated, for reasons we will explore). In the South, however, we may doubt his notion of 'capitalism from below'. In order to pursue this, we need to explore the role of former slave-owning plantation owners in that transition. What happened to this class? This is a question of central importance in our present context. Were they reconstituted, in the post-bellum south, as a landlord class? If they were, then the idea of the absence of an effective landlord class in the United States may legitimately be doubted.

With the possibility of substantive diversity in mind, we may proceed to the historical origins of the agrarian question in the United States. These lie in North America's pre-colonial past, in the nature of initial European settlement, and in the manner in which European settlers and the colonial state confronted and attempted to resolve perceived obstacles to accumulation. We turn, indeed, to the beginnings of the long drawn-out process of primitive accumulation in the United States: a process which may be said to have been unleashed in the wake of the arrival of Columbus in 1492, and which was not completed until after the end of the American Civil War in 1865.

2 THE 'ABSENCE' OF FEUDALISM

(i) The Absence of Feudalism and Early Attempts to Establish It

In each of the other cases considered in our wider comparative study, feudalism was a powerfully dominating tendency. In those cases a transition from feudalism lies at the heart of the problematic, and is a central part of the relevant historiography. That was so in the English and the Prussian paths, with their distinct

feudalisms, their differing timing (the one taking shape as the other disappeared) and their contrasting outcomes. It was so, too, in the French and the Japanese cases, with yet other variants of feudalism and yet other outcomes. It was not so in the United States.

The United States, then, is exceptional among the five case studies pursued, in the absence of feudalism as a looming presence in its historical agrarian landscape. As Barrington Moore observes: 'The United States did not face the problem of dismounting a complex and well-established agrarian society of either the feudal or the bureaucratic forms' [Moore, 1967: 111]. In the United States there would be no transition from feudalism, since feudalism never became firmly established. Yet, as we shall see, the picture is rather less simple than this might suggest. Paradoxically, although feudalism was never securely rooted in what is now the United States, there was something of a feudal legacy that had considerable significance in the agrarian transformation that unfolded. No account of the North American path (or paths) can be complete without reference to that legacy.

If feudalism was never firmly established in the English colonies, that is not to say either that no serious attempts were made to introduce it or that there was no realistic historical possibility of its taking root. Nor, as I have suggested, is it to say, indeed, that there was no feudal legacy. On the contrary, such attempts were made; there is no obvious *a priori* reason why it might not have been seriously established; and such a legacy was bequeathed. We need to keep the three issues separate. First, we may consider the attempts so to proceed and their failure. We may then consider the nature of the feudal legacy. Finally, we may ask, without assuming that the attempts were simply historical anachronisms doomed to failure, why they failed, what alternative solutions were adopted and why.

In a thoughtful and illuminating paper, Berthoff and Murrin tell us, indeed: 'By 1630, after the commercial corporation had demonstrated the unprofitability of founding colonies, proprietary projects on a feudal model dominated virtually all seventeenth century attempts to plant English settlements in the New World. By the end of the century all of them had failed quite decisively' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 264]. Far from a feudal solution never being contemplated, the seventeenth century, we may say, was the era of attempted feudalisation of North America, not only in what is now the United States by the English, but in Canada, by the French. As another historian – of older vintage – observes: 'Except in the corporate colonies of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, the formula held good *nulle terre sans seigneur*, for every acre of land was held of a lord, either the king himself, or some landed proprietor or proprietor to whom a grant had been made by the crown' [Andrews, 1919: 14]. Berthoff and Murrin mention New York, the Jerseys, Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia, and refer, also, to Canada (New France). It included, then, in the United States, both the North and the South. That attempted feudalisation did not, however, include New England.

We may first consider the manner in which attempts were made to introduce feudal structures in the early Dutch, English and French colonies (the last in French Canada). That is an instructive exercise. Later, we will note feudal forms in those parts of the Spanish Empire that concern us.

Carl Degler, in an influential textbook, addresses the issue and points to those early efforts 'to establish feudal or manorial reproductions' and their lack of success [Degler, 1984: 3–4]. He notes three attempts in the seventeenth century, by the Dutch and by the English 'to establish quasi-feudal regimes in the [North American] colonies' [Degler, 1984: 552]: 'in the New Netherlands (which became New York), in Maryland, and in the Carolinas'.[9]

Whether we consider these attempted 'reproductions' 'feudal', or 'quasi-feudal', or 'semi-feudal' (a notion noted with respect to nineteenth century Prussia) all are worthy of note.[10] My own predilection is to view them as attempts to introduce genuinely and full-bloodedly feudal structures. One is of especial interest, that in the Carolinas: since it involved a detailed blueprint prepared by the English political philosopher, John Locke. Here was a calculated and purposive attempt to create feudal relationships. We can scrutinise the intent with care. Moreover, it allows us both to confront an important analytical point concerning transitional situations and to pursue comparison. We encounter Locke in the wider study, as the theorist/philosopher of early agrarian capitalism, or, perhaps more accurately, of that transitional, long drawn-out, and, for those living through it, that uncertain era, between feudalism and capitalism.[11] Here he is the proponent and architect of feudalism.

Before proceeding we may recall the following general propositions. The general problem we confront is as follows. We have a given tract of land, with settled agriculture, a given technology or range of techniques, a given level of the productive forces. We also assume a state, with powers over the land, such as to alter ownership rights and access. A range of possibilities exists with respect to the ownership of the land, to access to the land, and to the relationship between owner and direct producer (if the direct producer does not himself own the land). The possibilities are many: feudalism, slavery, capitalism, peasant proprietorship, a variety of forms of tenancy (feudal tenants or capitalist tenants, share tenants or those paying fixed rent; with rent paid in labour, kind, or money). Our concern here is with feudalism.

(ii) New York

The first attempt was by the Dutch in the New Netherlands, which would become New York, one of the English 'middle colonies'. The Dutch 'tried to set up an ambitious system of patroons, or great landowners, whose broad acres along the Hudson were intended to be worked by tenants [presumably serfs – TJB]. In keeping with the manorial practices common in Europe, the patroon was to dispense justice and administer in his own right the government of his little kingdom' (p. 3).[12] Those structures did not survive: 'But contrary to the

popular tradition that sees these patroonships carrying over into the period of English rule after 1664, only two of the Dutch grants outlasted New Netherlands, and of them, only one was in existence ten years later. Under English rule only Rensselaer retained his original grant; all the others returned or forfeited them to the Dutch West Indies Company' (loc. cit.). What succeeded in their place is noteworthy: 'It is significant that the other land-granting policy of the Dutch, that of *individual small holdings*, was much more successful' (loc. cit., emphasis mine). What are we to make of this?

Feudalism did not transplant successfully. It is, indeed, the case, as we have suggested, that in the North 'individual small holdings' did prevail as the dominant form of landholding. We need to explore why. Moreover, as we have seen, slavery was also a clear alternative to feudalism, and, indeed, in New York reached significant proportions, although it did not become dominant (the proportion of blacks, as we shall see, varying between 12 and 16% of the population in the decades between 1680 and 1770). We have yet to consider, in detail, why this was so.

(iii) Maryland

The second instance of an intended feudalism was that attempted by Lord Baltimore in Maryland. He sought 'to erect manors...and to create a feudal aristocracy' (loc. cit.); and this was, initially, more successful than Dutch efforts to institute a feudal (quasi-feudal, or semi-feudal) structure in the New Netherlands:

> Some sixty manors were established in the province during the seventeenth century, the lords of which constituted a kind of new Catholic aristocracy. On at least one of these manors, St. Clement, manorial courts-leet (for tenants) and baron (for freeholders) were actually held, private justice being dispensed by the lord. (loc. cit.)

This, too, proved unavailing. In Maryland, as elsewhere in the South, slavery became dominant. As we shall see, the proportion of blacks rose there from 9% in 1680 to 32% in 1770.

Degler reaches for an 'explanation', in fact running two quite distinct 'explanations', or hypotheses, together, and in the process explaining very little:

> But here too the experiment of transplanting European social ways to the free and open lands of America was to prove futile. Slavery and the plantation were much more efficient ways for utilizing land than the outmoded manor; moreover, tenants were restive in the face of free lands to the west. [Degler, 1984: 3]

One is reminded of Evsey Domar's observation on the Russian historian, Kliuchevskii, writing on serfdom in sixteenth and seventeenth century Russia:

'Like many a historian, he assembled and described the relevant facts (and in beautiful Russian at that) and stopped just short of an analytical explanation' [Domar, 1989: 226]. What we get from Degler is not quite an analytical explanation, but an assertion – albeit an interesting one.

We may comment as follows. If we disentangle the two explanations, it is not (a) the European nature of feudal structures that is the problem, a point to which I will return. To resort simply to their being European, and, therefore, inappropriate, is quite unacceptable. We need to know what real characteristics, if any, are to be associated with their being European. Nor is it, necessarily, (b) the existence of 'free and open lands', and, in relation to that, the restiveness of 'tenants' (i.e. presumably serfs) that explains their failure. That is a possible hypothesis, but it needs both to be stated more fully and more rigorously, and to be tested.

(iv) The Carolinas, John Locke's Fundamental Constitution of 1669 and Feudalism

Our third example, in the Carolinas, allows us considerable insight into the tensions of transition, the historically specific interests of landlords, and the significance of context. In pursuit of this, we may start with the following description by Degler, in his general text on American history:

> The failure in New York and Maryland to reconstitute the manors of Europe did not prevent the founders of the Carolinas from making one more attempt. In the Fundamental Constitution of 1669 provisions were made for 'leet-men' who would not be able 'to go off from the land of their particular lord' without permission. Moreover, it was decreed that 'all children of leet-men shall be leet-men, and so to all generations'. Atop this lowest stratum of hereditary tenants was erected a quasi-feudal hierarchy of caciques and landgraves, capped by a palatine. [Degler, 1984: 4]

Degler continues, substituting a knowing hindsight for explanation:

> It seems hardly necessary to add that this design, so carefully worked out in Europe, was implemented in America only to the extent of conferring titles upon the ersatz nobility; the leetmen, so far as the records show, never materialized. Indeed, the Fundamental Constitution caused much friction between the settlers and the proprietors. Even though the hereditary nature of leetmen was discarded in 1698, the popular assembly never accepted the revised Constitutions. By the opening years of the eighteenth century, the baronies which had been taken up ceased to exist, having become simply estates or farms, none of which enjoyed the anticipated array of tenants. [Degler, 1984: 4]

Such is the Degler view.

Of course, it does 'seem necessary to add' that the projected feudal structures 'did not materialize'. It is also necessary to explain that outcome, rather than have it simply be the result of an inappropriate European design, whose inappropriateness is never specified adequately. Here, indeed, we have a reflection of 'the general levity with which virtually every history of the colonial period treats Lord Shaftesbury's [i.e. John Locke's – TJB] Fundamental Constitution of Carolina' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 264, n.17].[13] Degler is a good example of that generality of 'historians...[who] conclude that feudalism was too anachronistic to survive in the free air of a new world' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 264]. Where, one wonders, might that leave slavery, the most unfree of all relationships?

The 'baronies' did not become 'simply estates or farms'. Would that it were so 'simple'. They became plantations. The proprietors did not become simply proprietors. They became a class of plantation owners. Their plantations, indeed, did not 'enjoy the anticipated array of tenants', or leetmen (i.e. serfs). Rather, they 'enjoyed' a labour force of slaves, brought by force in the first instance from Africa and subsequently bred in captivity: certainly not free to move and totally devoid of the means of production. North Carolina and South Carolina became slave states *par excellence*, especially South Carolina: with the former's proportion of blacks rising from 4% in 1680 to 35% in 1770, and the latter's from 16% to 61%.

What Degler, and, indeed, Berthoff and Murrin, fail to tell the reader, curiously, is that the author of the Fundamental Constitution was John Locke. Locke has been identified as the 'bourgeois philosopher of early capitalism' [Wood, 1984: 15], the theorist of early agrarian capitalism, albeit caught in the tension of a prolonged transition. Yet here he is, apparently, conceiving a thoroughly feudal solution for the North American colonies. What was going on? We may pause to consider the Fundamental Constitution, and the role of Locke, rather more closely. This allows valuable comparative insight.

Locke had met Lord Ashley (who would become the 1st Earl of Shaftesbury in 1672), in 1666, when he was asked to give him medical advice, and he entered his household in 1667. He quickly became Ashley's close friend, and his personal as well as his medical adviser (he would supervise an operation on Ashley's liver that saved Ashley's life in 1668). Ashley, a formidable and influential politician, was at that time a leading minister of the king, Charles II. He had become one of the biggest and wealthiest landowners in England, with a massive annual income of £30,000. In 1663, he and seven others were given by Charles II a grant of the province of Carolina, which raised the clear possibility of his adding considerably to his wealth and income. Locke became, indeed, 'secretary to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina, a colony effectively governed by Ashley, and drafted a remarkable constitution for the new settlement' [Wootton, 1993: 18]. That, of course, was the celebrated Fundamental Constitution of Carolina of 1669. It was remarkable because of its essentially feudal nature.[14]

One commentator observes: 'If we are going to understand Locke's political philosophy we are going to have to dig beneath the surface of his life' [Wootton, 1993: 26]. That is manifestly so. Yet there is one aspect of his background, and that of his patron, Ashley, not far beneath the surface, that has clear significance in understanding the Constitution of 1669. Both were landlords. We have noted already that Shaftesbury was one of the biggest landlords in England. He was, without doubt, one of that handful of progressive, 'improving' landlords (in distinction from the 'enabling' landlords) whom we encounter in our treatment of the English path. As has been noted:

> He was an extremely rich landowner who viewed such landowners as the foundation of English society and he supported an ideal of gentlemen who were benevolent, generous and hospitable. He attempted to live as such a gentleman, seeing no contradictions between those ideals and his energetic improvement of the land by new agricultural methods that were undertaken against his tenants' opposition and to their very probable short-term disadvantage. Rioters against Ashley's enclosures in the 1640s were whipped. [Marshall, 1994: 171]

Ashley could still have his tenants whipped for opposing enclosures. But those tenants had long since ceased to be serfs.

Locke, too, was a landowner, though on a far smaller scale than Ashley. It was not just that 'from birth Locke was exposed to farming, and he was always interested and in and informed about the subject' [Wood, 1984: 21]. His exposure and interest were those of a landlord. Already, before meeting Ashley, he had imbibed the class interests of a landlord, and pursued them. Thus Locke was

> the son of a country lawyer, a small gentlemanly landowner and clerk to the Justices of the Peace in Somerset...[in] one of the richer 'farming countries' of England, known as the 'Western Waterlands', highly reputed among agriculturists...Friends and relatives of Locke were landowners in this area of capital farms with convertible husbandry and floating water meadows...On the death of his father in 1661 [Locke, born in 1632, was then 29], Locke inherited the modest landed estate, thus becoming an absentee landlord for the remainder of his life [he died in 1704, Shaftesbury having died twenty-one years earlier, in 1683]. By Cranston's estimate, Locke in 1669 had been receiving about £240 per year from these properties. This annual income alone was sufficient to maintain a comfortable life for a bachelor gentleman of Locke's modest tastes. Little in his correspondence with his various managers is of moment except to reveal that he was an exacting and impatient proprietor, perpetually exercised by the laxity of his tenants in paying their rents when due. [Wood, 1984: 21][15]

Where, then, as we have seen, Ashley's annual income was £30,000, Locke's was £240. But landlord he was. In Somerset, his tenants, though under constant pressure to pay their rents on time, were not tied to the soil. Some of them may,

already, have been well on the way to becoming capitalist farmers. He would become, as we shall see, a substantial landowner in Carolina. As has been noted: 'As committed to experiment and trade as Locke and Ashley were...and as important as Locke's investment in shares bonds and private loans was to become, it is important to underline that their main income during their lives came from land and office, and that their favoured experimental methods were almost entirely based upon the harnessing of land to its best advantage – that is, to the best advantage of the landowner' [Marshall, 1994: 177]. The Constitution, we note, was a landlords' charter, drawn up with landlords' needs clearly in mind.

In 1669, the Carolinas were still inhabited by Indian tribes – by, among others, the Tuscarora (in what is now North Carolina) and the Cusabo, the Catanba, the Yamjee and the Cherokee (in South Carolina). Their existence is not acknowledged in the Constitution. Yet their presence constituted a significant obstacle to the appropriation of the land by the Proprietors and to the colony's settlement – with whatever relations of production that would be secured. The clear underlying assumption was that they would be dispossessed and cleared. Locke's views on essential matters of political philosophy underwent fundamental change between the early 1660s and the 1690s.[16] But when, later, in his *Second Treatise of Government* (of 1681) he supplied the hint, at least, of a justification for their dispossession, and perhaps their extirpation, he was surely addressing matters with which he had become familiar, and perhaps, even, preoccupied, when dealing with the Carolinas in 1669 and previously; and he was, perhaps, articulating a view that he held then.

As the 'bourgeois philosopher of early capitalism' [Wood, 1984: 15], Locke, in E.P. Thompson's phrase, was much preoccupied with 'the origin of property and...historical title to land' [Thompson, 1993: 159]. In his *Second Treatise*, he traces the origin of property to 'the mixing of labour...with the common' [Thompson, 1993: 160]. Thompson points out:

> Locke had ruminated, in his chapter on property, on 'the wild Indian...who knows no enclosure, and is still a tenant in common'. This Indian serves as a paradigm for an original state before property became individuated and secure: 'In the beginning the world was America'. Locke decided that the American Indian was poor 'for want of improving' the land by labour. Since labour (and improvement) constituted the right to property, this made it the more easy for the Europeans to dispossess the Indians of their hunting grounds. [Thompson, 1993: 160][17]

The dispossession of Indians, then, was both justified and necessary. The Indians had no right, or very tenuous right, to the land, because they had not 'mixed their labour' with it sufficiently. Only such fructifying of the land with labour could create the right to property. Moreover, the absence of such 'improving labour' might be seen as reprehensible. The settlers could provide it. But how best might they do that? What set of social relationships would best serve accumulation, 'improvement', and, therefore, the income of landlords? It was that issue which Locke addressed in the Constitution. He decided on the desirability of a feudal solution.

The question of legitimacy arises. Locke was a political philosopher, concerned with fundamental questions of ethics and of 'the true principles in politics' [Aaron, 1978: 14] (not to mention metaphysics and epistemology). One writer observes: 'It seems to me clear that the argument of the *Second Treatise* made chattel slavery as it existed in the New World illegitimate, and clear too that Locke, who played a role in shaping England's policy towards the colonies, did nothing about it' [Wootton, 1993: 117]. Whether, in 1669, such a clear inference concerning chattel slavery's illegitimacy could be attributed to Locke is not obvious. Locke, however, while extending religious toleration to slaves in the Constitution, there endorsed slavery unequivocally: 'Every freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over his negro slaves, of what opinion or religion soever' (Article 110 of the Constitution, as reproduced in full in Wootton [1993, see p. 230]). Wootton further observes:

> as is often remarked, the constitution provided for an extraordinary measure of religious toleration. All that was required of anybody was that he or she should belong to a religious association. As long as that association recognized a God and provided for some form of solemn oath-taking (a stipulation that would have excluded the Quakers) its members were free to believe what they liked and practise as they chose. This freedom extended even to slaves, who, despite the fact that they had rational souls, were to be entirely, in every other respect, at the disposal of their masters. [Wootton, 1993: 43]

Locke did not contemplate slavery as a presiding solution. Yet he did not exclude it: slavery with religious toleration. But it was feudalism that he put forward as the preferred solution. About feudalism's legitimacy there was no doubt.[18]

The Constitution clearly turned upon Locke's perception of 'the interest of the landowner' [Marshall, 1994: 174]. That 'interest', we must stress, depended upon historical context. The same individual, operating in different contexts, could, perfectly rationally, opt for two totally distinct, even diametrically opposed, sets of relations of production. The interests of a capitalist landlord in England of the second half of the seventeenth century (or a landlord towards the end of a transition to that state), he perceived, differed fundamentally from those of a landlord in colonial North America at the same time.

So it was, then, that a blueprint was drawn up by Locke for a thoroughly feudal agrarian structure. One recent commentator identifies the envisaged landlord class and the land that would be theirs:

> Carolina was to be divided into counties, one fifth of each then being divided amongst the eight Lords Proprietors, including Shaftesbury. A further fifth of

each county was to be divided in equal amounts among a hereditary nobility composed of one 'Landgrave' and two 'Cassiques'. The Lords Proprietors were thus to own about 96,000 acres of each county between them; a Landgrave 48,000 acres of land in one county. The initial settlers of the colony, on the other hand, were offered up to 150 acres for each adult male, and lesser amounts for servants. In 1671 the Lords Proprietors granted Locke the title of 'Landgrave' in Carolina and the substantial lands that went with it. [Marshall, 1994: 174–5]

The symmetry is impressive.

Another recent Locke scholar distinguishes the class of direct producers that would work the land and be the source of surplus for the envisaged landlord class (of which Ashley was one, and Locke would soon become one). Wootton sees this as 'the most significant aspect of the constitution' and 'its most peculiar'. It is 'the provision for a class of "leet-men"' [Wootton, 1993: 43]. The land, we have seen, would be worked by 'leet-men', permanently tied to the land on a hereditary basis, happy, like the slaves, in the freedom of worship that they would enjoy. Wootton provides a clear and concise account, referring, in the process, to Ashley's biographer, Haley [Haley, 1968]:

> This has been described as 'curious', but the full extent of the curiosity is missed if one then proceeds to remark that 'the attempt to transplant manors and courts leet across the Atlantic was not so anachronistically medieval as it sounds' (Haley 1968, 244, 247). For the proposed 'leet-men' of Carolina bear no resemblance to those recognized as 'leet-men' in seventeenth-century England, who were, in essence, individuals entitled to poor relief. [Wootton, 1993: 43]

Wootton draws attention to three crucial aspects of these leet-men:

> In the first place, the leet-men of Carolina, unlike any English man or woman, have no right of appeal beyond their lord's court. In the second, they have no freedom of movement: they are obliged to remain on their lord's land, and they are to be bought and sold with the land. Above all, [thirdly], it may have been envisaged that the first leet-men would be volunteers, but the status was to be hereditary: 'All the children of leet-men shall be leet-men, and so to all generations' [Article] 23.[19] There is no question as to what this institution is: it is serfdom by another name. [Wootton, 1993: 43]

Nor was this 'attempt to establish hereditary serfdom' either the result of 'royal pressure to embody any such peculiar institution in the constitution' or 'imposed upon a reluctant Shaftesbury and Locke by their associates, for in 1674 the two of them were urging the impoverished settlers of Carolina, who had fallen deep into debt to the proprietors, to register as leet-men' [Wootton, 1993: 43].[20] There is no reason to doubt Wootton's judgement in any of these respects.

The initiative assumed, of course, the existence of a landlord class, with a monopoly of landownership in a particular bounded region, in this instance, the Carolinas. That class confronted the problem of all landlord classes: of how to have the land that they owned worked in order to yield a surplus that might be appropriated (an income). That was a problem of class relationships: in Marx's famous phrase, that of 'the specific economic form in which surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers', that 'direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers...which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure' [Marx, 1962: 772]. We will have occasion to return, below, to this formulation. The nature of that relationship would have crucial implications for whether, and the manner in which, accumulation would proceed; and for the form taken by the productive forces. The Constitution sought to cement and perpetuate the existence of the landlord class in the Carolinas; a class that sought to appropriate surplus from direct producers through rent, in this instance feudal rent.

Interestingly, Locke seems not to have envisaged any contradiction between the feudal class relationships he sought to establish and an ongoing accumulation and technical transformation of agriculture. The latter he clearly sought to foster. Thus: 'In running the Carolinas via an extensive correspondence as Secretary to the Board Locke emphasised strongly the best utilisation of land by employing both the best agricultural techniques and the labour of the "industrious people' whose" voyages to Carolina were financed by the Lords Proprietors' [Marshall, 1994: 176]. Locke 'had the same attitudes...towards Ashley's extensive lands at home' (loc. cit.).[21] He clearly believed that the 'best agricultural techniques' could as well be introduced via feudal relationships as capitalist ones. Perhaps, this, too, reflects the dilemma of writing in circumstances of prolonged transition. For contradiction there surely was.

Here, then, was a very clear attempt to respond to the shortage of labour in the colonies by creating a class of serfs: an unfree peasantry, with the peasant, in the classic phrase, *ascripticius glebae*, bound to his holding, not free to move, and this a hereditary condition. We have noted already, with favour, Wootton's judgement in this respect. Moreover, it is, indeed, the case that 'by 1669 serfdom had completely disappeared in England' [Wootton, 1993: 43]. Such a class no longer existed in England, the source of this feudal initiative in North America. We noted, too, at the outset, the failure of this attempt to introduce feudalism. By the beginning of the eighteenth century feudal structures existed not even in name in the Carolinas. Their place, of course, had been taken by slavery as a mode of appropriating surplus from direct producers. But, let us stress, feudalism did exist, in very real form, among our other case-studies in the wider comparative project: in France, Prussia and Japan. Anachronism it may have been if one took England as one's yardstick. But, on a wider canvas it most certainly was not. Even in England, it was hardly quite the distant memory sometimes suggested. The following observation, in a book published in 1919, is clearly an exaggeration: 'We treat often with ill-disguised contempt what seem to us the

fantasies of Locke's "Fundamental Constitutions" and fail perhaps to understand that they were but a philosopher's elaboration of a feudal order of society that was still real to many of those who sought land in America' [Andrews, 1919: 19]. But Locke was, indeed, no fantasist. In an era of transition, such as Locke lived through, one might, even if one had the clearest perception of dominant tendencies that embodied a fundamental break with the past (as Locke preeminently had), one might, nevertheless, reach backwards rather than forwards in pursuit of particular interests. That, I think, Locke appears to have done.

Feudalism surely did represent a real possibility, as a mode of surplus appropriation in the colonies of North America. It cannot simply be dismissed as an anachronism (which Wootton seems to suggest); or as an initiative somehow unworthy of John Locke (again apparently Wootton's judgement); or as an inappropriate European institution, which misguided Europeans attempted to introduce into an unreceptive environment (as, for example, Degler suggests).

On the question of anachronism and inappropriateness, in 1669, would slavery have seemed any less anachronistic or inappropriate? I think not. Yet it became the norm throughout the southern colonies. Slavery, too, may be deemed unworthy of Locke. But Locke seems to have been, in practical matters, a hard-headed realist, seeking solutions consistent with the interests of landlords, and anxious not to reject whatever seemed possible, workable and surplus-yielding.

(v) Resistance to Feudalism in New England and Its Absence There

In the New England colonies, slavery, by and large, was of minor significance as a mode of surplus appropriation. Neither, despite various proposals to the contrary, was a feudal solution, or its derivative, quit-rents, ever a serious possibility in most of the New England colonies. These were never established in Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, or Rhode Island. They were resisted fiercely by the colonists. Quit-rents were, however, established in Maine and New Hampshire.[22]

Thus, from the very outset of English colonial settlement in New England, in the colonies mentioned as free from feudalities, at least, the colonists were: 'determined to assert as complete an independence of external control as possible...and bitterly opposed such a charge as the quit-rent, deeming it a sign of vassalage and an arbitrary limitation of their rights as lords of their own lands' [Bond, 1919: 35]. From the beginning, the Plymouth colonists obtained all rights to the soil, and 'the Puritan idea of a land tenure free of all feudal incidents and restraints' [Bond, 1919: 39] spread to the other New England colonies.[23]

Rather, individual ownership was, from the outset, the preferred solution. Thus:

> In New England there was no experimentation with feudal or manorial trappings at all. The early history of that region is a deliberate repudiation of European social as well as religious practices. As early as 1623, for example, William Bradford wrote that communal property arrangements had failed in Plymouth and that as a consequence the governing officials divided the land on an individual basis. Individual ownership of land, so typical of American land tenure ever since, was thus symbolically begun. The larger colony of Massachusetts Bay, in its first codification of laws, the Body of Liberties of 1641, made explicit its departure from feudal and manorial incidents upon landholding. 'All our lands and heritages shall be free from all fines and licenses upon Alienations, and from hariotts, wardships, Liveries, Primerseisins, yeare day and wast, Eascheates and forfeitures...'. [Degler, 1984: 4–5]

But if, indeed, individual ownership of land by the direct producer (land-to-the-tiller) was enshrined in New England codification of laws, it would be quite wrong to imagine that it necessarily remained the invariable practice. Certainly, in other parts of the North and West of what would become the United States, tenancy became common. Nor, indeed, was it absent even in New England. In the South, of course, after the Civil War a particular form of tenancy, share-cropping, became widespread.

(vi) Feudalism and French North America

It is worth pausing to consider briefly the experience of French Canada. It has been noted that: 'Even in New France the rationalized feudal order that Colbert attempted to impose in the Saint Lawrence valley produced an impressive number of paper seigneuries by 1700, but not feudalism in any recognisable sense' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 265]. That Colbert should attempt, a century before the French Revolution, to introduce a 'feudal order' into New France, at the same time as Locke and Ashley were trying to do so in the Carolinas, does not attract the charge of 'anachronism' or 'inappropriateness'. Yet the objective circumstances were not so very different. If Colbert could muster any rational arguments in favour of feudal structures, that rationality could not be denied further south in North America.

Indeed, while Colbert's early efforts were not successful, it seems that feudalism did later take root there: 'Only by the middle of the eighteenth century would the population of New France expand sufficiently to make the seigneurial system profitable – and quite durable thereafter' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 265].[24] The argument, here enunciated, that the reason for the failure of feudalism was that 'in every colony the demographic base was too narrow' (loc. cit.), I will contest presently. But, on a basis of the French Canadian experience we might certainly speculate that feudalism was not the *a priori* impossibility in the English colonies that many have suggested. John Locke's Fundamental Constitution cannot be dismissed so easily. But we do need to explain why feudalism did not take in the Carolinas, or more generally in the English colonies.

(vii) Feudalism and the Spanish Colonies

We note the Spanish Empire created largely in the sixteenth century, parts of which, in its northern reaches, i.e. in New Spain, would pass to the United States: Arizona, California, Florida, New Mexico and Texas. These were, perhaps, peripheral parts of the Spanish Empire, within which, it seems, the Spanish legacy, in term of agrarian institutions, was insignificant. The 'core areas of Spanish occupation' [Wolf, 1982: 143] lay elsewhere. Consideration of the surplus-appropriating practices, in the countryside, of the Spanish conquerors in any detail would take us too far from our overall concern. But we note them in passing, in the broadest outline, if only as a yardstick against which to compare English colonial practices, and, in particular, the English unsuccessful attempt to introduce a form of feudalism into its American colonies.

The way for the Spanish Empire was cleared by 'slaughter and conquest...by Spanish adventurers, half-mad with greed, who overcame fearful hardships to plunder and ultimately to destroy an ancient civilization' [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 6]. From early in the sixteenth century, the Spanish practised slavery: at first with both Indian and African slaves, but from 1542, with the 'formal abolition of Indian slavery' [Wolf, 1982: 143], only African (with exceptions that we will note below). Indeed, the beginning of the import of African slaves into the 'New World' is usually put at 1502, 'when the first references to blacks appear in the documents of Spanish colonial administrators' [Fogel, 1989: 18; (see also Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 15]). That trade in black slaves by Spain lasted for more than three centuries, until it was outlawed in 1820 – although, we are told 'Spain took no measures to enforce the ban' [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 217]. Between 30 and 50% of the slaves imported into Spanish America were involved in sugar culture [Fogel, 1989: 20].

Slavery in Spanish America was under the strict control of an autocratic Spanish Crown, and its nature was subject to considerable interference by the Spanish Church. While there can be no doubting 'the extent of the cruelty and brutality of Spanish slavery, which sanctioned whipping, "mutilation of body members", including castration, and "slow death" as forms of punishment' [Fogel, 1989, 38],[25] it does appear that the Church's preoccupation with conversion, and its attempt to 'preserve as much as the legal personality of the slaves as possible...severely restricted the rise of large-scale, gang-system plantations...and [at least to start off with] limited the importation of slaves below the level desired by the planters' [Fogel, 1989, 38]. The issues here are, to say the least, controversial. Clearly, however, slavery was less than a full solution to the labour problem in the Spanish colonies.

Another solution was sought by the Spanish colonists from the very outset. As Immanuel Wallerstein observes, in general vein: 'slavery was not used everywhere...Not even in many sectors of the economy of Hispanic America where, instead of slave plantations, the Spaniards used a system known as *encomienda*' [Wallerstein, 1974: 90]. The Spanish, when they arrived in the

Americas, immediately created, in the *adelantados*, a class of '*feudal* lords whom the crown had granted extraordinary powers to subjugate the American frontiers' [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 12, emphasis mine]. They also established the *encomienda*, 'a grant of the labor of a specific number of native Americans for agriculture or mining – along with the land they occupied...in effect, a gift of slaves or serfs' (loc. cit). Those native Americans, whose labour was so granted, would be essentially 'serfs' rather than 'slaves'. Indian slavery, we have noted, was formally abolished in 1542. This was so 'except in frontier zones where rebellious populations refused to accept Spanish sovereignty...[which included] the northwestern frontiers of Mexico, where Apache, Navaho, and Shoshoni continued to be enslaved well into the nineteenth century' [Wolf, 1982: 143]. But these were of minor significance.

The *encomienda* started as a curious mixture of supposed 'trusteeship' and temporary feudal rights, designed to further conversion, prevent the creation of an established class of feudal seigneurs, and keep an Indian sector quite separate. It has been described thus, by Eric Wolf:

> It had been the initial intention of the Crown to deny the incoming conquerors any direct control of land and of Indian hands to work it. It wanted to inhibit the development of an independent class of tributary overlords...and thus insisted at first on granting the services of native Americans only on its own terms. This was done by the issuing of temporary grants of trusteeship (*encomienda*). An encomienda permitted the recipient to employ stipulated amounts of Indian tribute and labor in his own service, in return for Christianizing their pagan souls. A grant of encomienda did not, however, bestow on the *encomendero* (trustee) rights over Indian lands or unlimited rights to Indian services. These rights the Crown reserved to itself. The Crown hoped for the emergence of a society dichotomized into a sector of conquerors and a separate Indian sector. Thus, it strove to interpose its royal officials between Spanish employers of Indian labor power and the Indians themselves. [Wolf, 1982: 142]

Such were the intentions and hopes of the Spanish Crown: of the Spanish Absolutist State.[26] They were not realised.

That state 'was born from the Union of Castile and Aragon, effected by the marriage of Isabella I and Ferdinand II in 1469' and presided over a Spain that 'was the premier power in Europe for the whole of the sixteenth century' [Anderson, 1974b]. There was an anxiety to snuff out, in Spain itself, the strongly centrifugal tendencies of feudal power, and construct a centralised State. Yet, as Marx observed, 'in the very country where of all feudal states absolute monarchy first arose in its most unmitigated form, centralization has never succeeded in taking root'.[27] That anxiety was transferred to the Americas and translated into the *encomienda* construction.

In fact, there gradually emerged from the *encomienda*, which never, anyway, worked in the way intended by the Crown, the *hacienda* system:

> Gradually the trusteeships were superseded by *haciendas*, landed estates worked by laborers settled upon them and directly dependent upon the estate owners...Most of the hacienda workers were recruited among native Americans. Sometimes hacienda owners obtained workers by depriving native settlements of their land. At other times they attracted migrants who had left their tribute-laden villages to settle elsewhere. The hacienda owners also offered to pay the tribute on their workers' behalf, or to extend credit in other forms. Outright enserfment through debt, including the establishment of heritable debt, seems to have developed in later centuries. [Wolf, 1982: 143]

What we have, then, is, quite clearly, 'a dual structure of commercial crop farming and predial servitude by serf-tenants' [Wolf, 1982: 144]. It seems most appropriate to identify this as feudal, or semi-feudal. Unlike the English, the Spanish did introduce, in their colonies, a set of feudal structures. Yet, while the English made open but fruitless efforts throughout the seventeenth century so to do, even drawing up unmistakably feudal plans, the Spanish did so in spite of themselves.[28]

Not unexpectedly, Wallerstein denies emphatically the 'feudal' identification and the notion of 'serfs'. Although he tells us that 'the *encomienda* was originally a feudal privilege, the right to obtain labor services from Indians', he continues that 'they were soon transformed into capitalist enterprises by legal reforms' [Wallerstein, 1974: 92 and 93]. He wishes to term the *encomienda*, and its successor, the *hacienda*, capitalist, and, to use his own description, he coins the 'imperfect and awkward' term 'coerced cash-crop labor' to replace 'serfdom'. In justification of this, his essential point is that in Hispanic America (as in Eastern Europe at the same time) 'the landowner (seignior) was producing for a capitalist world-economy' [Wallerstein, 1974: 91]. *Ergo* he was capitalist. In a 'true' feudal situation (that of mediaeval Europe) the coercive power of the seigneur derives from the weakness of central authority. Here, however, it is the strength of central authority that is the source of power.

Wallerstein appears to be wrong. Thus, to start off with, the *encomienda* was not in intent a feudal grant at all. The aim of the Spanish Crown was to avoid heritable feudal fiefs. But it began to take on the characteristics of such a fief. Then, it may be deemed doubtful whether any meaning may be attached to the notion of a 'capitalist world-economy' in the sixteenth century (when the *encomienda* was introduced), or even in the seventeenth century. But even if such meaning might be allowed, production for world markets may be suggested as essentially irrelevant, if, as I have done, one defines feudalism in terms of relations of production and identifies it with respect to the tying of labour to the land: so yielding an essentially unfree labour force, from which surplus is appropriated in rent, whether that rent takes the form of labour, money or kind; a

labour force which we may represent as one of serfs. His term 'coerced cash-crop labor' is not only 'imperfect and awkward', it is also misleading. Finally, it seems doubtful whether, indeed, the coercive power of landowners depended so thoroughly on central power as Wallerstein suggests. Indeed, in a passage that Wallerstein quotes with apparent favour [Wallerstein, 1974: 190], Lockhart, in considering the growth of *haciendas*, points to the 'newly powerful families who began to carve out estates of their own undermining the inflexible encomienda system' [Lockhart, 1969: 428]. Such families did not need central power to support their exploitation of labour.

So it is that 'the native Americans were quickly transformed into a mass laboring population' [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 13]. There was a dramatic decline in the Indian population, as a result of disease brought by the Spanish, by deprivation, and by extreme exploitation. It is estimated that in the whole Viceroyalty of New Spain (which, of course, included more than what would become states of the United States) the population fell dramatically from around 25 million when the Spanish arrived to just over 1 million in 1600 [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 13].[29] That native population was dispossessed of its land: 'as the Indian population plummeted, the Indians' abandoned land passed to Spanish landlords, and the surviving native Americans found themselves bound by debt servitude called peonage' [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 13]. It is that part of New Spain that would enter the United States that is our concern here. Certainly, there, in some places at least, feudal relations of production were established.

The difference, however, between these Spanish territories and the English colonies was that in the latter the Indian population was not transformed into a subject labouring population, in circumstances akin to serfdom. Nor were the colonial settlers. Instead, in the English colonies the Indians were driven from their land, to make way for European settlers. Those settlers would, for the most part, either work the land as owner-cultivators, or sometimes as non-feudal tenants, the solution in the North but also in parts of the South; or they would constitute a planter class of slave-owners, the South's solution.

(viii) Feudal Nadir and Feudal Revival

If we may resume and complete the treatment of feudalism and the English colonies, we may identify a feudal nadir by the 1720s. Thus, by then

> the New York manors were largely untenanted and profitless to their owners. The East Jersey proprietors had abandoned the effort to derive a steady income from their patent. The claims of the Carolina proprietors became almost worthless when Charleston revolted in 1719 and a decade later all but one proprietor – Lord Carteret, later Earl Granville – sold out to the crown. Lord Fairfax, the Culpeper heir, netted only £100 from the Northern Neck [in Virginia] in 1721, nothing in 1723, and another £100 in 1724. Years later Pennsylvania still returned perhaps £100 clear profit to the heirs of the first

proprietor. Maryland alone was beginning to show signs of a profitable future following the restoration of the proprietary regime shortly after the Hanoverian succession. [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 265–6][30]

The death of the feudal project had been signalled. Feudalism had ceased to be a realistic possibility in the English colonies. Other social forms predominated.

But, if feudalism was dead, a so-called 'feudal revival' got under way from about 1730, until it was put to an end by the American Revolution. The characterisation is on the European analogy and with France especially in mind, in the era before the French Revolution. It is instructive to consider briefly that 'feudal revival'.[31]

What it amounted to was a concerted attempt by colonial proprietors, 'from Carolina to New York' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 266], a class of absentee landlords, to collect quit-rents, or money rents supposedly in lieu of feudal obligations. This was a resuscitation of old claims to what Andrews described as a 'somewhat obscure payment, badge of an inferior title to the soil and relic of feudalism and the past' [Andrews, 1919: 11].[32] But, as we have seen, no such feudal obligations had ever been firmly rooted. It proved extremely lucrative, aroused immense resentment, and provoked 'more social violence after 1745 than perhaps any other problem' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 268]. As one writer comments:

> In England landholders at first gladly accepted the quit-rent as a commutation of irksome services and payments in kind and gradually became accustomed to it through long usage. But in the colonies the quit-rent had no significance as a welcome release from undefined obligations and was usually construed as an arbitrary charge upon the land. Sacrifices borne and expenses incurred by the founder of a colony were soon forgotten, especially where the quit-rent was paid to an absent proprietary, and the people opposed the payment of it as an obligation for which they got nothing in return. [Bond, 1919: 33]

What is revealed, in the pre-American Revolution era, is, outside of New England – which 'had a striking immunity to the whole phenomenon' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 273] (we recall that New England avoided an attempt at feudalisation) – a large class of tenants paying quit-rents to absentee landlords. Here was a legacy of the abortive effort to establish feudalism in the English colonies.

Moreover, the scale of surplus appropriation and withdrawal associated with the 'feudal revival' and the imposition of quit-rents, is of major significance. It

> became the greatest source of personal wealth in the colonies in the generation before Independence. By the 1760s the largest proprietors – and no one else in all of English America – were receiving colonial revenues comparable to the incomes of the greatest English noblemen and larger than those of the richest London merchants. Indeed the Penn claim was rapidly becoming the most valuable single holding in the Western world. [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 267]

We have had occasion to comment on the £30,000 per annum income generated by Ashley's English estates around the time that the Fundamental Constitution was drafted (and Locke's £240). Even a century later, in 1760, only a very few English landed families, such as the dukes of Newcastle and Bedford, had a gross annual income of between £30,000 and £40,000. In England only 400 landed families had a gross income exceeding £4,000.[33] The scale of the income from quit-rents may be gauged by the following: that Lord Baltimore's income from Maryland was more than £30,000 (which was the equivalent of an 18% duty on the colony's exports), while the Earl of Granville's income in the Carolinas from quit-rents alone was £5,000 per annum and that of Lord Fairfax in Virginia was £4,000 in quit-rents (apart from revenue from other sources). Surplus appropriated via rent was considerable, and much of that must have accrued in England, where it must have contributed to the financing of the Industrial Revolution.

Clearly, the attempt to introduce feudalism into the English colonies cannot be dismissed as a minor anachronistic episode of little historical significance. It did have major repercussions in its legacy of tenancy and absentee landlordism in the American colonies. Indeed, the resentment caused by the so-called 'feudal revival' must surely be part of any treatment of the intricate causality of the American Revolution; while, it has been suggested, 'the Revolution challenged what was perhaps the main social trend of the previous half century [i.e. the 'feudal revival']' [[Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 264].[34]

The 'feudal revival' – what has been termed 'mercenary feudalism' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 272] – was swept away by the American Revolution. Tenancy, assuredly, did not disappear. It was absentee landlordism that was especially reviled and detested. Thus, in Virginia, for example, where Lord Fairfax was a resident landlord, 'the trend towards tenancy...continued after independence...until by 1830 it had disfranchised about half the adult white males' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 272]. Nevertheless, 'the number of freeholders increased significantly, especially in areas that had been heavily tenanted before' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 273]. In place of the 'feudal revival', and as a direct reaction to it, came the stuff of ideology, a

> democratic individualism [that] harked back to a[n]...old English model that had persisted more successfully in eighteenth century America than in England itself – the yeoman freeholder, a figure most typical of the back-country settlements of Pennsylvania, the new Southwest, and northern New England. Increasingly he would be taken as the archetype of the American everywhere. Instead of peasant communities the new nation preferred to idealize the peasant himself or rather the yeoman of English folk memory:

self-reliant, honest, and independent, the classic figure of English 'country' ideology that the American revolutionaries appropriated to describe themselves – and the backbone of Jeffersonian democracy, the common man of Jacksonian rhetoric. [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 276]

To that particular myth we will come presently.

(ix) Why Did the Feudal Outcome Not Prevail?

Why, despite apparently serious efforts to secure it, a feudal outcome did not prevail, either in the North or the South, is of obvious significance. We may examine various suggested explanations.

The first is a land abundance argument. Degler observes: 'In America the availability of land rendered precarious, if not untenable, those European institutions which were dependent upon scarcity of land'. By this he means feudal institutions. His statement is misleading [Degler, 1984: 3]. It is a question of how dominant classes attempt to solve the problem of land abundance, and how subordinate classes react to this.

In America, indeed, land was abundant, and, the corollary of this, labour was scarce. The crucial importance of labour scarcity we will have occasion to stress frequently. It is an important thread that runs through the whole American experience of agrarian transformation, bearing critically upon, for example, the adoption of slavery, the nature of technological transformation and the persistence of the 'family farm'. We will encounter it again at several points. But this cannot have been the reason for the failure of feudalism to take. After all, Prussian feudalism, as we have seen, was, precisely, a response to labour scarcity. Feudalism, we stress, ties labour to the land, and so, if it can be established successfully, is clearly a way of coping with labour scarcity.

To the extent that a second argument is there, to the effect that feudalism was inappropriately European, that, too, is unacceptable. The Japanese example reveals that feudalism was not an exclusively European phenomenon.[35] What is left unanswered, anyway, is for what reasons 'European institutions' were inappropriate? To be European is hardly, in itself, sufficiently compelling. It is not enough, to use a gloss put on this by other writers, to 'conclude that feudalism was too anachronistic to survive in the free air of a new world' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 264]. Degler is unconvincing.

We have a third argument, which suggests that 'the opposite explanation is more compelling' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 264]. Thus:

> Feudal projects collapsed in the seventeenth century, not because America was too progressive to endure them, but because it was too primitive to sustain them. A feudal order necessarily implies a differentiation of function far beyond the capacity of new societies to create. In every colony the demographic base was much too narrow. [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 264–5].

The proponents of this argument suggest that this is why a feudal order was not successfully established in seventeenth century New France, postponing its establishment until the middle of the eighteenth century [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 265].

But this argument is problematic. Firstly, it is not terribly convincing to suggest that feudalism requires a differentiation of function so complex as to be beyond seventeenth century English colonies. At the very least, the argument needs some bolstering. It is not enough simply to assert it. It needs to be supported. Even if it were valid, secondly, for the late seventeenth century, when attempts at feudalisation were made, the proponents of the argument themselves point out that it was only a matter of time (and not a terribly long time, at that) before, in New France, a durable feudal order emerged, i.e. by 1750. Feudal relationships are, indeed, unlikely to be created overnight. The question is why they did not take root and grow in the English colonies, as they apparently did to the north, in French Canada. The argument, thirdly, assumes that the subject population would be one of European settlers. But the Spanish created feudal relationships with an Indian subject population. Such a feudalism was surely in principle possible in the English colonies. Indeed, a feudalism with black serfs was also conceivable. But with respect to blacks slavery was the preferred alternative. We turn to the Indian problem in the next section of this chapter, and to slavery in Chapter 6.

In New England, as we have seen, a feudal solution was, from the very outset, resisted. Unlike other areas of English colonial settlement in North America, a seigneurial class was never established, because of the nature of the initial colonial settlements. Once that settlement had taken place, there was fierce resistance to any such suggestion. If we cannot quite term that class struggle, since there was no established seigneurial class to struggle against, it was not far from it. There was certainly a concerted effort to prevent such a class being created.

Feudalism requires a dominant, seigneurial class, able to tie direct producers to the land as a subject class. That Locke's Fundamental Constitution tried to create, and failed. In England, a long, attritional class struggle destroyed the basis of the feudal relationship by the time English efforts were being made to introduce it in North America. At the same time, in Prussia, the peasantry was decisively beaten in a class struggle in which the seigneurial offensive was triumphant. In North America, it seems, or at least in the English colonies, the seigneurial class (of which, for example, both Ashley and Locke were members) was unable to subjugate either the native Indian populations (as the Spanish were able to do) or the European colonists (as the French were able to do in New France). That certainly invites an explanation in terms of class struggle.

If we may return to Degler, the ideological nature of his view is noteworthy:

> Thus in those areas where an attempt was made to perpetuate the social system of Europe, it was frustrated almost from the beginning. Quite early in the colonial period, great disparities of wealth appeared in the agricultural

> South, as elsewhere, but this was stratification resting initially and finally upon wealth, not upon honorific or hereditary conceptions derived from Europe. As such, the upper class in America was one into which others might move when they had acquired the requisite wealth. And so long as wealth accumulation was open to all, the class structure would be correspondingly flexible. [Degler, 1984: 4]

A vast number of slaves and Indians might have been surprised to learn of the flexibility of the class structure, and of their freedom to move into the 'upper class'. So, too, would a large number of others.

But, if feudalism was absent slavery has been a massive presence. Slavery was the South's institutionalised reaction to the chronic labour shortage we have noted. The first device was white indentured labour, largely from England. When, by the early eighteenth century, that had proved unsatisfactory, black slaves were the labour force. American Indians had been tried but were not persisted with. Elsewhere, in the North and the West, petty commodity production, the locus of the much mythologised family labour, dominated. This was the classic territory of Lenin's 'capitalism from below'. If it existed, then this was its home.

3 AMERICAN INDIANS AND PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION IN NORTH AMERICA

(i) Pre-Existing Native Populations: An Obstacle to Settlement and Accumulation

Our concern is with the agrarian history of the United States and the broad transformations in both social relationships and productive forces that accompanied capitalist development. That quest, to establish the nature of the North American path, takes us back to the colonial era of American history, where the distinct beginnings of the path lie: in the agricultural practices and agrarian relationships introduced and developed by European settlers, with the mediation of the colonial and post-colonial states. Our story starts, effectively, in the early seventeenth century, when English settlement began on the eastern seaboard of North America, in Virginia and in New England, although, in a full treatment, one would need to take account of other colonial interventions (most notably by Spain and France). That is our point of departure. It is the transformation of the structures thus fashioned that we seek to examine. In so proceeding we need, however, to stress a point of central significance.

The roots of that history clearly lie in North America's pre-colonial past, in the hunting activities and the agriculture practised by the native populations encountered by Europeans when they first came, and in the social relationships of those populations. As has been observed, 'The "New World" discovered by

Columbus was not new, nor was it a "virgin land" that beckoned European settlement. For thousands of years North and South America had been inhabited, in many areas as densely as Europe' [Levine *et al.*, 1989: 9]. To suggest the importance of these pre-colonial roots is not to make an empty gesture – a liberal nod in the direction of a romantic past now obliterated. Nor is it to embrace the infinite regress of a 'genetic determinism'. For the relevant pre-colonial structures and the accompanying possession of land essential to them, constantly modified by the encounter with European settlers and the state which represented them, survived into colonial and post-colonial times, and were perceived by the settlers and their state as a continuing obstacle to the accumulation which they sought to institute and extend.

So it is that no treatment of the North American path – or paths – can be complete without consideration of those native populations – the American Indians – as they lived through the initial impact of disease brought by the Europeans and then their elimination as an obstacle to settlement and accumulation. This was an integral part of the kind of structures established and the manner of their establishment. And that experience, in its turn, derived, in part, from pre-colonial structures and relationships, which American Indians attempted to preserve. Nor is it idle to insist upon the ideologically loaded nature of terms like 'New World' and 'virgin land'. They serve to conceal part – a central part – of North America's path of agrarian transformation: that bloody history of the processes of primitive accumulation represented by the encounter between settlers and Indians.

If, as Marx posits, primitive accumulation represents dispossession of the owners of the means of production, especially land, and the creation of a class of the dispossessed,[36] if 'so-called primitive accumulation...is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production...[a crucial episode] in the pre-history of capital' [Marx, 1976: 874–5] then here was primitive accumulation at its most primitive. The Indians were so separated, but they did not become, in any lasting sense, slaves; and nor did they become serfs, or sharecroppers. Neither were they transformed into a rural proletariat or an urban proletariat. They did not become wage labourers in the countryside, or part of the urban workforce. They were uprooted, and those who survived were physically moved – ever westwards, and ultimately into reservations. They bore, most heavily, the costs of primitive accumulation, but were excluded from any active participation in the processes of capitalist transformation.

It was the pre-colonial economic activities, social relationships and land possession of American Indians that the European settlers met and that constituted an obstacle to the agrarian settlement which they sought to make and the expansion they sought to secure. It was these that blocked the early process of settler agrarian accumulation in colonial North America and that subsequently acted to prevent accumulation from proceeding.

We may identify two fundamental senses in which this was so, that the settlers and their descendants, and their representatives in the state, confronted and

responded to, with long-drawn-out duplicity and ruthlessness and with murderous effect. There is a clear historical parallel in the Highland Clearances. But the savage irony is that some of those driven from the Highlands of Scotland by the imperative of accumulation were among the settlers who dispossessed Indians of their land and drove them from it.

The first, and primary, sense concerns the land problem, and relates to property rights in land and the acquisition of land. Pre-colonial structures and relationships, continuing in both colonial and post-colonial North America, had to be extirpated, if the settlers were to appropriate the 'abundant' and 'virgin' land that they saw, and establish their own property rights in that land. It is primary inasmuch as the initial step in the creation of a settler agriculture had to be the acquisition of land.

The second sense, which encompasses the labour problem, pertains to the supply of a malleable ('disciplined') labour force and the chronic labour shortage that, from the settlers' viewpoint, was endemic in North America. This they would have a long struggle with. These structures and relationships might prevent the relieving of the recurring land problem which they faced. It was part of the colonial and post-colonial mission to destroy them. But to the extent that the effort to dispossess Indians of their land meant either their death or their physical shifting to far-flung terrain, there was a conflict between acquiring land and acquiring a labour force to work it.

The settlers were wholly successful in overcoming the former obstacle. The latter proved more problematic. Indeed, the ultimate resolving of the land problem, involving, as it did, the destruction of the Indian population, was accompanied by a dramatic reduction of that population and their herding into reservations. There could be no solving of the labour problem from that source. They reached for another solution, especially in the southern states, that involved a yet other population of non-European origin, and one that had to be torn from its moorings and imported by force. In the north, the rooting and the continuing reproduction of an agriculture that used predominantly family labour was the agrarian structure that solved the problem. But that is to anticipate. Before coming to that, we must consider the manner in which the Indian population was treated.

(ii) A Sizeable Population of Diverse Indian Peoples, Occupying and Using the Land and 'Ingeniously at One with Their Surroundings'

When the Europeans first set foot in North America, it was inhabited, over its length and breadth, by a vast array of Indian tribes. Much of it, though certainly not all, was, by European standards, sparsely populated. Yet it was in the possession of native Indians, who hunted, fished and cultivated the land.

A great debate has raged over the size of the Indian population when the Europeans arrived. It is certainly the case that 'exact figures are impossible to ascertain. When colonists began keeping records, the American Indian population had been drastically reduced by war, famine, forced labour, and epidemics of European diseases' [*Encarta*, 1994: entry on 'American Indians']. Estimates of the size of the initial population (in 1492) vary enormously. As a recent writer has it, 'the size of the native population in 1492...has been one of the most hotly, and on occasions bitterly, debated issues in New World history in recent years' [Newson, 1993: 248]. The 'inadequacy of archaeological and ethnohistorical sources' (loc. cit.) leaves much scope for controversy. Yet, as Newson stresses: 'The size of the native population in 1492 is not merely an academic quibble. Population size is a reflection of environmental conditions and biological and cultural processes, and, as such, a barometer by which the significance of post-Columbian changes can be measured' [Newson, 1993: 250]. Extrapolation backwards, from the time that records began to be kept or from a later date, is a tricky, contentious, inexact and ultimately unsatisfactory business. Methods other than extrapolation, all of doubtful usefulness but of varying degrees of dubiousness, may be deployed. Anything approaching precision will never be achieved.

We need not enter that controversy with any degree of intensity, fascinating as it is. Indeed, for a non-specialist, in this of all fields ('the vexed question of Indian population figures' [Bolt, 1987: 313, n. 84] – vexed indeed), confident judgement is dangerous and ill-advised. The broad lines of our investigation do not require that, anyway. But some view of the orders of magnitude, however tentative and amateur, is useful.

Our concern is with what is now the United States. Any effort so to limit our endeavour is, however, in this instance, complicated by the controversy's focusing upon the whole of the 'New World' (i.e. all of the Americas), or, if not that, the whole of 'North America' (i.e. with what is now Canada as well as the United States). Nevertheless, we may attempt to focus upon the United States. Many have entered the fray, and, as Newson points out [Newson, 1993: 249], we may identify, between the 1920s and the present, for the hemisphere as a whole (from which, of course, estimates for the United States may be derived) a remarkable cycle of estimates: from 'mid-range' estimates in the 1920s, through 'conservative' approximations in the 1930s and 1940s, 'high' estimates in the 1960s and 1970s, a 'downward revision' thereafter, back to 'mid-range' estimates more recently.[37] The United States estimates up to the present are summarised in Table 5.3.

We may say the following. It seems most unlikely that earlier estimates which put the figure for the United States at less than one million (for example, those of Mooney [1928], Kroeber [1939], Rosenblat [1954], and Steward [1949]) can now be taken seriously. One does, however, see it still quoted [Gilbert, 1993].[38] Equally, the highest figure that has been suggested, of between 7 and 9 million [Dobyns, 1966: 414–15], might be seen as excessive, even at its lower end: although one does find such a figure, or something close to it, still given in the secondary literature [*Encarta*, entry on 'American Indians', which was written by Alice Beck Kehoe, Calvin Martin and Sandra L. Cadwalader; and [Levine *et al.*,

Table 5.3 Estimates of the Indian population of the United States in 1492

Source	*Specific United States estimate*	*Derived Estimate: from total 'North America' figure*			
		North America estimate	*Assuming different proportions of United States to total for North America*		
			70%	*80%*	*90%*
(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*
Macleod [1928]	3,000,000	–	–	–	–
Mooney [1928]	–	1,153,000	807,100	922,400	1,037,700
Kroeber [1939]	–	1,026,000	718,200	820,800	923,400
Steward [1949]	–	1,000,880	700,616	800,704	900,792
Rosenblat [1954]	–	1,000,000	700,000	800,000	900,000
Dobyns [1966] (a)	–	9,800,000	6,860,000	7,840,000	8,820,000
(b)	–	12,250,000	8,575,000	9,800,000	11,025,000
Denevan [1992]	–	3,790,000	2,653,000	3,032,000	3,411,000
Bolt [1987]	1,000,000	1,300,000	–	–	–

Note: The above is a selection of estimates chosen for their representativeness, to illustrate the remarkable range of scholarly view on the matter. Estimates given in secondary sources are not cited, although some are noted in the text.
Each of the sources cited is the work of a specialist in the field of the history of the Indians of the Americas. We may comment as follows on the possible proportion of the United States population of Indians to the North America total (columns 3–6). North America is the whole area north of Mexico. It includes three components: (a) the United States, (b) Canada and (c) Alaska. Alaska, of course, did become part of the United States, but, for purposes of the present exercise, we exclude it from the United States. In 1930, in fact, the United States proportion of the actual figure was 68% (calculated from the figures given in Rosenblat [1945: 22], cited in Dobyns [1966: 415]). The figures given by Bolt [Bolt, 1987: 32] suggest a proportion of 77% for the United States in 1492. That the United States share declined more than proportionately over the whole long period seems likely. It is doubtful if we will ever be able to be remotely precise about this. But a figure of between 70 and 80% seems plausible for 1492.

Sources: The figures cited have been collated from Dobyns [1966: *passim* but especialy 397–400, 415], Newson [1993: 248–51], Bolt, [1987: 32]. Bolt refers us to Tyler [1973: 18] and Josephy [1968: 61–2].

1989: 9][39]. The figure of one million is sometimes cited (see, for example, Bolt [1987: 32], who does, however, say that it is 'conservative'). Denevan's recent attempt to derive a figure from all the available regional estimates suggests that around 3 million for the United States seems plausible on a basis of existing evidence, although one might suggest that it is the most likely minimum figure. A figure of 4 million is not inconceivable. That may have to be revised, as more research becomes available. It may, indeed, turn out to be higher. It seems unlikely to be lower. Let us say, then, that the likely figure is between 3 and 4 million.

We will not attempt to capture here the rich diversity of the pre-colonial past, of the tribes which constituted the likely 3 to 4 million native Americans in 1492. We may simply comment that the variety across North America, and the individual complexity of social arrangements, of the extensive network of American Indian tribes, were far greater than was commonly recognised either in the colonial era or subsequently. Europeans remained 'blind to the diversity and complexity of Indian cultures, to the native Americans' traditions of mutual obligation and communal ownership of land and to the peculiarly advanced position of Indian women (Iroquois women, for example, played a crucial role in political and economic decisions)' [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 305]. These are easily subsumed, and obliterated, under the formulation of a general 'Indian problem', or in notions of the 'wilderness' or of 'savages'. We do well to remember what was obliterated by the agrarian settlement, and the subsequent agrarian transformation, of North America by Europeans. This was one of the major costs of primitive accumulation in North America.

We can distinguish eight broad regions of Indian settlement and culture – 'eight basic culture areas' [Bolt, 1987: 14]: '(1) the northeastern woodlands, the region above the south and east of the Mississippi; (2) the Southeast, which comprised all the southern territory east of the Mississippi; (3) the Great Plains, stretching between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi; (4) the Southwest, encompassing Arizona, the western two-thirds of New Mexico and parts of Utah, Colorado and Texas; (5) California; (6) the Great Basin, ranging across Nevada and Utah from the Rockies to Sierra Nevada and including sections of Idaho, Oregon, California, Arizona and Wyoming; (7) the Plateau country between the Rocky Mountains and the Cascade Mountains; and (8) the northwestern Pacific Coast, taking in western Oregon and Washington' [Bolt, 1987: 14–15]. There was, of course, overlap between these. Different writers, moreover, may use rather different groupings.[40] This division seems, however, to be reasonable. Within those broad areas, we might identify the remarkable array of tribes which possessed the land in what are now the individual states of the United States, and glimpse a little of their diversity and distinguishing characteristics. But space precludes that.[41]

Even the most synoptic view of the Indian tribes would suggest remarkable diversity. Concentrating, for the moment, on the initial encounters of European colonists and Indians, and abstracting from the fear, prejudice and misconceptions of those settlers, we may cite a recent specialist historian, who points out:

> Colonists, in order to survive, were obliged to learn from the natives how to obtain food and other resources, how to apply herb medicines and how to travel and fight effectively in wilderness conditions. They admitted that the native populations engaged in 'hunting, farming, and trade' and that some groups were 'more competent than others'. Indian corn was highly valued, Indian towns, houses and products remarked, and in these matters...the fact that the Indians were ingeniously at one with their surroundings was appreciated. [Bolt, 1987: 15–17]

Such grudging acknowledgement of the oneness of Indians with their environment did not, however, give prominence to a very basic fact.

Those tribes possessed the land that the incomers sought to settle. They had to be dispossessed. The incomers settled first on the Atlantic coast, in the east. They then moved ever westwards, and the Indians were uprooted and pushed westwards as they vacated first their eastern homeland and then territory that they had subsequently occupied, with promises from the white man of permanent settlement. As Eric Wolf observes:

> The westward expansion seemed the 'American dream' come true. There appeared to be land for the taking in the North American wilderness, and agrarian democrats like Jefferson looked forward to a nation of sturdy yeomen, servants to no man through their possession of land. But, of course, this was not a 'a land without people for a people without land'. Land was occupied and used by native American populations; and to make yeomen, these natives had first to be dispossessed. To the new settlers, land was value for more than the crops and livestock it could sustain. Land was 'the nation's most sought after commodity in the first half century of the republic' [Rohrbough, 1968: xii], its 'major investment opportunity' [Rogin, 1975: 81]...[Those native American populations] were horticulturists (with cultivation in the hands of women) as well as hunters, firmly settled upon their land and hunting ranges and unwilling to yield them to newcomers. [Wolf, 1984: 284]

We anticipate somewhat. Our story goes back beyond the republic, to the first days of European settlers, when the dispossession began. We have seen already the justification given by Locke for such dispossession, in the name of 'productive labour'. Other kinds of justification, sometimes uneasy but ultimately unyielding, would be made. The imperative of accumulation, in whatever cloak of legitimacy it was draped, would not be denied.

(iii) Initial Impact, European Disease and Population Decline

The colonial encounter of native populations with the Spanish started a process that the British would spread across the face of North America. With the English, and later British, and with other settlers, mostly the French but also the Dutch, beginning at the start of the seventeenth century, the confrontation would prove prolonged, violent and ultimately fatal for those native populations. It was not complete until the final quarter of the nineteenth century.

We may first stress the initial impact of disease, brought by the Europeans, to which those native populations had no resistance. South of the Gulf of Mexico, in the sixteenth century, the Spanish wrought havoc upon native populations. In North America, European disease wrought further havoc as, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, contact proceeded. As has been observed: 'Before the coming of the whites, not least because of their geographical isolation, they appear to have been comparatively healthy and long-lived peoples. But traders missionaries and settlers brought with them diseases to which the natives had no immunity' [Bolt, 1987: 24–5]. Diseases such as smallpox, plague, cholera, measles, mumps, dysentery, scarlet fever, syphilis, influenza, and tuberculosis cut a swathe through populations that had no resistance to them. These diseases might run ahead of the incoming Europeans, and one epidemic could take away a third or a half of the population of an area through which it spread.[42] Thus:

> In Virginia, the Indians were ravaged by smallpox epidemics in the 1660s, 1679–80 and 1696. Other southern tribes, both close to and distant from the main areas of white colonization, also felt the impact of European diseases. Assorted epidemics similarly devastated the tribes of New England in 1616–18, 1622 and 1633. Precise figures are lacking, but the Massachusetts, for example, may have been reduced by smallpox from 3,000 to 1,000. [Bolt, 1987: 25]

As another writer has it:

> In the French and English colonies the impact of diseases was considerable but patchy. At first, in New England, the effects were devastating, creating an impression on one witness of a 'new found Golgotha' with perhaps a third of the Indian population dying in the vicinity of the earlier settlements, thus opening up the coast for Puritan colonization. [Hennessy, 1993: 18]

It has been suggested that

> within a generation or so, the impact of such epidemics on particular Indian groups tailed off dramatically. However, by that time the damage was done. [Bolt, 1987: 25]

That is probably true, but the disease brought by Europeans would bring murderous effect long after that. As the final assault was getting under way, in the 1830s, in the winter of 1831–2, on the 'trail of tears' (see below), as the Choctaw trekked from Alabama and Mississippi to Oklahoma, out of the tribe of

16,000 who made the journey at least 1,600 died partly as the result of a cholera epidemic [Brogan, 1986: 68].

In the next three hundred years, far greater damage would be done: damage that would bring about the virtual extermination of the Indian population. The diseases brought by the Europeans were not a deliberate visitation upon native populations.[43] Some of them hit the Europeans themselves. But what followed, the systematic dispossession of Indians from their land, was deliberate, unremitting and systematic, until they had been cleared from the face of the United States. In the very early years of English colonization, disease helped in that dispossession, inasmuch as 'one effect of early Indian population decline was to release land and thus to lessen the possibility of conflict between Indians and settlers' [Hennessy, 1993: 21]. But such an absence of 'conflict' could last only until 'immigration from England began to build up later in the seventeenth century' (loc. cit.).

(iv) Dispossession

Bearing its historical roots in mind, we begin our story of dispossession in the early seventeenth century, as the diseases brought by Europeans were wreaking their havoc. It is then that the colonial assault by England on the eastern seaboard of North America, that would result in the creation of the United States, began. As the seventeenth century proceeded, so 'the ghastly plagues that took life also broke down the kinship networks, skills, customs and leadership of the afflicted societies' [Bolt, 1987: 25]. Disease was acting, in yet another way, as an unwitting and vicious accomplice in the struggle to dispossess Indians.

The land lay before the colonists, as they arrived, but it was occupied. One source tells us:

> In 1600 the eastern coastal region of mainland North America, some 362,000 square miles from Maine to Georgia and west to the Appalachian Mountains, was largely uncultivated. Much of it was covered with forests, but it was by no means an unbroken wilderness. A native Indian population, grouped in well-organized tribes and sharing approximately the same culture, lived fairly settled lives there. Many dwelled in semi-permanent villages of up to 1,000 persons. Concentrated in the fertile coastal plain and the broad river valleys, these native Americans communicated readily along an intricate network of riverways and forest trails. They lived on a generally nutritious diet of fish and farm crops, principally maize (corn), as well as on game and on wild foods, and they rarely suffered famine. [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 28]

That seems to be a fair statement. It was this that English colonial settlers intruded upon. Their immediate and primary need was for land. The native Indian people stood in their way. As colonial settlement spread, and the number of colonists mushroomed, so the presence of a native population, occupying, if not

cultivating (and they did cultivate), the land was first a nuisance and then an obstacle. There had to be, if we may borrow an expression from another context in which a native population obstructed agrarian accumulation, a 'clearance'.

Our source continues, as if, retrospectively, to reduce the difficulties and ease the pain of such clearance in North America:

> But the Indians' hold upon the land was light. Large areas of the Atlantic woodland region were completely uninhabited; the new England coastal population had been decimated by smallpox just before the first English settlers arrived. Anthropologists have estimated the average population destiny for the entire region east of the Appalachians in the early days of European settlement as thirty-four persons per hundred square miles. In the most populous region, New England and coastal New York, whose population in 1610 has been estimated at 72,000, the average density was between four and five persons per square mile. Nowhere was there more than 1 per cent of all the land available for cultivation actually being farmed, and nowhere did the Indians think of landownership in terms familiar to Europeans. The Indians did not view land as pieces of property owned by individuals. Rather, land was a common resource that was inherited from ancestors, held in trust by tribal chiefs for future generations, and used by all members of the tribe for their daily needs. (loc. cit.)

If, indeed, the hold of the Indians on the land was so light, and if, indeed, there was such an abundance of land, the mystery is why the Indians had to be driven inexorably and totally from this land, pushed ever westwards; and why whole tribes, in monotonous sequence, had to be exterminated. As another historian of North America comments: 'there was (and is) room enough on the vast continent for both peoples...The Indians knew it...The two peoples might have developed side by side in peace' [Brogan, 1986: 60]. But the Indians had much to learn about 'possessive individualism', property rights, European savagery and the power of the accumulation imperative.

The separation of North American Indians from the land that they possessed, to allow the establishing of a settled agriculture by European settlers and their descendants, was a crucial part of North America's era of primitive accumulation. It was they, the American Indians, who bore much of the costs of that accumulation. If North America did not possess a feudal agriculture whose subject population might have those costs imposed upon it, it did have a native population whose extirpation was necessary to that accumulation, and who, in bearing those costs, paid a horrifying price. It also acquired a black population from abroad, whose separation from their African land and whose exploitation as slaves would constitute another large part of those costs.

To start off with, indeed, American Indians were taken and sold into slavery, or forced labour: at first shipped off to Europe, and then to the West Indies, as slaves, in the wake of the arrival of Columbus in 1492 [Brown, 1971: 2 and 4];

then, after the arrival of the English in Virginia in 1607 and the landing in Plymouth in 1620, taken into slavery in the early English settlements, from the very outset [Degler, 1984: 31; Kolchin, 1987: 11]. As has been observed: 'the high level of Indian mortality did not prevent Europeans from enslaving the natives' [Bolt, 1987: 25].

The following has been suggested, in a recent, acclaimed exercise in comparative history (in which American slavery and Russian serfdom are examined, in a 'comparative study of unfree labor' [Kolchin, 1987: ix]: 'A shortage of laborers...plagued English settlers in the American colonies, and there...this situation led to the use of physical compulsion to secure workers. A vast abundance of virgin land together with a paucity of settlers defined the problem in all the mainland colonies; everywhere, land was plentiful and labor scarce' [Kolchin, 1987: 10]. We will return to the labour problem presently. It does seem to be the case that 'land was more important than labour, at least in the northern colonies, where subsistence agriculture was based on the family farm' [Hennessy, 1993: 21]. That particular agrarian structure we will explore below. We may pause to note an awkward fact not pointed to by Kolchin. The 'vast abundance of virgin land' which the English settlers were presented with, in fact, represented land settled by and in the possession of American Indians, gaining their livelihood from it in a wide variety of ways. Before that 'virgin land' could, from the settler's viewpoint, become usable and cultivable the Indians had to be dispossessed, uprooted and moved. Only then could property rights in that land be established for the settlers.

The very earliest settlers recognised the rights that Indians had in land, and acknowledged them, more or less, as ownership rights, at least to start off with. Thus, in Massachusetts, the Plymouth colonists, in what they called New England, at first lived happily side by side with the Indians, the Wampanoags, who, in the first years, helped the white people, instructing them in how to plant and cultivate corn and catch fish. Then:

> In 1625 some of the colonists asked Samoset [a Pemaquid Indian from Maine and friend of Massasoit, chief of the Wampanoags] to give them 12,000 additional acres of Pemaquid land. Samoset knew the land came from the Great Spirit, was as endless as the sky, and belonged to no man. To humor those strangers in their strange ways, however, he went through a ceremony of transferring the land and made his mark on a paper for them. It was the first deed of Indian land to English colonists. [Brown, 1971: 3]

Such courtesy and legal nicety did not survive the very earliest instincts of the settlers. Already, further settlers were pouring in, in their thousands, and they

> did not bother to go through such a ceremony. By the time Massasoit, great chief of the Wampanoags, died in 1662 his people were being pushed back into the wilderness. [Brown, 1971: 3]

By 1685 the Wampanoags, along with the Narragansetts, had been 'virtually exterminated' [Brown, 1971: 4], whether by disease or through direct confrontation with settlers.

Land was 'purchased' for derisory amounts. Further south, for example, in what would be one of the 'middle colonies', Manhattan Island was bought by the Dutchman, Peter Minuit, from the Manhates Indians in 1626 'for sixty guilders in fishhooks and glass beads' [Brown, 1971: 4]. A relentless process had been set in motion.

The justification for dispossession and the denial of ownership rights were given early statement. Indeed, more than a century earlier, Sir Thomas More, writing 'of the continent his Utopians colonized whenever their own island became overcrowded' [Sanders, 1992: 327], gave it in his *Utopia*, completed and published in Flanders in 1516 (in Latin). As if anticipating the colonising zeal, proprietary instincts and ruthless determination to expel the Indians, he wrote:

> The natives there have more land than they can use, so some of it lies fallow. The Utopians permit the natives to live in the colony if they wish, since their acceptance of Utopian laws and customs means they are easily assimilated, which benefits both peoples. The Utopian way of life makes the land fruitful enough for both groups, though previously it was too poor and barren for either. All native who refuse to live under Utopian law are driven out of the colony and war is waged on the natives who resist. Utopians regard a war as just if it is waged to oust a people who refuse to allow vacant land to be used according to the very law of nature. [Quoted in Sanders, 1990: 327]

All of the elements of subsequent argument in favour of appropriation and expulsion are there: the existence of surplus/unused land, a settler capacity to make formerly 'poor and barren' land productive, and the licence to 'drive out' those 'natives who resist' the desire to use productively 'vacant land' – all in the name of 'the very law of nature'. It is a remarkably prophetic statement, though one that showed rather more inclination to be tolerant towards compliant Indians than the New England settlers would.

The essential argument would be taken up by Puritans who, in other respects, would have looked askance upon the popish More. It would be expressed, as one might expect of Puritan colonists, in Christian scripture and the word of God. E.P. Thompson drily notes: 'The Puritan colonists were ready to moralise their appropriation of Indian lands by reference to God's commands, in Genesis I, 28, to "replenish the earth, and subdue it"' [Thompson, 1993: 165]. John Winthrop (1588–1650), like Oliver Cromwell of the English Puritan gentry and the first Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (he had sailed from Yarmouth in March, 1630, with 1,800 Puritan settlers) could, in 1640, conceive in biblical vein, of seeing 'the Indians rooted out, as being of the cursed race of Ham' [quoted in Sanders, 1992: 355]. He echoed More and anticipated Locke when he pronounced:

> That which is common to all is proper to none. This savage people ruleth over many lands without title or property; for they enclose no ground, neither have they cattle to maintain it, but remove their dwellings as they have occasion, or as they can prevail against their neighbours. And why may not Christians have liberties to go and dwell amongst them in their waste lands and woods, leaving them such places as they have manured for their corn, as lawfully as Abraham did among the Sodomites? For God has given to the sons of man a two-fold right to the earth: there is a natural right and a civil right. The first right was natural where men held the earth in common, every man settling and feeding where he pleased; then, as men and cattle increased, they appropriated some parcels of ground by enclosing and peculiar manurance, and this in time got them a civil right. [cited in Brogan, 1986: 60].[44]

As Brogan comments: 'Thus the patriarch of New England, justifying the robberies he meant to commit by the best social science of his day' (loc. cit.) One might imagine a latter-day incarnation, on a World Bank mission, preaching justification via transaction costs, the principal-agent problem, or other neoclassical nostrums (except that Winthrop could write a measured, clear and sonorous English prose). Thus, indeed, were property rights born in the English colonies. And thus were settler civil rights given priority over natural rights.

Thereafter, the fine words of ideology, steeped in the resonance of Christian scripture, find a harsh dissonance in the ugly practice of settlers and their representatives. It is a tragic succession, for two centuries, of Indians being driven from their lands; of stubborn resistance by Indians and massacres of Indians; of 'Indian Wars'; of broken promises; of treaties being solemnly signed by Indian chiefs and the white settlers' representatives, and then being reneged upon by the latter; of the full force of the state's coercive might, in the shape of the military, being deployed in the process of dispossession and banishment. The Indians had many ways of describing the white man. The Indians in the north, who grew to know them only too well, called them 'The Cut-throats' and 'People Greedily Grasping for Land'.[45] That seems appropriate. What took place has been summed up, aptly, as follows:

> Again and again [the Indian]...made treaties with the white man, to last, in the picturesque phrase, 'as long as grass grows or water runs'; invariably the treaties were broken almost at once – by the whites...Treachery was a principal theme in the whites' treatment of the red men. The use traders regularly made of whisky to cheat Indians of their fair payment [is well-documented]...It was as regularly adopted to cheat them of their lands. Nor was it the only method. Illiterate Indians were induced to put their names to documents transferring land-title which they did not understand and had, anyway, no right to sign, but which were used to justify the expulsion of them and their fellows from their hunting-grounds. In 1686 the Delaware Indians ceded to William Penn as much land to the north as a man could walk in three days. The upright and moderate Penn ('I desire to enjoy it with your consent, that we may always live together as neighbours and friends', he had remarked in 1682) took only what he covered in a day and a half of easy strolling; but fifty-one years later his successors had the rest of the ground covered by relay runners, and claimed the whole enormous extent under the so-called 'Walking' purchase. In later years bribing the chiefs – particularly half-breed ones – to part with tribal land was found to be a good method. Another was to recognize, for the purpose of land transactions, a pliant Indian as a chief, or an otherwise unempowered fragment of a tribe as competent to act for the whole. And where straightforward trickery was inapplicable, humbug, its twin, proved invaluable. The two greatest wrongs ever committed against Indians as a group , the Removal Act of 1830 and the Allotment Act of 1887, were both made palatable to the Anglo-American conscience by sincere, semi-sincere and insincere assurances that they were passed chiefly to help their victims...The Christians themselves [passionate denouncers of the fiendish savages] raped, scalped, looted, murdered, burned and tortured, the very deeds by which they justified their contempt and loathing for the Indian. [Brogan, 1986: 61–2]

One cannot better that account. It is a shameful story.[46]

We may summarise, in the baldest possible fashion, a long and complex story as follows. Thus 'in New England, the tribes had substantially lost their land base by the end of the seventeenth century and their numbers may have plummeted by as much as 80 per cent by the middle of the eighteenth' [Bolt, 1987: 34–5]. Winthrop's patriarchal vision for New England had come to pass. The New England tribes tended to be small, and their smallness made them vulnerable. In western New York, however, the Iroquois, straddling the Mohawk Valley and the Lake Ontario Plain, survived for far longer. It was not until a century after the New England tribes had yielded, in the wake of the American Revolution, that the Iroquois came to grief. But come to grief they did. They had been reduced to an abject condition by the end of the eighteenth century. By then: 'The Senecas of New York, once the proud "keepers of the western gate" of the Iroquois Confederacy, were a beaten, demoralized people who huddled in rural slums. Many of the Mohawks...fled to Canada '[Levine *et al*, 1989: 88–9]. When their time did come, it came quickly.[47]

In Virginia the experience of the Indian tribes was similar to that in New England: 'The Virginia tribes felt the brunt of early white expansion in the South and Nash estimates that between 1607 and the first decade of the eighteenth century the Indian population of the colony declined from perhaps 18,000 to 2,000' [Bolt, 1987: 35].[48] As with New England, the Indians had been dispossessed and driven out by the beginning of the eighteenth century.

We noted above the eastern coastal region, the 362,000 square miles from Maine to Georgia, west to the Appalachians, that the English intruded upon at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Two centuries later, say by 1820, the

relevant dividing line had moved west from the Appalachians to the Mississippi. By that time, all the territory east of the Mississippi was part of the United States. There was territory, too, west of the Mississippi: but a huge swathe of territory – Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, the Oregon Country (Oregon, Idaho, Washington) – had yet to be acquired. Much had been done, through wars, force, trickery, deception, theft, treaties that were dishonoured to dispossess Indians of their land. For all that

> in 1820 the prairies and forests east of the Mississippi River still contained approximately 125,000 native Americans. Although millions of acres had been legally cleared of Indian occupancy rights, the physical presence of the Indians blocked the way to government sale of much public land that could lead to increased revenues, to profits from land speculation, and to the creation of private farms and plantations. [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 305]

If the Indians were no longer an effective force in the north, a final act of clearance needed to be secured. In some parts – for example, in Illinois and Wisconsin – there were particular concentrations that blocked expansion (from the Fox and Sac, or Sauc tribes, that had united in 1760). In the south, east of the Mississippi, their continued possession of land represented a serious obstacle to expansion and accumulation.

The accumulation imperative worked its powerful way. It could not be resisted. The economic development of the south was, it seemed, subject to the commanding constraint of a land shortage. This was so in the following way:

> The southern states stood to gain most from the removal of over 50,000 Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks and Seminoles, living on 33 million acres of land. And the southerners' mouthpiece was Georgia, whose western land claims had been relinquished in 1802 in return for a promise from the federal government to extinguish the Indian land title within the state. After 1815, the total value of cotton exports mounted steadily and cotton constituted an increasingly large share of the total value of exports. Its share of the total, together with receipts from public land sales in the South, rose particularly markedly during the removal years of the 1830s, and as Takaki and others have shown, the emergence of the cotton kingdom plainly depended on Indian dispossession, the accompanying expansion of white settlement, and black slavery. Repeated cessions by the southern Indians between 1814 and 1824 had whetted rather than dulled the whites' appetite for land which was not only suitable for cotton growing but also contained valuable mineral resources. Southerners asserted that they would use this territory better than the Indians and the acquisition of rich new land was especially welcome at a time when town life and work were exerting a growing attraction for country dwellers in unrewarding regions. [Bolt, 1987: 57][49]

Such was the relentless logic that underpinned 'Indian removal'. What was true of Georgia was true, *mutatis mutandis*, of other states in the south, east of the Mississippi.

What we next witness, indeed, is the 'Indian Removal' (whose rationale was stated in the 'Georgia logic'), the relocation of Indians from their eastern territories to the west, as settlement and expansion in the east generated a insatiable appetite for Indian land. It was invested, at first, with the apparently legitimising conditions that this would be both voluntary (i.e. it would be secured without force) and permanent (i.e. it would give the Indians inviolable rights in their new land). As Christine Bolt has it: 'Following the example of Thomas Jefferson [whose presidency lasted from 1801 to 1809], but with an ever growing degree of urgency, presidents James Monroe [1817–25] and John Quincy Adams [1825–9] urged the voluntary removal of eastern Indians to a permanent home west of the Mississippi' [Bolt, 1987: 57]. Their successor, Andrew Jackson (1829–37), a dedicated 'Indian fighter' (the Indians, from personal experience, called him Sharp Knife[50]) would establish, in 1830, the so-called 'permanent Indian frontier':

> On 28 May 1830, the Removal Act was passed after a bitter struggle. It authorised the President to provide unorganized public lands west of the Mississippi for the settlement of eastern Indians willing to move there. Indian emigrants were to be given permanent title to their new land, compensation for improvements in the East, help in moving and protection on arrival. [Bolt, 1987: 59]

The appearance of maintaining Indian rights was solemnly upheld. Under that facade, '[I]t was soon apparent that every device would be employed to secure tribal compliance' [Bolt, 1987: 59]. The plot of the 'Indian Removal' drama unfolded with the relentless inevitability of a Greek tragedy.

First, the eastern Indians were moved, with all of the most base expedients of both civil society and the state deployed to that end: 'When bribery, fraud and intimidation had not cleared all the Indians from the East by the middle of the 1830s, troops were used to move the Indiana Potowatomis, Cherokees, Creeks and Seminoles' [Bolt, 1987: 62]. One of the most bloody episodes was played out in Florida, so recently acquired by the United States. The Seminoles had been left to themselves by the Spanish. But the Americans were hungry for land. Immediately after 1819, colonists began entering Florida from the north. The Seminoles resisted fiercely. The war continued until 1842. The Seminole were defeated, and most were either killed or removed to Indian Territory, in what is now the state of Oklahoma. Here was found justification for the whole policy of removal: 'the Indians' resistance and their friendship to black fugitives...were said to prove their savagery and justify white tactics' [Bolt, 1987: 62]. Despite this prolonged resistance, the end of the first stage of the 'Indian Removal', in fact, came within fifteen years of the passage of the Removal Act:

> By about the mid-1840s, most of the eastern Indians had been, or were in the process of being, relocated. During Jackson's administration, some 100 million acres of Indian land east of the Mississippi had been secured through nearly seventy treaties, at a cost of approximately 68 million dollars and 32 million acres west of the river. [Bolt, 1987: 59–60]

The major aim had been secured. The eastern Indians had been dispossessed and removed. But more was to follow.

In 1803, almost all of what is now the state of Ohklahoma came to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase. From 1817, it became, essentially, a dumping-ground for Indian tribes driven, for the most part, out of the southern states: sent by the federal government from Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi and North Carolina. Dumping-ground it may have been, but it was given to the displaced Five Civilized Nations of Indian tribes as their territory, and divided among them: the Creeks (from Alabama and Georgia), Cherokee (from Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia and the Carolinas), Chickasaw (from northern Mississippi), Choctaw (from southern Mississippi and southwestern Alabama) and Seminole (mainly from Florida). In 1834, the region was established as the Indian Territory, and, supposedly, 'the tribal authority of the Indian nations within the territory was assured' [*Encarta*, entry on 'Oklahoma']. It is estimated that

> under the Indian Removal Act of 1830 the 60,000 Indians of the Five Civilised Tribes were moved from the lands they had always occupied, lands which were guaranteed to them on the honour of the United States as pledged in treaty after treaty, to lands far across the Mississippi...Many other Indians, until the very end of the nineteenth century, were to be uprooted. But the Great Removal sticks in the memory because of its scale, and because of the ostentatious bad faith of all concerned...and because of the immense human suffering involved. [Brogan, 1986: 67–8]

The trek from east to west the Cherokees called the 'Trail of Tears'. They were forced to make the journey on foot, covering long distances often in severe winter conditions, and subject, for example, to a cholera epidemic. Of the 60,000 who were forced to move, between 1831 and 1835, large numbers died, most of them children or old people, 'either in the concentration camps where they were assembled for deportation or during the removal itself' [Brogan, 1986: 68]. At the very least 10% of the total died, and probably nearer 20%. Thus, for example, one tenth of the entire Choctaw tribe of 16,000 died en route; and 4,000 eastern Cherokees, from the mountains of western Georgia and North Carolina, or one of every four, died on the 'Trail of Tears' (a further 5,000 had moved earlier to Indian Territory).[51]

The lands on which the Indians were settled in the west 'in due time were also filched from them '[Brogan, 1986: 68]. They were pushed further and further

west as settlement proceeded.[52] By the middle of the nineteenth century, all pretence at safeguarding the interests of Indians was abandoned with resort to the notion of 'Manifest Destiny' – the proposition that 'the Europeans and their descendants were ordained by destiny to rule all of America' [Brown, 1971: 8]. This they believed long before the middle of the nineteenth century, of course. Now it became official. The solemnly declared 'tribal authority of the Indian nations', that was sworn in inviolate treaty to be assured, would not survive for long after the Civil War. The appetite for land and expansion was too great to allow that. By 1889 the Indians' rights had disappeared.

The process was institutionalised under the General Allotment Act of 1887, the so-called Dawes Act (after its progenitor, Henry Dawes), or Severalty Act, whose aim was 'to transform all reservation Indians into individualistic farmers through allotment' [Bolt, 1987: 97].[53] Under it, plots of tribal land were allotted to individual members by force. This the Cherokee resisted unequivocally, to no avail. In 1891 'the Cherokee Strip, or Cherokee Outlet, was sold to the United States; in 1893 it was opened up mostly to white settlers, in a famous land run' [*Encarta*, entry on 'Cherokee']. We will consider further the Dawes Act below. Government of the Indian nations was dissolved when Oklahoma joined the Union in 1907, as the 46th state. The 'trail of tears' had, as with all other encounters with white men and the white man's state, ended in bad faith, deception and theft. The passion for land could not be resisted.

Even as late as the 1830s, it had seemed to many white Americans that the land west of the Mississippi was a wilderness to which Indian tribes might be consigned, and which Europeans would not penetrate in any numbers or settle extensively. Jefferson had an equivocal stance. For him, 'the Indian was truly a Noble Savage: wise in council, brave in battle, loyal to friends and family, honorable, proud, self-reliant, and "breathing an ardent love of liberty and independence"' [Miller, 1991: 65–6]. Yet, for all his qualities, the Indian had to buckle down to the needs of 'civilisation', a 'civilisation' brought by the white man, and ordained by God:

> While the white man, in Jefferson's view, had by virtue of his superior civilization and by a Decree of Providence the right to dispossess the Indian [echoes of John Winthrop], this right did not extend to total expropriation of the aborigines. Rather, the Divine Plan called for the sharing of the Garden between whites and Indians, with the Indians getting their fair share provided that they settled down as farmers. If, on the other hand, they chose to remain hunters and gatherers, they must face the prospect of removal beyond the Mississippi. [Miller, 1991: 70]

Yet, for all the apparent equivocation and the possibility of the Indian adopting 'the best life known to man the life of an American farmer' [Miller, 1991: 70], Jefferson, along with many others, had come to regard such a movement of Indians 'as the only way of saving America's original inhabitants from ultimate

extinction' [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 306]. It was assumed that the territory west of the Mississippi could be given over permanently to the Indians. That assumption could be made in the belief that while the territory in question contained 'plentiful game' and could, therefore, be held to appeal to the Indians, various 'exploring expeditions' had concluded that 'much of the Louisiana territory [i.e. the territory acquired in the Louisiana Purchase] was to arid for agriculture' [Bolt, 1987: 47]. Jackson believed in the 'permanent Indian barrier' notion, and suggested as much in his Farewell Address of March 4, 1837.[54]

By then, however, the seeds of doubt might have been planted. Could the 'west' (i.e. the land west of the Mississippi) really remain the exclusive preserve of Indians? Certainly:

> Ten years later...the government had recognised the impossibility of a 'permanent Indian barrier' west of the Mississippi River. Having defeated all Indian attempts to resist the pressure of westward white migration, the government now began moving toward a policy of fencing native Americans within specified 'reservations' and opening the otherwise boundless territory of the great West to wagon trains, cavalry, miners, farmers, surveyors, and railroad builders. Even in the 1820s a few perceptive Indian chieftains had foreseen that western lands would be no more invulnerable than lands in the East. This conclusion was soon confirmed by the destruction of tribal game reserves and by the purchase or remaining Indian lands in Missouri and Iowa. [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 306]

The push west had begun.

The Indians of the Great Plains, the Southwest and the Rocky Mountains contested nearly every move of the United States westwards. That resistance started in 1832, with the Sauk and Fox chief, Black Hawk, defending tribal lands east of the Mississippi, in Wisconsin. They had originally been ceded to the United States, in 1804, for an annuity of $1,000. That was repudiated and the land then ceded by the Indians again in 1815 and 1816, when most of the Fox and Sac settled west of the Mississippi, on less fertile land. Suffering from hunger, they returned in April, 1832, to their ancestral lands, to plant crops. They were defeated and settled first on a reservation in Kansas and finally on one in Des Moines, Iowa.[55]

Most of the resistance to the push westwards – the 'winning of the west' – was provided by the Sioux. The Sioux dominated the heartland of the northern Plains still, in 1750, when there were, it is estimated, 30,000 of them. That dominance continued from 1750 until well into the nineteenth century. By 1850, still powerful, they had begun to move west, out of their lands east of the Mississippi. By 1890 they had been destroyed.[56]

Moving to the southwest – to Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California – we find resistance crushed and Indians shipped off to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) and herded into reservations. In Texas, the settlers were in no doubt

about their 'manifest destiny'. They stated it with open arrogance and pursued it with brutal effect:

> The Anglo-Saxon settlers in Texas, who won independence from Mexico in 1836, asserted their unprecedented claim that Indians had no right whatever to possession of the land. Texas reaffirmed this doctrine after being annexed as a state in 1845, and even demanded that some 25,000 Apaches and other tribesmen be removed or face extermination. Years of border warfare finally led in 1854 to the Texans' acceptance of Indian reservations under federal jurisdiction. But the federal government found that it could not protect Texas tribes from being slaughtered by marauding whites and therefore authorized their removal to the territory north of the Red River, in what would later become Ohklahoma. [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 308–9]

The Indian Territory, as it was then called, was acquiring yet more arrivals. In Arizona, New Mexico and California the grip tightened and the universe of the Indians narrowed. Thus:

> between 1846 and 1860 government policy began to settle the fate of the strong western tribes that had previously been free to roam prairies and intermountain grasslands without concern for the conflicting claims of white nations. The American invasion and occupation of New Mexico in the Mexican War led to brutal punitive expeditions against the Navajo. In 1851 Congress passed the critically important Indian Appropriations Act, which was designed to consolidate western tribes on agricultural reservations, thereby lessening the danger to the tens of thousands of emigrants streaming towards California and Oregon and also to the proposed transcontinental railroad...The degradation reached its climax in the 1850s in California, where federal restraints on white aggression disappeared. Whites molested the Diggers and other primitive native Americans, shooting the males for sport and enslaving the women and children. Farther east, the Apaches and powerful Plains tribes offered occasional and sometimes spectacular resistance. The famed encounters between Indians and the United States Cavalry came after the Civil War. But even by 1860 the western tribes had been demoralized, their economy had been fatally weakened when buffalo and other game became depleted, and increasing numbers of native Americans had been herded into compounds with boundaries that moved only inward. [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 308–9]

In Arizona, there were serious Indian uprisings during the Civil War and some flurries until 1896.[57]

In fact, Indian resistance came to an end, effectively, in 1877, when the Nez Perce tribe of Oregon was defeated. But the harrying of the pitiful remnants of a

proud people continued. It was at Wounded Knee, in South Dakota, on December 29, 1890, that the appalling conclusion was marked:

> On December 29, 1890, some 200 unarmed Oglala Sioux men, women and children were massacred by the 7th U.S. Cavalry. The Sioux had been captured after the death of Sitting Bull and brought to this site, and the massacre allegedly began after an Indian, who was being disarmed, shot a U.S. officer. [*Encarta*, entry on 'Wounded Knee'][58]

This was the final symbolic act of the nineteenth century.

If Wounded Knee may be taken to symbolise the nature of the relationship which white men forged with American Indians, and its playing out, the General Allotment Act of 1887 twisted the last large portion of land from the possession of Indian to whom it had been ceded in perpetuity. We have had occasion already to note this, the Dawes Act. That Act, and subsequent legislation, applied to Ohklahoma and to Indian land in Minnesota, Montana, Idaho and Washington. The sale and lease of Indian land proceeded apace, as 'Indians without experience of commercial transactions were persuaded to part with their territory by waiting buyers and often wasted their suddenly acquired assets' [Bolt, 1987: 100].[59] Its effects are well described as follows:

> In 1890 the decennial census made it seem that there was no more unoccupied land available for white settlement in the United States; but in that very year the Indian tribes were robbed of a further seventeen million acres – one seventh of the remaining Indian lands – under the Allotment Act of 1887, which Congress had passed solely, its supporters averred, to hasten the civilisation and happiness of the Indians. It resulted in the Indians losing eight-six million acres altogether between 1887 and 1934. They were the most valuable acres. Yet the Indians, as they grew poorer, grew also... more numerous. It had once seemed that the race would gradually cease to reproduce itself. Now more and more Indians came into the world to suffer. Their reservations, narrow and poor to begin with, were less and less able to afford them the means of life. They became ever more expensive charges on the government, which yet continued callous and incompetent – so much so that by the 1920s destitution was bringing about famine. It seemed that the last ruin of the American Indian was at hand. By the same token, the white conquest of the continent, which had begun so uncertainly, so small, so long ago, was complete. [Brogan, 1986: 70][60]

A central concern of the Dawes Act was with property rights: it removed the right to tribally-owned reservation land and created, instead, individual ownership. Thus was the transfer of Indian land to non-Indians effected. It was the final act of a long-drawn-out drama. To the bitter end the last vestiges of land were to be removed from the possession of Indians. As has been observed:

> Land allotment, however, embodied more than property rights. The architects of the policy aimed at broader goals, such as destroying tribal authority, eradicating native religions, and changing Indians into farmers. In short, severalty sought a complete transformation of Indian life. [Parman, 1994: 1][61]

But Utopia had long since come to pass. The shades of Sir Thomas More, John Winthrop and John Locke might have surveyed with interest, if not with pleasure, the outcome of the processes for which they had given justification.

(v) The Decline in the American Indian Population, 1492–1892

We may now consider the impact of five hundred years of contact with European settlers: of all that we have described in this section. We recall that our suggested minimum population figure for 1492 was between 3 and 4 million (it may have been higher, but let us take that as our base line figure). We may first consider what has been described as the 'demographic collapse of native peoples' [Newson, 1993: 247] that took place between 1492 and, say, 1650 (or, let us say, roughly the settling and early expansion of English colonists on the eastern seaboard). One writer suggests that by the time of the arrival of the early settlers in Virginia and New England the figure had fallen to between 600,000 and 900,000.[62] If that is correct, we have, already, a dramatic decline before the process of dispossession got seriously under way.

By the end of the nineteenth century (let us say, for the sake of historical symmetry, by 1892) the figure had dropped to around 330,000. Dee Brown tells us:

> In 1860 there were probably 300,000 Indians in the United States and Territories, most of them living west of the Mississippi. According to varying estimates, their numbers had been reduced by one-half to two-thirds since the arrival of the first settlers in Virginia and New England. [Brown, 1971: 9]

That seems to be a slight underestimate. It seems that the so-called 'nadir' figure, that obtained in 1930, was 332,397 [Rosenblat, 1945: 22, cited in Dobyns, 1966: 415]. If that is so, then our round figure of 300,000 (or a little more) seems likely.

If we suggest a reduction from, perhaps, 750,000[63] to 330,000 between the early seventeenth century and the late nineteenth century, we may not be far wrong. If we go further back, to 1492, and accept the figure of 3 million suggested above, this is a reduction to only one-tenth of the 1492 figure. This was hardly a way of solving the problem of labour shortage. But it was part of the solution to the land problem.

The outcome of the encounter of European settlers with native populations must certainly be seen as an integral part of a North American path drenched in blood. Those native populations were destroyed ruthlessly, violently and with all-consuming greed, in what amounted to an act of genocide. As we have seen, by 1860, their population had reduced in the United States to around 300,000.

They had been dispossessed of virtually all rights to land; and that population had been consigned to reservations. Here was a triumph, indeed, for capitalism and its accumulation imperative and for European settlers.

(vi) The Labour Problem

Thus was the land problem solved, and the process of accumulation facilitated. The labour problem proved less tractable, however, and did not find part of its resolution among the Indians. As we have seen, attempts so to do were, however, made.

It has been suggested that the following was true of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries:

> To attract laborers, the colonists...found it necessary to pay wages that in Europe would have been considered exorbitant...In all the colonies complaints were rampant about the high cost of labor and about the resulting lack of submissiveness among the much-sought-after workers. The law of supply and demand rendered unsuccessful the early efforts of several colonial governments to legislate maximum wages, and both skilled and unskilled labor continued to command wages up to twice those prevalent in England. [Kolchin, 1987: 10–11]

Since 'highly-paid free labor' was insufficient to meet the needs of the colonists, and since, as yet, a labour-displacing solution was not to hand, the settlers reached for 'forced labor of one type or another' [Kolchin, 1987: 11].

Throughout the seventeenth century, there was common reliance on indentured labour, whether that of Europeans or of colony-born Americans: such servants indentured for between 4 and 7 years, as agricultural labourers, house servants or artisans, and in conditions of privation and unfreedom; the indenture being the price of a free passage to America, punishment for a criminal offence, or the outcome of kidnapping [Kolchin, 1987: 11–12]. At first, the Indian population was seen as a possible source of forced labour, and 'like the Spaniards to the south, although with less success, the English forced Indians to work for them' [Kolchin, 1987: 11]. Indian slavery was the solution reached for. We have already commented on resort to this from the very outset of English settlement. But it did not prove to be a feasible solution.

The following explanation, an amalgam of quite separate possible causes, has been suggested:

> For a variety of reasons...Indian slavery never became a major institution in the English colonies. The proximity of the wilderness and of friendly tribes made escape relatively easy for Indian slaves. The absence of a tradition of agricultural work among East Coast Indian males – women customarily performed the primary field labor – rendered them difficult to train as agricultural laborers. Because they were 'of a malicious, surly and revengeful spirit; rude and insolent in their behavior, and very ungovernable', the Massachusetts legislature forbade the importation of Indian slaves in 1712. Finally, there were not enough Indians to fill the labor needs of the colonists. In New England, for example, most of the natives present when the Puritans arrived died from illness and war during the next half-century. The policy of eliminating the threat of Indian attack by eliminating the Indians themselves proved in the long run incompatible with the widespread use of Indians as slaves and necessitated the incorporation of foreign laborers. [Kolchin, 1987: 11]

We may comment on this explanation, and the four quite distinct reasons suggested for the failure of Indian slavery as an institutionalised response to labour shortage: (i) ease of escape, (ii) absence of a tradition of agricultural work among Indian males, (iii) inappropriate disposition and (iv) in the end, insufficient numbers.

The first is clearly plausible. The second and third are dangerously close to stereotype. The most compelling is the last, although one might change its formulation. Certainly, the Indians were 'eliminated', but surely not essentially because of 'the threat of Indian attack'. Their quite literal 'elimination' was because of the need to acquire property rights in the land which they possessed. That must be primary. After all, none of the other three reasons can, in the longer run, have any possible real significance in the physical absence of Indians. That absence became the central part of the land problem strategy pursued by the settlers and by the American state on their behalf. We shall have more to say below about land settlement, the push west, the Homestead Acts etc.

Throughout the seventeenth century, as we have seen, there was reliance on indentured labour, to compensate for the insufficiency and consequent high price of free labour. Indian slavery proved not to be a solution. Small numbers of Indian slaves could still be found in the middle of the eighteenth century, even in New Jersey [Kolchin, 1987: 11], but before the end of the seventeenth century it had become clear that neither white indentured labour nor Indian unfree labour, whether indentured or slave, constituted a solution to labour shortage. Another solution would have to be found. If high Indian mortality did not prevent the 'enslaving of natives' [Bolton, 1987: 25], it did, in the end, make Indian slavery an unlikely solution to the labour problem and it

> did have the grim side-effect of stimulating the demand for black slaves. As Kiple and King remark, whereas whites were discouraged from settling in Africa because they were fatally susceptible to its diseases, they were encouraged to settle in the New World, where they and imported Africans could survive, the latter being resistant to European and tropical diseases alike. The African slave traffic then introduced African Indians to falciparium malaria and yellow fever, by which their numbers were further reduced, while the African ability to withstand these two diseases was used by whites as 'proof' that blacks were intended to labour in hot regions and that they were not. In

short, the colonists were conveniently able to conclude that the Indians would vanish before civilization, while the Africans were ordained to be its servants. [Bolt, 1987: 25][64]

When it became obvious that neither indentured labour not Indian slavery could supply sufficient agricultural labour for European settlers, other solutions were reached for. The first, slavery, was as hideous in its repercussions as the murderous encounter of American Indians with European settlers. African slaves were imported, and then bred domestically. That, in essence, was the South's solution. The second, which became heavy with ideological significance and mythology (the Jeffersonian vision etc., to which we have already referred) was family-based agriculture. That, essentially, was the solution of the North and West.

(vii) Conclusion

Such was the prolonged and shameful chapter on the dispossession, degradation, and impoverishment of Indians in the United States, in pursuit of land. Whatever obstacle they might have presented to accumulation and its accompanying agrarian transformation was destroyed with fearsome thoroughness. That destruction is a central part of the American path of capitalist transformation. It is not to be contemplated with equanimity or comfort.

What emerges with clarity is the crucial role of the state in thus solving the land problem. Once the United States had been created, and as it was being extended and consolidated, the state intervened consistently to ensure the acquisition of land from the Indians and its vesting in European settlers. The prolonged process of dispossession and appropriation was always underpinned by the state. Frequently, the state took the initiative in yet another round of expansion into Indian territory and driving out of Indians. It underwrote the deception and bad faith of individual and collective actors. It was itself the agent, again and again, of duplicity and fraud. It was responsible for numerous treaties with the Indians, and broke them all, often very soon after they had been signed. It was always willing to use its coercive power against the Indians, and never did so against whites. In its passing of legislation (very notably the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the Indian Appropriations Act of 1851, and the General Allotment Act of 1887), and in its vigorous implementation of that legislation, its intervention was purposive and effective. Here was no 'rolling back' of the state. It was at the very forefront of action to acquire every single scrap of Indian land, and not least the land it had itself invested with the Indians in perpetuity.

In celebrated words, that bear repetition, Red Cloud, of the Oglala Teton Sioux, commented thus: 'They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one; they promised to take our land and they took it' [Brown, 1971: 449]. Such was the role of the state. But in the manner of so doing, the possibility of solving the labour problem through Indian labour was destroyed.

4 THE 'LABOUR PROBLEM' AND TWO DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS

We have had occasion already to refer to the 'labour problem': to the endemic labour shortage of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and the consequent high wages and 'lack of submissiveness' of labour; to reliance upon indentured labour throughout the seventeenth century, whether of Europeans or colony-born Americans; to the attempts to use Indians as a source of forced labour and, indeed, to enslave Indians. Indentured labour proved not to be a satisfactory longer-term solution. Indian slavery, as we have seen, was attempted but, for reasons we have considered, was not feasible. Quite distinct solutions were adopted in the North and the South, with profoundly differing implications.

Analysis of the North American path, then, requires the clarification of two broad sets of issues, which may be regionally located and each with distinct important aspects. In the North and the West, the 'labour problem' would be coped with via an agrarian structure based on an agriculture worked largely by family labour (although we will have to examine carefully the wage labour component). That we will consider in Chapter 8. We will wish to examine the rationale and significance of the following:

(a) the family-based agriculture which was established initially, with a dominant position in the social formation;
(b) the seeming remarkable persistence of that family-based agriculture in a position of dominance (one of the 'puzzles' of the American path) and its evolving forms (one must not assume that a 'family-based' agriculture in the mid-seventeenth century is analytically synonymous with one in the late nineteenth century);
(c) the apparent absence of a dominant landlord class;
(d) the widespread existence and the growth, despite the presumption of owner-occupancy, of tenancy, and the landlord class responsible for leasing out land to tenants.

We will wish to analyse the significance of these class relationships with respect to

(e) the level and forms of the productive forces, and technological transformation, and
(f) capitalist transformation.

In the South it was slavery that was reached for and institutionalised in the seventeenth century as settlement proceeded. It would last until the end of the American Civil War in 1865. In the South we explore the logic and implications of:

(a) slavery in the antebellum South, with an eye to exploring the nature of both the planter class the slave class;
(b) the nature of the class of 'yeoman farmers' that existed in the antebellum South, its relationship to slavery, and the extent of social differentiation within it;
(c) the manner of transition, in the postbellum South, from slavery as a mode of surplus appropriation to continuing 'unfree labour' and especially a particular form, sharecropping, with emphasis on the sharecropping relationship, the class status of sharecroppers, and the nature of the class that succeeded that of slave-owning planters (whether it was a landlord class or a class, in embryo, of capitalist farmers);
(d) the transition from sharecropping to wage labour, and the class transformations associated with that. Again, these class relationships will be viewed in relation to
(e) the productive forces and technical change and
(f) the prospects for capitalist industrialisation.

Such is our agenda. First it is slavery we examine, in the next chapter.

Notes

1. These were:
   (i) the six New England states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut;
   (ii) the three Middle Atlantic states of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania;
   (iii) the five North Central states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin;
   (iv) and the seven West North Central states of Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.
2. As follows:
   (i) the nine South Atlantic states of Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia and Florida;
   (ii) the four East South Central states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi;
   (iii) the four West South Central states of Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Texas.
3. Thus:
   (i) the eight Mountain states of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Nevada; and
   (ii) the three Pacific states of Washington, Oregon and California.
4. From the Census grouping used by Lenin, we exclude six of the West North Central states (with Iowa remaining). We take it to be further useful to divide the North into
   i. the Northeast (the six New England states along with the three Middle Atlantic states); and
   ii. the Northwest (the five North Central states) along with Iowa (a West North Central state).
5. That is to say, it should include, as well as the eight Mountain states and the three Pacific states identified by Lenin, six of the seven West North Central states (with Iowa left out).

6. The following six states: Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida.
7. Seven states in all: Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Delaware, Kentucky and Tennessee.
8. The three states of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas.
9. The first edition of Degler's book was published in 1959 and the second in 1970. Interestingly, in the 1970 edition the most recent of the sources drawn upon by Degler to document the attempt to establish feudal structures in the colonies was a book more than thirty years old [Nissenson, 1937]. The two others are Johnson [1883] and Rife [1931]. In the third edition, in 1983, in the additions to the Critical Bibliography, no further sources are mentioned. Does this signify that here is a problem no longer dealt with? Curiously, one important paper which he does not cite in the 1983 edition (and which we have just quoted in the text) is Berthoff and Murrin [1973].
10. Degler reaches for the 'quasi-feudal' representation in the excellent Critical Bibliographical Essay at the end of his book. Perhaps while in the 'critical' mode he became a little more cautious.
11. For a classic study see Wood [1984].
12. One notes Degler's use of the word 'tenants', where I have interpellated 'serfs'. If, indeed, this was an attempt to establish feudal relationships – as it seems to have been – then 'serfs' is clearly more appropriate.
13. Berthoff and Murrin direct us towards Hartz [1955: 64–6] 'for a similar attitude towards early Maryland' (loc. cit.).
14. For this paragraph see Aaron [1978], Marshall [1994: 47–9, 172], Wootton [1993: 16–19, 41–4]. The Fundamental Constitution drawn up by Locke may be seen in full in Wootton [1993: 210–32].
15. For the estimate of his annual income from the land, we are referred to Cranston [1957: 17]. Wood further refers us to letters to three successive 'managers', one of them an uncle and one a cousin [Wood, 1984: 119, n.18]. On Locke cf. Marshall: 'For most of his life he was a landed proprietor in Somerset, inheriting his father's lands in 1661, and thus becoming the exacting absentee landlord of a large number of farmers and labourers; the majority of correspondence with his relatives in Somerset concerned collection of rents' [Marshall, 1994: 163].
16. On this see Marshall [1994: xv *et passim*].
17. John Dunn, one of the great Locke scholars, cites from the same passage as Thompson, but to make a quite different point. See Dunn [1969: 166–7].
18. Fogel and Engerman, the authors of *Time on the Cross*, are anxious to stress the 'routine acceptance' of slavery until well into the eighteenth century [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 29–32], and Fogel repeats this in his later book of 1989, which represents his final, mature judgement on the whole subject of slavery [Fogel, 1989: 201–2]. Thus, they tell the reader:

> For nearly three thousand years – from the time of King Solomon to the eve of the American Revolution – virtually every major statesman, theologian, writer and critic accepted the existence and legitimacy of slavery. [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 29–30].

As part of this exercise in apologetics, having pointed to Christian justification they invoke John Locke:

> Acceptance of slavery was not less common in the secular than in the religious world. As prominent a champion of the 'inalienable rights of man' as John Locke wrote a provision for slavery into his draft of the 'Fundamental

> Constitutions of Carolina', and also became an investor in the Royal African Company, the organisation that enjoyed the British monopoly of the African slave trade. Thus, the man who formulated the theory of natural liberty, and whose thesis regarding the moral obligations of men to take up arms in defense of liberty later inspired many revolutionaries and abolitionists was, nevertheless, a staunch defender of slavery. [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 31] (See Fogel [1989: 202] for repetition of that passage.)

They quote David Brion Davis's explanation of the paradox:

> [Locke believed that] the origin of slavery, like the origin of liberty and property, was entirely outside the social contract. When any man, by fault or act, forfeited his life to another, he could not complain of injustice if his punishment was postponed by his being enslaved. If the hardships of bondage should at any time outweigh the value of life, he could commit suicide by resisting his master and receiving the death which he had all along deserved. [Davis, 1966: 119, as cited in Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 31]

It would be difficult to imagine any greater humbug. How such an argument might 'justify' the capture and enslavement of an African torn from his surroundings and transported in a coffin ship to North America is hard to contemplate.

Locke's 'justification' of dispossessing Indians of their land is no more convincing. He did not, of course, attempt any 'justification' of his feudal constitution for the Carolinas. Presumably, the maximisation of rent would have been justification enough. The general mixture of hypocrisy and self-interest is noteworthy.

19. See full Constitution as reprinted in Wootton [1993, p. 215].
20. Or, as Marshall has it: 'The colony fared badly, and by 1674 Locke was arguing on behalf of the Proprietors that colonists who were in debt should become hereditary serfs in a refounding of parts of the colony' [Marshall, 1994: 175].
21. For brief details see Marshall [1994: 176]. See Wood [1983: 20–30].
22. On this paragraph see Bond [1919: 35].
23. See Bond [1919: 35 and 39].
24. We are referred to Diamond [1961] and Harris [1966] on the New France experience.
25. Fogel cites Mellafe [1975: 106].
26. For an account of the Spanish Absolutist State see Anderson [1974b: 60–84].
27. This is cited in Anderson [1974b: 69–70]. It is from an article written by Marx in 1854, in a series for the *New York Daily Tribune*, entitled *Revolutionary Spain*. See Draper [1985: 77–8, entry 780]. Anderson refers us simply to K. Marx and F. Engels, *Revolutionary Spain*, London, 1939.
28. For an account of the *encomienda* and the *hacienda* systems see Lockhart [1969], and on the *hacienda*, Morner [1973].
29. Unfortunately, no source is given for the estimate.
30. On this we are referred to the following sources: on New York and New Jersey: Horowitz [1966: especially 39 and 48]; on Carolina: McRady [1897: 654–80], Sirmans [1966: 103–28], Crittenden [1924], Saunders (ed.,) [1886–1890: III, 32–47]; on Virginia: Brown [1965: 39], Wright (ed.,) [1940: 69, 108]; on Pennsylvania: Gipson [1936–1969: III, 180]; on Maryland: Mereness [1901: 80], Mereness and Barker [1940: 130–4].
31. This 'feudal revival', and its implications, are considered in Berthoff and Murrin [1973: 266–76]. There the following references to the French 'feudal revival' are made: Cobban [1964], Taylor [1964], Taylor [1961–62], Taylor [1966–67], Eisentstein [1965–66], Kaplow, Shapiro and Eisenstein [1966–67], Roberts [1947], Palmer [1959–64], Tocqueville [1955].
32. See Andrews [1919: 16], Bond [1919: 25–34] for a general discussion of quit-rent and its origins in England.
33. See Berthoff and Murrin [1973: 267–8]. The source they draw on for the English figures is Mingay [1963: chs. 1–2].
34. It is complicated inasmuch as those regions in which the 'feudal revival' was strongest (for example, in Pennsylvania and Maryland) were not necessarily areas where the Revolutionary movement was powerful. On the contrary, there 'response to the Revolution was mixed or divided', with strong royalist movements developing, in the hope of replacing 'proprietary government with a royal regime' [Berthoff and Murrin, 1973: 268]. This, of course, is not inconsistent with the 'feudal revival' being swept away after 1776. Nor is it inconsistent with tenancy remaining; which it did, but with tenants paying not quit-rents but straight commercial rents.
35. On Japanese feudalism see, for example, Anderson [1974b: Note B, 435–61].
36. Cf. Dobb [1963: 185]
37. The 'mid-range estimates' of the 1920s are those, for example, of MacLeod [1928], Sapper [1924], Spinden [1928], although Mooney [Mooney, 1928] suggests lower figures. We then get the 'conservative estimates in the 1930s and 1940s' [Mooney, 1928; Kroeber, 1939; Rosenblat, 1954; Steward, 1949]; and the shift, thereafter, to the high estimates in the 1960s and 1970s [Borah, 1964; Borah and Cook, 1963], with an important intervention by Dobyns in 1966 [Dobyns, 1966]. These were, in fact, anticipated by Sauer [1935] (see also [Sauer, 1966]). The 'downward revision' thereafter, as a result of 'detailed regional research' may be found in the work, for example, of Borah [1992], Denevan [1992], Jacobs [1974], Uberlaker [1976]. Then, more recently, we seem to have come to a position in which we have returned to the 'mid-range estimates' of the 1920s. These are meticulously surveyed for the period up to the mid-1960s by Dobyns [Dobyns, 1966] and considered most recently by Denevan [Denevan, 1992] and Newson [Newson, 1993]. Dobyns has the great merit, from our viewpoint, of giving an excellent account of the United States estimates, at least up to 1966, as well as providing his own estimate.
38. Gilbert tells us: 'There were approximately one million Indians north of Mexico in 1492' [Gilbert, 1993: 2]. No source is given. He provides a very detailed map of the Indian tribes of North America before 1492.
39. The former gives a figure of 10 million for North America, which suggests between 7 and 8 million for the United States (i.e. between 70 and 80% of the total), and the latter 'more than seven million' north of Mexico, which suggests between 5 and 6 million (on the same basis).
40. These are sometimes collapsed into seven: the Eastern Woodlands (including some southern coastal states), the Southeast, the Southwest, the Plains, the California-Intermontane area (encompassing California, the Plateau Region and the Northwest Pacific Coast. See [*Encarta*, entry on 'American Indians'].
41. There is a large and varied literature – varied in both aim and quality. A good place to start is Josephy and Brandon [1961].
42. On European disease and its impact in North America see Newson [1993: 256–8], Brogan [1986: 58], Bolt [1987: 24–5]. Bolt refers us to the following: Sheehan [1980: 141–2], Axtell [1981: 248–9], Kupperman [1980: 5–6], Salisbury [1982: 7–8, 190–2, 209–10, 215–16], Crosby [1976: 289–99].
43. Brogan does note, however: 'Except for the rare occasions when they passed them on deliberately, as in 1763, when an attempt was made to spread smallpox among the warriors besieging Fort Pitt in Pennsylvania' [Brogan, 1986: 58, note 11].

44. On Winthrop, see Brogan [1986: 9, 41–6, 48–50, 60] and *Encarta*, [entry on 'John Winthrop (1588–1649)'].
45. See Brogan [1986: 56].
46. For an exhaustive treatment of 'American Indian treaties' – 'two centuries of treaty history' – although not one that examines the duplicity with which they were approached by white Americans, see Prucha [1990]. A 'treaty', Prucha tells us, 'implies a contract between sovereign independent nations'. Treaty making ended in 1871. By then Indians had been dispossessed and driven from the great bulk of their land, reduced in numbers almost to the point of extinction, and rendered abjectly dependent on those with whom they had entered into solemn treaties. Restricting the record to the post-Independence era, between 1778, when the first treaty was signed between the new United States government and the Delawares, and 1868 when the last was completed with the Nez Perces, there were 367 ratified treaties, and a further six of dubious status. See Prucha [1990: 1] and Prucha [1990: Appendix B, 446–502] for a full list.
47. Levine *et al* [1989: 88–9].
48. The reference is to Nash [1972: 74].
49. Bolt refers us to Takaki [1980].
50. Before becoming President in 1829, during his frontier career, 'Andrew Jackson...and his soldiers had slain thousands of Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks and Seminoles' [Brown, 1971: 5].
51. See Brogan [1986: 68], Bolt [1987: 62], Brown [1971: 7].
52. On this see Brown [1971: 3–9] for a brief but passionate and informed treatment. See also Brogan [1986: 51–70].
53. For a treatment of this legislation and its effects see Bolt [1987: 97–101].
54. cf Bailyn *et al.*, [1985: 306–7].
55. See *Encarta* [entry on 'Black Hawk', 'Fox Indians', 'North America'].
56. See *Encarta* [entry on 'Sioux'].
57. See Encarta [entry on 'Arizona'].
58. See Encarta [entry on 'North America', 'Sioux'].
59. For a treatment of the Dawes Act and its effects, see Bolt [1987: 97–101].
60. Bolt, in fact, indicates a higher figure than Brogan for the land so lost by Indians: 91 million acres between 1887 and the 1930s. This reduced their land base from 139 to 48 million acres, over that period, or to one-third in the 1930s of what it had been in 1887 [Bolt, 1987: 100].
61. For an account of the immediate repercussion of the Dawes Act, see Parman [1994: 1–10].
62. These are the figures implied in Brown [1971: 9]. Brown tells us that by 1860 numbers had reduced to 300,000, and that this was a reduction of between a half and two-thirds since the arrival of the early colonists in Virginia and new England.
63. This is somewhere between the 600,00 and 900,000 suggested by Dee Brown.
64. The reference is to Kiple and King [1981].

6 The South: Slavery

1 THE COLONIAL ERA: BEGINNINGS, THE ROOTING AND GROWTH OF SLAVERY, AND THE REGIONAL SLAVE ECONOMIES

(i) Beginnings

The beginning of the import of African slaves into the 'New World' is usually put at 1502, 'when the first references to blacks appear in the documents of Spanish colonial administrators' [Fogel, 1989, 18; see also Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 15]. In North America, the first blacks arrived in Jamestown, Virginia (the earliest permanent English settlement in North America – it was settled in 1607) in 1619. In that year, the Virginia Company of London purchased, in Virginia, twenty black Africans from a Dutch captain.

In the words of John Rolfe (the Virginian colonist who married Pocohantas and who is said to have introduced tobacco into the colony): 'About the last of August [1619] came in a Dutch man-of-war that sold us twenty negars' [cited in Sanders, 1992: 353].[1] There is disagreement among historians as to whether those 'twenty negars' were set to work as indentured labourers, or became slaves at once. Certainly, they were part of a cargo of slaves while on the Dutch vessel. Equally certainly, in Virginia, where tobacco had been introduced as a cash crop and other industries had been established, there were, within two decades of their purchase, 'distinct signs that slavery was obtaining a foothold in Virginia' [Sanders, 1992: 353]. If, indeed, they were subject, initially, to limited servitude as indentured labour – white indentured labour being, at that time, as we have seen, a primary source of labour in the English colonies – it was not long after the expiry of those initial two decades that slavery was the norm for black labour.

Ironically, it was in the colonies of the North, where, as we shall see, slavery would not, by and large, achieve significant proportions, that slavery first received statutory recognition (in initial statutes relating, for the most part, to fugitive slaves): in Massachusetts in 1641, and then in Connecticut in 1650. In Virginia, the initial statute was enacted in 1661. Thus were the 'slave codes', which would be elaborated in individual states over the years (see below), introduced. In Virginia, 'by 1670 lifetime slave status had become hereditary for blacks, and large plantations were replacing small farms as the basic unit for growing tobacco' [*Encarta*, entry on 'Virginia']. Such were the origins of slavery in the United States.

The southern plantation system would include slavery as an essential part of its functioning. 'Chattel slavery', previously unknown in English law, would be established. By 1680, 7% of the population of Virginia was black (a reasonable proxy, by that date, for the incidence of slavery, in the absence of a precise

figure); by 1690 this had risen to 18%; and by 1700 to 28% (see Table 6.1). In the two colonies of the North already mentioned, Massachusetts had a figure of 0.4% in 1680, which had risen to 1.4% by 1700; while in Connecticut the figure of only 0.3% in the former year had risen to 1.7% by the latter. Already, a clear division between North and South, in this respect, was evident.[2]

(ii) Expansion and the North/South Divide

Table 6.1 is instructive. In 1680, the incidence was 5% for the thirteen colonies as a whole: with 2% in the seven colonies of the North and 6% in the six of the South. By 1770, the figure for the thirteen colonies – the colonial legacy of slavery, if you like – was 21%, with an overall figure for the seven colonies of the North of 4% and for the colonies of the South of 40%. Slavery had become a substantial presence in the thirteen colonies, but very predominantly in the South.

In the South, as the American Revolution approached, the demand for slaves grew, and the incidence of slavery rose: overall, in the six colonies of the South,

Table 6.1 Estimates of blacks as a percentage of the population of the individual thirteen American colonies, and of the North and South and the thirteen colonies as a whole, 1680–1770

Colony	*1680*	*1690*	*1700*	*1710*	*1720*	*1730*	*1750*	*1770*
North								
New Hampshire	3.6	2.4	2.6	2.6	1.8	1.8	2.0	1.0
Massachusetts	0.4	0.8	1.4	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.2	1.8
Rhode Island	5.8	5.9	5.1	4.9	4.7	9.8	10.1	7.1
Connecticut	0.3	0.9	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.7	3.1
New York	12.2	12.0	11.8	13.0	15.5	14.3	14.3	11.7
New Jersey	5.9	5.6	6.0	6.7	7.7	8.0	7.5	7.0
Pennsylvania	3.7	2.4	2.4	6.4	6.5	2.4	2.4	2.4
South								
Delaware	5.5	5.5	5.5	13.6	13.2	5.2	5.2	5.2
Maryland	9.0	9.0	10.9	18.6	18.9	19.0	30.8	31.5
Virginia	6.9	17.6	27.9	29.5	30.3	26.3	43.9	41.9
North Carolina	3.9	4.0	3.9	5.9	14.1	20.0	25.7	35.3
South Carolina	15.7	38.5	42.9	37.7	70.4	66.7	60.9	60.5
Georgia	–	–	–	–	–	–	19.2	45.5
Totals								
North	2.3		3.6		5.2		4.8	4.4
South	5.7		21.1		27.7		38.0	39.7
Thirteen Colonies	4.6		11.1		14.8		20.2	21.4

Sources: Kolchin [1987: 20 and 21] and Kolchin [1995: 240]. The figures are calculated from the *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960).

the figure was 38% in 1750 and 40% in 1770. There was some variety among the individual colonies. The incidence was already very high at 61% in South Carolina in 1750 and it remained at that figure there in 1770. It rose in both North Carolina and Georgia: from 26% to 35% in the former case, and 19% to 43% in the latter. In Maryland, it remained steady at around 31%. In Delaware the incidence was very small, at 5% in both years.

The contrast with the North was marked. In the Northern colonies, although 'slavery...was legal everywhere...nowhere...did the concentration of slaves approach that in the South. What is more, after the middle of the eighteenth century Northern demand for slaves [having peaked before that] slackened, and on the eve of the Revolution slaves constituted a declining proportion of the population' [Kolchin, 1995: 27]. So it was, then, that before the Revolution 'despite regional variations within the South the division that became most essential was between the South, where slavery was solidly entrenched as a system of labour, and the North, where it was not' (loc. cit.). Slavery was, indeed, established as the dominant mode of exploitation in the South. If we reach forward in time:

> The peripheral nature of Northern slavery meant that when it came under attack – as it would during the last third of the eighteenth century – it would be relatively easy to abolish. The result would be very different in the South, where slavery stood at the heart of the economic and social system. In the antebellum period, the line would be clearly drawn between the slave South and the free North; although not so clear as it would later become, that line was already evident on the eve of the Revolution. (loc. cit.)

The North/South division, in this respect, was clearly established; and a path was set that would lead to the Civil War.

(iii) Sub-Regions/Regional Slave Economies in the South

We may identify, in the colonial era, among the six colonies of the South, two sub-regions, or what have been termed 'regional slave economies' or 'slave societies' – in which slavery emerged in rather different ways, and which remained distinct in the postbellum South. They lay, respectively, in the Upper South and the Lower South. Considerations of space preclude their being a full part of our treatment, although, in a full examination, they would require close consideration. We may, however, distinguish them briefly.

The Upper South

The Upper South covered Virginia (most prominently), Maryland, the north-east part of North Carolina (we may include, for purposes of analytical convenience, all of North Carolina) and Delaware. At the heart of the Upper South slave economy lay tobacco cultivation. These were, for the most part, the so-called

'tobacco colonies'. The Upper South of the colonial era has been characterised as 'a society of people on the make: market-oriented farmers (both large and small), traders, and land speculators. It was also a society with an intense demand for labor' (loc. cit.). Our concern is with how it coped with that demand for labour, ultimately, and why it reached for a particular solution: slavery.

In such a society the seeds of capitalism might well have been sprouting. We might, then, have expected an outcome in which free wage labour predominated, and the wage relation was the essential form of exploitation. It is possible that an agrarian structure in which a proliferation of holdings worked by predominantly family labour, and geared to the market (petty-commodity producers), might have prevailed. We have seen that, in the late seventeenth century, in the Carolinas, a feudal solution to the labour problem was contemplated, and attempted. But none of these was the primary solution reached for. That solution was one of unfree labour.

In the Upper South there was recourse first to white indentured labour, and then to black slaves. Thus, the intense demand for labour that we have noted

> was met by European indentured servants until the 1680s, and by African slaves thereafter. Demand for new slaves remained strong through the first half of the eighteenth century but weakened markedly after that as soil exhaustion and overproduction turned tobacco boom into tobacco crisis; in the second half of the century, planters cut back their tobacco acreage, increased their cultivation of wheat, and sharply curtailed their purchase of Africans. Slavery, however, remained firmly entrenched. [Kolchin, 1995: 24–5]

We have already noted the incidence of slavery in these colonies in 1750 and 1770 (see Table 6.1 for the figures). After the Revolution, two other states, Tennessee and Kentucky, would join the Union (the former in 1792 and the latter in 1817) and become part of the Upper, or Yeoman, South, as it came to be called. West Virginia would eventually break away as a separate state (in 1863). These were all slave states, although less markedly than in the Lower, or Deep, South. We will note the antebellum incidence of slavery below. We will wish to ask why slavery prevailed rather than any of the other outcomes.

Clearly, then, a plantation system in which the labour of slaves was deployed had emerged as dominant, with at least half of the inhabitants slaves 'in most of the tobacco-producing areas along the Chesapeake' [Kolchin, 1995: 25]. Delaware was not a 'tobacco colony', and, with its low incidence of slavery, was an exception.

The predominance of slavery did not exclude other forms of labour, and the existence of what has been termed, in the context of the South, a class of 'yeoman farmers'. As has been noted, 'these figures mask significant intra-colonial variation: in the backcountry, largely self-sufficient farming precluded the use of many slaves' (loc. cit.). But the issue, surely, cannot be simply reduced to one of 'self-sufficiency' precluding the use of slaves.

That is to pose the issue in static terms. We are, after all, contemplating a period stretching from, let us say, 1620 to 1776 (the colonial era), and, indeed, thereafter to 1861 (the antebellum period). Over such a period, and given the economic forces that we have briefly identified, we may contemplate other possibilities. We need to identify possible forces of change, stimuli to and blocks upon them, and alternative feasible outcomes. Critical here is the extent, if any, of differentiation within the yeomanry/peasantry; whether there are any signs of a 'rich' and a 'poor' peasantry forming; and the forces encouraging or stifling differentiation. We have stressed above the importance of considering such processes. We need to consider whether yeomen/peasants – whom we shall term early petty commodity producers (see below) – might become advanced petty commodity producers and, ultimately, capitalist farmers (full commodity producers). That is to say, we may leave open the possibility that rich/large yeomen/peasants might become slave-owners or petty commodity producers and, ultimately, capitalists. It is, surely, too restrictive to assume that 'self-sufficiency' is a permanent state over such a long period of time, or that it has, as its only alternative, slave-run plantations.

The Lower South

The second sub-region lay in the Lower South, along the coast, and was constituted by South Carolina, Georgia and the south-eastern part of North Carolina. Rice, and to a lesser extent indigo, were at its centre. Again, it is how the demand for labour, to enable these activities, was coped with – the form of exploitation – that is our concern.[3]

It was, indeed, slavery that was reached for. Not only that, but for, it seems, largely conjunctural reasons, at least to start off with, the use of slaves would be even more intense in the Lower South. Those reasons lay, initially, in the circumstances in which South Carolina was first settled:

> Commercial agriculture produced in the lower South an economy even more heavily dependent on slave labor than that of the upper South. Because a number of South Carolina's settlers resettled from the West Indies and brought their slaves with them, the colony had from an early date a higher proportion of slaves in the population than any other British colony on the American mainland. [Kolchin, 1995: 26]

The initial powerful predisposition towards a high incidence of slavery in South Carolina endured, as economic circumstances combined to reinforce the use of slaves:

> This lead persisted, for unlike the colonies to the north, South Carolina did not experience a reduction in demand for (or delivery of) slaves in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Throughout the pre-Revolutionary period slaves constituted a majority of the colony's population – a large majority in

the coastal rice-producing parishes. In Georgia, too, the allure of profits proved impossible to resist. Although the idealistic founders of the colony originally banned slavery altogether, indignant planters forced the abandonment of this policy in 1750. [Kolchin, 1995: 26]

As we have seen, the proportion of blacks in South Carolina by 1770 was 61%; while in Georgia it was 46%, having risen from 19% in 1750. See Table 6.1.

In the antebellum period, those two states of the Lower South would be joined by four other states, to make a total, as in the Upper South, of six states. These four were Louisiana (which joined the Union in 1812), Mississippi (which became a state in 1817), Alabama (in 1819), and Florida (in 1846). The states of the Lower South all lay east of the Mississippi: bordered on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, on the North by the states of Tennessee and North Carolina, and on the west by the states of Texas and Arkansas. The last two would also join the Union (respectively, in 1845 and 1836), and be part of the South, but as components of a third sub-region. To that we will come below.

2 THE ANTEBELLUM ERA

(i) The North-South Divide and Growth of the Slave Population

From Table 6.2 we observe that in 1790 the population of the United States, it is estimated, was 3.9 million, almost equally divided between North and South; and of these around 700,000, or 18%, were slaves. Almost all of those slaves were in the southern states: some 658,000, or 94% of all slaves in the United States in that year. They constituted 34% of the total population of the South of 1.96 million (this latter, 50% of the total US population), with especially large concentrations in particular states, as we have seen for the colonial era. That compared with a proportion of only 2.1% in the North. On that basis, clearly, the distinction between a 'slave South' and a 'free North' was, in 1790, well-established.

By 1860, on the eve of the Civil War (which erupted in April, 1861 and lasted until May, 1865), that total slave population had risen to very close to 4 million, having been 894,000 in 1800, which was almost 13% out of a total US population in that year of 31.443 million. But the growth in North and South was uneven. The South maintained the proportion of slaves to its total population at 32.3%: 3.95 million out of a total population in the South of 12.2 million [Kolchin, 1987: 53]. In the North, contrariwise, the slave population had fallen to a mere 4,000, or to negligible proportions, while total population had risen more quickly than in the South, to 19.2 million.

It is of interest that while the Indian population declined dramatically from a possible 4 million when Europeans made their first contact with North America to about 300,000 in 1860, so the total slave population rose to 4 million by 1860.

Table 6.2 Population and total numbers of slaves for the United States and for the North and South, 1790 to 1860

Census	*Population*			*Slaves*		
(1)	*Total (2)*	*North (3)*	*South (4)*	*Total (5)*	*North (6)*	*South (7)*
1790	3,929,214	1,968,040 (50%)	1,961,174 (50%)	700,000 (18%)	42,000 (2.1%)	657,538 (33.5%)
1800	5,308,483			893,602 (17%)		
1810	7,239,881					
1820	9,638,453					
1830	12,866,020					
1840	17,069,453					
1850	23,191,876					
1860	31,443,321	19,202,057 (61%)	12,241,264 (39%)	3,954,000 (12.6%)	3,489 (.02%)	3,950,511 (32.35%)

Sources:
(a) Total population figures (column 2), Bailyn *et al.* [1985: Appendix, xxvii]. These are the Census figures.
(b) Slave figures for the South, 1790 and 1860 (column 7), Kolchin [1987: 53]. The detailed sources are given there.
(c) The population figures for the South for 1790 and 1860 are given in Kolchin [1987: 53]. The figures for the North are the total figure (column 2) less these.
(d) Total slave figures for the US for 1790 and 1860 (column 5) are, respectively, from North [1966: 17] and Puth [1993: 193]. The figure for the North for those years (column 6) has been obtained by deducting the figure for the South (column 7) from this total.
(e) The 1800 total slave figure is from *Encarta Multimedia Encyclopedia* [1994: entry on 'Slavery']. See also Puth [1993: 193].

Note:
The percentage figures in brackets have been calculated from these figures. Thus
(i) Those in columns 3 and 4 are the percentages, respectively, of the populations of the North and South to total population.
(ii) Those in column 5 are the percentage of the total slave population to the whole population for all of the United States.
(iii) Those in columns 6 and 7 are the percentages, respectively, of the slave population in the North and the South to total population in those regions.

The Indians were replaced as possessors of the land by colonial settlers. As the numbers of the latter grew, and they became the agents of accumulation, and as disease and dispossession (via a variety of devices) eliminated one, possessing, population group, so it was replaced, in numbers, almost exactly, by a population of non-possessing black slaves. Their character as a class we will consider

below ('Slaves as a Class'), which, along with a section on planters ('The Nature of the Planter Class in the South') will allow us to capture something, at least, of the nature of their relationship with the planter class.

Such were the dominant relations of production in the South. We will wish to explore them fully below.

(ii) Variety of Incidence in Different Sub-Regions of the South and the Significance of Cotton

In the South, in the antebellum era, slavery was widespread and dominant. But there were significant differences in the incidence of slavery in different sub-regions. We have already noted the existence of two such sub-regions, the Upper South and the Lower South, in the colonial era. In the antebellum period, a third sub-region, the New South, west of the Mississippi, emerged, as new states joined the Union; and the old sub-regions gained new states. Moreover, under the determining influence of cotton, there was a shift in the balance of influence of particular sub-regions. We will consider the influence of cotton presently. Let us first identify differences in the incidence of slavery in the sub-regions.

Upper South

We have noted that the states of the Upper or Yeoman South were joined, after Independence, by Tennessee and Kentucky, both East South Central states, to give a total, by 1860, of six states (West Virginia would break away from Virginia in 1863, to form a seventh). The other four – Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina – are South Atlantic states.

In the Upper South, Table 6.3 shows that the unweighted arithmetic average incidence of slavery for the six states was 21% in 1860, which was significantly below the overall proportion for the South of 32%. I have included North Carolina in the Upper South, although parts of it should clearly be in the Lower South (see above). The individual states had, respectively, the following proportions of the population as slaves in 1860: 33% (North Carolina), 31% (Virginia), 25% (Tennessee), 20% (Kentucky), 13% (Maryland) and 2% (Delaware). Clearly, the relatively high figures for North Carolina and Virginia are noteworthy. We are not dealing with groupings that are uniform in their constituent units. But there is, on the whole, a clear lower incidence than in the 'Deep South' – lower, even, in the two states just mentioned.

One of them, for example, Tennessee, which had 25% of its population as slaves in 1860, is identified as 'a state of the upper South' and we are told that: 'unlike the Deep South, in which large plantations were the symbol of the cotton empire Tennessee developed largely as an agglomeration of small farms' [Hodges, 1978: 128]. We will wish to consider that part of the social formation of the South that was 'an agglomeration of small farms': the so-called 'yeomanry' of both back-country and plantation belt.

Table 6.3 Slaves as a percentage of the total population of the United States South by state, 1860

State	*Slaves as a percentage of total population*
(a) The Lower/Plantation/Old/Slave/South (6)	
South Carolina	57
Mississippi	55
Louisiana	47
Alabama	45
Georgia	44
Florida	44
Unweighted Arithmetic Average	49
(b) The Yeoman/Upper South (6)	
North Carolina	33
Virginia	31
Tennessee	25
Kentucky	20
Maryland	13
Delaware	2
Unweighted Arithmetic Average	21
(c) The Newer South (3)	
Arkansas	26
Texas	30
Oklahoma	–
Unweighted Arithmetic Average	28
Total for the United States South	32

Note:
(a) The unweighted average the Newer South excludes Ohklahoma, since we have no figure for that territory in 1860. The figure for the total United States South is the actual figure from the U.S. Census Office figure. It is not an unweighted average.
(b) One state with a not insignificant slave population, but which we locate in the West, is Missouri. The figure was 10% in 1860.
Source: Kolchin [1987: 53 and 55].

Lower South

The second sub-region is variously categorised, in the relevant literature, as the Lower South [Kolchin, 1995: *passim*], 'the Old South' [Mann, 1990: 75], 'the slave South' [Levine *et al.* 1989: 222 *et seq.*], the 'plantation south' [Kirby, 1987: 25–50, cited by Mann, loc. cit.]: some of them clearly social categories which may be examined within a political economy framework. After 1776, it was joined, as we have seen, by Louisiana , Mississippi, Alabama, and, eventually, Florida. So it encompasses, like the Upper South, six states in all:

three of the four South Atlantic states, Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida (the fourth, North Carolina, we have placed in the Upper South); the two East South Central states of Alabama and Mississippi, and the West South Central state of Louisiana.

The unweighted arithmetic average of the incidence of slavery for the grouping as a whole was 49% in 1860 (compared to 32% for the South as a whole and 21% for the Yeoman or Upper South). None of these states had an incidence of lower than 44%. The figures for the individual states in 1860 were: 44% (Georgia), 44% (Florida), 57% (South Carolina), 45% (Alabama), 55% (Mississippi) and 47% (Louisiana).

Cotton was, of course, a staple crop in these 'older plantation areas' [Mann, 1990: 167, note 1]. We might, then, designate this the 'Cotton South' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: xii, 275], except that this category may be taken to include Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas, which are obviously not part of the 'Old South'. We may reserve the notion of the 'Cotton South' for all of these states.

Newer South

But we need a third regional division in the South, to encompass the southern states west of the Mississippi, which we might call the 'Newer South': the three West South Central states of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. We might, even, include them in 'the West', but that we will resist.

Dickinson refers to Texas and Oklahoma as 'the younger cotton-producing areas' [Dickinson, 1990: 167, note 1]. Arkansas, too, was a cotton-producing state. These are distinct from the 'Old South' in having a smaller incidence of slavery. Texas and Arkansas were both 'slave states': with, respectively, in 1860, 30% and 26% of their population slaves [Kolchin, 1987: 55], proportions quite high but lower than the states of the 'Old South'. Oklahoma would eventually become a state in 1907, and a part of the Newer South, long after our immediate concerns here. We recall that during the antebellum period territory was essentially a dumping-ground for Indian tribes driven from their homelands.

Before proceeding to the agrarian class structure in the South let us note the overwhelming significance of cotton in the antebellum continuing vitality of slavery in the South. Space precludes our entering the controversy over whether 'slavery was dying in the United States from the end of the Revolution to 1810, and if it had not been for the rise of the cotton culture, slavery would have passed from existence long before the Civil War' [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 24]. Fogel and Engerman reject that case. That rejection it seems to me to be implausible. More convincing is the argument that 'the peculiar institution [slavery] owed much of its persistence in antebellum years to cotton, a crop grown only in very limited quantities in the colonial period' [Kolchin, 1995: 94]. Certainly, tobacco was replaced, in the South, by cotton as the staple crop there, to a quite remarkable extent. After the dramatic breakthrough in the nature

of the technology used in cotton manufacture, with the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793,[4] cotton cultivation received a remarkable, new lease of life. This unleashed a large and rapidly increasing demand for cotton (especially from England) and rendered its growing highly profitable. We then witness cotton's spread and dominance throughout the South, via the use of slaves.

The running of profitable cotton plantations, worked by slave labour, required, it was clearly perceived by masters and state, a renewal of restriction (which had been allowed to slacken in the 1780s and 1790s[5]), a clear focus upon the plantation as the centre of slave activity, and the imposing of measures that would ensure a docile and malleable labour force. The state – in the form of the different state legislatures – played a crucial role. We see the elaboration, extension and consolidation of those 'slave codes' whose early origins in the seventeenth century we have identified above.[6] There was, also, a heightened, self-conscious concern with a 'paternalism' – certainly with the ideology of paternalism – whose roots lie in the colonial era.[7] Kolchin captures this as follows:

> As slavery in the South became more and more distinctively Southern, it underwent further changes, some of which represented continuations of trends previously evident and others of which were new developments. Patterns of behavior that had been tentative became more firmly entrenched as people who were increasingly third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation slaves and masters confronted one another. Masters expressed growing concern for the well-being of their 'people', and the material treatment of most slaves improved. At the same time, slave owners renewed their efforts to promote slave dependence and docility, sharply curtailed manumissions, and imposed new restrictions on the actions of both slaves and free blacks. These two trends, although apparently contradictory, were in fact closely linked, for as Southern whites grew increasingly committed to their peculiar institution and took measures to defend it, they also sought to demonstrate, both to themselves and to outside critics, its basic humaneness (and hence its defensibility). Antebellum Southern slavery became both more rigid and more paternalistic; in the process, it also became increasingly distinctive. [Kolchin, 1995: 94]

We will wish to comment later on various aspects of its distinctiveness, among them the suggested 'paternalism', which identify the specificity of slavery in the United States.

The significance of cotton may be inferred from the following statistics, provided by Fogel in his later book. In the 1730s, around one-third of slaves were involved in tobacco production, and a further 10% in rice. In the 1760s, tobacco, rice and indigo took rather more than 50% of the slave labour force. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, 11% of slaves were on cotton plantations; and that rose to 64% by 1850.[8] Cotton was, indeed, King – at least in the South.

3 THE AGRARIAN CLASS STRUCTURE IN THE SOUTH AND THE DOMINANCE OF SLAVERY

If the class structure of the post-feudal English countryside could be viewed as a trinity of very unequal class segments (landlords, capitalist tenant-farmers and wage labourers), that of the antebellum South can be represented, too, as a triad of unequal class components. But it was a triad of an altogether other stripe, with fundamentally different forms of surplus appropriation and class relationship.

Its major components were: a dominant 'planter', slave-owning class; a thoroughly subservient class of chattel slaves; and a class of 'yeoman farmers', or 'independent proprietors' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 261].[9] The nature of each of these as a class we will consider presently. We will wish to examine the character of their relationships and the manner of surplus appropriation: and the implications of these for our central concerns of accumulation and capitalist transformation.

Wage labour was strikingly absent in the antebellum countryside. The mass of labour was that of slaves, and slaves, assuredly, constituted a class. Slaveholders used wage labour only minimally. To the extent that it existed, it was white; and for yeoman farmers 'white labour was scarce and unreliable, at least if a farmer needed steady help' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 260]. Yeoman farmers were largely dependent on family labour. Tenancy, too, seems to have been of small proportions.

Clearly the South was dominated by slavery and the slave-master relationship. The general sense in which this is so, with respect to any dominant mode of production, is captured evocatively by Marx in the *Grundrisse*:

> In all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations thus assign rank and influence to the others. It is a general illumination which bathes all the other colours and modifies their particularity. It is a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being which has materialized within it. [Marx, 1973: 106–7]

In the antebellum South that ether was slavery. It pervaded the whole social formation. This was so in several particular senses, which we will explore presently. Elsewhere, Maurice Dobb carries forward the general sense in which it is so from our viewpoint:

> save for comparatively brief intervals of transition, each historical period is moulded under the preponderating influence of a single, more or less homogeneous economic form, and is to be characterized according to the predominant type of socio-economic relationship...[a form] which has grown to proportions which enable it to place its imprint on the whole society and to exert a major influence in moulding the trend of development. [Dobb, 1963: 11]

With the dynamic of accumulation and the possibility of capitalist industrialisation in mind, we will wish to consider how this particular 'socio-economic relationship', in practice, 'placed its imprint on the whole society', not only of the South, where it was clearly so, but also the North, where its implications could also be powerfully felt. We will argue that it constituted a powerful barrier to such industrialisation. It was those implications which, in part, gave rise to the Civil War which tore the United States apart, but which cleared the way for an unleashing of capitalist industrialisation.

To argue that slavery dominated the South is not to suggest that the South – the white South – was devoid of contradiction and conflict, nor that it was a place of flat uniformity. On the contrary, there is powerful evidence to support the proposition that 'there was growing stratification and class conflict [and accompanying] bitter social divisions beneath the surface of white society [in the South]' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 251].[10] Nevertheless, we can also argue that 'the slaveholders and the non-slaveholders were bound together by links firms enough to account for the political unity of the South' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 251]. We will wish to consider the nature of the relevant economic ties: the way in which, for example, the hegemonic planter class 'protected the yeoman by keeping them out of the clutches of merchant capital' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 253]. That, we will see, is of considerable importance.

4 THE GENERAL NATURE OF SLAVERY: SURPLUS EXTRACTION VIA THE MOST EXTREME FORM OF UNFREE LABOUR

First, the nature of slavery in general, analytical terms is to be noted. We are here dealing, as has been said of slavery in another context, with circumstances 'in which *the propertied class*...extracts the greater part of its *surplus* from the working population by means of *unfree labour*' [Ste. Croix, 1981: 133, emphases in original]. This is, surely, a valid representation of slavery in the American South. As Ste. Croix stresses, with respect to Greek and Roman antiquity, we are not here referring to *production*. The crucial point is that the great bulk of the *surplus* generated in the American South, and appropriated by the dominant propertied class, that of planters, derived from unfree labour.[11]

Unfree labour may take various forms: chattel slavery, serfdom, and debt bondage being its major manifestations.[12] Its most extreme form, chattel slavery, was the source of surplus in the South. Following Ste. Croix, we may adopt the following definition of chattel slavery (taken from Article 1(1) of the Slavery Convention of 1926, convened by the League of Nations[13]), 'for the ancient as well as the modern world', as 'the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised '[Ste. Croix, 1981: 135]. This is analytically acceptable, and transcends a mere legal definition,

'since what it stresses is not so much the fact that the slave is the *legal property* of another as that 'the *powers attaching* to the *right of ownership are exercised over him*' – for the essential elements in the slave's condition are that *his labour and other activities are totally controlled* by his master, and that he is virtually without rights, at any rate enforceable legal rights' [Ste. Croix, 1981: 135, emphases in original]. It is around this form of surplus appropriation – based upon total control of the slave and his labour – that the slave–master relationship turns. We are concerned with its specific manifestation in the American South. We look at the planter class in section 5, and the slave class in section 6.

5 THE NATURE OF THE PLANTER CLASS IN THE SOUTH

(i) Questions and Sources: From Empirical Characteristics to Class Character

We may first examine the nature of the dominant class in the South up to the Civil War: the planter, slave-owning class. In so doing we are better able to capture the inherent nature of slavery in the South, as a mode of surplus appropriation, and identify some of its contradictions.

We are fortunate in being able to draw on the work, preeminently, of Eugene Genovese, but also that of Peter Kolchin. We may disagree, at times sharply, with some of their formulations, and even some of their interpretations, but only on the basis that it is they who make possible informed judgement on this matter, and it is they who have masterly control over the empirical material, in a way that no comparativist can possibly have. Genovese works within a framework of Marxist political economy, and addresses almost all of the issues that concern me. I may, therefore, seek to have a dialogue with him. His is a lifetime's body of distinguished work, for which one is grateful.

We may start by asking: what is a planter? We may then proceed from the apparent empirical characteristics of planters to more difficult questions about their nature as a class. We may first seek their most straightforward identifying features. These, which are clearly empirical, help set the context in which their character as a class may be considered. Our central concern with the implications for accumulation and transformation remains, of course, but in seeking their nature as a class we may stretch beyond that.

(ii) Distinguishing the Planter Master Class and 'Yeoman Farmers'. A First Approximation: How Big Were They?

We may first distinguish the planter master class from the class of 'yeoman farmers'. As a first approximation, we may do so in terms of size: i.e. the number of slaves owned.

Ownership of slaves was widespread. By 1860 almost a quarter of all whites were members of slave-owning families (or 16% of the total population).[14] Can we identify all of these slave-owning families as constituting the planter master class in the South? The answer is that we cannot – any more than we might, say, consider all who owned some land in eighteenth century England as members of the English landlord class. Ownership of slaves is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for such identification. As a first approximation, we may suggest, following common practice among specialist historians, that size, or the number of slaves owned, is a useful distinguishing criterion.

The great majority of southern slave-owners were not, in fact, substantial owners. There were, of course, regional variations, but in 1860 72% of slave-owners owned 9 slaves or less. A further 16% owned between 10 and 19; 9% between 20 and 49; and 3% more than 50.[15] How might one categorise these? Kolchin, with characteristic precision and directness, provides a useful initial statement:

> Like 'black' and 'American', the word 'planter' has diverse connotations. Sometimes it has been applied to any landowning farmer, but to historians of the antebellum South it has usually meant a landowning farmer, of substantial means; in the most restrictive usage, the term is reserved for those owning twenty or more slaves. Slaveholders themselves were usually much less restrictive in their definition of 'planter', frequently referring to someone with ten or twelve slaves as a 'small planter'. Because the conditions and world-view of a slave-owner with twelve slaves were not likely to be fundamentally different from those of a slave owner with twenty, I have adopted this somewhat more relaxed criterion for entry into planter ranks, while maintaining the distinction between a 'farmer' (with few or no slaves) and a 'planter' with many. Further distinctions among 'small slave owners', 'small planters', and 'large planters' (or 'wealthy planters') are useful, but these are imprecise terms that vary over time and place. Someone owning fifty slaves would have qualified as a very large planter in Virginia in the 1720s but not in Louisiana in the 1840s. [Kolchin, 1995: xiii].

We have, then, the distinction between 'planter' and 'farmer', or 'yeoman farmer', that we have already encountered, although there is some lack of precision in the suggested identification.

We might suggest that a planter is someone with ten slaves or more. Strictly, we might insist upon a 'yeoman farmer' being defined as someone without slaves, a non-slave-holder. That would simplify the analysis, but would do damage to the social realities with which we are concerned. Clearly, there was some differentiation within the yeoman farmer class. That we will pursue in section 7. A slave-owner with less than ten slaves we may identify as a farmer: one at the top-end of the slave-owning scale being a substantial farmer; or, to use terminology common in work on the South, a substantial yeoman; or, in yet other terminology, a rich peasant.

Thus, accepting the foregoing, only 28% of slave-owners were members of the planter class, on the criterion of owning 10 slaves or more. There was,

however, significant concentration within the planter class, albeit with regional variety. Thus, while in the South as a whole half the slaves lived on holdings with more than 23 slaves, in the 'deep South' the median figure was 33, in Louisiana 49, and in Concordia parish Louisiana more than 117; whereas in western Kentucky it was 14.[16] Someone with fifty slaves was 'a very substantial slave-owner' [Kolchin, 1987: 52]. So it is, then, that we may say that 'the great majority of southern slaveowners had only a few slaves each' [Kolchin, 1987: 52–3]. We may also say that the majority of slaves were owned by planters and that differentiation existed within the planter master class.

(iii) An American-Born Master Class

It is important to grasp the empirical diversity which the foregoing reveals. We must, however, seek the general characteristics of the planter class. We may, then, proceed further in attempting to establish the character of the planter class in the South – still in the realm of empirical features.

A particular American master class, and with it a particular slave class, and a particular form of slavery, emerged in the colonial era. Although imports of slaves from Africa continued to come in right through to 1860, as early as 1680 the majority of slaves were native-born, while the figure was 80% by 1774 and in 1860 99%.[17] Preponderantly, then, and unlike other contemporary slave economies, the American South had an American-born slave class. The slaveholders of the South shared this characteristic. At the same time, and again unusually, there was formed an American-born master-class.

The distinctiveness of the latter is to be stressed. It distinguishes the American master class from slave owners in, for example, Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti, Saint-Domingue, and most of Brazil. Those other slave-owners, not native to the country in which they owned slaves,

> often...lived far from their slave property – perhaps...in the mother country of England or France...Other planters spent a number of years supervising their holdings in the colonies and then retired at a relatively young age to their estates in the mother country. [Kolchin, 1995: 35]

It was not so in the American South. Here was a class of permanent settlers, with deep roots in Southern society. They would become a ruling class that was an organic part of the society they ruled. That, surely, was important.

(iv) A Non-Absentee Master Class, 'Residence Mentality', 'Residence Behaviour' and Some Implications

The next characteristic has considerable significance. We have, when considering landlord classes in the wider comparative study, encountered the importance of whether they were resident or absentee. English landlords were to a

significant extent, resident. So, too, were Prussian. A critical feature of Japanese landlords, between the Meiji Restoration and 1945, was that they were largely resident. It is not a characteristic that southern slave-owners need necessarily have possessed. Elsewhere, slave-owners were largely absentee. Such a native-born class could, certainly, have been a class of absentee slave-owners, living, perhaps, in a colonial city, and as slave-owners elsewhere did, looking 'upon their holdings primarily as investments to be milked, investments that needed little of their attention so long as they provided the requisite income...[and visiting] their plantations only occasionally, receiving periodic reports on them from stewards' [Kolchin, 1995: 35]. But it was not so in the American South. American slave-owners had no such 'absentee mentality'.

American slave-owners in the South – more precisely, the American planter class – differed from this absentee pattern. As Kolchin observes, 'American masters were rarely outsiders on their estates' (loc. cit.). We may spell this out:

> Most southern slaves not only lived on modest holdings but also lived with resident masters...Exceptions prove the rule. The small number of wealthy planters who owned multiple holdings were of necessity absentee proprietors to many of their slaves, and other masters chose to spend much or all of their time away from their slaveholding, either because of other obligations, such as political office or political practice, or because of personal inclination. Low-country planters often avoided their estates during the malarial summer months, and elsewhere, too, some very wealthy slave-owners craving the company of fashionable society, kept houses in nearby towns. But far more often than Caribbean slave owners or Russian serf holders, American masters lived on their rural holdings and considered those holding home. Their residence mentality, which was already well-established in the eighteenth century, became still more entrenched in the nineteenth as political independence and the spread of democratic government reinforced local attachments among the white gentry. [Kolchin, 1995: 101–2]

This had clear and significant implications.

It has been suggested that they had, indeed, a 'residence mentality' [Kolchin, 1987: 60–1, 129; Kolchin, 1995: 34–5]. Thus:

> This self-perception of southern planters as a resident class developed early, persisted throughout the slave regime, and was one of the most important characteristics that distinguished the southern United States from most other modern slave societies...Even when a southern planter was unable to be present on his plantation, that plantation was still home, and its management constituted his main social duty. [Kolchin, 1987: 61]

This was associated, it is further argued, with a clear pattern of 'residence behaviour' [Kolchin, 1995: 34]. Our concern is with the possible significance of

this mentality and this behaviour with, on the one hand, the management of the plantation and the effectiveness with which this was done and, on the other, accumulation and the forms taken by the productive forces (or technical change).

Firstly, we note the suggestion that, as part of the 'residence mentality', there grew, increasingly in the eighteenth century and extensively in the first half of the nineteenth, a particular form of 'residence behaviour': a clear paternalism among the planter class. This view, to which we have drawn attention already, is associated most plausibly with Genovese. Others, too, espouse it, although often with implications quite different from those drawn by Genovese. The Genovese view has been robustly criticised. Space precludes detailed pursuit of this important issue.[18] But we do need to take a position on it, and relate it to our major analytical concerns.

Genovese's view of paternalism, which we take as of primary interest, is as follows (abstracting from a detailed and textured argument). To start of with, it was, indeed, a derivative of residence:

> The foundation of a patriarchal and paternalistic ethos ultimately proved to be not the European institutional inheritance, which did play a role, but the plantation regime itself. The confrontation of master and slave, white and black, on a plantation presided over by a resident planter for whom the plantation was a home and the entire population part of his extended family generated that ethos. [Genovese, 1969: 96, emphases mine]

He takes, as a central example of paternalism, 'the possibility of marital stability [among slaves] because their masters provided it' [Genovese, 1969: 97]. Why did they provide such a possibility? He gives two reasons, one material and the other ideological: 'They provided it for two complementary reasons: they could more easily control married slaves with families, and their Christian consciences demanded it' [Genovese, 1969: 97]. Genovese does not assign weights to these, and to that extent he may be said to be somewhat equivocal. He does, perhaps, at another juncture, come close to qualifying the second – the ideological – reason. In an essay on George Fitzhugh, an arch-supporter of slavery ('who argued that slavery was the proper relationship of all labor to capital' [Genovese, 1969: 99–100]) for whom Genovese, the Marxist, has a somewhat paradoxical fond regard, he avers:

> If I do not dwell on the evils of slavery and the hypocrisy of its world view, it is for two reasons, the first being an assumption that all ruling-class ideologies are self-serving...and the second being that few people any longer seem in need of sermons on the subject...To insist, for example, on the reality and centrality of paternalism is to try and account for specific forms of class consciousness and their political consciousness; it was not to imply that paternalism was ever a good thing. [Genovese, 1969: 119]

If we take 'Christian conscience' as part of ruling-class ideology, a 'specific form of [ruling-] class consciousness', then we assign a determining priority. The former – the material reason – seems the more compelling. Certainly, a more malleable and a more controlled labour force was one that lent itself more readily to a process of ongoing accumulation. It seems doubtful whether Christian conscience, itself remarkably flexible, here any more than with respect to the appropriation of Indian land, would have yielded an outcome antithetical to accumulation.

In contesting Fogel and Engerman's simplistic conclusions drawn from accounts by ex-slaves of 'good masters',[19] exponents, that is, of a benevolent paternalism, Genovese stresses the following:

> No amount of decency, however, could obliterate the central fact of southern life. The slaves did not face the objective laws of the market directly; they faced the individual, human will of another man, against whom they had no direct, sanctioned recourse. [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 117]

That, of course, is the case, and serves to distinguish slave from free wage labour. But, the phrase 'no amount of decency' is deflective. In terms of the operation of the system, the critical point, whether or not we allow the existence of a moderating 'decency', and whether or not paternalism allowed more effective control, is that the essence of control in this form of exploitation lay elsewhere. Paternalism might smooth the way, but was not, and could not be, the cement of such a system.

Throughout the era of slavery, the essential means of social control was physical coercion. It was upon this that accumulation depended. Routine use of the lash secured compliance. The system functioned, and accumulation proceeded, via regular imposition of pain. For the colonial period, Kolchin captures this concisely and cogently:

> Born in violence, slavery survived by the lash. Beginning with the initial slave trade that tore Africans away from everything they knew and sent them in chains to a distant land to toil for strangers, every stage of master-slave relations depended either directly or indirectly on physical coercion. The routine functioning of Southern farms and plantations rested on the authority of the owners and their representatives, supported by the state, to inflict pain on their human property. Plenty of pain was inflicted. [Kolchin, 1995: 57]

Notwithstanding a burgeoning paternalism, as the colonial period drew to an end, and 'an increased interest in the lives of their slaves' [Kolchin, 1995: 60] by slaveowners, this underpinning reality did not disappear:

> The existence of such attitudes did not, of course, vitiate slavery's cruelty. Most benevolent masters resorted to the whip – some quite frequently – and behind all the talk of love and protection lurked the master's power to compel obedience, by whatever means were necessary. [Kolchin, 1995: 60]

Nor did this become any less real, or any less important as the lynchpin of the system, during the antebellum period.

What we have not yet stressed is that this had, as a central feature, an extreme form of dependence, deriving from a pervasive interference:

> Southern slaves suffered an extraordinary amount of interference in their daily lives. Of course, such interference was rooted in the very existence of slavery, for masters everywhere assumed the right to direct and control their slave property. But the unusually close contact that existed between masters and slaves in the antebellum South meant that whites there impinged to an unusual degree on slave life...This closely governed nature of slave life represented a central feature of slave-owner paternalism, as masters who cared for their slaves in a variety of ways also strove to shape virtually every aspect of their lives treating them as permanent children who needed constant direction as well as constant protection. [Kolchin, 1995: 118]

As we shall note below, slaves resisted this, in a variety of ways, in an attempt to retain autonomy. That resistance was powerfully constrained by, the operation of paternalism was overborne by, and the continued functioning of the system was enabled by the lash, by punishment, and by pain:

> almost all masters punished, most more than they would have been willing to admit. By far the most common punishment was whipping, and it was a rare slave who totally escaped the lash. A whipping could be a formal occasion – a public, ritualized display in which a sentence was carried out in front of an assembled throng – or a casual affair in which an owner, overseer, or hirer impulsively chastised an 'unruly' slave. Either way, the prevalence of whipping was such a stark reminder of slave dependence that to the bondspeople (and abolitionists) the lash came to symbolise the essence of slavery...Many owners resorted to additional methods to inflict pain and maintain order, methods that included stocks, private jails, and public humiliations, as well as fines and deprivation of privileges, and that less commonly embraced harsher physical tortures. [Kolchin, 1995: 121]

And so one could go on. So much for paternalism. It performed a function in the extreme dependence that it engendered. But it was, surely, a secondary rather than a primary part of the system, and as much ideological as real.

A second feature of this class of resident planters, deriving from the fact of residence and associated with a 'residence mentality, related to plantation management. Thus, 'whether they lived on farms or plantations, the great majority of American slaves – unlike Russian serfs – had resident owners who undertook the main chores of running plantation affairs themselves' [Kolchin, 1987: 68].

(v) Neither Feudal Nor Capitalist: A Distinct Class

It was in the eighteenth century that 'a self-conscious master class began to develop...as settled life replaced raw frontier and as slavery became an entrenched institution' [Kolchin, 1987: 162 and 163]. That master/planter class, clearly possessed of a sense of its own identity, was united as a class: by the wealth common to its members; by its shared aristocratic pretensions, its ideology – 'an aristocratic self-image, one that like most myths was based on a small parcel of reality, interwoven with large doses of pure fantasy' [Kolchin, 1987: 167][20] – which, as we have seen, included a strong element of paternalism; but mostly by its unifying 'relationship to the means of production...[and] to the specific class or classes it rule[d] '[Genovese, 1969: 5]. The means of production included slaves (Marx's 'speaking implements' – see below). That they ruled their slaves is obvious enough. They also exercised 'an obvious hegemony...over the yeomen' [Genovese, 1969: 139].[21] It was, without doubt, a hegemonic ruling class. It was deeply entrenched in the South and, when threatened in 1861, was 'determined to defend [its]...property and power' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 394]. It was, most certainly, not a class that was going to yield its privileges and its wealth, clearly based on the ownership and exploitation of slaves, without an intense struggle. It was, moreover, a class able to mobilise the rest of the white population in defence of slavery.

That class emphatically was not feudal. To suggest as much is unacceptable.[22] We need here to return to Lenin's observations, that we discussed above, and any misunderstanding that might arise from them. They require some comment. Genovese handles it convincingly. Thus, his observation that Lenin, in attacking Mr Himmer and his other opponents, 'attacked much too sharply' – and did so 'in the heat of polemics' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 24] is apposite. He places Lenin's remarks in context. He continues:

> Lenin's argument does not equate southern slavery with feudalism – an absurdity that he was much too good an historian and political economist to fall into, even in the heat of polemics. Rather, it specifically equates the limited effects of European, particularly Russian, feudalism with those of southern slavery; that is, it equates their specifically retardative effects on the process of national capitalist development. In so doing, it recognises as historically essential the prebourgeois character of the class relations of slavery and of the society based upon it. (loc. cit.)

The point is well-taken. But while recognising the prebourgeois/precapitalist nature of both slavery and feudalism, and stressing that both had a powerfully

retardative influence with respect to the development of capitalism, we do need to recall that they were fundamentally distinct.

If slavery was not feudal, it equally certainly was not capitalist. We have encountered that particular fallacy already, with respect to other contexts (in our discussion of the Prussian path). In Marxist terms that cannot be sustained. If one defines capitalism (or any other mode of production) by the criterion of the nature of its relations of production, and further specifies that capitalism is characterised, in its essence, by a free labour force (free in Marx's double sense), and the exploitation of wage labour, then the South with its predominantly unfree (as unfree as one might imagine) relations, and its non-wage labour, cannot possibly be seen as capitalist. As Genovese insists, 'the relationship of master to slave is fundamentally different from that of capitalist to wage worker...and this difference is decisive for an understanding of ideology and class psychology' [Genovese, 1969: 17]. That one cannot quarrel with. The planter class was, as Genovese stresses, 'an essentially pre-bourgeois ruling class [that] dominated the South' [Genovese, 1969: viii]. It was 'fundamentally noncapitalist' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 148]. That seems clear enough.

Yet it is common, in certain quarters, to argue that the planter class was a capitalist class: especially among neo-classical economists, but also among those who would not view themselves quite in that light; and, indeed, this position is held by those who disagree significantly over other aspects of their interpretation of slavery.[23] Now, existing, as it did, when capitalism was flourishing and developing a world market, and tied, as it was, to that market, it could not possibly 'free itself totally from the economic, social, and moral influence of modern capitalism' [Genovese, 1969: viii]. That is incontestable. Deeply implicated as it was in world markets, it 'could [not] survive under modern conditions unless it adapted to capitalist norms' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 149].[24] But so 'adapting to capitalist norms' does not make it capitalist (*pace* Gunder Frank, Wallerstein *et al.*). Then, its acquisitiveness is not in question. In a telling formulation, Genovese drives the point home:

> No Marxist would argue that prebourgeois ruling classes rejected acquisitiveness of wealth. For us, the historical form of acquisition and its objective consequences remain at issue...All ruling classes in all societies must strive to acquire wealth – how else could they rule? [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 149,]

The planters were acquisitive. They did seek profits. They may even, in the given objective circumstances, have sought to maximise profit. They did accumulate. We will, indeed, wish to examine the nature of their accumulation. But they assuredly were not capitalists. We confront 'a ruling class of an extraordinary type in an anomalous and indeed, hostile relation to those bourgeois who everywhere in the world stood first and foremost for capitalist development' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 22]. The class of southern slave-owners

came 'closest of all the New World slave societies to resurrecting an archaic mode of production' [Genovese, 1969: 118]. If feudalism was archaic and anachronistic, slavery was *a fortiori* so: a veritable corpse brought back to life. Yet it prevailed in the South and was the basis of Southern society for close to two centuries. Archaic it surely was, but with the power to confuse analytically, if only because it was so archaic.[25]

Where feudalism failed to take root, slavery succeeded. In so doing, moreover, it effectively blocked the development of capitalism in the South and placed limits upon its full emergence in the North. The precise senses in which this was so we will discuss presently. The planter class did not yield easily. On the contrary, as we have already suggested, 'southern slave-holders staked everything on preserving slavery' [Kolchin, 1987: 374]. It would take a bloody civil war to remove that blockage. Even then, the subsequent development of capitalism in the South was slowed, and its form disfigured by the heritage it took from its slave past. That we will consider later, when we examine what took slavery's place in the South.

6 THE NATURE OF SLAVES AS A CLASS AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF SLAVERY FOR THE PRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE OF AGRICULTURE AND FOR ACCUMULATION

(i) Slave Labour and Free Wage Labour Distinguished, the Possibility of Class Struggle and Some Questions

Slave labour, as with the planter class, is distinguished by important specificities in particular contexts. We need to capture these if we are to identify the nature and character of individual slave societies. We have attempted to convey the particular character of the master class in the American South in the previous section. We must now do the same for slave labour.

The particularity, however, of both master class and slave labour (and there is a symbiotic relationship between the two) needs general analytical moorings. We have sought to indicate those moorings for the master class. We may do the same for slave labour, and start with a distinction of central significance, which, in any treatment of slavery, transcends time and place. In his remarkable book, Ste. Croix, in the context of Ancient Greece, captures the general analytical point which is precisely relevant in the American South. The contrast between slave labour and wage labour – free wage labour – is fundamental, and so the contrast between a slave-based mode of production (in our case the American South) and capitalism.

As Ste. Croix insists, slave labour and wage labour are, in Marxist terms, 'completely different categories' [Ste. Croix, 1981: 58]. Thus,

> the free wage-labourer, who has his own labour power to sell, obviously occupies a completely different position from the slave, who is the property of the

> master, a mere 'animate tool' (*empsychon organon*), as Aristotle calls him. And the slave, with working animals and the land itself is placed specifically by Marx among the 'instruments of labour' which forms an important category of the 'means of production' and are therefore a part of 'fixed capital' and of Marx's 'constant capital', whereas the free wage-labourer (part of 'circulating capital') constitutes Marx's 'variable capital' – a profound difference in Marx's eyes. [Ste. Croix, 1981: 58][26]

For Marx, that contrast between slave labour and free wage labour was of essential importance. His consideration of slavery and its implications centred upon the contrast with free wage labour. To that we will return.

Ste. Croix makes a further analytical point of great significance with respect to slave societies. Again, his context is classical antiquity. Again, the point is general and has application in any slave society.

A slave society is a class society, in the sense that it is characterised by surplus appropriation from subordinate classes (in this instance slaves) by dominant classes (here, masters). This exploitation is made possible by the control by the dominant class of the conditions of production, and, as we have already suggested, is compounded, in a slave society, by the ownership of slaves by masters: an ownership which allows, in principle, the total control of the slave's labour and other activities by the master. But that control is always subject to possible limitation as a result of resistance. Thus, says Ste. Croix: 'I use the expression *class struggle* for the fundamental relationship between classes (and their respective individual members), involving essentially exploitation, or resistance to it. It does not necessarily involve collective action by a class as such, and it may or may not include activity on a political plane' [Ste. Croix, 1981: 44 emphasis in original]. Ste. Croix insists, I think fruitfully, that even where there is no awareness of class, i.e. even where there is an absence of class consciousness, and even where there is no specifically political struggle, or, indeed, consciousness of struggle of any kind,[27] if one uses 'exploitation as the hallmark of class...at once class struggle is in the forefront' [Ste. Croix, 1981: 57]. That is an important reminder.

What the historian – or the comparativist – must do, of course, is pursue the concrete manifestations, the particularities, the relative strength or weakness of class struggle in a specific historical context. There may be, even in a slave society, some awareness of common interests among slaves, even if not class interests. As we have seen, planters, certainly, had a very clear class awareness. There may be action in pursuit of such common interests, albeit not necessarily with a clear class orientation and albeit limited in scope. Such 'resistance' may, indeed, have some influence. Planters assuredly pursued class action. The possibility of political action by slaves may be virtually non-existent. But masters clearly did take political action. The 'slave codes', for example, which we have noted above, represent such action on behalf of the masters.

There is no preordained outcome, no black box. But the issue must be addressed, must be part of the analytical agenda.

We note, indeed, a fundamental difference of judgement on the implications of slavery for agriculture's efficiency and productive performance and for accumulation. Our assessment of slavery will hinge upon the position we take on that debate. That assessment will depend, in part, upon both the distinction between slave and free wage labour and upon our reading of the nature of class struggle in the American South. The questions we must ask are: what were the implications of the production relationships constituted by slavery for the operation of the system? Was there, inherent in them, a set of contradictions which effectively shackled the system's productive potential? Or was slave labour perfectly compatible with an efficient and productive outcome?

(ii) A Fundamental Difference of View: Olmsted, Cairnes and Marx versus Fogel and Engerman *et alios*

At one extreme, we have the view expressed cogently by Marx, in some *obiter dicta* and footnotes on slavery.[28] Marx's *obiter dicta* are always worthy of note and usually incisive and enlightening. Sometimes, however, they may be open to diverse interpretation, and sometimes they may seem quite contrary to views expressed in other parts of his writing (it is, after all, a large body of writing spread over many years, and Marx did change his mind). Sometimes, indeed, they may be shown to be wrong (perhaps on a basis of information not available to Marx). We keep an open mind.

Marx, influenced, especially, by two contemporary writers on slavery in the American South, Frederick Law Olmsted[29] and J.E. Cairnes,[30] and possessed of formidable classical scholarship with respect to slavery in antiquity, argued a powerful case. That case was for the constricting influence of slavery upon the efficient operation of an agriculture based upon slavery and, more broadly, upon accumulation and its elasticity and capacity to expand. A system based on slavery was far less capable of deploying its labour flexibly, effectively and productively than one based on free wage labour. That was inherent in the very nature of slavery and the production relations which it embodied. It would both lead to a careless and incompetent use of the existing instruments of production and be antipathetic to an improvement in their quality. The views of Olmsted, a shrewd, insightful and careful observer, who travelled extensively in the South in the 1850s and wrote at length about it, are especially important. They were rigorously restated – and added to somewhat – by Cairnes, an accomplished, elegant economist of considerable analytical power. Marx drew on both of them, adding powerful insights of his own.

At the other extreme we have, in recent years, a strong defence of slavery in this regard, by Fogel and Engerman, and by others, who argue that slaveowners could, and did, deploy slave labour effectively and with remarkable efficiency; and that slavery could and did have incentives built into it, to produce an

outcome hardly less effective than capitalism. Indeed, for them it is indistinguishable from capitalism: a somewhat deviant form of capitalism, but one capable of splendidly efficient operation. They carefully avoid engagement with Marx, but they do engage with both Olmsted and Cairnes, upon whose writings Marx drew – and, therefore, by extension, and covertly, with Marx (the extent to which historical scholarship in general is informed by covert engagement with Marx is remarkable). It is worthy of note that the view that Fogel and Engerman feel compelled to confront is not that of some recent writer on slavery but that of Olmsted, Cairnes, and, by extension, Marx – more than a century after its formulation. As they themselves say:

> the writings of these men [Olmsted and Cairnes]...have never been allowed to slip into the category of intellectual history. Continual reliance on their arguments and their evidence by modern writers has kept their indictment alive, has maintained their position as the principal antagonists on the issues of efficiency, growth, and even on the issues of the profitability and viability of slavery. Their work is the core around which the traditional interpretation of slavery has been molded. [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 190]

The longevity and power of the Olmsted/Cairnes/Marx view is remarkable.

Before engaging with the debate, we shall turn to the specific features of the class of slaves in the American South. As with the planter class, we shall start with some empirical characteristics, which identify the specificity of American slaves. We then turn to the labour process of which slavery was a part. This enables us to confront the nature and implications of slaves as a class.

(iii) A Recapitulation of Some Empirical Characteristics

Some of the relevant empirical characteristics of American slaves have emerged in our treatment of the planter class. This is not to suggest that the nature of slaves as a class is a mere reflex of the master class, or that slaves totally lacked autonomy and a capacity for class-for-itself action. That is a position which we reject. With that clarified, we may recapitulate.

We have noted already that, in contrast with other slave economies, here was a very predominantly native-born slave class, owned largely by planters, although sometimes by farmers/yeomen. It is those owned by planters that concern us. Planters, we recall, we distinguish from farmers/yeomen in that they own ten slaves of more. The majority of slaves were owned by such planters.

Planters varied in size, were themselves native-born and were very largely resident. They took a close interest in the running and management of their plantations. Slaves, then, were thrown into close proximity with their masters. We have seen that notwithstanding the paternalism that grew in the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, the essential means of control to which they were subject was physical coercion: routine use of the lash and the

imposition of pain. We have seen, too, that paternalism, itself a derivative of residence and a 'residence mentality', in fact engendered, via the pervasive interference that it entailed, an extreme form of dependence of slaves upon masters.

A set of characteristics that we have not yet considered suggests something of the nature of the labour process in which slaves were embedded. This is the way in which they were set to work, the manner in which they were supervised, the character of the work they did, and the fashion in which they coped with this.

(iv) The Labour Process in Which Slaves Were Embedded: Elements of a 'Neutral' Statement and the Fogel and Engerman 'Positive' View

There were clear, substantive changes as slavery evolved over the two centuries of its effective existence, with a convenient watershed between the colonial and the antebellum periods. There was, also, significant variety between the 'regional slave economies' of the South that we have identified above. That, too, shifted in its manifestations and its significance. Clearly, a full historical treatment needs to take adequate account of change and variety. We are indebted to Kolchin for an excellent, recent survey, that conveys this, via a mastery of the whole range of an abundant and growing historical scholarship, with an enviable sureness of touch, that singles out his work as a nutrient base for the comparativist [Kolchin, 1995].

Here, however, as with all of our treatment of slavery, space and the pursuit of the general dictate that we seek the more typical, rather than the relatively minor variant. The more minor may be sought out to bolster a case that lacks general warrant. We need to be on our guard against that. We concentrate, moreover, on the *antebellum* rather than the colonial period. The antebellum period represents slavery in its most highly 'developed' form: an era when its contradictions were at their most mature stage; and when the implications for the productivity of agriculture and for accumulation in a more general sense were under the most intense scrutiny.

We may start with the whole range of activities in which slave labour was engaged, before focusing on our major concern, productive activity in agriculture itself. In pursuit of that concern we will identify the labour process in which slave labour was embedded. In this sub-section we shall seek to establish a 'neutral' view (i.e. one without judgement of the implications attached) alongside the 'positive' interpretation of slave labour argued by Fogel and Engerman. In the next sub-section, we shall begin to question that interpretation, against evidence that sits ill with it, before proceeding, in a subsequent sub-section, to a treatment of the Olmsted/Cairnes/Marx view, with the emphasis on Marx.

Kolchin sums up the variety and the major dominant trends of the antebellum era, as follows:

> As earlier, slaves in the antebellum period engaged in a broad variety of endeavors. They cultivated the South's major crops, cleared land, dug ditches,

put up fences, built and maintained houses, unloaded boats, and worked as mill hands. They served their masters in managerial capacities, as drivers and overseers, and cared for their comfort, as cooks, grooms, gardeners, and personal servants. They also attended to the needs of fellow slaves, working as preachers, conjurers, child carers, and 'doctors'...Widely scattered evidence suggests that in general about three-quarters of the adult slaves worked as field laborers while one quarter had other duties, but there were many variations on this pattern. There was more specialization of labor on large plantations and in cities than on smaller plantations and farms. Women performed a narrower range of occupations than men, with house service the main alternative to field labor. Occupations that catered to the masters' personal comfort – house servants, grooms, coachmen – were relatively scarce on absentee-held estates. In the deep South, where demand for cotton produced an intense shortage of labor, especially during the 1850s, a higher proportion of slaves was pressed into field labor than in the Upper South. And throughout the South, increased importation of manufactured goods from the North and pressure from white artisans who resented the competition acted to reduce the number of slaves (and free blacks) working in skilled crafts, especially from the 1840s. [Kolchin, 1995: 105]

That we take to be an uncontroversial 'neutral' statement, acceptable to exponents of any view of slavery.

We note the important differences between estates with absentee masters and those with resident masters. This is, certainly, of considerable interest, and we will note relevant differences. But, as we have seen, the latter were by far the more common, and it is such estates that we take as the norm. Differences between the Lower and Upper South are also noteworthy. We are especially interested in cotton and cotton-growing areas because of the central significance of cotton for the South (as we have seen).

It is the field-work that is our primary concern. There were, in the South, two major forms of labour organisation: a gang labour system and a task system. The former was by far the more widespread. The latter was, for identifiable reasons, confined to particular regions of the South. We will comment on the relative incidence in the next sub-section. In the rest of this sub-section, we will identify, as dispassionately as possible, the characteristics of each system, but proceed also to the Fogel and Engerman 'positive' view of slavery with respect to effective deployment of labour, productivity and efficiency. There is, as we have suggested, fundamental disagreement on this: on whether there were powerful contradictions inherent in slavery itself that exercised a limit in this respect; or whether such a system, based upon slave labour, could yield, in one phrase, 'a highly disciplined, highly specialized, and well-coordinated labor force' [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 203]. It may well be the case that 'among planters...there was widespread agreement that the ultimate objective of slave management' (loc. cit.) was the latter. But there is certainly no agreement,

among those who have considered slavery seriously, that it was achieved. We will consider the 'negative' view of slavery in the American South in the next sub-section.

Let us start with the gang system, and then proceed to the task system. How did they function?

In the gang labour system, supervision was constant, via the master, the overseer and the slave driver; and an effort was made to drive the slaves hard, and, given the available techniques and instruments of production (this is an important 'given', as we shall see), secure the maximum output per day from them. Thus:

Slaves on large plantations usually worked in gangs, often headed by a slave driver appointed from among the male slaves for his strength, intelligence, loyalty, and managerial ability. The driver functioned as an assistant to the overseer or master, directly supervising agricultural labor. Plantations with more than fifty slaves generally had two or more gangs. A typical arrangement was to divide slaves into plow-hands, who usually consisted primarily of able-bodied men but sometimes included women, and hoe-hands, less fit for strenuous endeavor; on some plantations, lighter work still – for example, weeding and yard cleaning – was assigned to members of a '*trash gang*' made up of children and others incapable of heavy labour. Very large plantations sometimes exhibited more complex administrative hierarchies that approached those of big sugar plantations in the Caribbean (although not the military-like organization of huge serf-holding estates in Russia). [Kolchin, 1995: 103,]

That is as neutral an account as one might get.

We may cite the somewhat less neutral statement of Fogel and Engerman, which carries forward the description. It has all of the hallmarks of *petitio principii*, and embodies some of the intent, or perhaps the ideology, of the planters. But it does serve to capture some of the content of gang labour and to view its functioning, in the cultivation of cotton, at each of the critical periods of the agricultural season: planting, growing and harvesting. In so doing, it seeks to establish the 'rationality', power and effectiveness of slave labour organised in gangs. We may take each of the relevant seasons in cotton growing in turn.

In the operations associated with both planting and growing, it is suggested, 'considerable opportunities [presented themselves] for division of labor and specialization' [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 206]. Slave labour, organized in the gang system, it is argued, was able to reap the economies associated with such specialisation and division of labour. Adam Smith might have rubbed his hands with glee – except that his was a less sanguine view of the possible efficacy of a system of slavery, arguing, as he did, that 'though the wear and tear of a free servant be equally at the expence of his master, it generally costs him much less

than that of a slave' [Smith, 1976, vol. 1: 98]. Fogel and Engerman might have persuaded Smith to the contrary, although it seems unlikely, in view of Smith's strong case against slavery (which surely invites consideration in the American case).[31] Marx, as we shall see, would later take up the point that slave labour was more expensive than free wage labour.

The first, and very important, part of the season was planting, when the gang, or team, was composed of five categories of hands, working together: ploughmen, harrowers, drillers, droppers and rakers:

> the various hands were formed into gangs or teams in which the interdependence of labor was a crucial element. During the planting period the interdependence arose largely from within each gang. A planting gang consisted of five types of hands who followed one another in a fixed procession. Leading off the procession were plowmen who ridged up the unbroken earth; then came harrowers who broke up the clods; then drillers who created the holes to receive the seeds, each hole a prescribed distance apart from the next one; then droppers who planted the seeds in the holes; and finally rakers who covered up the holes. [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 203]

The description shades off into positive judgement, with a factory analogy clearly stated and equivalence with an assembly line suggested (a veritable capitalist factory, indeed). Thus – and we here need to maintain caution[32] –

The intensity and pace of these gangs was maintained in three ways:

> *First, by choosing as the plowmen and harrowers who led off the planting operation the strongest and ablest hands. Second, by the interdependence of each type of hand on the other. (For as on an assembly line, this interdependence generated a pressure on all those who worked in the gang to keep up with the pace of the leaders.) Third, by assigning drivers or foremen who exhorted the leaders, threatened the laggards, and did whatever was necessary to ensure both the pace and the quality of each gang's labor.* [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 203–4].

This is an idealized account, indeed, in which the 'productive' nature of 'tension' is given prominence, and its possibly negative implications ignored. The somewhat ominous 'threatening the laggards' and 'doing whatever was necessary' to secure the desired outcome are nowhere expanded upon. Might they not have engendered deep resentment and a culture of minimising compliance? That seems not to have occurred to Fogel and Engerman.[33] Or if it did, they do not mention it.

The account becomes even more idealized, as we proceed beyond the planting operation, to the growing/cultivation season. It is instructive to follow the ever more positive view of the gang system. We will question it presently. Thus, Fogel and Engerman continue:

> During the period of cultivation, this interdependence and the productive tension which it created, stemmed to a considerable extent from the interaction between gangs. Field hands were divided into two groups: the hoe gang and the plow gang. The hoe hands chopped out the weeds which surrounded the cotton plants as well as excessive sprouts of cotton plants. The plow gangs followed behind, stirring the soil near the rows of cotton plants and tossing it back around the plants. Thus the hoe and plow gangs each put the other under an assembly-line type of pressure. The hoeing had to be completed in time to permit the plow hands to carry out their tasks. At the same time the progress of the hoeing, which entailed lighter labor than plowing, set a pace for the plow gang. The drivers or overseers moved back and forth between the two gangs, exhorting and prodding each to keep up with the pace of the other, as well as inspecting the quality of the work. [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 203–4]

Again, the ominous activities of overseers and drivers are seen to have no negative connotations. This idealized version is then erected into an analytical generalisation about the labour process made possible by slavery. There is no mention of the productive forces, or how the instruments of production are utilised. Might not such a system have given rise to careless, even deliberately careless, use of the instruments of production? Abstracting from that, the labour process in which slavery is embedded possesses remarkable strengths, it is urged:

> This feature of plantation life – the organization of slaves into highly disciplined, interdependent teams capable of maintaining a steady and intense rhythm of work – appears to be the crux of the superior efficiency of large-scale operations on plantations, at least as far as fieldwork was concerned. It is certainly the factor which slaveowners themselves frequently singled out as the key to the superiority of the plantation system of organization. [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 203–4]

It is portrayed as a quite remarkably effective system. There is a completely opposite view, which we will consider presently.

The third crucial operation in cotton cultivation, harvesting, did not lend itself so readily to assembly-line operation and economies of scale. But there, too, effective operation was secured: via judicious use of incentives and competition between teams, or, where necessary, 'abuse', whether verbal or physical:

> Harvest operations in cotton do not appear to have offered the opportunities for division of labor and specialization that existed during the plantation and cultivation seasons (although such opportunities do appear to have existed in sugar harvesting). In the absence of an interdependence that could be exploited to promote an intense rhythm of work, planters attempted to achieve the same objective by dividing harvest hands into competing groups. There were

> daily as well as weekly races, with prizes (bonuses) offered to the winning team and to the leading individual picker. There were daily weigh-ins of the cotton picked, and those who did not respond to the positive incentive had to face the abuse, verbal or physical, of the driver, if they fell too far below the expected pace. [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 206]

A splendid system, indeed, able to deploy both incentive and abuse to secure the desired end. Incentives and competition, it seems, know no boundaries. Adam Smith would have been surprised,[34] and he might have enquired as to the balance between incentives and abuse. Were carrot and stick used in equal measure? Did one preponderate significantly over the other? Does the tactic of 'you will be rewarded if you reach the desired goal, you will be whipped if you don't' in effect secure a desirable outcome? In the absence of real evidence, it is not a necessarily convincing account.

It was in the low country, of South Carolina and Georgia, where the incidence of slavery was highest and where absentee planters were most common, that the task system arose and became widespread. It was an attempt to dispense with the detailed and extensive supervision of the gang labour system. In the 'task' system,

> each slave was assigned a job in the morning and was free to stop work on its completion. Unable or unwilling to engage in minute supervision of agricultural operations, absentee planters often allowed their low-country slaves an unusual degree of self-management, with estates left in the hands of trusted black 'drivers' who were in effect overseers, and who operated under the loose control of white 'stewards', each of whom supervised several estates. [Kolchin, 1995: 31]

The system may be portrayed as having certain desirable properties. Again, we can rely upon Fogel and Engerman:

> The so-called 'task method' was still another means of promoting the intensity of labor during the harvest system. Under this method, slaves were assigned given plots of land which were to be picked each day. Intensity of labor was promoted by permitting the slave to use his time for his own purposes when the task was completed. One way of ensuring that the work was done well under this system was to reassign the same plot to the same slave in each of the successive rounds of picking. Daily weighing of cotton also served as a check on performance. [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 206]

Cunning, indeed, are the ways of supervisors. It may be argued that within such a system 'slaves developed their own "internal economy" based on flexible work schedules and the ability to accumulate and dispose of their "own" property on their "own" time' [Kolchin, 1995: 31]. Kolchin, indeed, cites the historian of slavery who initiated work on this aspect of slavery, Philip D. Morgan: 'on a much reduced scale, there were lowcountry slaves who resembled the protopeasants found among Caribbean slaves' ([Morgan, 1982: 597] cited in [Kolchin, 1995: 31–2]). It is the case that, in terms congenial to the Fogel and Engerman view, 'its proponents argued that the task system provided slaves with powerful incentives to hard work' [Kolchin, 1995: 32]. We will consider the whole Fogel and Engerman position, including the relevance of the task system for the South as a whole, in the sub-sections that follow.

(v) Questioning the Fogel and Engerman View: Class Struggle, Some Counter-Evidence, and the Beginnings of Another View

What Fogel and Engerman do not contemplate – and what their neoclassical preconceptions simply exclude – is the possibility of struggle, class struggle, conducted by slaves in the arena of the labour process. Of course, they would exclude such struggle if they were considering a purely capitalist situation. For them, indeed, there is no distinction between slavery and capitalism. Slaveowners are simply somewhat unusual capitalists. The total removal of any degree of slave resilience or autonomy, whether we call it 'a semi-autonomous way of life' or 'partial autonomy' [Kolchin, 1995: 133, 166], and the positing of the possibility of the powerful operation of both incentives and 'abuse', with slaves seen as responding to one or the other, but incapable of any other response, places slaves at one further remove from the possibility of class struggle than free wage labour. Yet the positing of a 'partial autonomy', however limited, immediately questions the Fogel and Engerman representation.

Before considering the evidence that suggests activity that may be deemed class struggle, and which sits ill with the Fogel and Engerman thesis, we may first insist that slaves did constitute a class. From what we have established already, the following emerges. They were clearly a class-in-itself, in the sense suggested above. They had a common, alien, relationship to the means of production, inasmuch as those means of production belonged in their totality to others. As Marx expressed it, in one rendering: 'the slave works under alien conditions of production and not independently' [Marx, 1962: 771]. They utilised the 'instruments of labour', but neither owned nor possessed them. Indeed, they shared the condition of being themselves 'instruments of labour'. They had a common relationship to the master class: sharing the condition of being owned as chattels, of extreme dependence, and of being subject to the lash. They were proletarians without the freedom to sell their own labour. On the contrary, they were themselves bought and sold as commodities.

The foregoing suggests an undeniable commonality of condition that constituted slaves as a class-in-itself. At the same time, a large and growing historical scholarship suggests a variety of experience, a diversity of occupation, and a 'complexity...of social relations' [Kolchin, 1995: 167], amid 'a world full of contradictions and ambiguities' [Kolchin, 1995: 166].[35] That cannot be reduced

to a flat uniformity. Yet it is important to note what was general and common. This has been summed up as follows:

> In short, although there was an extraordinary variety of slave experience, the slave population was relatively undifferentiated in terms of economic and social status. Slaves performed numerous occupations under widely varying conditions, but except on atypically large estates those conditions did not encourage the emergence of sharp social divisions among them. The dependent status they shared, together with the limited opportunity for specialization of labor and the substantial degree of occupational mobility, meant that antebellum Southern slaves formed a population that paradoxically was marked by great uniformity even as it exhibited great diversity. Despite the multiplicity of different slave experiences, much more united the slaves than divided them. [Kolchin, 1995: 111, emphases mine]

Slaves were united by common class bonds. Perhaps most of all, to an extent not even hinted at by Fogel and Engerman, and other writers in that tradition, they were united by 'a blind hatred of slavery – and of those responsible for it' [Kolchin, 1995: 75];[36] a hatred of dependence, regimentation, subservience and lack of autonomy; a hatred of brutality and cruelty. It was a hatred that spilled over into the postbellum era:

> In the countryside, where the vast majority of freedpeople remained, blacks struggled to square 'free labor' with their own idea of freedom. Faced with a variety of possible agricultural relationships, they repeatedly opted for those that afforded the greatest autonomy and resisted those that smacked of slave-like subservience. Seeking most of all to acquire land of their own, they generally favored rental and sharecropping arrangements over dependent wage labor, and vigorously resisted remnants of the old order such as gang labor under the supervision of overseers. [Kolchin, 1995: 217]

Fogel and Engerman, with their stress on 'good masters', paternalism and the operation of incentives, miss this altogether. It is the central weakness of their whole position.

The extent to which class-in-itself was translated into class-for-itself was, however, another matter. The obstacles were formidable: the impossibility of overt organisation; the close monitoring of their daily lives by planters, in a regime, as we have seen, of quite remarkable interference; equally close scrutiny of their daily work, by masters and overseers; terrible penalties for lack of compliance with the norms set by planters, or for 'disobedience (whipping, disfigurement, cruelty); an oppressive ideology of white superiority and black subjection. Yet, something approaching class-for-itself action may be discerned – albeit inchoate, embryonic and covert.

We may first comment on the relative weight of incentives and 'abuse'. In the gang system, and even in the task system, incentives surely played far less of a

role than we are asked to accept by Fogel and Engerman. They produce remarkably little evidence in support of their position. The gang system , let us recall, ultimately, operated via the 'compulsion of the lash' [Kolchin, 1995: 106]. Whatever 'incentives' masters might seek to introduce could never transcend that. Far more likely than a system driven by incentives, was one in which slaves would muster whatever capacity they had to resist a regime which sought to drive them to the limit and extract the maximum amount of surplus.

Clearly, there was class struggle on a day-to-day basis. The outcome of the operation of the gang system was determined by a constant, if barely visible, struggle between slave and master/supervisor. This is not organised, collective action, motivated by clear class consciousness. But neither is it simply a manifestation of 'everyday forms of resistance' in the James Scott sense [Scott, 1985].[37] What white contemporaries chose to call 'innate laziness' was, in fact, a struggle at the point of production which had a tangible effect in moderating the pace of work, subverting the attempt to introduce assembly-type routines of the kind identified by Fogel and Engerman, and securing a compromise with the master class that made the operation of the gang system far less smooth than the text-book paradigm presented by Fogel and Engerman. Kolchin captures this effectively. He suggests the operation of forces of which there is no hint in Fogel and Engerman:

> Even under gang labor, slaves, like many other pre-industrial workers, typically resisted the efforts of their masters and overseers to impose a factory-like work routine, forcing a more relaxed pace through behavior that contemporary whites typically blamed on innate laziness and that more recent scholars have attributed either to a deliberate effort to undermine authority or to a pre-industrial, 'peasant' sense of work and time. As Eugene D. Genovese has argued, slaves expected to work at breakneck speed on particular occasions – for example, at corn shuckings and hog killings – but they resisted the attempt to turn them into metaphorical clock punchers and forced their masters to accept a compromise schedule that included elements of industrial discipline (being summoned to work by the sound of a horn, for example) but that also included a lackadaisical work pace and time off for themselves. Unlike house servants, who had to be at the constant beck and call of their masters, field workers almost always had Sundays to themselves, whether to play, to pray, to rest, or to work on their garden plots and attend to other chores. Although masters occasionally forced hands to work on Sundays, especially at harvest time, it was universally understood that this violation of the slaves' customary right and throughout the antebellum South state law – was justified only by exceptional circumstances. Indeed, many masters required of their slaves only half a day's work on Saturday, while others paid their hands for Sunday field work. [Kolchin, 1995: 106–7]

Such an outcome did not derive from 'paternalism' or from the generosity of masters. Nor can it be seen as the result of action by the state. It surely derived

from a form of class struggle: a struggle over how far exploitation might be pushed by masters, and to what degree it might be moderated by resistance.

Let us not romanticise the condition of the slave, nor exaggerate how much resistance might secure. They were driven hard, to pursue arduous fieldwork from 'sunup to sundown' [Kolchin, 1995: 106]. We recall the ever-present threat of the lash and the extreme dependence of slave upon master. Kolchin cites the autobiography of a former slave, Charles Ball, who recalls a Georgia master – the best master that he had, and one whom he 'really loved' – who 'once gave him a brutal whipping – for no other reason except that he had not received one since childhood' [Kolchin, 1995: 167].[38] Yet, and this is the essential point that we wish to convey, 'masters never achieved the total domination they sought over their slaves' [Kolchin, 1995: 133]. That was the result, essentially, of a form of class struggle.

We may, next, discount the significance of the task system, firstly in terms of its very limited spread in the South. We may, further, suggest that, indeed, it contained the seeds of slavery's destruction: and that, had it developed and become anything other than marginal, it would have spelt the end of American slavery. It is the case that most slaveowners knew this, and opposed its extension. This is captured cogently by Kolchin. He observes: 'The task system, which emerged over the course of the eighteenth century and reached its full fruition in the antebellum period, was significant both for the autonomy that it provided low-country slaves and for its atypicality' [Kolchin, 1995: 31]. He further notes:

> But although its proponents argued that the task system provided slaves with powerful incentives to hard work, most Southern slave owners viewed the self-management and economic independence that it fostered among slaves as subversive of the discipline, order and dependence essential to slave labor. For this reason, although planters elsewhere in the South occasionally experimented with the task system, and many masters introduced limited task features while maintaining gang labor – for example, assigning daily tasks to gangs – the task system as a whole never became widespread outside the South Carolina and Georgia low country. [Kolchin, 1995: 32]

The task system need not occupy much of our attention.

We may now proceed to Marx's view of slavery. In so doing we carry forward the argument of this sub-section.

(vi) Marx's View of Slavery – with Some Reference to Olmsted and Cairnes

I shall consider the so-called 'traditional interpretation of slavery' [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 190] – i.e. that of Olmsted, Cairnes and Marx – through the lens of Marx, since his are the analytical categories we are using. Where appropriate I shall refer, also, to Olmsted and Cairnes, upon whose writings Marx drew. I need hardly say that the writing of both Olmsted and Cairnes deserves careful attention in its own right. Unfortunately, considerations of space forbid that here.

Fogel and Engerman engage with Olmsted and Cairnes.[39] They do not engage with Marx. Let us, then, consider Marx's view. It is powerfully subversive of the Fogel and Engerman position.

In a nutshell, for Marx, slave labour by comparison with free wage labour, i.e. capitalism[40] – and this was the essential touchstone – was wasteful, careless and destructive in its use of the means of production, so that, in effect, 'production based on slavery [was] more expensive' [Marx, 1976: 303]. That, we recall, was Adam Smith's view, too. Slavery was compatible only with fairly crude forms of the instruments of production, so that a brake was placed on improved, more subtle forms. That, in its turn, placed a limit upon accumulation in agriculture.

This, in part, is why Marx referred, in his *Theories of Surplus Value*, to 'the slave-holding states in the United States of North America [as one of the] backward nations' of the world, along with, for example, Poland [Marx, 1971: 243]. So long as slavery dominated the South, this would continue to be so. We will examine this, and its rationale, in detail.

We might draw the further conclusion that in a 'backward nation' dominated by slavery industrialisation would be severely constrained. Marx, in his brief treatment of slavery, did not consider this in full, although he did provide the beginnings of an argument. We may consider it to be an extension of his analysis. We will examine this in a later sub-section. It is important, and has drawn the attention of a number of Marxist writers (as well as others).

We may start by noting Marx's observation that the slave was the merest object of accumulation. Thus, Marx commented: 'The slave-owner buys his worker in the same way as he buys his horse. If he loses his slave he loses *a piece of capital*, which he must replace with fresh expenditure on the slave-market' [Marx, 1976: 377, emphasis mine]. The slave worked, as Marx had it, 'with conditions of production that do not belong to him, and [he] does not work independently' [Marx, 1981: 927].[41] Marx stressed that extreme dependence of slaves which we have noted already. It was, for Marx, a central element in the slave's class position. It was an important part of his argument.

Certain implications ensued. Thus, following on from the previous observation: 'Relations of personal dependence are therefore necessary, in other words personal unfreedom, to whatever degree, and being chained to the land as its accessory – bondage in the true sense' [Marx, 1981: 927]. In such 'conditions of production', the slave is no more than a mere instrument of production, to be categorised along with working animals and implements (and land): 'according to the striking expression employed in antiquity, the worker is distinguishable only as *instrumentum vocale* [the 'speaking implement'] from an animal, which is *instrumentum semivocale* [the 'semi-mute' implement'], and from a lifeless implement, which is *instrumentum mutum* [for example, the plough the 'mute implement']' [Marx, 1976: 303].[42] In such a system, it is implied, in direct con-

tradistinction to Fogel and Engerman, there is an extreme lack of incentives for direct labourers, and a consequent need for extensive supervision (in another terminology, the supervision costs of a slave system are exceptionally high).

Marx comments on supervision, with that profound historical sense so strikingly absent in Fogel and Engerman. For them, supervision has no historical specificity. For Marx, it clearly has. Supervision exists, and is necessary, in both slavery and capitalism. In slavery, however, it takes on particular significance:

> this work of supervision necessarily arises in all modes of production that are based on opposition between the worker as direct producer and the proprietor of the means of production. The greater this opposition, the greater the role that this work of supervision plays. *It reaches its high point in the slave system.* [Marx, 1981: 507–8, emphasis mine]

The larger the plantation, the higher the supervision costs. He cites Cairnes:

> If the nature of the work requires that the workmen [i.e. the slaves] should be 'dispersed over an extended area, the number of overseers, and, therefore, the cost of the labour which requires this supervision, will be proportionately increased' [Cairnes, 1862: 44, cited in Marx, 1981: 508, note 74].

Marx further cites Cairnes, a propos of supervision costs:

> Professor Cairnes, after stating that 'the superintendence of labour' is a leading feature of production by slaves in the southern states of the U.S.A., continues: 'The peasant proprietor' (of the North) 'appropriating the whole produce of the soil, needs no other stimulus to exertion. Superintendence is here completely dispensed with.' [Marx, 1976: 450, citing Cairnes, 1862: 48–9]

We will consider the North in chapter 8. We will see that 'the peasant proprietor' was, at least by 1880 (when the first general figures on tenancy became available), not quite so common in the North as is suggested here; and that supervision did not disappear, necessarily, with the advent of sharecropping tenancy (the most common form of tenancy in both North and South). Sharecropping in the South we discuss in the next chapter. The central point of disproportionately high supervision costs in slavery does, nevertheless, remain valid.

One might interject that if, however, there are genuine technical economies of scale to be obtained from the gang labour system (as argued by Fogel and Engerman) the proportionate increase in supervision costs might be compensated for. But, as we shall see, the outcome of Marx's analysis is that there are forces preventing the reaping of such economies of scale where slave labour is used.

That is to view the situation statically, i.e. at a particular historical moment (the moment, if you like, at which Olmsted was observing slavery in the South). Such a view is crucial in any assessment of mode of production's present functioning. If, however, one considers it in dynamic terms, i.e. with respect to its possible future functioning – in terms of technological possibilities – there is a further issue, of the kind to which Marx was sensitive. We must ask whether there is inherent in the system of slavery a brake upon an expansion and a qualitative change in the productive forces? Adam Smith suggested that there was (see above). Then, even if, in the short run (the given situation), one could identify technical scale economies sufficient to compensate for supervision costs, we might have a crushing indictment of slavery. Marx's treatment suggests precisely that.

We have, then, two distinct questions. Firstly, can one identify scale economies, of the kind suggested by Fogel and Engerman, as a result of the specialisation and division of labour made possible by the gang system? Secondly, does slavery exercise a brake upon the productive forces in agriculture? These are difficult questions. Hard evidence is in short supply. We may, however, discern a clear argument in Marx.

We have noted that the slave is viewed as part of the means of production, as on a par with beast and implement. Marx, drawing on Olmsted, suggests that the slave, concerned to express his autonomy (or some semblance of autonomy) and humanity, will resist in whatever ways are open to him, i.e. will pursue a form of class struggle. Marx does not use that phrase, but it is appropriate. In so acting, the slave, if the depiction is accurate, both reduces the possibility of reaping technical economies of scale (or even subverts that possibility altogether) and places a severe check upon technical change (i.e. improved and more productive instruments of production). Let us examine the argument given by Marx.

Of the slave, Marx, drawing on Cairnes, suggests the following, and it is a statement that has no room for the operation of incentives:

> But he himself takes care to let both beast and implement feel that he is none of them, but rather a human being. He gives himself the satisfaction of knowing that he is different by treating the one with brutality and damaging the other *con amore.*

This has critical implications. Certain results flow inexorably:

> Hence the universal principle, universally applied in this mode of production, of employing only the rudest and heaviest implements, which are difficult to damage owing to their very clumsiness. In the slave states bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, down to the date of the Civil War, the only ploughs to be found were those constructed on the old Chinese model, which turned up the earth like a pig or a mole, instead of making furrows. [Marx, 1976: 304][43]

Marx gives the action of the slave a subjectivist slant. But it can equally well be seen as an element of class struggle. It has an outcome perfectly consistent with the evidence presented in the previous section.

If what he says about the nature of the plough used, right up to the Civil War, in the 'seaboard slave states' (the title of Olmsted [1856], upon which Cairnes bases himself), is true then we might draw two further conclusions. The first is that the idyllic account of gang labour given by Fogel and Engerman must be severely qualified if such a backward instrument of production was perforce used because of the character of slave labour. Economies of scale, then, must have been significantly less than what was technically possible; and less than what was secured in another mode of production. Secondly, the possibility of future technical change must, also, have been severely constrained. The system was locked into that constraint. It was its principal contradiction: a classic illustration of the fettering of the forces of production by the relations of production. We saw this most clearly in late Prussian feudalism. Here it was in slavery.

Marx, indeed, through Olmsted, makes a direct comparison between slavery and capitalism, between practice in the slave plantations of the South and capitalist farms in the North (we have noted already the comparison, drawn from Cairnes, with farms based on 'peasant proprietorship'): between a system based on the most unfree of unfree labour and one based on free wage labour. It is curious, indeed, that Fogel and Engerman seem blind to the comparison, seem unaware that there is a fundamental distinction between slave labour and free wage labour. Marx [Marx, 1976: 304] cites the following instructive passage from Olmsted, on the 'seaboard slave states':

> I am here shown tools that no man in his senses, with us [i.e. in the North], would allow a labourer, for whom he was paying wages, to be encumbered with; and the excessive weight and clumsiness of which, I would judge, would make work ten per cent greater than with those ordinarily used with us. And I am assured that, with the careless and clumsy treatment they always must get from the slaves, anything lighter or less rude could not be furnished them with good economy, and that such tools as we constantly give our labourers and find our profit in giving them, would not last a day in a Virginia cornfield – much lighter and more free from stones though it be than ours. So, too, when I ask why mules are so universally substituted for horses on the farm, the first reason given, and confessedly the most conclusive one, is that horses are soon foundered or crippled by them, while mules will bear cudgelling, or lose a meal or two now and then, and not be materially injured and they do not take cold or get sick, if neglected or overworked. But I do not need to go further than to the window of the room in which I am writing, to see at almost any time, treatment of cattle that would ensure the immediate discharge of the driver by almost any farmer owning them in the North. [Olmsted, 1856: 46–7]

The essential point is reiterated with force.

We must assume that the planters of the seaboard states were aware of the technical possibilities open to them and had taken an active decision to choose

inferior instruments of production. We must assume that, in principle, horses, if treated properly, are preferable to mules. We must conclude that the decisions in question were forced by the nature of slave labour and the struggle it was able to wage, invisibly but effectively. It would seem that neither the whip nor incentives could secure a superior outcome.

Olmsted was not a neo-classical economist of the 1970s, with a universal competitive vision, informed by actively functioning incentives, and determined to find specialisation and division of labour, that would inexorably give substantial scale economies. He was a highly intelligent practical farmer, with an intimate knowledge of the techniques of the farming of his day, reporting accurately what he observed, and able to make acute comparisons between two systems with which he was familiar. He must be taken very seriously. I am inclined to take him more seriously than Fogel and Engerman do.

Marx drew powerful conclusions about the contrast between slave labour and free wage labour.[44] He stressed the 'versatility' of free wage labour, and contrasted this with slave labour's clear lack of versatility. Again, he drew on Cairnes. He observed:

> nowhere are people so indifferent to the type of work they do as in the United States, nowhere are people so aware that their labour always produces the same product, money, and nowhere do they pass through the most divergent kinds of work with the same nonchalance. This 'versatility' appears to be a quite distinctive mark of the free worker, in contrast to the working slave, whose labour-power is stable and capable of being employed in a manner determined by local custom. [Marx, 1976: 1014, note 23]

He quotes Cairnes, as follows: 'Slave labour is eminently defective in point of versatility...if tobacco is cultivated, tobacco becomes the sole staple, and tobacco is produced whatever the state of the market, and whatever be the condition of the soil' [Cairnes, 1862: 46–7].[45] We have noted that slaves did pursue a variety of occupations. It was not the slave, of course, but the master, who decided on which would be appropriate. In principle, a slave could be shifted between activities. What Cairnes and Marx are, in fact, drawing attention to, in this respect, is a feature of the planter class: and its perception of slave labour's lack of versatility. Slave labour has no agency in this respect. Slave labour does not choose the branch of production in which it is deployed. It is slavery's lack of versatility that is at issue: a systemic fault. This may well derive, however, from the nature of slave labour. The planter's perception may well, in this respect, be correct. Marx argues – not in so many words, but very clearly, by implication – that it was. To the extent that Cairnes's observation is valid, we see a grave shortcoming of the whole mode of production.

We may now consider Marx's more detailed argument with respect to the profound differences between free wage labour and slave labour which he encapsulates in the proposition that the former possesses and the latter does not possess

versatility. The argument is important. It captures the senses in which slave labour is defective, and in which its use places a powerful limit upon agriculture's productive potential – a limit that is not present either in petty commodity production (based, of course, on family labour) or in capitalist agriculture (based on the use of free wage labour). We may, also, extend it to implications with respect to industrialisation. It is not Marx's concern to do that, in any extended way, in the context of the *Resultate* (where the argument is developed). But that, in a very clear sense, is the central thrust of the *Resultate*, where the argument does revolve around the manner in which capitalist manufacturing industry 'starts with free production on the basis of the guild and the handicraft system wherever this is not thwarted by the ossification of a particular branch of trade' [Marx, 1976: 1034] and develops from there, via first formal subsumption of labour under capital, deploying and exhausting all the forms of absolute surplus-value, and then real subsumption of labour, 'in all the forms evolved by relative...surplus-value' [Marx, 1976: 1035]. Slavery prevents that from happening. Marx does initiate that discussion with great clarity. The implications are important. We will consider them carefully.

At the root of Marx's treatment of slavery lies an identification, in the respective cases of slavery and free wage labour, of motivation and incentive to activity, based on need, survival and reproduction. Fundamental material differences in this respect produce profoundly different forms, levels and quality of productive activity by the two kinds of labour. Marx compares free wage labour and slave labour continuously, feature by feature. Let us take them separately. Let us take slave labour first and then contrast it with free wage labour.

The following has emerged from our treatment so far (both in this and in previous sub-sections). The slave is the property of the slave-owner, who, in principle, has complete control over his labour. The slave receives no wage, but all his needs (food, clothing, housing, health) – all that is necessary for his reproduction and his healthy functioning as labour power – is supplied by the master. There is, in this, a continuous relationship between slave and master – until and unless the master decides to sell the slave. It is in the interests of the master to see that his asset is able to function adequately. This may well involve 'paternalism', the more strongly in a context of resident masters,[46] but the ultimate sanction is the lash, and control is exercised through fear. The slave is part of the conditions of production, but does have at least a partial autonomy that allows pursuit of class struggle.

Marx stresses the centrality of fear and compulsion, alongside the need for the slave-owner to ensure the subsistence and reproduction of the slave (his asset) in working order. He starts by identifying the basis upon which labouring activity by the slave rests. That basis lies in the nature of the relationship between master and slave. Thus:

> the slave works only under the spur of external fear, but not for *his existence* which is *guaranteed* even though it does not belong to him...The *continuity in the relations* of slave and slave-owner is based on the fact that the slave is kept in his situation by *direct compulsion*. [Marx, 1976: 1031, emphases in original]

Where fear and compulsion are the driving force, the worker will clearly perform his assigned tasks to avoid punishment. But he will, on balance, do no more than that.

There is no, or very limited, connection between labouring activity and reward. Marx continues: 'In the eyes of the slave a *minimal wage* appears to be a constant quantity, independent of his work ' [Marx, 1976: 1031, emphasis in original]. Moreover, the particular attributes of the slave may be only tenuously related, if they are related at all, to reward. Thus, Marx observes: 'In the case of the slave, great physical strength or a special talent may enhance his value to a *purchaser*, but this is of no concern to him ' [Marx, 1976: 1032, emphasis in original]. It is of no, or of minimal, concern to him because he does not benefit from it, or benefits only marginally. The 'continuity in relations' between slave and master, already commented on, is critical: 'The slave is the property of a particular *master*' [Marx, 1976: 1032, emphasis in original]. That master may sell him, but such a fixed relationship introduces a powerful element of inflexibility, which again excludes the operation of incentives, since the direct producer is not a 'free agent' (Marx's phrase) – 'the slave...needs a master' [Marx, 1976: 1033] – and cannot move in order to improve his position.

Moreover, the nature of the slave's access to the means of subsistence is important. That access is not through exchange value, i.e. wages: 'The slave receives the means of subsistence he requires in the form of *naturalia* which are fixed both in kind and quantity – i.e. he receives *use-values*' [Marx, 1976: 1033, emphases in original]. That, again, is profoundly limiting. There is no choice. The use-values provided are specific (and probably produced on the plantation) – 'a particular use-value hedged round with traditional and local restrictions' [Marx, 1976: 1033]. They carry no incentive to increased effort.

We may pause to insert the reminder that not only is there a severe absence of incentives, but, within the constraint of avoiding punishment, the slave may act to perform his assigned tasks with a minimum of effectiveness. He will seek to minimise the intensity of work, seek to place a limit on the number of hours, and use the instruments of production and the animals roughly.

Not only that, however, but, very important, slavery does not contain any transformative impulses, either in agriculture itself or more broadly, in the social formation as a whole. On the contrary, it stifles any such possibilities. Out of this emerges, as we have already noted, a system starkly lacking in versatility. Its rigidity is reflected, in agriculture itself, in 'the utterly monotonous and traditional nature of *slave labour*, which does not vary with changes in production, but which requires, on the contrary, that production be adapted to whatever mode of work has once been introduced and carried on from one generation to the next' [Marx, 1976: 1034, emphasis in original]. Moreover, if

we add the possibility, or the likelihood, of class struggle of the kind we have noted, based on partial autonomy, the limits imposed by slave labour are even tighter. That is bad enough. But, further, the absence of any 'diversification of use values' or the 'development of new forms of work' means that, where slavery dominates a social formation, as in the American South, there can be no 'real advance in the nature of exchange value – and in consequence the progressive division of labour in *society as a whole*' [Marx, 1976: 1034, emphasis in original]. That is a crippling disability. It relates, we may say (Marx does not do so precisely), to a severely constricted home market. It means, of course, that the development of manufacturing industry – industrialisation – must be severely inhibited.

We will carry this particular implication further below, where we will argue that slavery constricts the home market, both with respect to consumer goods and capital goods; severely limits the creation of an urban proletariat (the necessary urban, free wage labour working class); and fails to supply the necessary investible surplus for manufacturing industry. For the moment, however, we may turn to Marx's treatment of free wage labour, in the context of the discussion of slavery. This serves, by comparison, to identify even more clearly the shortcomings of slave labour.

By contrast with the slave, whose existence is guaranteed, but who is driven by fear and kept in place by compulsion 'the free worker...is impelled by his *wants*...The free worker...must maintain his *own* position, since his existence and that of his family depends on his ability continuously to renew the sale of his labour power to the capitalist' [Marx, 1976: 1031, emphasis mine]. That being so, certain aspects of the behaviour and the work of the free worker follow:

> The consciousness (or better: the *idea*) of free self-determination, of liberty, makes a much better worker of the one than the other, as does the related sense of *responsibility* [given the need to meet his and his family's wants – TJB]; since he, like any seller of wares, is responsible for the goods he delivers [i.e. his labour-power – TJB] and for the quality [of labour – TJB] which he must provide, he must strive to ensure that he is not driven from the field by other sellers of the same type as himself. [Marx, 1976: 1031, emphasis in original]

By contrast with the slave, driven by fear but with a guaranteed existence, 'this labour becomes more productive, because more intensive' [Marx, 1976: 1031]. Slave labour, then, from its very condition, is less intensive, and therefore less productive, than free labour.

More than that, however, there is a powerful incentive built into the relationship between capital and free wage labour: an incentive based on some correspondence between effort, skill and strength, on the one hand, and reward on the other. Without romanticising this, without forgetting poor working conditions,

long hours and the other barbarities of early capitalism (not to mention late capitalism), we may say the following:

> For the free worker [unlike the slave – TJB]...the *value of his labour-power* and the average wage *corresponding to it* does not appear to him as something predestined, as something independent of his own labour and determined by the mere needs of his physical existence. The *average* for the class as a whole remains more or less *constant*, like the value of all commodities; but this is not how it immediately appears to the *individual* worker whose wages may stand above or below this minimum. The *price of labour* sometimes sinks below and sometimes rises above the *value of labour-power*. Furthermore, [unlike slavery – TJB] there is scope for variation (within narrow limits) to allow for the worker's *individuality*, so that partly as between *different* trades, partly in the *same* one, we find that wages vary depending on the diligence, skill or strength of the worker, and to some extent on his actual personal achievement. Thus the size of his wage packet appears to vary in keeping with the results of his own work and its individual quality. This is particularly evident in the case of *piece rates*... [Marx, 1976: 1031–2, emphases in original].

None of this is so for the slave. The essential difference is that the free worker owns and disposes of his labour power.

Because the free worker thus owns and sells his labour power, because a relationship between skill/effort and reward exists, because there is 'scope for individual variation' so these conditions 'provide the worker with an incentive to develop his own labour-power [Marx, 1976: 1032]. Even with the insertion of the necessary caution, and even with a deromanticised view, the contrast between slave and free labour emerges: 'Certain though it be that the mass of work must be performed by more or less unskilled labour, so that the vast majority of wages are determined by the *value of simple labour-power*, it nevertheless remains open to individuals to raise themselves to higher spheres by exhibiting a particular talent or energy. In the same way there is an abstract possibility that this or that worker might conceivably become a capitalist and the exploiter of the labour of others' [Marx, 1976: 1032, emphases in original]. No such possibilities exist for slaves.

Because of the differences enunciated between slave and free labour, because the free labourer has that capacity denied the slave, 'to sell himself to whomever he wishes...and [to]...change his master' [Marx, 1976: 1032] certain results follow inexorably: 'The effect of all these differences is to make the free workers' work more intensive, more continuous, more flexible and skilled than that of the slave' [Marx, 1976: 1032]. There follows another result, because the free worker is paid a wage, i.e, 'money, exchange value', rather than receiving, like the slave, use-values: 'It is the worker himself who converts the money into whatever use-values he desires; it is he who buys commodities as he wishes and

as the *owner of money*, as the buyer of goods, he stands in precisely the same relationship to the seller of goods as any other buyer' [Marx, 1976: 1033, emphasis in original]. Again, one must not exaggerate or romanticise: 'Of course, the conditions of his existence – and the limited amount of money he can earn – compel him to make his purchases from a fairly limited selection of goods' [Marx, 1976: 1033]. Marx inserts the necessary qualifications, and it is important that we bear them in mind.

With all qualifications made, however, three crucial results follow, which permit us to make an analytical judgement on slavery. The first is the responsibility that attaches to the free worker's condition: 'he acts as a free agent; he must pay his own way; he is responsible to himself for the way he spends his wages. *He learns to control himself, in contrast to the slave*, who needs a master.' [Marx, 1976: 1034, emphasis in original]. That feeds into the second: the versatility, to which we have referred above. For the various reasons identified, 'the free worker is *in principle* ready and willing to accept every possible variation in his labour-power and activity which promises higher rewards' [Marx, 1976: 1034]. It is a versatility that 'stands in stark contrast' to the lack of versatility inherent in slavery. Thirdly, it allows, again in contrast to slavery, 'the constant development of *new forms of work*...continual change – which corresponds to the diversification of use-values and hence represents a real advance in exchange value – and in consequence the progressive division of labour in *society as a whole*.' [Marx, 1976: 1034, emphasis in original]. In brief, it heralds the possibility of capitalist industrialisation; a possibility stifled by slavery.

As we have stressed, one must avoid the danger of romanticising the free wage-labourer's position. We are here dealing with ideal types, and abstracting from the profound limitations of the wage worker's condition. Marx, of course, throughout his writing, examines this consistently, cogently, and incisively. He does that in the context of the comparison between slave and free wage-labour, as we have seen. In the *Resultate*, he reminds us: '...the capitalist takes good care that the labour adheres to the normal standards of quality and intensity, and he extends its duration as far as possible in order to increase the surplus-value that it yields' [Marx, 1976: 1020]. We need not pursue that. It is the case, nevertheless, that free wage labour, in the ideal situation, 'when the former slave-owner engages the former slaves as paid workers' [Marx, 1976: 1020], and when 'the slave ceases to be an instrument of production at the disposal of his owner' [Marx, 1976: 1020] represents a fundamental advance for the direct producer, the slave. It also represents a fundamental advance for the 'former slave-owner'. Let us recall that all of the advantages of free wage-labour – its versatility, more intensive work, greater productiveness, its responsiveness to incentives – accrue largely to the capitalist.

We note a further crucial point. While, indeed, we may identify the various ways in which free wage-labour represents a fundamental advance on slavery, the advantages of such labour may not be secured in the immediate aftermath of

slavery. There are two sets of reasons. Firstly, as we have noted already, former slaves may resist strongly forms of labour that are reminiscent of slavery. Slaves in the South did that, and quickly became resolutely opposed to becoming wage labourers – especially where that involved work in the form of gang labour. Secondly, we note that, all of the identified advantages notwithstanding, former slave-owners, and others – in what is, after all a situation of transition – may make strenuous efforts to continue with forms of unfree labour. These, indeed, may, in the given conditions, serve to maximise surplus appropriation and total surplus. That we will pursue below.

(vii) A Concluding View

The Civil War brought slavery to an end. How much later it would have lasted, in its absence, we cannot tell. It surely was approaching the limits of its productive functioning. Of other contexts, Marx observed in the *Grundrisse* 'the consciousness of the slave that he cannot be the *property of another*, his consciousness of being a person, reduced slavery to an artificial lingering existence, and made it impossible for it to continue to provide the basis of production' [Marx, 1986, vol. 28: 390–1 emphasis in original] That surely would have come in the South, although it had not yet come in 1861. Even if it had not, however, the productive limits inherent in slavery would have sounded the 'knell to its doom', to use one of Marx's phrases (loc. cit.). We cannot tell just how soon that would have been. We can, however, examine what came in slavery's stead.

7 THE CLASS OF YEOMAN FARMERS

When comparing the written instructions of Russian serf-owners and American slave-owners, Kolchin makes a telling point: 'The American instructions were designed to deal with plantations that constituted a *planters' world*, whereas the Russian ones were meant to impose some order on and extract money from a largely *peasant world*.' [Kolchin, 1987: 87, emphases mine]. A very large part of the countryside of the American South – the dominating part – was not a 'peasant world'. But, as we have seen, there did exist a class of 'yeoman farmers'. This class had two components: 'It is essential to distinguish sharply between the yeoman of the plantation belt and those of the upcountry' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 252]. What were the differences between the two?

We have had frequent occasion to stress the importance of whether or not processes of social differentiation exist within the peasantry. Such processes are essential to the development of a capitalism in the countryside that might emerge from the peasantry. Genovese argues as follows. Placing his argument in the context of a possibly '"Prussian road" to southern capitalism' (an issue we

will consider in Chapter 9), as discussed by Barrington Moore and Jonathan Wiener, he tells us:[47]

> the slaveholders of the plantation belt appear to have strengthened the isolation and autonomy of the upcountry by supporting political and economic policies that inhibited the penetration of merchant capital, both in the form of commercial capital and in the more openly destructive form of what Marx called 'money dealing capital', which often reduced to plain usury...Indeed, even in the plantation belt itself the big slaveholders, in this sense, protected the yeomen by keeping them out of the clutches of merchant capital. When the big slaveholders provided ginning and marketing services – when in fact they usurped the role of commercial middlemen – they substituted paternalistic support for the kind of bloodsucking associated with the rise of the kulaks in Russia and with rising agrarian capitalist classes everywhere. [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 253]

We may take that as a valid statement of what happened. But what were the consequences, with respect to differentiation and a possible agrarian capitalism in the countryside of the South?

In a somewhat ambiguous passage, Genovese carries the argument forward as follows. He draws attention to the critical implications for peasant differentiation (or 'yeoman' differentiation):

> It is true, as Lenin observed in his great book on the development of capitalism in postemancipation Russia, 'In modern society it is impossible to exist without selling, and anything that retards the development of commodity production merely results in a worsening of the conditions of the producers'. In particular, Lenin followed Marx in viewing money-dealing capital, and merchant capital in general, as normally feeding off and thereby reinforcing the existing mode of production. But he also followed Marx in noting that merchant capital, even as usury, prepares the way for the emergence of capitalist social relations to the extent that it concentrates money-wealth and ruins not only the small producers but also the ruling class as well...The ultimate social effect, then, of the penetration of merchant capital depends upon the specific conditions in the productive sector. And the unusually favourable conditions of American life, including life in those upcountry southern enclaves, provided considerable protection against such worsening, even if they also guaranteed an economic and social backwardness that would prove dangerous in the long run...That considerable protection blocked, or at any rate slowed, the social differentiation of the countryside into classes of rural bourgeois and landless proletarians. [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 253–4]

So far, so good. The clear implication is that had merchant capital been allowed to penetrate the interstices of the southern countryside, and reach the class of yeoman farmers, both in the plantation belt and up-country, then it might well

have undermined the existing regime/mode of production and prepared the way for agrarian capitalism. Poor and middle peasants ('yeomen') might have been ruined, and eliminated, but capitalism (and, indeed, capitalism from below), might have emerged powerfully.

The critical point made by Genovese, that somehow is obscured at this juncture, is that it was the protection afforded by the slave-holders that was critical, and not any prior 'favourable conditions of American life'. If we read it thus, then the argument follows clearly and cogently, notwithstanding a later statement to the effect that 'the penetration of the upcountry by independent merchant capital...under normal circumstances would probably have retarded social differentiation in the countryside' (pp. 254–5). It is not at all clear what he means by 'normal circumstances'. He simply seems to be contradicting his earlier, tenable statement.

We may pursue the argument, in the company of Genovese, on our preferred basis. It is a plausible and a powerful one, and one that carries the logic into the domain of accumulation and the crucial sphere of capitalist industrialisation. The protection afforded by the planters, from the intrusion of merchant capital, slowing, as it did, differentiation

> contributed to the backwardness of southern society as a whole by retarding the development of a home market not only for consumer goods, which an emerging proletariat would have offered, but for the means of production, which an expanding rural bourgeoisie would have offered. The development of those markets would have strengthened the South's industrial bourgeoisie and even redounded to the profit of those slaveholders who were penetrating the industrial sector; but it would also have added to the insecurity of the slaveholding regime as a whole. Except for a general rising of slaves, nothing was so likely to prove so dangerous as the rise of an increasingly autonomous class of industrial capitalists with access to a swelling pool of rural free labour and with a deepening interest in forcing an expansion of the home market. [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 254]

Here we have a classic argument, straight form Lenin's *Development of Capitalism in Russia.*

It is, I think, a convincing argument. It is backed up by the work of Harold Woodman [Woodman, 1968], who, 'in his excellent work on the slave economy, argues that the near autarky of the yeomen even more than the poverty of the slaves, restricted the home market and blocked capitalist development in the South' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 25]. With respect to the up-country yeoman, Genovese draws on the work of Hahn and of Wright [Hahn, 1983[48]; Wright, 1978] to argue that while most did participate in the market (mostly local markets), with more and more of them shifting to cotton by the 1850s, they did so, in the antebellum period, mostly 'as a supplement to, not a replacement for, their subsistence agriculture' [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 253]. They were, it seems, in the position of archetypal 'middle peasants', beginning to be

subject to the forces of disintegration. The seeds of differentiation were there. He tells us that 'the upcountry yeomen resisted the pull of the market' (loc. cit.). He stresses: 'The upcountry yeomen did not act out of economic ignorance or out of dull-wittedness; they acted out of a sound sense that their long-evolving community culture and preferred way of life could not withstand a massive invasion by the forces of the world market' (loc. cit.). Of course, one might argue that without the protection afforded them by planters their resistance would have had a far less secure base. They would have found it far more difficult to withstand such an invasion, and far harder to keep differentiation at bay.

We may argue, then, that the planter class, whether deliberately or not, ensured that whatever processes of differentiation lay latent within the 'yeomanry' were kept so by their action in protecting yeoman farmers from merchant capital. 'Commercial capital' and 'usurer's capital' may have been kept out, and with them a whole series of destructive and 'bloodsucking' effects, from which the 'yeomanry' was 'protected'. At the same time, however, that speeding and intensifying of differentiation that might have been released were, surely, blocked. A 'bloodsucking' class of kulaks may not have emerged. But neither did agrarian capitalism from below. The possibility of a 'rising agrarian class' from within the peasantry (capitalism from below) was effectively stifled. Not only that, but a powerful block was placed upon capitalist industrialisation in the South. These are crucial implications.

In fact, these 'yeoman farmers' were, in analytical terms, simple commodity producers. Charles Post refers to them as 'independent household producers' [Post, 1995: 421]. I prefer to identify them as 'early simple commodity producers', distinguishing them from 'advanced simple commodity producers'. These categories are discussed in detail and rigorously below. Here we note, simply, the insulation from the market of these so-called 'yeoman farmers', or early simple commodity producers. That distinguishes them fundamentally from advanced simple commodity producers. Their other, important, characteristics – primitive instruments of production, their use of predominantly family labour, the importance of kinship and communal relations and so on – will be examined, in analytical terms, later. This social form has been analysed most carefully in the context of Northern agriculture, where it was dominant.

8 SLAVERY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TECHNICAL CHANGE IN AGRICULTURE AND RISING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

At various points, we have had occasion to point to the negative implications of slavery and its inherent production relations for technical change in agriculture and rising agricultural productivity. We need not repeat those arguments here: they relate to slavery and incentives, slavery and the task system, and slavery and mechanisation. Those relations, we have suggested, constituted a binding fetter which prevented the productive forces from developing beyond a certain limit; and which restricted the growth of agricultural productivity. It has been

suggested (and evidence has been presented to this effect) that 'plantation slavery did not produce technical stagnation, but a highly episodic process of technical change' [Post, 1995: 436, n.1].[49] It is, of course, the case that, as Post points out, slavery – and, indeed, other pre-capitalist modes of production[50] – was not wholly inconsistent with technical innovation, or characterised by total technical stagnation. One might well witness 'the periodic introduction of new methods and implements' [Post, 1995: 405]. But, the essential, and unavoidable point, is that slavery, by its very nature, was not geared to such technical innovation as a regular and cumulative feature of its operation. That is a characteristic of capitalism.

Whether slave-based plantation agriculture had, in 1860, reached the limits of its productive potential is, however, doubtful. It seems likely that, the gathering contradictions notwithstanding, it could have continued to function for some time. It took a cataclysmic Civil War to bring it suddenly and dramatically to an end. After the Civil War, as we shall see, another form of unfree labour would take its place, although one less severe. That, too, would have negative implications for agricultural productivity and would exist at a relatively low level of the productive forces. Indeed, it was development of those productive forces that would finally lead to its demise.

A comparison with Prussia is instructive. In Prussia, too, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the contradiction between productive relations and productive forces had become intense, although it seems likely that it had become more extreme – more antagonistic – than was the case in the antebellum South. Prussian agriculture, with serfdom as its dominant property relation, had probably come closer to the limits of its productive potential than had the plantation South. Certainly, there seems to have been a greater awareness of it in Prussia than in the American South. In Prussia, too, it was a massive political crisis (in that instance occasioned by the defeat by Napoleon in 1806) that led to the overthrow of the old mode of production, and its replacement with new relations of production: those of capitalism. It was capitalism with the stamp of feudalism still upon it; an agrarian capitalism, indeed, within which the productive forces were able to develop far more freely than they had with serfdom, although one where a free wage labour force was sufficiently cowed to act as a constraint upon technical transformation, and especially mechanisation. The brake seems, however, to have been more powerful in the agriculture of the postbellum South, with its greater degree of unfreedom, than in post-1806 Prussia.

9 SLAVERY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR CAPITALIST INDUSTRIALISATION

(i) Industrial Retardation and Slavery's Role

We must address the central issue of the implications of slavery for capitalist industrialisation in the South. It is an issue that has attracted much attention,

both in the nineteenth century and more recently, with the strong consensus among historians, political economist, and economists, though for differing reasons, that slavery was powerfully retardative.[51] This issue we have referred to, and considered, at various points. We may draw the analytical threads together and make a full statement, from a political economy stance. In so proceeding, we include the yeoman farmer sector as an integral part of the slavery system, since, as we have argued, its precise character in the Antebellum South was determined by its relationship with and dominance by the planter class.

A class of Southern manufacturers had come into existence, but it proved incapable of generating a process of dynamic industrialisation in the Antebellum South. Why?

Here, in Genovese's phrase, was an instance of 'the subservience of town to country' [Genovese, 1965: 155]. But it was a very particular kind of countryside that exercised domination and prevented the unleashing of industrialisation. The essential point is that it was the property and production relations inherent in slavery that constituted the impenetrable barrier both to rising agricultural productivity in the South (which we have considered already) and to capitalist industrialisation. The latter is so for a complex of reasons.

(ii) The Home Market

The first set of reasons centre on the *home market*. It exists at two levels.[52]

Thus slavery yielded a constricted home market for Department II industries – industries producing 'articles of consumption'/consumer good industries. This was not, as has often been suggested, because of plantation self-sufficiency.[53] Rather, as Genovese stresses: 'The root of the insufficient demand must be sought in the poverty of the rural majority, composed of slaves, subsistence farmers, and poor whites' [Genovese, 1965: 162] Crucially, it was 'a home market greatly restricted by slavery's stifling effects on rural purchasing power' [Genovese, 1965: 181].

This was so, firstly, and powerfully, because slaves were paid no wages, and, therefore, had no purchasing power. A large proportion of the labouring population was excluded from any direct involvement in the home market. Of course, their subsistence and reproduction needs had to be met by the planter class, and these were, to a large extent, met locally. But cheap slave clothing hardly constituted a mass market for consumer goods. It could not be the basis for a thriving and expanding textile industry.

Then, secondly, yeoman farmers – both plantation-belt and up-country – had, as we have seen, a strong subsistence-orientation, with only the most marginal of market involvement. Their demand for consumer goods was extremely limited. Together with that of 'poor whites' it could not possibly compensate for the absence of purchasing power among the great bulk of labour (i.e. the slaves).

Not only that, but there was, also, a constricted home market for Department I industries – industries producing the means of production. We have noted that

there was a lack of technical dynamism in slave-worked plantations. Slavery, moreover, constituted a powerful barrier to mechanisation. Moreover, secondly, on this front, there was technical backwardness in a yeoman farmer sector in which differentiation was powerfully constrained.

The planter class, then, was determining far as the home market was concerned. It was the planters who met the slaves' subsistence needs, and they who purchased the necessary (we recall, crude) instruments of labour. And, of course, a large amount of income flowed into their coffers, which constituted purchasing power and a source of demand. So what did this amalgam of potential demand amount to?

Let us take, first, the needs of the plantation, both consumption goods and instruments of production. Thus:

> The planters needed increased Southern manufacturing, but only for certain purposes. They needed cheap slave clothing, cotton gins and a few crude agricultural implements, rope for cotton bagging, and other such items. [Genovese, 1965: 165]

That, however, was no more than the narrowest of markets. A comparison with the West has been made: 'This narrow market could not compare with the tremendous Western demand for industrial commodities of all kinds, especially for agricultural implements and machinery on the more capital-intensive Western farms' [Genovese, 1965: 165]. So it was, then, that the Antebellum South lacked a primary element in the unleashing of industrialisation: in this respect contrasting significantly with the West: 'However imprecise the estimates for the South might be [estimates of goods purchased, expenditure, gross income], they indicate the lack of purchasing power among the rural population of the Cotton Belt and demonstrate how greatly the situation differed from that in the West. With such a home market the slave economy could not sustain more than the lowest level of commodity production apart from that of a few staples' [Genovese, 1965: 169]. There was scant comfort in the planters' own demand:

> The plantation system did have its compensations for industry. The planters' taste for luxuries, for example, proved a boon to the Petersburg, Virginia, iron industry, which supplied plantations with cast-iron fences, lawn ornaments, balconies, fancy gates, and other decorative articles. A silk industry emerged briefly but was destroyed by climatic conditions as well as by a shortage of capital. [Genovese, 1965: 170]

That was hardly the basis for a thriving industrial sector. Indeed, the dependence of manufacturers on the planter class for what little home market existed was substantial, while that market was virtually stagnant, in part because planters freely imported goods from outside the South:

> Southern manufacturers relied on the planters for their best, and often only markets. The manufacturers needed the planters, but the planters, who could and all too often did patronize outsiders, did not have to depend on local manufacturers...The dependence of the Southern agricultural implement, hemp rope, and much of the iron industry, on the plantation needs no comment. The textile manufacturers found themselves in a similar position. [Genovese, 1965: 185]

It was not enough:

> Plantation slavery so limited the purchasing power of the South that it could not sustain much industry. That industry which could be raised usually lacked a home market of sufficient scope to permit large-scale operation; the resultant cost of production often became too high for success in competition with Northern firms drawing on much wider markets. [Genovese, 1965: 173]

The narrowness of the home market was critical.

If the constricted home market, that was the inexorable concomitant of Southern slavery, was critical in retarding industry in the South, it was by no means the only retarding element that flowed from slavery. We may next consider influences that prevented the class formation necessary to industrialisation.

(iii) Class Formation

Powerful, negative implications existed with respect to class formation. These were twofold. They related, firstly, to the creation of an urban proletariat; and, secondly, to that of an urban bourgeoisie – a truly Southern/'national bourgeoisie' of manufacturers. We may take them in turn.

There was much controversy in the Antebellum South about the nature of the working class that might man the factories that a burgeoning industrialisation would bring. But the essential point is that the continuing existence of slavery simply precluded this possibility. There were three possible sources for such a proletariat: black, slave labour; Southern white labour (poor whites of various kinds, migrant subsistence producers etc.); and migrants from abroad. Out of this, one might have black, slave factory labour; free black labour (i.e. the labour of freed slaves); and free white labour. In fact the choice, in the minds of protagonists in the debate, narrowed down to two possibilities, in an 'excited and sometimes bitter debate between those who wished to use slaves in Southern factories and those who wished to use free white laborers' [Genovese, 1965: 221]. As Genovese stresses: 'The case for *Negro* labor...always meant *slave* labor since no one proposed using free negroes' [Genovese, 1965: 221–2 emphasis in original]. But no solution was possible so long as slavery continued. Why?

The central possibility reached for, then, and much discussed, was that of slave factory labour: that of 'raising a class of urban factory slaves' [Genovese, 1965: 221]. Indeed, several instances existed, throughout the South, of the use of such labour: for example, in the hemp factories of Kentucky; in the Arcadia Manufacturing Company in Pensacola (in Florida), in iron works in Tennessee, and indeed, in many parts of the Lower and Upper South; in tobacco factories pervasively; in textile factories in Alabama; in gold mines in Virginia; and the railroads of Tennessee.[54] The arguments raised in favour of such a class of urban factory slaves were various:[55] that such labour was as efficient as white labour; that slaves could not readily leave their jobs (there was no problem in holding on to it); that, in the words of a Southern newspaper (the Natchez *Ariel*) it was 'more docile, more constant, and cheaper than freemen, who are often refractory and dissipated; who waste much time by frequenting public places, attending musters, elections etc., which the operative slave is not permitted to frequent' [quoted in Genovese, 1965: 222]; that it did not resort to strikes; that it did not demand wage increases, as skill and productivity rose. One advocate, as paraphrased by Genovese, even opined that 'whereas labor and capital were becoming antagonistic in industrial countries, slavery united the interests of labor and capital in the person of the slave and thereby avoided the class struggle' [Genovese, 1965: 222]. Indeed, the litany sounds like a capitalist's dream come true.

There were also arguments mustered against the use of such labour, some of them purely racist, inasmuch as they had nothing to do with slavery *per se*. It was held by some to be 'irresponsible and worthless' [Genovese, 1965: 224]; to be lazy and idle; to be uneducated and unable to acquire the relevant skills. These are clearly absurd. But no less absurd is the argument that there is nothing to choose between the quality of slave labour and that of free wage labour (whether black of white). We have examined in some detail the profound differences between slave labour and free wage labour, as identified by Marx: differences that result in significantly greater versatility, in more intensive work, greater productiveness and responsiveness to incentives. These apply equally, perhaps *a fortiori*, to industrial labour. Indeed, it is inconceivable that an efficient and dynamic manufacturing sector could possibly be based on 'urban factory slaves'.

There was an inherent and powerful difficulty of class formation. Neither the plantation sector nor the yeomanry was capable of yielding the class of free wage labour (free in the double sense) that is crucial to capitalism. The plantation sector could not do so, because that would have meant an end to slavery. The dominant, planter class would not tolerate that. Indeed, they were prepared to fight a bloody and destructive war in its defence. As far as the yeoman class was concerned: 'Factory workers did not command as much respect as the poorest farmers or even the landless agricultural workers' [Genovese, 1965: 227]. They had not been separated from the land and the means of production. They were an unlikely source of an urban proletariat. Moreover, there was a profound fear of European immigrant labour, with its heightened sense of class consciousness.[56] Thus, 'in view of the backwardness of the employable whites'

[Genovese, 1965: 227] the situation was a bleak one, 'for the South lacked an adequate pool of disciplined free workers' [Genovese, 1965: 226]. An urban proletariat of free wage labour was remarkable by its absence.

A society dominated by slavery, next, produced a particular kind of manufacturing class: a class that was essentially weak in relation to the planter class, and with respect to undertaking the tasks essential to a path of dynamic industrialisation. It was a class acquiescent to the slave regime, and held in check by it. Thus:

> the dominant rural slaveholders required some industrial expansion to support their plantation economy and political power but could not sustain economically or tolerate politically a general industrialization. Those industrialists permitted to operate in the South had to accept the prevailing social system despite the restrictions it imposed on the expansion of their wealth and power as a class. [Genovese, 1965: 181]

If it did not have quite those abject qualities that might permit its categorisation as a comprador class, then, equally, it manifestly lacked the independence and dynamism of a national/Southern bourgeoisie.

(iv) Surplus Utilisation

Thirdly, we need to direct our attention towards not the appropriation of surplus, but towards its utilisation. This was clearly antipathetic towards capitalist industrialisation. A surplus did exist and was appropriated by the planter class, but 'the greater part of Southern capital [was] tied up in slaves' [Genovese, 1965: 181]. There were powerful forces dictating that it should remain so 'tied up'. But that class, by its very nature, was strongly antipathetic towards industrialisation. The surplus, then, was not made available for such industrialisation. This we may expand on.

How, then, was the surplus utilised? Part of the surplus was dissipated in 'the planters' high propensity to consume luxuries' [Genovese, 1965: 158], a propensity, we have seen, that did not translate into any significant expansion of the home market. We have suggested, when discussing Prussia, that part of it was appropriated by the state via taxation. But, as we shall see, this was not diverted to accumulation in the manufacturing sector.

A further possibility might have been direct investment of some of the agrarian surplus in manufacturing industry. That, certainly, has happened elsewhere. Given planter hostility to industrialisation, this might seem unlikely. Yet planters did invest in industry, to the extent that their ownership of 'the South's industrial enterprises...was clearly considerable' [Genovese, 1965: 187].[57] But the crucial point is that 'for individual planters, however, investments in industry usually formed a minor interest, rarely large enough to influence their social outlook' [Genovese, 1965: 187]. It was in vain that 'the strongest voices of

Southern industrialism...pleaded with planters to invest in industry' [Genovese, 1965: 188]. Ideology was powerfully present in preventing it: 'The ideological barriers to substantial planter investment remained formidable, for investments in land and slaves brought high status, whereas investment in industry did not, and those requiring the sale of surplus slaves might even bring social disapproval' [Genovese, 1965: 189]. The planters' surplus went to manufacturing industry to only a very minor extent.

(v) The Planter Class and the Absence of State-led Industrialisation

Finally, in this brief treatment of industrial retardation, the absence of any state support for a programme of industrialisation is noteworthy, and hardly surprising in view of the opposition of slaveholders. To be sure, there was state-supported railway building, but no more than that. Thus: 'The slaveholders and their governments gave manufacturing little support. Only projects like railroad building met a positive response, for they helped consolidate the hegemony of the Black Belt over the South' [Genovese, 1965: 184]. That was far from enough.

In other historical situations, the state has intervened fiscally, in its role as tax gatherer, and has used surplus to enforce capitalist industrialisation: among our case studies, this being true certainly of England and Japan (in Japan quintessentially so). But not here. Any deficiency of investible surplus was not filled by the state.

But the contrast was not only with other, distant cases. There was a clear contrast with the North:

> Since the South was falling behind the North in scale of enterprise, entrepreneurship, and the accumulation of industrial capital, it would have had to do much more to support manufacturing in order to catch up; instead it did much less. Whereas, from the beginning of the century, community effort, state support, and private banks bolstered the industrial sector of the free states, in the slave states, they supported only those ventures linked to the plantation system. [Genovese, 1965: 184]

This, allied to an absence of adequate protection, meant that manufacturing industry could not grow. It was arrested in its infant stage.

(vi) The Need for the Destruction of the Slave Regime, But...

Slavery's powerfully retardative influence upon industrialisation is not in doubt. So it was, then, that 'the cause of Southern industrialism demanded, above all, the destruction of the slave regime' [Genovese, 1965: 181]. But while that destruction was a necessary, it was not a sufficient, condition for industrialisation in the South. We may again make the comparison with Prussia. In pre-1807 Prussia, too, productive relations served to act as a constraint upon capitalist industrialisation. It

did so, also, after 1807, as it did in the postbellum south. We turn, in the next chapter, to the postbellum South, before considering the North and the West, where a very different path would be followed.

Before doing that, we may, very briefly, suggest the beginnings of an explanation of 'why slavery in the South'?

10 WHY SLAVERY? EMBRACING A 'CLASS-BASED' EXPLANATION

Why, then, slavery in the South? And why black slavery? We have looked at one possible alternative, feudalism, and seen its failure to take root, despite serious attempts to establish it. We have rejected various explanations of why this was so. We have repeatedly stressed the shortage of labour throughout North America, from the earliest colonial times, and the difficulties associated with meeting this first via the commonly adopted initial solution, indentured labour, and then via wage labour, when indentured labour proved not to be a lasting answer. We have seen the absence of any possible solution via an Indian labour force, whatever form that may have taken, because of the virtual elimination of the Indian population as part of the resolving of the 'land problem'. We have noted a possible solution in a structure of small, family holdings (as in the North and the West). But neither tobacco cultivation nor cotton lent themselves to that, as a mode of surplus maximisation, either through owner-occupied holdings or tenanted holdings. Here, I think, lie the beginnings of an explanation.

It is an explanation that has been put forward for the use of slave labour in Ancient Greece. Ste. Croix postulates the Ancient Greece case as follows:

> I suggest that the most profitable way of approaching the problem of unfree labour is to think of it...*in terms of the extraction of the largest possible surplus from the primary producers*. I think that in antiquity slavery probably did provide the best possible answer, from the purely economic point of view (that is to say, disregarding all social as well as moral factors), having regard to the low level of productivity, and also the fact that *free, hired* labour was scarce, largely confined to unskilled or seasonal work, and not at all mobile, whereas slaves were available in large numbers and at prices the lowness of which is astonishing, in comparison with what is known of the price of slaves in other societies. But given these conditions – the poor supply of free, hired labour, the easy availability of slaves, their cheapness, and so on – I do believe that slavery increased the surplus in the hands of the propertied class to an extent which could not otherwise have been achieved...I would draw attention to the fact that the distinction I have just drawn is not a difference of *status*, between slaves *and free men*, but a difference of class, between slaves *and their owners* – a very different matter. [Ste. Croix, 1981: 40, emphases in original]

Its appropriateness, in general terms, to the American case can be plausibly argued. *Mutatis mutandis*, it has considerable plausibility in the context of the American South. We do, of course, need to take account of *mutatis mutandis* and consider the specific conditions and circumstances of slavery in the South. That we have done. Its analytical plausibility remains.

Notes

1. Sanders tells us that the quotation is from Rolfe's journals and comes to us via Captain John Smith. From Sanders' own account of 'The Adventures of Captain John Smith' [Sanders, 1992: 263–96] Smith is hardly the best of witnesses or the most reliable of sources. But he does not question the Rolfe quotation.
2. For the information in the present sub-section to this point, see Fogel and Engerman [1974: 15], *Encarta Multimedia Encyclopaedia* [1994: entries on 'North America', 'Slavery', 'United States of America' 'Virginia'], Duignan and Gann [1984: 9–10, 15], Bonilla *et al.* [1978: 861], Bailyn *et al.* [1985: 14, 30–6], Sanders [1992: 353–4] Kolchin 1987: 20 and 21], Kolchin [1993: 3–10, 240], Stampp [1956: 22–3, 192–236].
3. For a concise account of the emergence and growth of these colonies, see Kolchin [1995: 25–6].
4. This meant that while previously one man could separate manually around one pound of fibre in a day, now more than fifty pounds could be separated.
5. There had been a significant increase in private manumissions in those decades. See Kolchin [1995: 74, 89–90].
6. For an account of the 'slave codes' of the southern slave states, with a bias towards their ultimate content (i.e. as the Civil War approached), see Stampp [1956: 22–3, 192–236]. See also Kolchin [1995: 17–18, 78–80, 89–90, 127–32] for a most useful treatment. Stampp tells us:

> Every slave state had a slave code. Besides establishing the property rights of those who owned human chattels, these codes supported masters in maintaining discipline and provided safeguards for the white communities against slave rebellions. In addition they held slaves, as thinking beings, morally responsible and punishable for misdemeanors and felonies.
>
> Fundamentally slave codes were much alike. Those of the Deep South were somewhat more severe than those of the Upper South, but most of the variations were in minor details. The similarities were due,in part, to the fact that new states patterned their codes after those of the old...
>
> After a generation of liberalization following the American Revolution, the codes underwent a reverse trend towards increasing restrictions. This trend was clearly evident by the 1820s, when rising slave prices and expansion into the Southwest caused more and more Southerners to accept slavery as a permanent institution....
>
> In practice the slave codes went through alternating periods of rigid and lax enforcement...
>
> At the heart of every code was the requirement that slaves submit to their masters and respect all white men. (pp. 206–7).

Stampp provides a fascinating account of the content of these codes, which prevented everything from freedom of movement to learning to read and write (this, interestingly, was taken especially seriously), which provided for the administration

of 'justice' with respect to slaves and their masters, and which regulated punishment of offending slaves.

7. On paternalism in the colonial era, see Kolchin [1995: 59–62].
8. See Fogel [1989: 31].
9. I am here quoting from an interesting essay by Eugene Genovese, 'Yeoman Farmers in a Slaveholders' Democracy', originally published in *Agricultural History*, 1975, vol. 49, and reprinted in Fox-Genovese and Genovese [1983]. I shall draw on it later when considering the class of yeoman farmers in a little more detail.
10. Genovese (loc. cit.) draws our attention to the work, for example, of Roger Shugg. See Shugg [1939].
11. Ste. Croix argues that in ancient Greece and Rome 'The bulk of production...in most places and all times...at any rate until the fourth century of the Christian era, when forms of serfdom became general in the Roman empire' was done by free peasants and artisans; while most of the surplus appropriated by the propertied class came from slavery [Ste. Croix, 1981: 133; emphasis in original].
12. For a most useful general discussion of these categories see Ste. Croix [1981: 134–7], and for detailed, incisive treatment of the nature and existence of each form of unfree labour in antiquity, Ste. Croix [1981: 137–74].
13. Ste. Croix directs our attention to Greenidge [1958: 25–6 and second and third appendices, 224 ff] for 'a particularly well-informed account of the whole subject' [Ste. Croix, 1981: 134].
14. See Kolchin [1987: 51 and 53].
15. See Kolchin [1987: 54].
16. See Kolchin [1987: 54].
17. See Fogel and Engerman [1974: 23–4].
18. For a useful general account of paternalism and slave-owners see Kolchin [1987: 83–5, 100–1, 128–40, 156, 189, 198, 209, 233, 235, 254, 360–1, 425 n.52] and Kolchin [1995: 59–62, 94, 111–35, 139, 142–6, 153–4, 167–8, 170, 194, 198, 220, 234]. The Genovese view is stated in Genovese [1969: 96–7, 100–1, 112, 119, 121, 131]; Genovese [1974: 3–158]; Fox-Genovese and Genovese [1983: 114–7, 130–1, 199, 398]. Kolchin points to writers who have come close to arguing that 'slaveowner paternalism created a benign system of slavery' [Kolchin, 1987: 425 n.52]. These are Phillips [1966, first published in 1918: 306–8, 501–3] and Scarborough [1976: 108–10]. As our treatment in the text testifies, Genovese's subtle account of paternalism is sharply opposed to that. It is also quite distinct from the Fogel and Engerman view that paternalism was not 'intrinsically antagonistic to capitalist enterprise' [Fogel and Engerman, 1974, vol. 1: 73]. See also Fogel and Engerman [1974, vol. 1:77–8, 129–30] As we observe later in the text of this sub-section, Genovese has argued consistently and powerfully that slaveowners *cannot* be seen as capitalists. Nevertheless, his insistence on the importance of paternalism can be contested. Kolchin [Kolchin, 1987: 424 n. 52] draws our attention to the vigorous critique of the Genovese view in Gutman [1976: 309–18], Oakes [1982: *passim*] and Censer [1984: 135–49].
19. See, for example, Fogel and Engerman [1974, vol. 1: 146]. In the 1930s, the W P A (the Works Progress Administration) collected narratives of former slaves. Fogel and Engerman (loc. cit.) tell us: 'The overwhelming majority of the ex-slaves in the W.P.A. narratives who expressed themselves on the issue reported that their masters were good men'. Their simplistic use of such evidence is questioned effectively by Genovese [Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 146]. For a similarly more balanced view, see Kolchin [1987: 138–40].
20. See Kolchin [1987: 157–69] and Genovese [1969: 6, 123, 137–43, 180–90, 204–5].
21. See also Genovese in Fox-Genovese and Genovese [1983: 261].
22. cf. Genovese [1969: viii].

23. Among many see, for example, Fogel and Engerman [1974: 67–78], Fogel [1989: 64–72], Conrad and Meyer [1958], Conrad and Meyer [1964], Stampp [1956: 5–6, 383–418], Stampp [1976], Oakes [1982], Elkins [1976], Gray [1958]. James Oakes would later repudiate his position on this [Oakes, 1990: 54]. Some of these are noted and commented on in Fox-Genovese and Genovese, [1983: 22, 96, 99–100, 134–5, 165] and Kolchin [1995:172–3].
24. I am here quoting from Genovese's essay 'The Debate over *Time on the Cross. A Critique of Bourgeois Criticism*'. In the course of a rousing polemic, Genovese develops a powerful argument.
25. Charles Post contests the capitalist characterisation most cogently. See Post [1982: 31–5].
26. For stress on the significance of free wage labour as variable capital and slave labour as constant capital see also Post [1982: 34].
27. I am here paraphrasing Ste. Croix very closely and drawing on his own words. See Ste. Croix [1981: 57].
28. For Marx's major discussion of slavery, see *Capital*, volume 1 [Marx, 1976: 303–4*, 345*, 365–6, 377, 414, 571*, 680, 934–5, 1014*, 1027–8, 1031–4*]. There are interesting observations, too, in volume 3 [Marx, 1981: 121, 278, 507–10, 597, 762, 911, 927*, 970, 1021]. From our point of view the references in volume 2 are slight. See Marx [1978 a: 116, 189]. There are also some acute comments in his *Grundrisse*. See Marx, 1986, vol. 28: 35, 157*, 391*, 413*, 415*, 419*, 436–7*, 443*, 509*]. I have marked the especially interesting pages with an asterisk.
29. Olmsted, a strong opponent of slavery, was a northern farmer from the state of New York. He was an indefatigable traveller and close observer of the countryside in which he travelled. He was commissioned, in 1852, by the *New York Times*, to write articles on the slave South based on his going there. In all, he spent thirteen months travelling the length and breadth of the South, between 1852 and 1854 (in three periods of, respectively, three months, seven months and three months). Seventy-five articles were published in the *New York Times*, and from these four books were published: [Olmsted, 1856, 1857, 1860, 1953]. Marx drew upon his *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* [Olmsted, 1856]. His best-known and most influential book was his last *The Cotton Kingdom* [Olmsted, 1953], which was written just after the start of the Civil War and first published in 1861. For details on Olmsted, I have drawn on Fogel and Engerman [1974: 170].
30. John Elliot Cairnes (1823–75) is described by Fogel and Engerman as 'one of the most eminent British economists of the mid–nineteenth century' [Fogel and Engerman, 1974: 181]. Schumpeter tells us: 'everyone would have mentioned him when asked, after Mill's death in 1873 (Jevons not being appreciated as yet according to merit), who was England's first scientific economist' [Schumpeter, 1954: 533, note 7]. He wrote a powerful 'economic indictment of slavery' (loc. cit.). Cairnes drew heavily upon the writings of Olmsted, and especially the first two of his volumes [Olmsted, 1856; 1857], in his book, *The Slave Power: Its Character, Career and Probable Designs: Being an Attempt to Explain the Real Issues in the American Contest* [Cairnes, 1969], originally published in 1862, and republished with additions in 1863. Marx thought highly of Cairnes and cites him often in *Capital*, volume I and elsewhere.
31. See also Smith [1976: vol. 1: 388–90; and vol. 2, 683–4] for a more extended discussion of slavery, both in the colonies and in antiquity. He notes that in both the 'sugar colonies' and the 'tobacco colonies' of his time, profits are very high – higher than any other cultivation known in either Europe or America. This is not, however, taken to constitute a justification of slavery, or an indication that it was more efficient (less costly) than cultivation with free labour. He comments, simply, that both sugar and tobacco cultivation 'can afford the expence of slave cultivation'

[Smith, 1976: vol. I, 388–9]. By implication, he holds to his position that cultivation would have been cheaper – more efficient – with free labour. He observes later, of both classical antiquity and his own day (in the latter regard, the Hungarian and the Turkish mines, both worked with slave labour):

> Slaves...are very seldom inventive; and all the most important improvements, either in machinery, or in the arrangement of distribution of work which facilitate and abridge labour, have been the discoveries of free men. Should a slave propose any improvement of this kind, his master would be very apt to consider the proposal as the suggestion of laziness, and a desire to save his own labour at the master's expence. The poor slave, instead of reward, would probably meet with much abuse, perhaps with some punishment. In the manufactures carried on by slaves, therefore, more labour must generally have been employed to execute the same quantity of work, than in those carried on by freemen. The work of the former must, upon that account, generally have been dearer than that of the latter. [Smith, 1976: vol. 2, 684]

We note, in this context, that, for Smith, it is the lack of incentive, inherent in the condition of slavery, and not any absence of native inventiveness or presence of innate laziness that prevents 'improvements' being made by slaves.

32. Unfortunately, Fogel and Engerman give no source for their account. Since they did not observe it (!) they must have drawn it from somewhere. It is a pity that they do not reveal the source. We might then be better able to judge the usefulness of the statement. Fogel, in his later reprise volume, which we may take to be the final judicious summary of the vast research enterprise on slavery that they pursued, is hardly helpful when, in repeating, more or less, the statements in the early book, simply refers the reader back to that [Fogel, 1989: 27 and 426, note 30]. There is some suggestion in the later volume that they may be referring to evidence for one plantation, the McDuffie plantation, as drawn from Debow's *Review* VI, as quoted in a paper by Metzer which appears in one of the several technical volumes that accompany Fogel's 1989 summary volume [Fogel, 1989: 27 and 426 note 29]. For such a central conclusion and such an important judgement the evidence is, indeed, exiguous.
33. The passage quoted in italics appears as if it were a quotation. But no source is given. See the comments in the previous note.
34. Cf. note 31 where Smith's views on the absence of incentives among slaves are noted.
35. This is captured in Kolchin's excellent book [Kolchin, 1995]. See *passim*, but especially chs 4 and 5.
36. Kolchin notes the statement of a slave who participated in the Gabriel Prosser conspiracy of 1800: 'I could kill a white man as free as eat' [Kolchin, 19995: 75].
37. Without romanticising in any way the nature of struggle that slaves were able to wage, or exaggerating what slaves were able to achieve (see text), one can argue that the net effect was to secure an outcome more substantive than Scott appears to envisage for his 'everday forms of resistance' or 'weapons of the weak'. Thus, for example, we may note Scott's observation:

> From the account so far, one might justifiably assume that the struggle between rich and poor was largely confined to a war of words. That assumption would not be entirely be wrong, but it would be misleading. For the poor and wealthy peasants of Sedaka are not merely having an *argument*; they are having a fight. Under the circumstances, the fight is less a pitched battle than a low-grade, hit-and-run guerrilla action. [Scott, 1985: 241 emphasis in original]

So to reduce a detailed and highly-textured argument is, perhaps, unfair. But the Scott view does not capture the grim, unremitting and focused action that slaves must have taken, against massively formidable odds; and nor does it allow for an outcome so significant as appears to have been achieved in the slave plantations. The struggle waged by slaves was more than a 'war of words'. Indeed, it was almost certainly not a 'war of words' at all. It was, also, more than 'low-grade, hit-and-run guerrilla action'. It was material in its effect. It must have been subtle in its *modus operandi* (almost invisible, since otherwise it would have attracted the lash), and sustained in its action.

38. See Ball [1837: 288–9].
39. See Fogel and Engerman [1974]. On Olmsted see pp. 160–1, 170–81, 204–9, 213–14, 218–33, 225–7, 231, 234, 241, 263; on Cairnes, 47–8, 63, 170, 181–90, 197–8, 231, 254; on both, 196–8.
40. There is a problem here, which Genovese confronts effectively. This is Marx's apparent categorisation, in the *Grundrisse*, of plantation owners (slaveholders) as *capitalists*. I have argued above that slavery, clearly cannot be viewed as capitalism and must be seen as quite distinct from it. For Genovese's detailed treatment of this see Fox-Genovese and Genovese [1983: 16–23].
41. In another translation, which I have cited above, this is rendered as: 'the slave works under alien conditions of production and not independently' [Marx, 1962: 771].
42. The editor in this edition of volume 1 of *Capital* provides the glosses which I have inserted, from Varro, *Rerum Rusticarum Libri Tres*, I, 17.
43. Marx directs the reader to Cairnes [1862: 46 ff].
44. These conclusions are stated most thoroughly in the *Resultate*, a text originally designed as Part Seven of volume 1 of *Capital*, but discarded by Marx for reasons that are not altogether clear. He may have intended to publish it in future volumes of *Capital*. It was first published in Russian and German in 1933, and then again in German and other Western European languages in the late 1960s. But it was not until 1976 that the first English translation became available, as part of the Penguin edition of volume 1 of *Capital*. See Marx [1976: 948–1084]. Its title in English is *Results of the Immediate Process of Production*. It is here that, for example, Marx introduces his distinction between the formal and real 'subsumption of labour under capital'. For a useful discussion, on which this note is based, see Ernest Mandel's Introduction [Marx, 1976: 943–7]. For the comparison between slave labour and free wage labour see Marx [1976: 1014, 1020, 1031–4].
45. This is cited in Marx [1976: 1014, note 23].
46. Marx, in fact, appears to be in error with respect to the evolution of paternalism (or 'patriarchy', as he termed it). He argues:

> the Negro labour in the southern states of the American Union preserved a moderately patriarchal character as long as production was chiefly directed to the satisfaction of immediate local requirements. But in proportion as the export of cotton became of vital interest to those states, the over-working of the negro, and sometimes the consumption of his life in seven years of labour, became a factor in a calculated and calculating system. It was no longer a question of obtaining from him a certain quantity of useful products, but rather the production of surplus-value itself. [Marx, 1976: 345]

In fact, as we have seen, paternalism seems actually to have increased in intensity in the antebellum South. A slave was a valuable asset, who, the development of a slave market notwithstanding (see Marx [1976: 377], where Marx cites Cairnes [Cairnes, 1862: 110–11], in support of such a position), was expensive to buy. Such an asset

could not simply be worked into the ground in a brief period of time, to be replaced by another purchase. That would have been economically irrational.

47. Genovese gives no references (either to the relevant work or the relevant pages). Presumably the references are as follows: Moore [1967: 115, 127, 130, 149, 152] and Wiener [1978]. One notes another historian who argues that the American South conformed to the 'Prussian Road', in Billings [1979]. Wiener and Billings are referenced, and their views commented on in Angelo [1995]. We will comment below on the 'Prussian Road' argument in the context of the American South. One might note here, however, that while Barrington Moore's comments are of interest, he does not give a treatment of the Prussian experience. His observations are more *obiter dicta* than substantive treatment.
48. Hahn's 1979 Ph.d thesis, which is cited by Genovese, was later published as Hahn [1983].
49. Post cites an unpublished Ph.d dissertation [Garret. 1978].
50. On technical innovation in *feudalism*, he cites Anderson [1974a, 182–96], Brenner [1985a, 31–5; 1985b, 228–42, 311–14], Dobb [1946: 42–50], Hilton [1985: 119–37]. See Post [1995].

    See also Ste. Croix [1981: 38–9, 545–56, n. 14]. Ste. Croix wishes to stress, it seems, on the one hand, that antiquity was not characterised by complete technical stagnation; and on the other that it is not, necessarily, a Marxist position that slavery, by its very nature, precludes technical progress. But in a remarkable book – rich in insight, impressive in the deployment of Marxist theory, and awesome in the command of the sources displayed – this is, perhaps, the least convincing position taken. Thus, in the former respect, in the passages in question, what seems to emerge very clearly is that, over vast stretches of time, not very much technical advance did take place. As he says himself, 'the Greek world...was very underdeveloped technologically' (p. 38). Of course, one might argue that this did not, in any demonstrable way, derive from the existence of slavery. That, indeed, seems to be what he implies. In the latter regard (the Marxist view of the implications of slavery, in this respect), it seems to me that, with respect to the United States at least, on a basis of Marx's treatment of slavery there, discussed above, he did take the view (I believe convincingly) that slavery impeded technical progress in agriculture in the South. I think that one can argue, further, *pace* Ste. Croix, that Marx's arguments suggest this to be a broader view of slavery's effect.
51. See Genovese [1965: 157–79, i.e. ch. 2; 180–220, i.e. ch. 3; and also 221–39, i.e. ch. 4] for the outstanding – and brilliant – political economy statement. See also Parker [1970], as reprinted in Parker [1991] for an interesting, if significantly slighter statement; and North [1966: 122–34, i.e. ch. X] for a limited view. One notes also Fleisig [1975] who argues the slavery-retardation thesis within a neo-classical framework, but whose 'rigour' adds little to our understanding, and nothing to Genovese's treatment – although he does take something of an unreferenced side-swipe at Genovese [Fleisig, 1975: 592]. Fogel discusses other neo-classical work on this issue (which he terms 'the lag in southern industrialization and urbanization'), especially that of the cliometricians [Fogel, 1989: 102–13]. There is, here, no dispute as to retardation, but controversy, rather, over the analytical framework within which one must examine it. It is examined, too, in Fogel and Engerman [1974: 63–5, 159–60, 187–8, 228, 254–7]. They are somewhat equivocal, but seem to conclude (p. 257) that on balance slavery probably did retard industrialisation. The only serious attempt to dispute the thesis is that of Kenneth Stampp in his *The Peculiar Institution* [Stampp, 1956: 396–9]. The causes of retardation, he argued, lay elsewhere. His is a lonely voice.
52. The crucial effect of slavery on the size of the home market is stressed most cogently by Charles Post. See Post [1982: 35–8].

53. Genovese produces evidence to this effect [Genovese, 1965: 161–2]. Genovese points out that exponents of the self-sufficiency argument are North [1966: 132–3] and Smith [1958 : 134]. See Genovese [1965: 161].
54. See Genovese [1965: 222–4].
55. They are identified in Genovese [1965: 221–2].
56. See Genovese [1965: 231–2].
57. See Genovese [1965: 187–8] for examples.

7 The Postbellum South: From Slavery, Through Unfree Labour to Wage Labour

> colored tenants...with most of the white tenants, are forced to *strain every nerve* to raise cotton to pay rents and liens.
>
> (Senate Report of 1895)

> What do you want us to do? We can't take less share of the crop – we'r half-starved now. The kids are hungry all the time. We got no clothes, torn an'ragged. If all the neighbours weren't the same, we'd be ashamed to go to meeting.
> And at last the owner men came to the point. The tenant system won't work any more. One man on a tractor can take the place of twelve or fourteen families. Pay him a wage and take all the crop. We have to do it.
>
> [Steinbeck, 1940: 38, i.e. ch. 5]

1 THE DEMISE OF SLAVERY

Just as Prussia's crushing defeat by Napoleon in 1806 was followed by the edict of 1807, which brought serfdom to an end in Prussia, so the South's surrender in the American Civil War spelt the demise of slavery. That surrender came effectively on 9 April, 1865, when General Robert E. Lee handed his sword over to General Ulysses Simpson Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia (although it was not until July, 1865 that the final skirmishing was over and it was brought entirely to a completion). Having erupted on 12 April, 1861, it had lasted almost exactly four years.[1] Its ostensible cause had been the existence of slavery in the South, the determination of the South to maintain slavery, and the desire of the North to see it eradicated. Its causes are, of course, more complex than can be so briefly represented, but in 1865 slavery, assuredly, was abolished:

> In 1864 the Republican Party had endorsed a constitutional amendment that would end slavery in America for ever. On January 31, 1865, Congress finally passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, prohibiting slavery and involuntary servitude in any lands within the jurisdiction of the United States. [Levine *et al.*, 1989: 463]

This was ratified in December, 1865. Slavery was dead.

In Prussia, an institution, a mode of production, that had been established in the sixteenth century was swept away. Feudalism in Prussia had had its day. It had lasted more for than three centuries. In the American South, the institution, the mode of production, that had been introduced in the seventeenth century and had come to dominate the South had been extirpated. The 'peculiar institution' was at an end. It had proved to be no momentary aberration. Its life-span had been more than two centuries. In each case, a cataclysmic political event had acted as a powerful catalyst for fundamental change. In both, a true era of *longue durée* was over and another had begun. We have seen the Prussian outcome. But what would the nature of that 'other' be in the American South? That we pursue in the present chapter.

We have posed above Hartmut Harnisch's question of Prussia. We may repeat part of it here: 'There is no way of finding out whether without the disaster of 1806 there would have been stabilisation and consolidation of the feudal order' [Harnisch, 1986: 66–7]. We might pose a similar question of the American South. One might suggest that in Prussia the contradictions of feudalism had, perhaps, matured and become antagonistic to a degree greater than was the case in the South in 1861. Those contradictions, we have argued, were clearly there in the South (*pace* Fogel and Engerman): it was a system with manifest rigidities, with obvious limits on its productive potential. There were, however, more internal pressures towards change in Prussia than in the American South. It seems likely that in the South, without the Civil War, there would have been 'stabilisation and consolidation' of slavery before its final demise; more clearly than would have been the case in Prussia, with the feudal order, without 1806. That, however, is one of the imponderables of history.

In both Prussia and the American South the dislodged modes of surplus appropriation had been the response of a dominant class to a chronic labour shortage. In the American colonies, feudalism had been reached for seriously in the seventeenth century, but had failed to take root; while in the colonies of the North another solution had prevailed (the subject of the next chapter). In neither Prussia nor the South had the solutions adopted to the then 'agrarian question' been the subject of any blueprint (although there was a blueprint for feudalism in Locke's constitution for the Carolinas). No one sat down and planned Prussian feudalism or American slavery. Each, indeed, seemed to be a remarkable flying in the face of history: at least, of historical developments that were taking place elsewhere. As feudalism was disappearing as an outmoded and apparently unworkable system in England, and being replaced by capitalism, so it was being established for the first time in Prussia. As American colonies were being founded as havens of 'freedom' and 'tolerance' so the most unfree of all systems, slavery, was being introduced; and as they won their political freedom from Britain so the unfreedom of slavery was consolidated and extended. Their rooting was followed by long and complex processes of class formation that produced dominant and subordinate classes each of which was sui generis. They had proved to be remarkably effective and long-lasting ways of appropriating

surplus in the countrysides of the respective countries. In each case the 'labour problem' had to be confronted anew.

The American Civil War 'was and is the bloodiest war in American history' [Brogan, 1986: 355]. Its wounds went deep and were slow to heal. Its scars are still visible.[2] One week after Appomattox, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. As has been commented:

> Lincoln's assassination a week after Appomattox seemed to mark the end of an era. Conflict between two social systems – one based on slavery, the other on free labor – had plagued the nation since the American Revolution. More than six hundred thousand Americans had died to make a second revolution, resolving once and for all the issue of slavery. In the process, nearly four million Americans who had once been slaves were freed. All Americans now had to confront difficult new questions in the spring of 1865. [Levine *et al.*, 1989: 463]

It is the questions confronted in the postbellum South, and the manner of their addressing that are our concern in the present chapter.

A deeply-rooted mode of production had been torn up at its roots. A new mode of surplus appropriation, a new set of class relationships, would have to be established. In Prussia, we have seen, feudalism was replaced by a clear form of capitalist agriculture, and serfdom gave way to the wage labour relationship, albeit via processes that took more than half a century to work themselves out. The Junkers were transformed from a class of feudal landlords into one of capitalist farmers, and serfdom was replaced, essentially, by wage labour. Many former serfs became wage labourers. Clearly, here was a possible option in the South. Marx, as we have seen, writing just as the Civil War proceeded and as it came to an end, contrasted the properties of slave labour with those of free wage labour, and, in an abstract, rather than an historically literal, treatment, contemplated that day 'when the former slave-owner engaged his former slaves as paid workers' [Marx, 1976: 1020]. That assumed both that 'the former slave-owner' would continue to own the land and that 'his former slaves' – if, indeed, he opted for the capitalist solution (other possibilities clearly existed) – would be transformed into a true rural proletariat, a class of free wage labour. History, however, does not necessarily work according to preordained patterns – as Marx was abundantly aware. What happened?

What processes of class formation would obtain? What forms of surplus appropriation would be established? How would the labour of four million former slaves be mobilised to yield a surplus? How, indeed, would the class of yeoman farmers respond to the new circumstances of the postbellum South? In one rendering:

> Emancipation had destroyed the foundations of the southern economy and southern society. Freedom meant that the immediate postwar years had to be literally years of reconstruction, and freedom meant that the new economy and the new society that were to be constructed on the site of the old could not be patterned on the old design. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 1]

But what design would they be patterned on?

Several possibilities existed. But there were no blueprints in a war-ravaged South, just as there had been none in seventeenth century colonial North America. There, we recall, feudalism had been reached for and was rejected. What would be reached for now? One thing seemed certain. The 'new society', whatever its 'pattern', would be profoundly influenced in its form and shape by the old. Paraphrasing Marx's observation on a very different context, it would be 'a...society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from [slave] society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges' [Marx, 1972: 15 emphases in original].[3] The social foundations of the postbellum south, the basis of its economic functioning, had yet to be laid.

Let us start our treatment with the planter class – or former planter class – and consider, too, something of the former slaves in the immediate aftermath of abolition. The new position of each – the new class position – and the processes of class formation that would unfold would be critical to the outcome. We recall our concern with the implications for accumulation both in the countryside and outside, with what the new relationships would signify for capitalist industrialisation. We have argued that slavery had constituted a formidable barrier to accumulation and to industrialisation. What of the postbellum situation?

2 FROM PLANTER CLASS TO LANDLORD CLASS AND FROM SLAVE LABOUR TO SHARECROPPING: VIA A BRIEF INTERLUDE OF ATTEMPTED CAPITALISM

(i) The Planter Class Retains the Land

A first issue was whether the planter class would retain ownership of the land which it had owned when the Civil War broke out. That would, clearly, be crucial to the nature of the 'new society'.

In the wake of cataclysmic political events of the kind exemplified by the defeat of the South in the American Civil War, or the Prussian rout in 1806, the possibility exists of major land reform: of a land redistribution that would take land from those who owned it, with or without compensation, and vest ownership with those who worked it as direct producers. That might open the way to a transition from below, of the kind postulated by Lenin to be the 'American path', and advocated by Lenin as the desirable path for Russia (if, as he thought, capitalism were to be her immediate fate). Such a redistribution happened in France after 1789, partially, and in Japan, in 1945, root and branch. It did not

happen in the American South. It requires a profound weakening of the propertied classes and a political vacuum that allows the necessary intervention. Neither existed in the South. An agrarian transition from below was not to be enacted, in the aftermath of the Civil War.

What, then, happened to the planter class that had dominated the South as slave-owners up to 1865? We note, first, that 'the majority of large planters from before the war were able to retain their lands' [Wright, 1991: 596]. Or, as Ransom and Sutch put it: 'In January 1868 the agricultural land of the South was owned by the same class of white families who had owned both the South's land and its black labor before the war' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 87]. Ransom and Sutch take January, 1868 as their reference point because by then, they argue, certain choices were being made by the former planter class that would determine the nature of the political economy of the countryside of the South. That political economy, we note, would obtain for some considerable time to come, and certainly until the 1950s. The choices were influenced by the strong action of the newly-freed slaves. They were choices of profound significance.

(ii) The Planter Class and Labour Shortage

The former slave-owners continued to own the land. But they no longer owned the black labour that had gone with it. The slaves went free, and they carried nothing with them but their labour – and a hatred of the slavery to which they had been subjected. The plantation owners had no captive labour force.

Not only that, but they were acutely aware, from the very outset, of an endemic labour shortage. That, indeed, had been obvious, before the Civil War, in the 1850s. As Angelo points out:

> The expansion into the Western cotton-growing lands in the 1840s and 1850s had already created a slave labor shortage...In 1830, the price of a male field worker was $850 or the equivalent of 22 bales of cotton. By 1860, and adult field worker cost $1,800 or 41 bales of cotton.[4] There was even a call, on the eve of Emancipation, for a return to the international slave trade.[5] [Angelo, 1995: 627, note 10]

There had been attempts, also, to import immigrants from both Europe and Asia. These proved unsuccessful.[6] The lack of success, Angelo observes, was

> because the only conditions that were profitable to the planters were not attractive to the immigrants. The experience of the Southern planter in labor relations mistakenly led him to believe that the standard practices of slavery could be applied to free wage workers. [Angelo, 1995: 627, note 11]

It was a set of attitudes very difficult to dislodge. The difficulty would not diminish with Emancipation. It would be a 'birth mark of the old society'.

The antebellum labour shortage was exacerbated for the former master class by Emancipation. There were two distinct mechanisms at work, and two distinct ways in which individual planters, or former planters, perceived this. Firstly, former slaves now had, initially at least, an autonomy and a freedom to dispose of their labour time that was lacking in slavery: they had the ability to reduce the total amount of labour time that they, or their families, supplied to those who used their labour. Secondly, they also had a freedom to move for the first time, either within the countryside of the South or out of the countryside altogether. They could now, it seemed, exercise choice in ways that might seriously influence the supply of labour.

At the first level, there can be no doubt at all that former slaves exercised choice to quite devastating effect. They chose, perhaps not unexpectedly, both to reduce the amount of male labour time and to withdraw female labour (the labour of wives), or some of it, from work in the fields. This is summed up as follows:

> Emancipation gave the ex-slave the freedom to lighten his burden and, for the first time, reserve a portion of his time for himself. The slave was literally worked to the limit of his economic capacity. Once free, he quite naturally chose to work less, so that he might reserve a portion of each day within which to enjoy the fruits of his labour, fruits that had previously been taken from him by his master. The result was that the amount of labor offered by each freedman and his family was substantially less than when slavery forced every man, woman and child to work long hours throughout the year. Rather than work like slaves, the freedmen chose to offer an amount of labor comparable to the standard for free laborers of the time [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 44][7]

It was observed that 'black men sought to free their wives from dawn to dusk labor in the fields so that they might better care for their children and the household' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 55]. There is ample evidence of this happening in the 1860s, in the immediate aftermath of Abolition; certainly, there were numerous complaints to this effect. There were contemporary estimates – for early 1867, for the first half of 1868 and for 1869 – of a reduction to half, or in some places to less than a third, of the 'effective labour' supply of the pre-War situation.[8]

On a conservative calculation, Ransom and Sutch make a conjectural estimate, comparing the 1850s and the 1870s. Our immediate concern is with the years immediately following Emancipation, and the implications for the choices being made by former planters with respect to how best they might appropriate surplus from their ex-slaves. We may, however, take the Ransom and Sutch estimate as relevant to the second half of the 1860s. They take account of the reduction in labour force participation (by women and children) and the fall in both number of days worked and number of hours worked per day; although they do

not attempt to take account of the intensity of effort. They take their estimate to be the likely minimum of the actual decline. The decline was one of between 28 and 37% of the labour time 'extracted through the coercion of slavery' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 44–7].[9] That, certainly, was very much in the minds of planters, as they decided how the land would be worked.

In the second area of choice, in those early years, immediately after the end of the Civil War, many ex-slaves left the plantations: sometimes in search of estranged families, sometimes simply to test the reality of their new-found freedom, perhaps to leave the detested place of enslavement, and often to towns. Again, planters were much exercised by this. They were especially concerned about an apparently substantial movement to urban areas, since this reduced, perhaps permanently, the supply of labour for agricultural work. No doubt part of the reduction in the supply of labour time we have noted is accounted for by such migration.[10]

(iii) The Planter Class and an Attempted Capitalist Solution

With the foregoing in mind, we may ask: how would the class of former slave-owners deploy their land and their capital? How would the former slave-owners appropriate surplus from the land of which they were still proprietors? How would they re-establish a relationship of exploitation with the 4 million freed slaves – one-third of the total population of the South – who constituted a massive segment of the working population of the South? And on what basis would that relationship rest?

Given that redistribution of land did not take place, and given that an agrarian transition from below was not an immediate possibility, the potential existed of former slave-owners becoming capitalist farmers: as envisaged by Marx and as had happened in Prussia. That, indeed, was what they first reached for.

Land and labour had now to be coupled to yield surplus. The first, and natural, impulse of the former slave-owners was to retain the system with which they were familiar, and which had yielded surplus, power, privilege and class hegemony for so long. Such a system, in its new form, was one of plantations – large-scale agricultural operations – based on gang-labour, but one using, it seemed, free wage labour rather than slave labour. The planter class sought to transform itself into a class of capitalist farmers, using wage labour and appropriating surplus value via the wage relation.

Ransom and Sutch capture the immediate postbellum reaction of the former slave-owners and the system they sought to establish:

> The antebellum plantation system depended on the use of forced labour so that the granting of the freedom to the slaves undermined the primary economic advantage of this form of agricultural organisation. Nevertheless, since few large landholders in the South had experience with any other system, it was only natural that they attempt to recreate the plantation regime as nearly as possible. While the planter had little experience dealing with free labor, he could at least draw upon an established technology familiar to himself, his overseer, and the laborers. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 56]

We have argued that the slave system was inefficient and that it produced an outcome that was far less satisfactory than the potential, and likely, operation, of one based on free wage labour, i.e. capitalism. We have pointed to the backward nature, indeed, of the 'established technology' in question. From the former slave-owner's viewpoint, however, it had allowed the appropriation of a significant quantum of surplus and, at the outbreak of the Civil War, its contradictions had not yet matured to the point of that being threatened. It is not clear that the former slave-owners had a true awareness of the remarkable potential of a properly reconstituted plantation agriculture: a potential based on the harnessing of the powers of free wage labour. Their instincts, and their ideological preconceptions, as slave-owners, a master class, were deeply ingrained. They experienced great difficulty in transforming these into a genuinely capitalist rationality and world view, driven by the imperatives of capitalist accumulation.

What they did, perhaps not surprisingly, was simply try and recreate the former system as closely as possible, but in apparently capitalist form:

> So it was that in 1865 and 1866 most of the prewar plantations were reestablished. The freedmen were hired for fixed wage payments, and the work-gang system was reintroduced with only minor modifications from the slave regime...Of course, the postwar version of the plantation system had its points of difference from that of the slave era. The use of whips and other forms of corporal punishment were deemphasized – but by no means eliminated. The overseer was frequently renamed 'manager' or 'agent' or...'supertender'. Yet while the overseer's name had been changed to indicate the new order, his duties remained virtually the same...The laborers were provided housing and rations in addition to their fixed monthly wages. The housing provided was typically the old slave quarters – small cabins or barrackslike buildings with little privacy and no amenities. The weekly rations differed little, if at all, from that offered slaves. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 57]

For newly freed slaves little, it seemed, had changed. It appeared that the detested system was as it had been.

One crucial element did seem to be different. Slave labour had been replaced by wage labour. Now wages had to be paid. A remarkable variety is recorded in the 'wages offered freedmen', from some working for food and rations alone, and others as low as $2 per month in Georgia, to as high as $25 along the Mississippi River delta areas. What the average was in any area, in 1865 and 1866, is not clear, although the Freedmen's Bureau tried to ensure between $8 and 10 per month.[11]

We have seen that in those early years freedmen left the wage plantations. One notes: 'Very frequently, only a portion of the wages was paid monthly, the balance being reserved to guarantee the laborer would stay with the plantation through the season' [Ransom and Sutch, 60]. That generated resentment. Not only that but, in the conditions prevailing just after the end of the War, a lack of circulating currency meant that some planters were unable to pay the agreed money wages at all, and paid, instead, in kind or in private scrip. Bitterness and a disenchantment with the wage system no doubt grew. In some instances, a share wage was paid.[12]

Employers, moreover, were fearful of upward pressure on this new and strange entity: wages paid to black labour. Such pressure might be generated by competition in the labour market. It would certainly be exaggerated by freedom to move. There was, as we have seen, a serious labour shortage. Free labour was a dangerous beast.

Former slaves looked upon the wage plantation with growing suspicion and hostility. They had begun to exercise bargaining power.[13] They had discovered the potency of mobility.

(iv) The Planter Class, the State and the Black Codes: The Curtailment of the 'Freedom' of Free Wage Labour

Former slave-owners chose to exercise their class power through the state legislatures. The legislatures of the southern states 'controlled by the same white aristocracy that had ruled the South before the Civil War' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 66] had reacted swiftly to the menace of a free, black labour force and to labour shortage. Already, in late 1865 and early 1866, they had drafted and passed the first of the so-called Black Codes. They would continue to do so until 1886. The Thirteenth Amendment might have been accepted and slaves freed, but the freedom of black labour would be severely circumscribed.

The first of the Black Codes was passed in Mississippi in 1865, and was followed by acts in all the states of the South. They may be seen as a reaction to black labour mobility, labour shortage, and upward pressure on wages. They have been summed up as follows:

> The landowners sought protection from the competition of other employers through the passage of laws that restricted the mobility of the Negro...[It was] legislation that clearly defined an inferior status for the freedmen. Indeed, they made no pretense at hiding their intentions[14] ...A major goal of these acts was to restrict black mobility and to weaken the impact of competition in the labor market. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 66]

Measures included the rendering illegal of any efforts to entice away labour already under contract (for example, Alabama, in February, 1866); a requirement that labourers should make contracts for the subsequent year by January 10 (for example, Louisiana in December, 1865); and, universally, a 'vagrancy' statute. According to this latter,

> any freed person unable to prove in writing that he or she was employed was subject to arrest and fine. If the hapless 'vagrant' was unable to pay the fine, he or she could be bound out to hire. Such laws had the effect of restricting the ability of blacks to quit their present employment in protest or seek employment elsewhere. Since there were sanctions against potential employers seeking to bid labor away, it was difficult for a freedman to find a new job without leaving his present employer. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 67]

Freedom was, indeed, savagely curtailed.

All in all, these Black Codes represented the reaction of a class, and its representatives, still possessed of the notion that, if we may use Angelo's phrase already cited, some of the 'standard practices of slavery could be applied to free wage workers'. As Larian Angelo observes: 'The focus of the Codes in every state was to make unemployment a crime for the newly emancipated black population' [Angelo, 1995: 589]. In another formulation, they are aptly summed up:

> Essentially a series of rigid labor-control laws, the Black Codes attempted to ensure planters an immobile and dependent black labor supply lacking economic alternatives...The overall effect of the Black Codes was thus to set the status of newly emancipated African-Americans in the South as landless agricultural laborers, with no bargaining power and restricted mobility. The state government now replaced the master who had exercised such summary power under slavery. [Levine *et al*, 1989: 483]

The classic response to labour shortage in a pre-capitalist situation is to find ways of tying labour to the soil. If they were not, as many in the North thought, an attempt to reintroduce slavery [Degler, 1984: 232], or 'to keep the freedmen in quasi-slavery' [Bailyn *et al*, 1985: 499], they were certainly a concerted undertaking to restrict significantly the freedom to move and to bargain of black labour.[15]

So much for 'free wage labour'. It hardly accorded with the rendering given by Marx. As we have seen, Marx had observed, when addressing the German reader, in his Preface to the First Edition of volume 1 of *Capital*, *Le mort saisit le vif!* [Marx, 1976: 91]. 'The dead man clutches on to the living'. He did so with a vengeance here. A Republican leader in Louisiana is reported as having suggested that the intent of the Black Codes was 'for getting things back as near as slavery as possible' [Levine *et al.*, 1989: 483]. Slavery was dead, but its ghost held the countryside of the postbellum South tightly in its grip.

(v) Gathering Contradictions of 1866 and 1867: An Uncooperative Labour Force, Class Struggle and the Switch to Sharecropping

In 1866 and 1867, with widespread crop failures, large losses were incurred by planters. By now their doubts about the wisdom, or even the possibility, of continuing with such a system of barely re-constituted plantations, worked by wage labour, had grown.[16] Central to those doubts, was an increasingly uncooperative labour force that threatened the viability, and the very functioning, of the system. There was a clear shortage of labour, to which the Black Codes were a direct response.

That the labour force of former slaves should be uncooperative is not surprising. Thus:

> From the outset, the workers had expressed their displeasure with the wage plantation. The wage system as practiced by the large landowners bore an uneasy resemblance to slavery. The work gangs, the slave quarters, the overseers, the use of corporal punishment, all led to suspicion that little had been gained with freedom beyond wages. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 66]

But, wages were not proving to be satisfactory for the new wage labour force. We do have wage figures for 1867 and 1868, for five states (South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana), and they show annual money wages declining by between 7% and 40%.[17] Reports were legion, of employers cheating and breaking contracts, and colluding to reduce wages and restrict mobility. The practice continued, moreover, of retaining part of the wage until picking was over.[18]

These issues became matters of struggle. Black workers retaliated by using their new-found freedom to move: 'Despite the common practice of withholding a portion of wages due until picking had been completed, many workers apparently left the plantation in protest – temporarily or permanently – before the crop was harvested' [Ransom and Sutch, 66]. They disliked the wage plantation intensely, with its similarity to the slave plantation, and with added uncertainties attached to it. Moreover, it has been argued, they had an alternative that they sought actively. Thus: 'The facts that laborers were free to contract and in relatively short supply gave them the power in the labor market to insist on alternative arrangements. One preferred alternative was sharecropping' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 67]. By 1868 the plantation had more or less disappeared. In its place, a major form of surplus appropriation was the sharecropping contract. It would remain in place until the 1950s.

That the sharecropping contract became prevalent is beyond dispute (how prevalent, we shall see in the next sub-section). That the wage plantation failed, in large measure, because of the struggle waged by black labour seems likely. What is debateable, however, is whether the sharecropping contract was the 'alternative arrangement insisted upon' by black workers. In the Ransom and Sutch/Kolchin view, the sharecropping contract was the choice made by the freedmen and, almost, imposed upon the former planters. But the extent to which it was a choice favoured by the former plantation owners needs to be investigated. One need not adopt the 'new' neo-classical view that sharecropping, because of its risk-dispersing properties, is, in certain circumstances, a mutually beneficial outcome, favoured by both parties, to posit that planters might prefer it.[19] Rather, one might posit, planters, irrespective of any considerations of risk, might favour it because of their perception that here was a device through which they might extract the maximum surplus from direct producers. The Black Codes indicated their degree of concern with labour shortage, and their attempt to tie black labour to the soil. Their efforts to operate a gang-labour system based on wage labour had encountered formidable problems of supervision. Here was a system that might both effectively tie black labourers to the land and minimise, if not eradicate, the supervision problem. Former slaves, anxious to possess land, might favour it because of false consciousness. Here we are being speculative. It is likely that we will never be able to demonstrate the precise motivations on either side, or the relative strengths that brought about the outcome in 1868. What we can say is that sharecropping remained a deeply-entrenched part of the agrarian political economy of the South until the 1950s; and that it was, over that period, an exploitative mechanism massively to the advantage of the new landlord class.

It seems clear that one of the legacies of slavery in the American South was to make the creation of a class of free wage workers, and the establishment of capitalist relations of production, in the countryside, especially difficult. The particular form that this would take, that of a continuation of gang labour, was anathema to former slaves, and the attempts by planters to introduce a system redolent of the conditions of slavery just abolished compounded the detestation with which it was held. Problems with wage payments cemented the opposition to wage labour. Former slaves waged a successful struggle with former masters to resist their transformation into a class of free wage workers. A new set of relationships was established:

> The fact that emancipation was unaccompanied by a redistribution of land meant that a large landless class of free laborers came into being. When it became apparent that the plantation gang-labor system could no longer work using free labor, cultivation was continued by tenant farmers working small-sized one-family farms they did not own. [Ransom and Sutch: 1977: 13]

But, can it simply be that the only alternative to using wage labour was the gang-labour system? That is unlikely. Other possibilities must, surely, have existed. Be that as it may, the new class of landlords

> divided their land into family-sized farms of between 30 and 50 acres each and rented them to freedmen, either for a fixed rent, or, more typically, for a

share of the crop. Each tenant farm was then operated as an independent unit, and each became the source of income for a single black family. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 87]

Sharecropping became the dominant relationship between landlord and tenant; and replaced slavery as the dominant mode of surplus appropriation in the South.

(vi) From Planter Class to Non-Capitalist Landlord Class

In 1868, then, and very quickly thereafter, the planter class abandoned their attempt at creating a form of large-scale capitalist agriculture in the South. Thus: 'the landowners, one by one, gave up the plantation system of organization' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 87]. Overnight, more or less, they were transformed into a landlord class. In Wright's formulation, 'the planters were a "great landowning class" only after the war; previously, they were laborlords more than landlords' [Wright, 1991: 597]. The essential point made is valid, although the notion of 'labourlords' is not especially helpful analytically. Wright is, surely, correct when he argues that 'the term *planter class* applied to both slave owners and landlords obfuscates the economics of the matter [or, one might say, more usefully, the political economy of the matter – TJB]' [Wright, 1991: 596–7]. We may retain the terms planter class or master class, or, indeed, slave-owning class, with their clear reference to slavery and the relationships so entailed, to refer to the colonial and antebellum contexts; and use the term landlord class, with its connotation of tenancy, for the postbellum era.

We have, then, class transformation, the emergence of a 'new class', and new class relationships. These we need to capture. We examine the sharecropping relationship in the next section. We need, however, to dwell a little further on the new dominant class that emerged in the countryside of the South. There is something of a dispute among historians of the South.

That dispute started with the publication, in 1951, of C. Vann Woodward's *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* [Woodward, 1951]. That the planter class had dominated the antebellum South is beyond dispute. The question addressed by Vann Woodward, and several subsequent writers, was, in the words of Wright, one of the participants in the debate, 'whether the old planter class was destroyed by the war, or whether they survived to continue their regional domination' [Wright, 1991: 596]. Vann Woodward, according to Wright, argued that: 'the planter class had not survived, but had given way to a new middle class of merchants, lawyers, and industrialists, and that those who did survive largely accepted the values of the new groups' [Wright, 1991: 596].[20] What do we make of that?

That the old planter class ceased to exist after the War, we may observe, is clear enough. That the families which had formerly constituted it continued to own the land that had formed the plantations is also clear, as we have seen. Now, however, they constituted a new class: a landlord class. As Wright points out: 'Most planters may have held onto their land, but after the war, they had to deal with a nonslave labor market that was a completely new experience and that involved an "ideological capitulation" they took several years to complete' [Wright, 1991: 597]. What manner of landlord class was this?

Whether that 'ideological capitulation' was one that might justify categorising them as capitalist landlords, in the sense that describes, say, English eighteenth and nineteenth century landlords, is most doubtful. They had not become capitalist farmers and they were not capitalist landlords. As Mann observes: 'it appears that, despite the abolition of slavery, the older plantation South continued to be dominated by noncapitalist forms of production until the Great Depression' [Mann, 1990: 92–3].[21] From the viewpoint of our concern with accumulation and with capitalist industrialisation, it is important to stress that. They were not capitalist landlords in the sense that they did embrace or encourage capitalist relations of production or a capitalist attitude towards accumulation.

Marx, we recall, had contemplated the day 'when the former slave-owner engaged his former slaves as paid workers'. He did so almost immediately after the end of the Civil War. But, in the event, capitalist agriculture did not come to the South the day after the end of the Civil War, in the spring of 1865. Nor, indeed, was it in recognisable reach of that. A solution of the Prussian variety did not obtain in the immediate aftermath of abolition. It was the case that Marx's looking forward to when 'the slave ceases to be an instrument of production at the disposal of his owner' [Marx, 1976: 1020] had come to pass. But a form of surplus appropriation other than the wage relation was established. Let us now examine that.

Lenin, we recall, suggested that, by the time he wrote his text on the United States, in 1915, the dominant trend in agriculture in the United States was one towards wage labour. This was clearly not the case in the South. Lenin, indeed, pointed to the prevalence of share-cropping there, very predominantly among black cultivators [Lenin, 1964b: 25]. Whether, indeed, wage labour represented the dominant trend in the North we need also to consider. That will be one of the objects of the next chapter. But in the South share-cropping must be one of our major concerns. If slavery was dead, share-cropping had replaced it as one of the major forms of surplus appropriation in the American South.

3 SHARECROPPING

(i) Freedmen, the Desire for Autonomy, and the Sharecropping Option

As we have seen, given the prevalence of the gang-labour system as the major way of working plantations with slave labour, a possible option existed of retaining that system but with free wage labour rather than slave labour. In the immediate aftermath of abolition, efforts were made to continue with the gang-labour system, throughout the South – in the cotton South, the tobacco South and the

sugar South, but, with the exception of some sugar-growing areas, these did not prove successful.[22]

It has been suggested, as we have seen, that this was because such efforts were resisted by former slaves who had an extreme dislike for a system so intimately associated with slavery, and who were suspicious of and dissatisfied with the wage system as it operated in the 1860s in the South. As free labour, they exercised choice for the first time and, opting for what seemed to be the maximum amount of autonomy, showed a marked reluctance to become free wage labour. They wanted land, it is argued but, of course, what was on offer was land for rent. Of the various forms of rental arrangement, the argument runs, sharecropping was the one favoured by blacks. Kolchin sums up such a position:

> In the countryside, where the vast majority of freedpeople remained, blacks struggled to square "free labor" with their own ideas of freedom. Faced with a variety of possible agricultural relationships, they repeatedly opted for those that afforded the greatest autonomy and resisted those that smacked of slave-like subservience. Seeking most of all to acquire land of their own they generally favored rental and sharecropping arrangements over dependent wage labor, and vigorously resisted remnants of the old order such as gang labor under the supervision of overseers. The freedpeople were not able to achieve all their goals; landownership remained an unrealized dream for most, and in parts of the South – for example the sugar fields of southern Louisiana – gang labor continued to prevail. Throughout most of the cotton and tobacco South, however, blacks forced a fundamental change in agricultural relations, change that brought them a substantial increase in social autonomy. [Kolchin, 1995: 217–8]

This appears to be a considered and persuasive argument. We need, however, to approach it with care, and recast it, perhaps, in more appropriate terms.

At issue is the degree of choice open to former slaves. Moreover, even if one allows some element of 'choice' at this juncture that should not be projected on to the sharecropping system as it would actually function. That is an altogether different situation, that needs to be assessed separately.

(ii) Sharecropping as a Form of Surplus Appropriation

There is, surely, a kernel of truth in the argument expounded by Kolchin, and suggested previously by Ransom and Sutch. That former slaves should have a profound abhorrence for anything reminiscent of slavery is undeniable. That they should have wanted land is highly probable. But whether they had quite the degree of freedom of choice suggested, in the face of the class power of the former planter class, might be seen to be doubtful. And whether 'sharecropping arrangements' attracted quite the considered favour suggested, requires more

proof than is given. Before any such position might be occupied more evidence is called for, rather than what is little more than a speculative hypothesis.

Of course, freedmen might have favoured the sharecropping contract at the moment of crisis in the wage plantation system, in 1868. That is not inconsistent with a later change of stance. The nature of the sharecropping relationship in the South, over the years of its persistence, needs to be considered. Certainly, apart from neo-classical rationalisations of sharecropping (or, more accurately, 'new' neo-classical rationalisations, since the traditional neo-classical, Marshallian, view was less than enthusiastic[23]), the thrust of the literature on share tenancy, both historically and in, for example, contemporary developing countries, does not suggest, *a priori*, a necessarily favourable relationship for sharecroppers [see, for example, Byres, ed., 1983, *passim*]. That, however, we need to consider in the context of the American South.

What the Kolchin view fails to acknowledge is that the relationships into which free blacks entered in the postbellum South were those of exploitation: not exploitation in the 'romantic' sense of stark oppression (of which slavery is a clear illustration, although neo-classical interpretations, in the Fogel and Engerman tradition, manage to deny that consistently), but in the technical sense of surplus appropriation. Freedom did not signify an absence of exploitation. It simply meant a differently constituted exploitation. That we need to explore.

Before doing so, we may identify the extent of tenancy in the postbellum South, the incidence of sharecropping within tenancy arrangements, and the degree to which black and white tenants differed in this respect. We may also distinguish the identifying characteristics of the different forms of tenancy to be found, with a focus on sharecropping.

(iii) The Extent of Tenancy, the Incidence of Sharecropping, and the Racial Element: With Some Comparisons with the North

Table 7.1 is revealing with respect to tenancy between 1880 and 1920. 1880, indeed, was the year in which 'the first statistics on tenancy were collected' systematically in the United States [Atack, 1988: 6], and those figures came as 'something of a surprise' (loc. cit.), showing, as they did, a surprisingly high incidence of tenancy for the United States as a whole, and in both South and North. The figures for the South were rather less surprising, since its image was not of an area of owner-occupancy, sturdy homesteaders and an open frontier.

Table 7.1 shows that in the South as a whole in 1880, some fifteen years after the end of the Civil War, the proportion of all farms worked by tenants was 36%: this being constant among the three groupings of southern states (South Atlantic, East South Central and West South Central), at between 35 and 37%. By 1900 the average had risen to 47%, and between 44 and 49% among the groupings; and by 1920 to 50%, or between 47 and 53%. The incidence of tenancy in the South, already large in 1880, at 36% of all farms, grew steadily between 1880 and 1920, to reach a remarkable 50%.

Table 7.1 Proportion of farms operated by tenants in the United States by region, 1880–1920 (per cent)

Region	*1880*	*1890*	*1900*	*1910*	*1920*
North	19.2	22.1	26.2	26.5	28.2
New England	8.5	9.3	9.4	8.0	7.4
Middle Atlantic	19.2	22.1	25.3	22.3	20.7
East North Central	20.5	22.8	26.3	27.0	28.1
West North Central	20.5	24.0	29.6	30.9	34.2
South	36.2	38.5	47.0	49.6	49.6
South Atlantic	36.1	38.5	44.2	45.9	46.8
East South Central	36.8	38.3	48.1	50.7	49.7
West South Central	35.2	38.6	49.1	52.8	52.9
West	14.0	12.1	16.6	14.0	17.7
Mountain	7.4	7.1	12.2	10.7	15.4
Pacific	16.8	14.7	19.7	17.2	20.1
United States	25.6	28.4	35.3	37.0	38.1

Source: Wright [1988: 186, table 2]. Wright takes these figures from the US Special Committee on Farm Tenancy, *Farm Tenancy* (1937), pp. 39, 96.

That incidence is significantly higher than in the states of the North and the West, although there, too, tenancy was substantially present and growing: with the proportions rising, over the same years, respectively from 19 to 26 to 28% and from 14 to 17 to 18%. To that we will return in the next chapter. It is important. It is remarkable that in the United States as a whole the proportion rose from 26% in 1880 to 38% in 1920. This sits ill with that notion of owner-occupancy that adheres to nineteenth century America. It is not, of course, a notion that adheres to the black South.

To get at some notion of the proportion of tenanted land held under sharecropping agreements, we may concentrate on the Cotton South. Table 7.2 reveals the following for 1880. Just over 51% of all farms were tenanted, and these worked 24% of the available land and covered 39% of total acres harvested. Of these tenanted farms 72% were sharecropped, the rest being rented for fixed cash rent. Sharecropping farms worked 61% of all tenanted land and 65% of all tenant acres harvested.[24] If we take the median year of 1910, for the whole of the South, 66% of tenant farmers were sharecroppers [Lenin, 1964b: 25].

In racial terms, in that same year in the Cotton South (see Table 7.3), while 34% of white farmers were tenants the figure for black farmers was 80%, and while 26% of white farmers were sharecroppers the black figure was 54%. Only 16% of total white land was tenanted, compared to 60% for blacks; 9% of white land was sharecropped and 40% of black.

Table 7.2 Distribution of farms and farm land in the Cotton South in 1880, by form of tenure

Form of tenure	*Per cent distribution of farms**	*Per cent of all land in each class**	*Per cent of total harvested acres in each class**
All Farms	100	100	100
Owned	48.6	76.5	60.8
Tenanted	51.4	23.5	39.2
Rented	14.4 (28)	9.2 (39)	13.6 (35)
Sharecropped	37.0 (72)	14.3 (61)	25.6 (65)

* Figures in brackets are the percentages to total tenanted land.
Source: Ransom and Sutch [1977: 68, table 43].

Table 7.3 Distribution of farm land in the Cotton South in 1880, by race

Form of land tenure	*% Distribution of farms to total of black and white**		*% Distribution of land to total of black and white**		*% Distribution of harvested acres to total of black and white**	
	White	*Black*	*White*	*Black*	*White*	*Black*
All farms	100	100	100	100	100	100
Owned	66	20	84	40	73	32
Tenanted	34	80	16	60	27	68
Rented	8 (24)	26 (33)	7 (44)	20 (33)	10	23 (34)
Sharecropped	26 (76)	54 (67)	9 (56)	40 (67)	17	45 (66)

* Figures in brackets are the percentages to total tenanted land.
Source: Calculated from the data in Ransom and Sutch [1977: 84, table 5.3].

That sharecropping was of central significance as a mode of surplus appropriation in the South is clear. It is equally clear that its incidence was far higher among black than among white farmers. It was by no means absent in the North and the West, however. Indeed, its incidence was high, and in the North almost as high as in the South (as a proportion of all tenants). In 1910, in what Lenin refers to as the 'free' West, some 47% of tenants (25,000 out of 53,000 tenants) were share-croppers; while in the 'old North' the figure was 63% (483,000 out of 766,000 tenants) [Lenin, 1964b: 25]. This we will discuss in the next chapter.

What did this entail? What, precisely, did sharecropping encompass? What was the nature of the sharecropping relationship?

(iv) Sharecropping in the American South: Twofold Exploitation and Two Forms of Direction

In the late 1860s, with the abandonment of the wage plantation, a system of tenancy had been adopted, in its place: a system of family-sized farms of between 30 and 50 acres, rented out for a share of the crop. It is that system which we now wish to explore.

Central to the sharecropping system was the relationship between landlord and tenant and that we will wish to consider in detail. But the tenant was subject not only to landlord capital, but also to merchant capital. As we shall see, the operation of the system was critically dependent upon both forms of exploitation. The sharecropper was subject to a 'double squeeze', and his labour process and production 'decisions' (to the extent that he had any decision-making scope) to two forms of direction: he experienced the appropriation of surplus in two distinct forms, a rental surplus and an interest surplus; while pressures from both landlord and merchant converged to bring about a common outcome. This twofold exploitation must, on occasion, have existed in distinct circuits, with landlord and merchant being separate entities. But frequently, although to an extent that historians appear not to have identified, 'the landowner and the merchant were the same individual' [Ransom and Sutch, 1975: 416]. In this, perhaps common instance, two forms of direction and exploitation were utilised by a single class. We have, then, a manifestation of *interlinked modes of exploitation*. We must bear that in mind. But let us proceed separately with the two circuits, in order to lay bare the nature, logic and implications of each form of exploitation. We will bring in the interlinking of modes of exploitation where appropriate. First, however, it is worth pausing to consider interlinkage in this sense.

(v) Interlinked Modes of Exploitation: Some Insights from Another Context

It was the distinguished Indian political economist, Krishna Bharadwaj, who first drew attention rigorously, if briefly, to this relationship (in the general context of Indian agrarian relations) [Bharadwaj, 1969]. It was she who conceived it in terms of 'interlocking of markets'.[25] She would later develop her analysis [Bharadwaj, 1979], and provide a magisterial treatment [Bharadwaj, 1985]. Amit Bhaduri analysed, in 1973, a relationship of interlinked exploitation in the context of West Bengal, although he did not term it that. He identified it as the central mechanism of semi-feudalism [Bhaduri, 1973]. That, too, was an important statement. Neo-classical economists would later be attracted to the issue, although they would give it a very different treatment: emphasising mutuality rather than exploitation in the relationships in question.[26] It is the political economy treatment we will pursue here.

Krishna Bharadwaj provides a clear and cogent political economy definition. Writers in this tradition use the terms 'inter-linked [factor] markets' and 'interlinked modes of exploitation' interchangeably, although the latter is the more accurate representation for them. Those within the neo-classical tradition, of course (such as Pranab Bardhan, Kaushik Basu A. Braverman, T.N. Srinivasan, J.E. Stiglitz[27]) will use only the former. Krishna Bharadwaj tells us that a 'predominant phenomenon characterising exchange that has received prominent attention from economists and has been noted descriptively by a number of historians is what has been called "interlinked markets"' [Bharadwaj, 1985: 12]. She defines this, and provides relevant examples.

For her, this is clearly a phenomenon which exists in backward agriculture, and which must be analysed in class terms. The possible analytical relevance, in the context of the Postbellum South is clear. It is, in essence, on this view, a particular form of exploitation: a particular way of securing and maximising surplus extraction, for dominant classes. Thus, to quote Bharadwaj, the defining characteristic of these 'interlinked markets' is that: 'A dominant party conjointly exploits the weaker parties in two or more markets by interlinking the terms of contracts' (loc. cit.). Although here the language of 'contracts' and 'markets' is invoked, this is not a phenomenon to be analysed in terms of 'market imperfections'. On the contrary, within this tradition such a procedure would be quite inappropriate. The class relationships, and the exploitation, proceed on the basis of a set of 'personalised relationships': and a set of 'personal values', rather than 'market values'. These are not determined by the market. As Bharadwaj observes: 'The exchanges are set not only in terms of 'prices' but there can be non-price factors, explicit and/or implicit, which mainly rely on personal dominance and power equations' [Bharadwaj, 1980: 11]. This takes a variety of forms. Before drawing out more fully the implications of the political economy definition, let us consider the examples of inter-linkage as given by Bharadwaj. This will clarify the definition.

Let us take first the land–labour interlinkage, which, says Bharadwaj, 'prevails quite widely'. Here: 'the landlord stipulates, as part of the tenancy contract, attachment of labour services which are underpaid or unpaid. The tenurial conditions also differ depending upon the relative status of the landlord and the tenant' [Bharadwaj, 1985: 12]. So a prospective tenant can obtain a piece of land on rent (say as a sharecropper) only if he agrees to supply his labour to the landlord, for work on the landlord's operated area, at less than market wages, or for no wage at all. Otherwise, he will not have access to the land market. He does not have 'free and equal access to the market' [Bharadwaj, 1980: 12]. Moreover, entry to it will be on a personal basis. As we shall see, this particular interlinkage has clear relevance in relation to sharecropping in the Postbellum South.

Let us take, secondly, the land–credit linkage, which is of direct relevance in the context of the Postbellum South, since this is the form of interlinkage we see

there. In this case: 'a landlord also operates as a creditor [moneylender] and stipulates conditions regarding the type of crops to be grown or hypothecates in the form of a committed sale, the whole of part of the produce over and above rent' (loc. cit). Here a landlord will (i) provide a piece of land; (ii) provide a loan; (iii) as a condition for the loan insist that the loan is repaid in kind (at a price significantly unfavourable to the tenant/borrower). Again, there is no free access to 'markets', and entry is on a personal basis. If the landlord were, in addition, a trader, one would have a triple linkage: land–credit–trade. If, further, he insisted on labour services, it would be quadruple: land–credit–trade–labour.

Thirdly, the moneylender-cum-trader is a common figure. Take sugarcane in India. Here: 'credits were attached to the cultivation of sugarcane to be sold to the merchant...at pre-fixed prices much lower than the prevailing market rates' (loc. cit.). The need for cash (to settle revenue, or meet a variety of other obligations) 'compelled small peasants to accept credit on such onerous terms' (loc. cit.). Let us consider the essence of the relationship, as it is viewed within this tradition, and as it emerges from the definition considered.

If we may recapitulate, what we have, then, is the following. In each case a dominant class (whether in the shape of a landlord, a moneylender, or a trader, or someone who combines some or all of these activities) is in a particular class relationship with a subordinate class (usually with a poor peasant). In the American South it is a landlord class in relationship with sharecropping tenants. The subordinate class does not have free access to markets. Entry will be on a personal basis. The class relationship allows the dominant party/class to insist that the weaker party/subordinate class accepts a manifestly unfavourable 'contract' in one market as a condition for allowing access to another market. In the American South, there are formal contracts. This, however, may not be written into them. That 'contract' is unfavourable in the sense that its terms are clearly inferior to terms which would be accepted, or negotiated, in an open or free market; and which others may be observed to obtain in such markets. Manifestly, there is a perceived compelling need for the 'weaker party', the subordinate class, to secure access to one market: for survival, reproduction, for cash to permit this. This the 'dominant party' takes advantage of, in order to force compliance with the terms in the other market (or markets). So it is that exploitation is secured, cemented, and, in the given circumstances, maximised.

Compulsive involvement in exchange (the compulsion not of the whip, nor of legal sanction, but of everyday circumstance: the compulsion inherent in production relations) forces subordinate classes into interlinked 'contracts'. Moreover, dominant classes deliberately use interlinked 'contracts': to increase 'compulsion', to close off options, for their own gain. Such, according to the political economy representation, is the essence of the relationship embodied in inter-linkage.

We have noted that interlinking secures, cements and maximises exploitation. Let us elaborate that general consequence, by considering (a) how it is secured and (b) what other consequences flow from it.

It is secured by denying participants in interlinked markets access to any of the individual markets, in which better terms might be obtained; or, if it does not completely prevent such access, it limits it significantly. Here is the first consequence, if you like. As Krishna Bharadwaj puts it:

> the weaker party in exchange loses the option to exercise choice in other markets due to its commitment in one. For example, the tenant who has committed himself into a land-labour tie (that is, to render free or underpaid labour services on the landlord's land as part of the lease-contract) cannot avail himself of opportunities to hire himself out at a higher wage, even when such opportunities present themselves. The producer of a commercial crop who borrows on the commitment of selling his output to the merchant/creditor cannot gain from the higher return otherwise possible as he loses the option of selling it in the market. Often, unlike pure usurious capital, the merchant-creditor intervenes directly in the production organisation of the debtor, dictating the decisions regarding the crops to be produced. [Bharadwaj, 1985: 13]

So, we have a 'closing of options'.

This 'closing of options', in its turn, has a crucial implication. The relation of exploitation is *cemented* since the 'closing of options weakens the possibility of the indebted party recovering from a dependency situation, especially when there are no alternative means of livelihood' [Bharadwaj, 1985: 13]. Moreover, there is a further aspect, which makes interlinking especially attractive to the 'dominant party'.

It maximises the rate of exploitation, through time, by the range and the depth of control which it makes possible:

> The power of the dominant party to exploit in interlinked markets is much more than in markets taken separately. There are conventional limits to exploitation in any one single market. For example, the crop share is conventionally laid down. The division of produce becomes a matter of convention...There are also limits to exploitation set by the sheer minimum survival needs of the exploited party. With interlinked markets exploitation can be spread over markets (such as intervening in an output market on the basis of a credit tie) and even across generations, when the labour of future generations is committed by the debtor or tenant. Moreover, with options receding for the weaker party, the situation develops as one of dominant control over the entire livelihood of the weaker party. In proportion as the dominant party stretches the domain of exploitation, the weaker party's possibilities of redress diminish. [Bharadwaj, 1985: 13]

There are yet wider implications, it is postulated.

These wider implications we may identify as follows. All of this has important consequences for 'the central question of the generation of surplus, its form

and its distribution and the macro-consequences that follow for the character and pace of accumulation' [Bharadwaj, 1985: 13]. We have suggested the implications for distribution (to the significant advantage of the 'dominant party', and to the great detriment of the 'weaker party'). What about the generation of surplus, its form and the character and pace of accumulation?

The essential point that is made is as follows. The poverty that prevails in a 'backward agriculture', and which is intensified by interlinking of modes of exploitation, and the dependency which interlinking secures, are crucial. They encourage particular forms of capital investment: a particular pattern of investment. Accumulation, in these circumstances, takes on a particular character. 'Usurious', 'mercantile' and 'speculative' forms of investment are the norm: because for dominant classes, those who extract and control the surplus, usury (i.e. moneylending), trade and speculation pay handsomely. Poverty and dependency make very high rates of interest possible; make profit on trade high, because of the low prices at which commodities can be bought; make speculation attractive, because commodity markets are 'unformed'. The rate of return on these is far higher than any alternative rate of return [Bharadwaj, 1985: 15].

The consequences are, it is held, of great significance. They are summed up thus: 'investment goes into unproductive channels. Productive investment, meaning investment that enhances output growth is at a disadvantage...Where possibilities of exploiting labour become almost limitless there is less incentive to improve productive forces, that is, undertake productive investment' [Bharadwaj, 1985: 15,]. So it is that the rate of reinvestment of surplus, and hence 'the growth of surplus itself' [Bharadwaj, 1985: 15], are influenced. They are far less than they would be if a greater incentive to undertake productive investment existed. Such an incentive does not exist because of the high rates of return available in 'unproductive activities'. These are powerfully sustained by interlinked modes of exploitation.

A particular kind of economy, then, emerges, where interlinked modes of exploitation are prevalent. But a further point is argued. Such an economy, it is held, is likely to be peculiarly resistant to change: to the forces of transformation. This will be so for several reasons. Let us note two. Both are relevant to the Postbellum South.

Firstly, because of the advantage secured by dominant classes, through 'the underdevelopment or muted formation' of markets [Bharadwaj, 1985: 15] the growth of capitalist markets – fully-formed markets – is powerfully constrained: will be resisted. Markets, we may say, are likely to be 'thin'. So any impulses towards transformation, via this route, are stifled.

Secondly, in such a 'backward agriculture' there will be powerful dampening of the incentives to innovate in agriculture; and resistance, therefore, to technical progress in agriculture. This will be so because it will be perceived as a threat by landlords to the central basis of their surplus-extracting activities. Peasants involved in interlinked markets will be able to escape because of their enhanced income-earning capacity: will, for example, be able to discharge usurious loans

and avoid them in future; will be able to negotiate better deals on the land they rent, and resist, perhaps, having to supply underpaid or unpaid labour; or having to supply crops at unfavourable prices; and so on. Transformation via development of the productive forces, therefore, will be powerfully constrained, because of the opposition of dominant classes. As we shall see, this argument has clear relevance with respect to the South.

This latter proposition, especially as stated by Bhaduri [Bhaduri, 1973], has attracted particular attention. It is developed as follows by Bhaduri. First, let us consider the system as it functions to the advantage of the dominant class. Its rationale, its essential logic is thus:

> the existing semi-feudal relations of production [based upon interlinked modes of exploitation] allow the simultaneous operation of two modes of exploitation – exploitation based on the landowner's traditional property rights to land as well as that based on usury...[S]ince the persistence of usury as an important mode of exploitation depends largely on the *kishan's* [i.e. the peasant's] having to borrow regularly for consumption, the continuation of the system requires that the available balance of paddy of the *kishan* must always fall short of his consumption requirements. (p. 135)

Enter the possibility of technological improvements: of yield-enhancing technical change (say of the 'green revolution' variety). Such 'technological improvements'

> which raise the productivity level of the *kishan*, become undesirable to the landowner to the extent that they increase the *kishan's* available balance of paddy in relation to his consumption level so as to reduce his requirements for consumption-loans. For it weakens the system of semi-feudalism, where economic and political power of the landlord is largely based on his power to keep the *kishan* constantly indebted to him. Further, since the semi-feudal landowner derives his income both from property rights to land and usury, he will be discouraged from introducing any technological improvement so long as his gain in income from increased productivity brought about by technological change falls short of his loss in income from usury due to a reduction (or complete elimination) in the level of consumption-loan required by the *kishan*. (p. 135)

Thus, Bhaduri continues:

> in certain circumstances...the semi-feudal landowner may be caught in an almost paradoxical situation: he is rationally (i.e. on economic grounds) put off from a small improvement...which perpetuates indebtedness but reduces his overall income, while he is put off from a big improvement because it makes the *kishan* free from perpetual debt and destroys the political and econ-

omic control of the landowner over his *kishan*, even though on exclusively economic grounds, it may be profitable to him. (pp. 135–6)

This has been the subject of great controversy. How valid is it? Are, indeed, interlinked modes of exploitation likely to be so especially resistant to the forces of transformation? The argument has attracted powerful opposition, both from within the political economy camp and from elsewhere.[28]

My position is that it does have considerable validity, but that it makes insufficient attempt to identify the circumstances in which the forces of change may be so strong as to prevail. Its validity is testified to by the tenacity with which such relationships persisted in the American South (from the late 1860s until the 1950s). But the forces of change did, eventually, prevail. That transition, that prolonged 'moment of transformation', we will discuss below. The fault in the Bhaduri argument, perhaps, is that it simply does not seek to contemplate the manner in which the postulated logic of semi-feudalism ceases to hold.

Let us now focus upon the sharecropping relationship, as it manifested itself in the South.

4 THE SHARECROPPING RELATIONSHIP

(i) The Share

Before 1868, when sharecropping was firmly established as a dominant form of surplus appropriation, there was, in 1866 and 1867, a diversity of sharecropping contracts. Clearly, there had to be an initial trying out of a system that was 'in the Cotton South...an almost unprecedented form of labor organization' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 88]. During that experimental period, landlords attempted to impose very low shares on former slaves: shares that were clearly totally inadequate as a means of ensuring family subsistence. A variety of arrangements was tried, with sharecroopers being 'provisioned by the landlord' in some and providing 'a part of their own support' in others, and with the share as little as 10% or 20% of the crop [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 89]. In 1868 the share seemed to be standardised at 50:50 throughout the Cotton South, with the sharecropper receiving everything but food and clothing. We may now consider that.

Ransom and Sutch, surveying the not inconsiderable available evidence, tell us that, 'throughout the South...it is extremely rare, after 1868, to find any terms other than equal division of the crops in a sharecropping contract' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 89].[29] This 'universality', 'over a long period of time', they say, persisted, despite the fact that 'the demand for and supply of land typically vary from place to place and year to year... [and this] seems surprising' (loc. cit.). They suggest that one possible explanation is 'the simplicity of the fifty-fifty split' (loc. cit.).[30] It certainly was simple. But that cannot possibly have been the

explanation, in anything other than a superficial sense. They quickly reject it as satisfactory explanation. What, then, is the explanation?

Their suggested explanation has two possible components, one of which they embrace as crucial. The first is the suggestion that it is not the share that matters, so much as measures to ensure maximum intensity of cultivation by the sharecropping family, and so maximum output per acre. Thus, to unpack the argument, if we assume a constant share of 50:50, clearly, for any landlord, 50% of a total gross output of, say, 120 standard units (achieved through maximum intensity of cultivation) is to be preferred to 50% of a crop of 90 units (achieved via less than maximum intensity). Equally clearly, an increased landlord share of 60% of the latter is an inferior outcome for the landlord.

The second component is the possibility of altering the actual share by imposing various 'side conditions' on the sharecropper. If, let us say, the sharecropper were forced to meet certain expenses before the supposed 50:50 share were made, i.e. if it were net and not gross output that were shared, then the actual landlord share rises, perhaps significantly. Another 'side condition' (encountered in contemporary Third World countries) might be the need to supply labour to the landlord's home farm (if he has one). This, almost, is a form of labour rent. It is clearly a manifestation of interlinked modes of exploitation. If it existed, and if it were included in the rental surplus, it would certainly serve to increase the latter.

Ransom and Sutch suggest these two components as alternatives. But it is conceivable that both might be used. That would need to be investigated empirically.

(ii) Devices Other Than the Share to Ensure Maximum Intensity of Cultivation: Size of Holding

Let us, then, consider the Ransom and Sutch representation of the evidence, and their interpretation of it. We may consider, also, other of the relevant work on sharecropping in the Postbellum South. Thus, Ransom and Sutch present their treatment as follows:

> But simplicity of contract terms alone cannot explain the uniform choice of a single rental share. The explanation lies in the fact that it proved unnecessary to bargain over the share. Adjustments to the contractual arrangement between landlord and laborer could be made by varying other contract terms. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 89]

That certainly is plausible. In fact, what they are saying is that less important than the share are devices to ensure maximum rental surplus for the landlord, by enforcing maximum intensity of cultivation by the sharecropper and his family. We encounter such a possibility, when considering the theoretical literature on sharecropping: in the writing, for example, of John Stuart Mill, Alfred Marshall and D. Gale Johnson.[31] But what, in the Postbellum South, did it involve?

Ransom and Sutch suggest that the crucial device in this respect was variation in the size of holding:

> The critical variable appears to have been the number of acres allotted to each tenant family. With a fixed share rent the laborer would seek to obtain as much land as he could in order to maximise his output and hence the return to his efforts. The landlord, on the other hand, would view the labor supply as fixed both in quantity and quality by the size and experience of the tenant's family. Therefore, he would wish to limit the amount of land granted so as to increase the yield per acre through more intensive cultivation. A small plot would yield high output per acre, but low yields per man. Granting more land would increase the laborer's income, but simultaneously decrease the landlord's yield per acre. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 90]

That seems plausible enough,[32] although no actual evidence is produced to support the argument.[33] Apart from that, the argument is incomplete.

Critically, as thus formulated in the text, it omits two important consideration, which Gale Johnson identifies clearly [Johnson, 1950]. The first is that the critical size of holding is one which might, with considerable effort (considerable input of labour per acre), given the technology, just yield sufficient subsistence for the sharecropper and his family, so that leisure is not a meaningful choice. Such a condition must be inserted. Secondly, one must further postulate that the sharecropper is 'restricted in outside earnings' (as Gale Johnson has it). If he is not, the possibility exists of diversion of labour to other activities, off the holding. Both suggest very considerable asymmetry of class power in favour of the landlord.

The first is not mentioned. The second is carried forward in a footnote, where it is suggested, almost as an afterthought, that the argument 'assumes that the laborer is not free to seek part-time work off the tenant farm without the landlord's permission' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 337, n. 32]. If such work were available, and if the sharecropper or a member of his family could obtain it, and were free to take it, then a comparison of the wage and the marginal return to extra labour on the farm would have to be made (the opportunity cost of labour), to decide on whether it was worth taking. But, they further argue, the sharecropper did not have that choice: 'This seems to have been the case, since the amount of labour to be applied was either explicitly or implicitly agreed to by both parties as part of the contract' (loc. cit.). A sample contract is cited to that effect. The contract in question [see Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 91, figure 5.1] is hardly proof of that, since it is extremely vague in what it specifies. What seems likely is that careful supervision by the landlord might have secured that end. We will return to the evidence on such supervision.

If, indeed, the Ransom and Sutch argument in this respect is valid, it indicates a rental surplus maximising strategy backed up by a remarkable degree of landlord control. They adopt a Bell and Zusman-like terminology: 'The ultimate outcome of the bargaining process, of course, depended on the market strength of the two parties, as well as the quality of the land and labour' [Bell and Zusman, 1976: 90]. It is not, we suggest, a 'bargaining process' at all, and neither are we here dealing with 'two parties'. We confront two classes and it is a form of class struggle that was taking place: a struggle waged in circumstances of considerable asymmetry of class power. In that struggle, landlords seem to have been at a considerable advantage.

The landlord strategy to limit the size of holding and control the possibility of outside wage labour is surely credible. This, indeed, was one of the four techniques suggested by D. Gale Johnson. But what is the evidence for such a technique being deployed? Ransom and Sutch supply none.

(iii) Other Landlord Devices

One also wonders whether this was the only device employed by landlords in the Postbellum South. Ransom and Sutch suggest that it was not: 'Where a precise adjustment of the fixed share contract could not be reached by varying the size of farm, adjusting the terms of the agreement concerning such items as supplemental duties of the tenant and the allocation of minor expenses sufficed to adjust the "true" share rent per acre' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 90]. They argue that such 'side conditions' were necessary only where there was difficulty in adjusting the size of holding. They may be right. But one is not wholly convinced that these 'side conditions' were not more widespread than they suggest.[34]

Ransom and Sutch sum up the sharecropping contract as follows, and in so doing add further to the sense of the asymmetrical and powerfully exploitative nature of the sharecropping relationship:

> With these sources of flexibility [i.e. the ability to vary the size of holding, supplemented, where necessary, by 'side conditions'], it was unnecessary to bargain over the division of the crop as well. Despite occasional instances in which the sharecropping contract was complicated by side conditions, most sharecropping contracts were quite simple. They specified the amount of land to be tilled in each crop, the specific amount of capital to be supplied by the landowner, the proportion in which the crops were to be divided, the term of the lease (invariably one year), and a provision that the tenant should follow the landlord's direction concerning the management of the farm. Not all these provisions had to be spelled out in the contract. Thus, the provision regarding the division of land among crops was often implicit in the requirement that the seed be provided by the landowner. The sharecropper could plant only those crops for which he had been provided seed...in fact, sharecropping involved considerable direction by the landlord. Without such supervision the tenant might have been tempted to put too large a portion of his time to an alternative use...The sharecropping contract that had become standard by the early

> 1870s required the landlord to provide the land, housing, fuel, working stock, feed for the stock, farming implements and seed. The freedman and his family provided the labor and fed and clothed themselves. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 90]

In addition, they tell us, the sharecropper might have to supply considerable labour for work (presumably unpaid) on the landlord's farm (loc. cit.). Unfortunately, the nature of such work is not specified, and nor is its incidence.

They argue, further, that control of the size of holding was accompanied by insecurity of tenure:

> One of the major obstacles to long-term investment in the farm was the invariable practice of annual contracting. Annual contracting and insecurity of tenure were important devices used by the landlord to ensure the faithful cultivation of the tenant farm...in the American South, there was no security of tenure for the laborer...insecurity of tenure was an important incentive to diligent labor. [Ransom and Such, 1977: 101 and 103]

The one-year lease, it seems, was one which meant essential insecurity of tenure. We will return to the implications of this in the next sub-section. But certainly, to a marked degree, the tenant, if we may recall Marshall and Gale Johnson, was, in this sense, not 'free to cultivate as he chooses'. Moreover, in another and very specific sense, there was, effectively, 'constant interference' by the landlord. We may pursue this last point.

It is one which is borne out by much other work on sharecropping in the South[35] A recent scholar, Ferleger, summing this up and adding his own evidence (to which we will return), refers to the 'close supervision of sharecroppers' [Ferleger, 1993: 43], and cites an earlier writer [Brooks, 1914a: 48] to the effect that 'this practice of supervision dates back to the inception of the share system'. Ferleger, on a basis of the available evidence, tells us:

> Historical documents from the late nineteenth century show that sharecroppers, especially black sharecroppers, were very closely supervised and had very little decision-making power over farm practices...Landlords exercised a high degree of supervision and influence over their sharecroppers...[S]harecroppers were required...to obey many directives from the landlord, on a regular basis...[Many] contracts included the key phrase: All orders to be implicitly obeyed...Sharecropping contracts show that landlords actively and aggressively oversaw the operations of their sharecroppers. [Ferleger, 1993: 32, 40–2]

That is to say, the landlord class in the Postbellum South had the means to ensure maximum intensity of application of labour; which, in turn, meant maximum surplus appropriation.

We note, also, a propos of the 50:50 share, the following. When comparing the labour income of sharecroppers and other tenants, in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta in 1913, Ferleger notes: 'These sums, however, are not what the tenants received since the landlord's expenses needed to be deducted' [Ferleger, 1993: 34]. In other words, it was net and not gross output that was divided. Or, as Ransom and Sutch point out more generally: 'If fertilizer was to be used, the landlord would choose the brand and amount and its cost was to be deducted from the final output before the crop was divided' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 90], That is to say, it was net output that was divided. In practice, it was not a 50:50 split at all.

(iv) Debt

We have mentioned above the possibility of debt being a further means of ensuring maximum intensity of cultivation by the sharecropper, and, indeed, a further means of appropriating surplus. Debt certainly loomed large in the sharecropper's universe. That debt, it is traditionally stated (and it is a long tradition), was to the merchant. As we have pointed out, however, often merchant and landlord would be one and the same, deploying interlinked modes of exploitation. Let us focus, however, on the debt mechanism (bearing in mind, of course, that it may be a landlord device).

Sharecroppers, Ransom and Sutch argue, were caught in a form of 'debt peonage' Ransom and Sutch [1972]; [1973]; [1975]; [1977: 162–70]. The argument is stated with great clarity in their 1975 article.[36]

Given that few sharecroppers were self-sufficient, and given the meagre returns to their labour, sharecroppers needed credit. That credit was obtained at exorbitantly high rates of interest, from merchants who ran small rural stores. Repayment of the debt further reduced the sharecropper's meagre income. Through that debt certain decisions were forced upon the sharecropper. Those merchants (who might, also, be landlords) had an effective local monopoly of credit, and they compelled the sharecropper to grow cotton, at the expense of food crops (whether for his family or for the animals). They did so by the device of crop liens (enshrined in law), which secured the loan through legal title to the crop, so that the sharecropper 'became "locked-in" to the production of cotton and the purchase of supplies from a single store. Over time, this ability to control the farmer allowed the merchant to grip Southern farmers in a sort of "debt peonage" from which escape was virtually impossible' [Ransom and Sutch, 1975: 406]. Even where the landlord was a third party, the system operated in his interests, since it both reduced tenant mobility (tying tenants to a particular holding) and forced the sharecropper into intensive cultivation of his holding.[37] It is a view of the southern sharecropper suggested by several historians,[38] although not one that has gone unopposed.[39]

Caught tight in the pincer of landlord and merchant (who might be one and the same), the sharecropper was forced into maximum intensity of cultivation, with virtually no areas of choice or decision-making. Thus:

> The southern tenant was neither owner of his land nor manager of his business. Caught between requirements imposed by the landlord and those imposed by the merchant, his independent decision making was limited to the mundane and menial aspects of farming. The larger decisions – concerning land use, investments in the farm's productivity, the choice of technology, and the scale of operation were all made for him. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 170]

Wright and Kunreuther observe: 'Some contemporaries, at least, were well aware of these effects. While most were content to flay the tenants for their laziness and thriftlessness, the more sympathetic [knew different]' [Wright and Kunreuther, 1975: 550]. They cite a Senate Report of 1895, which observes: 'colored tenants...with most of the white tenants, are forced to *strain every nerve* to raise cotton to pay rents and liens' (loc. cit.). That, surely, captures the system's essence.

The sharecropper had everything bled out of him that could be bled. He was left with a bare subsistence income. It was a sorry system. But it was a system that worked to the considerable advantage of landlord and merchant: where they existed separately, maximising the former's surplus and providing the latter with a lucrative living; and where, as may have been commonly the case, they were one and the same, securing for the landlord/merchant that concentration on cotton production that he wanted, very intensive cultivation that must have come close to maximising output per acre, and maximum surplus.

The foregoing, then, was what was clearly understood as sharecropping in the South. This was distinguished, on the one hand, from a share wage and, on the other, from so-called share tenancy. In the general sharecropping literature, sharecropping and share tenancy are used interchangeably to refer to the same general relationship. This was not so in the South. There,

> share *tenancy* (as opposed to share*cropping*) required the landowner to supply only the land, house, and (in most cases) fuel. The tenant provided his own work stock, implements, and provisions. For the use of the land the tenant paid a standard rent of one-third of the corn (or other grains) and one fourth of the cotton – hence the colloquial expression 'working on thirds and fourths'...Of these three forms of share payments, by far the most common and widespread was sharecropping. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 90–1].

In fact, both are forms of sharecropping in the accepted sense. We may, however, safely concentrate on the form we have described in detail.

5 SHARECROPPING AND THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES IN AGRICULTURE

We may turn to questions that are our central concern (and upon which we have already touched): the implications of sharecropping for the productive forces in agriculture, and for capital accumulation more generally (with capitalist industrialisation in the South in mind). There is considerable evidence upon which to draw.

At the outset, let us note two quite distinct sets of issues within this rubric of instruments of production. Emphasis has been on one, to the neglect of the other. But both are important. The first relates to the quality of the components, the instruments of production, of a given technology. This is the issue that has been neglected. Clearly, this must influence the system's productive performance and potential for so long as that given technology is utilised. Now, the effectiveness with which it is utilised will depend on how it is deployed by the direct producer, the sharecropper. We recall our proposition that this was a strong defect of the system of slavery (as, for example Olmsted observed, and Cairnes and Marx stressed). Within sharecropping, in marked contrast to slavery, there is, however, a powerful incentive to utilise the existing instruments of production, the given technology, carefully and to maximum effect, in a manner that is not the case in slavery. But, in the system of sharecropping that predominated in the Postbellum South the instruments of production were supplied, for the most part, by the landlord, as we have seen. It was, therefore, his choice as to the quality of the instruments of production supplied and used. How, then, did he exercise that choice?

The second set of issues is the longer-term one of whether ths system will be receptive to new technology, to technical change, that may dramatically alter its productive capacity. Let us take that second issue first, since it has attracted considerable attention.

We have pointed out that landlords sought to influence the intensity of cultivation by controlling the size of holding and enforcing insecurity of tenure. With a given and unchanging technology, this desired end was probably achieved. But, if one introduces more dynamic considerations, and takes into account the medium- or longer-run, there is likely to be a significantly negative implication, in such circumstances. It is an old and a classic argument, which Ransom and Sutch repeat:

> the sharecropper who performed poorly would not be rehired, and this threat was often sufficient to ensure that the work was well done. Not surprisingly, the tenant insisted on maximising the value of the current crop (to half of which he was entitled) and showed little interest in long-run investment prospects from which he would be unable to benefit unless he were allowed to continue to work the farm. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 101][40]

No agricultural improvement, whose full benefits lay in the future, would be made by the sharecropper. That being so, the onus fell on the landlord 'to initiate and finance agricultural improvements' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 102]. He owned the land and would benefit, in future, from any improvements. The evidence is that he did not make such improvements. Ransom and Sutch note the contemporary insistence that 'no improvements can be made under this system'

[Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 102].[41] It is a judgement with which they concur. It seems that the landlord had no strong incentive, either, to make long-term investment. Let us pursue this.

Let us consider the investments that were deemed desirable with respect to the dominant crop, cotton. These are noted by Ransom and Sutch. Here, the given technology and the possibility of technical change are mixed together. But we will keep the distinction in mind. Thus:

> The investments affected would not only be the more obvious capital improvements such as improved drainage, sturdy fencing, more elaborate outbuildings, and farm machinery, but also the voluntary reduction in current crop yields designed to improve or maintain the soil's fertility in the long run. Such practices as crop rotation, contour plowing, and fallowing might have produced significant long-run improvements in output per acre had the landlord been willing to make the short-run sacrifice of output they entailed. These practices proved profitable in northern agriculture and also on southern farms operated by the owner. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 102]

It is worth pursuing in detail one particular manifestation of the tension between the short-run (current yields) and the long-run (future yields) that sharecropping resolved decisively in favour of the short-run, but with negative long-run implications which were to the very considerable detriment of agriculture's productive capacity.

Ransom and Sutch consider the example of soil depletion as a result of cotton cultivation, and its counteracting through the use of artificial fertilizers. Thus: 'Cotton is an exhausting crop, and the failure to introduce improved agricultural practices and expand capital investment would have ultimately led to soil depletion and erosion with the inevitable decline in crop yields because of neglect' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 102]. The sharecropping relationship, then, set up a powerful, long-run tendency towards declining yields. But, there was available, in the shape of fertilizers, a means of postponing this which both sharecropper and landlord found rewarding in the short- and medium-run:

> This decline, however, could be checked by the use of fertilizer. Commercial fertilizer was the one means of improving the soil's productivity that was frequently agreed to by both parties to the tenure contract. To the sharecropper, expenditures on fertilizer brought immediate returns commensurate with the cost. To the landlord, the fertilizer not only increased the current output, but had the additional advantage of forestalling the depreciation of the farm. (loc. cit.)

There is, however, an ambiguity here. We have seen above that in the standard sharecopping contract the landlord met all expenses; and that, with respect to fertilizer, he chose the brand, with the total cost deducted from gross output

before the division was made. So the implication, here, that the sharecropper had some choice in the matter seems false. We must assume that this was the landlord's decision. That decision to use fertilizers was frequently criticised: 'Of course, as southern agricultural journals were fond of putting it, it would have been cheaper and more beneficial to have employed crop rotation and composting than to use commercial fertilizer' (loc. cit.). But here the logic of sharecropping imposed itself. We have seen the emphasis upon maximising immediate yields. Thus:

> this superior alternative was not compatible with sharecropping because it did not increase current yields. The result was that the South used commercial fertilizers in prodigious quantities, and as the years went by they used ever increasing amounts. (loc. cit)

The outcome was a long-run drag upon the productivity of agriculture in the South: 'While fertilizer prevented the worst effects of soil depletion from manifesting themselves, it was unable to increase agricultural productivity, and the failure of many landlowners to make other capital improvements undoubtedly denied the South the dramatic improvements in agricultural productivity that accompanied the agricultural revolution in other regions of the United States' (pp. 102–3). This is a serious indictment of sharecropping.

For the unhappy failure to introduce both possible change within the given technology and technical change, an explanation that is pure Smith/Marshall is given. We note that especially significant is the failure of mechanization to spread: that is to say, we may posit the failure of technical transformation of southern agriculture. Given that sharecropping was a response to labour shortage, this is of especial interest, since mechanization, by its very nature, is labour-saving. To that we will return. But, if we may consider the explanation, it runs thus:

> since the landlord would receive only half the benefits of investments in the quality of his farm, his incentive to make such outlays would be reduced. Only if the return expected was worth twice what it cost would the landlord find a particular investment to his advantage. Thus, while landowners might pay their labor extra to make capital repairs or install capital improvements, they would invest less money in these projects than if they would anticipate receiving the full benefit from them. This impediment to capital formation ultimately worked to the detriment of both parties. [Ransom and Sutch, 197: 102]

Here the emphasis is on the most productive forms of the existing technology, or those whose introduction would have a pay-off in the future. The same logic is taken to apply to technical change.

But why did sharecropping landlords not contemplate changing to a system in which they would receive the full benefits of improvements or technical change?

Such a system was capitalist agriculture using free wage labour; or tenancy with fixed money rents, which, suitably endowed technically, would yield higher rent. We hypothesise that they must have seen the returns from maximum surplus extraction, secured via an intensively worked set of holdings and a given technology, as more sure and greater than those available from these other forms of surplus appropriation. They would, eventually, contemplate such change, and sharecropping would go. But we have not finished considering sharecropping and the apparent powerful barrier to improved technology and technical change which inhered in the sharecropping realtionship.

The analogy with Olmsted's comments on slavery and its implications, with the same comparison with the North, is striking. No Fogel and Engerman have come as yet to justify sharecropping *in extenso*, as Fogel and Engerman did slavery. The most likely possibility of such a justification would be a Cheung/Stiglitz treatment in terms of sharecropping's risk-dispersing powers. But that has nothing to say either about the quality of an existing technology or about technical change. Moreover, it would be hard put to combine any such justification with the evidence we have considered. No such justification would be possible within, say, a suitably revised Marshallian, or a Gale Johnson-type treatment, since such an analysis can only suggest the possibility of securing maximum intensification, with a given technology. Technical change could only come via action by the landlord, and he is prevented by the share itself. Nowhere is there the hint of what would induce the landlord to make such long-term investment within a sharecropping environment. He maximises rental surplus, with the existing relations of production and the given technology. It is when it becomes clear that there are significant profit possibilities, to be reaped either directly via the employment of wage labour or less directly via fixed money rent, to be generated with a new technology, and one which cannot be accommodated by the sharecropping relationship (the existing relations of production), that the sweeping-away of sharecropping becomes inevitable. We will turn to that presently.

Before turning to the sweeping away of sharecropping, let us take two important aspects of the instruments of production that have received attention. The first is the low quality of standard farm implements, and the second the clear tardiness of mechanisation. Both reveal a system in which the productive forces are blocked; a system whose productive potential is significantly constrained. The first relates to inputs within a given technology and the second to the transformation of that technology. Our argument is that the essential barrier to change is the existing relations of production. Having considered these manifestations of the instruments of production, we may proceed to the eventual sweeping away of sharecropping as the dominant form of surplus appropriation in the agriculture of American South, and its replacement by wage labour.

One source, Louis Ferleger, produces convincing evidence for the following argument:

> that the sharecropping system contributed to the low level of productivity advance in the South because of its influence on implement use. This hypothesis calls into question those theorists who assume that all tenants were independent farmers, motivated by higher yields and controlling their farming practices.. [S]harecroppers, especially black sharecroppers, were very closely supervised and had very little decision-making power over farming practices. It is especially important to note that they had almost no choice over the farm implements they would use to carry out production...Landlords exercised a high degree of supervision and influence over their sharecroppers; this included a bias towards the use of only the most rudimentary tools. The practice resulted in low crop yields, a slow rate of mechanization, and an overall slow rate of productivity growth in the late nineteenth century. The region trailed others nationwide in the use of modern implements. Unlike the south, other regions were shifting to less labour-intensive methods of production. [Ferleger, 1993: 32]

Let us first note the manifestations of this 'bias towards the use of only the most rudimentary tools'.

In fact, two observations are made: firstly, that sharecroppers had significantly fewer implements (or, more generally, 'implements, tools and machinery') per acre than other kinds of tenant; and secondly, that those implements were inferior. We may keep the two observations separate, but the former, as Ferleger points out, implies the latter. Ferleger produces clear evidence with respect to the former, for the South as a whole and for seven selected states, and argues that this was the case between 1880 and 1920 [Ferleger, 1993: 33–7]. His most general evidence relates, in fact to 1920,[42] but, he argues: 'There is no reason to assume that croppers were better off during the 1880–1910 period (in fact they were probably worse off) and thus these statistics paint a pitiful picture of the value of implements and machinery distributed to croppers' [Ferleger, 1993: 35]. With respect to the latter, he tells us: 'The range of implements and machinery that sharecroppers could have used included iron or steel rather than wooden plows, harrows, cultivators, hoes and cottonseed planters' [Ferleger, 1993: 33]. Evidence from sharecropping contracts, it is argued, 'suggest[s] that landlords did not provide sharecroppers with the most modern implements available to cultivate cotton' [Ferleger, 1993: 37].[43] Much other evidence is mustered to make the point [Ferleger, 1993: 37–40] that 'landlords did not supply the sharecroppers with improved implements even when those implements were low priced, available, and easy to use' [Ferleger, 1993: 44]. The outcome was the persistence of the 'one-mule farm' (or, less accurately, the 'one-horse farm'), which symbolised the plight of 'the majority of southern croppers who remained poor and debt-ridden over the years' [Ferleger, 1993: 45].[44] But why was this so? Why did sharecropping landlords favour 'only the most rudimentary tools'? There are echoes here of Olmsted's observations on the implications of slavery for the nature of the instruments of production. Is the rationale different?

Various arguments may be discerned. Ferleger insists that the available improved implements were both easy to use and likely to be profitable: illustrating the argument via reference to the iron-beam plough and the cotton-seed planter.[45] Any danger of improper use, he stresses, could have been avoided by the intense supervision of sharecroppers that took place, anyway (as we have seen).[46] Supervision costs had been incurred already. Improved implements would not have involved any extra supervision costs.

The rationale is, indeed, different from the slavery rationale. We have suggested that, under slavery, the outcome was the result of struggle waged by slaves. There was no incentive to use the instruments of production with care, since subsistence was guaranteed and there was nothing extra to be gained (although there was always the fear of punishment). In sharecropping this was not so. For the sharecropper there was a return from careful use. Apart from that, supervision would have prevented any improper use, as we have seen. Why, then, did sharecropping landlords not supply 'improved implements'? Ferleger suggests that it was a conscious decision motivated by the desire 'to continue to rely on *cheap labor* rather than on improved implements, tools and machinery' [Ferleger, 1993: 44, emphasis mine]. He continues, in an argument that bears a striking resemblance to Amit Bhaduri's semi-feudalism argument (formulated in the Indian context, with respect to West Bengal in 1970 – see above) [Bhaduri, 1973]:

> Higher yields generated by increased reliance on improved implements and tools could have led to higher net incomes for sharecroppers. Even with falling cotton prices, additional output may have contributed (even if only marginally) to a cropper's ability to earn income or pay off outstanding and past debts. Access to and ownership of cotton planters, plows and work animals could often be a first step toward independence for croppers...Providing the barest minimum of tools and implements could and did undermine sharecroppers' attempts to be self-sufficient. [Ferleger, 1993: 44–5]

The sharecropping landlord, then, if this is accepted as an explanation, deliberately sacrificed whatever profit might have accrued from improved implements, calculating that advantage would accrue, also, to the sharecropper, which might cut at his dependent status, improve his bargaining power and, perhaps, eliminate a source of cheap labour. One might suggest, then, that the profit possibilities inherent in 'improved implements' were insufficient to persuade the landlord to abandon sharecropping altogether and opt for capitalist agriculture based on wage labour or fixed cash rentals which would yield higher rental income. The relations of production inherent in sharecropping enabled him to take that decision.

There is a fundamental difference, of course, between 'improved implements' of the kind we have been discussing and the technical transformation inherent in

mechanisation. In principle, such 'improved implements', which were labour-intensive, might have been supplied to and used by a sharecropping household. But mechanisation is, by its very nature, labour-saving, and would have reduced dramatically the number of households needed by a sharecropping landlord. Mechanisation was significantly retarded in the South. It has been suggested that the retardation was powerfully encouraged by the annual contracts that were, as we have seen, an integral part of sharecropping. This retardation is an important issue. We may consider it in detail, before proceeding to the final and striking sweeping away of sharecropping in the wake of a rapid and climactic mechanisation.

That there was a lag in mechanisation in the Cotton South is unequivocally the case. It was 'the *mechanical cotton picker* that revolutionised the rural South' [Whatley, 1987: 45, emphasis mine]. But this was first marketed only in 1942 'over a hundred years after the widespread use of the mechanical wheat harvester in the Midwest, and almost a hundred years after the first patent on the picker principle was granted in 1850' [Whatley, 1987: 45].[47] If we compare cotton in regional terms, it has been estimated that South Carolina, to take one southern state, was between 9 and 13 years behind California in mechanisation of the cotton harvest.[48] If we look at tractorisation, and take as our measure tractors per acre, up to 1940 the South had only half the average for the whole of the United States.[49] We must ask why this was so. Mechanisation would serve to sweep away, eventually, sharecropping in the South as the dominant form of surplus appropriation. But did sharecropping, and its inherent relations of production, contribute to the retardation of mechanisation?

The logic of the arrival and spread of mechanisation in agriculture has been the subject of a large literature. That body of writing relates to the history of advanced capitalist countries, to socialist countries (or formerly socialist countries), and to contemporary Third World countries. It cannot receive here the attention it deserves. But the experience of the Postbellum South is of immense interest, since it raises issues that are very much alive in contemporary poor countries.[50]

A variety of explanations exists for the late arrival of mechanisation in the Cotton South. Thus, with respect to the timing of mechanisation in agriculture, and abstracting from those powerful considerations associated with agriculture's enhanced productive potential:

(a) In the orthodox literature, there is a so-called threshold model, according to which the largest units should mechanise first. That is a rather obvious proposition, given the clear scale economies associated with mechanisation, although one whose specification in concrete situations may be complex.[51] It is one that has been borne out in recent work on contemporary poor countries.[52]

(b) Given that, 'the tenant plantations in the South were by far the South's largest units of production...[and] in 1910...were five times larger than the average American farm' [Whatley, 1987: 46], and that, yet, they lagged badly

behind in mechanisation, there is a clear problem to confront. There arose, in the 1920s, a so-called 'traditional explanation', which, in addressing this 'southern anomaly', gave explanatory primacy to the 'retarding influence of southern agrarian instutions' [Whatley, 1987: 46]. It was a view first developed by US Department of Agriculture rural sociologists,[53] and one that has been taken up subsequently by several economists and economic historians.[54] It is a variant of that view that Whatley develops [Whatley, 1987]. We will come to Whatley's argument presently. From our viewpoint, we may stress, sharecropping and its particular manifestations in the South , which we have identified and which we take to be a means of maximising the rental surplus, can be seen as the archetypal 'agrarian institution' of the South.

(c) The 'traditional view' has been challenged, inasmuch as a variety of factors that seem to exist quite independently of the South's 'agrarian institutions', have been suggested as providing a more convincing explanation. We may consider this challenge. According to one of its variants [i.e. that of Sargen, 1979, and Musoke, 1981] 'small-scale production, cheap labor, uneven terrain, and the cotton crop itself were the primary deterrents to the use of tractors in the Cotton South' [Whatley, 1987: 46–7]. This is echoed in other studies [for example, Musoke and Olmstead, 1982: 411, cited in Whatley, 1987: 47]. We may examine this view.

Two of the factors identified, 'uneven terrain' and 'the cotton crop itself', would seem to exist independently of 'agrarian institutions', i.e. sharecropping. On this reasoning, whatever the organisational form, and given the technology, mechanisation would have been slow to come in the South. It would have been true, say, of fixed cash rent tenancies, or owner-occupied family holdings, or capitalist farms worked with free wage labour. But, if we can demonstrate (or suggest strongly) that sharecropping, as practised in the South, actually was a powerful deterrent to an operational and usable technology, that would have transcended 'uneven terrain' and coped effectively with the 'cotton crop itself', then we are, surely, driven back to 'agrarian institutions'. That is inherent in what Whatley argues [Whatley, 1987]. We will consider the argument presently.

Then, 'small-scale production' and 'cheap labour' arguably do not exist independently of the institution of sharecropping. Given the existence of sharecropping, we have seen, a strategy of minimising the size of the sharecropped plot yields maximum surplus. If 'small-scale production', i.e. small operational holdings, derives from the existence of sharecropping, in a way that 'uneven terrain' and 'the cotton crop itself' do not, and if this represented a barrier to mechanisation, then that barrier can be seen to derive from 'agrarian institutions'. Equally, if 'cheap labour' were an obstacle, and if, indeed, sharecropping was an effective means of securing and maintaining cheap labour, then, again, the causation runs back to 'agrarian institutions'. The scepticism on the significance of 'agrarian institutions', as formulated by the writers in question, is not necessarily convincing.

(d) There is a particular approach which stresses the role of technological change in the 'demise of the sharecropper', to use part of the title of one of its major exponents, Richard Day [Day, 1967]. Its other advocate is Lee Alston [Alston, 1981].[55]

Day does not take an explicit position on whether sharecropping actively prevented mechanisation. He simply assumes (and states) that a particular technology existed from 1868 to 1940, which made 'the maintenance of sharecroppers the year round' [Day, 1967: 439] economic and viable. Thereafter, a new technology made it uneconomic and unviable, and swept it away. Whatley attributes to him the view that the technology was exogenously given; that the new technology represented 'exogenous changes' [Whatley, 1987: 47]. In fact, there is nothing in the Day argument that could not be made consistent with the proposition that sharecropping and its manifestations actually delayed significantly the appearance and application of the new technology. We will examine the Day argument, which is powerful in its sweep, in section 8.

Our position is that technological change does not simply fall like the gentle dew (or, perhaps more appropriately, like a thunderbolt) from heaven. There were deeply-rooted forces within the system that prevented, or strongly discouraged, technical change. The argument and evidence are provided by Whatley [Whatley, 1987]. Let us consider them.

We have already discussed the implements used in cotton cultivation and stressed their rudimentary nature (the outcome of the landlord's decision). Whatley gives a fascinating account of the 'making of the cotton crop', and what this entailed, using the so-called 'folklore' technology of a mule and a one-row plough for pre-harvest activities and a pair of hands for harvest, over the full year that this required; providing a careful estimate of the number of labour hours per acre required.[56] As Whatley observes, and as is quintessentially the case in all agriculture – which is a time-bound activity of relentlessly sequential operations, and subject to the 'rhythms of nature': 'For a successful cotton crop...[the necessary labor] had to be applied in a predetermined sequence at predetermined intervals' [Whatley, 1987: 49]. What emerges clearly is the phenomenon, again noted in other agricultures, of a heavily peaked need for labour: with 'a pronounced preharvest peak' (in the three months of May, June and July – and starting gradually in April – when the preparation of the field,[57] ploughing and planting took place) and 'a pronounced harvest peak' (in September, October and November – starting at the end of August and tailing off in early December) [Whatley, 1987: 49,]. There were months of relative inactivity (in mid-winter, starting in December, running through January to March, and in some of April, and in mid-summer, in August).

The essential point that Whatley stresses is one that, once again, is observed in pre-capitalist/labour-intensive agriculture the world over: the seasonality of labour inputs. But in cotton, he argues, it was an extreme seasonality:

> Many landlords were concerned about finding enough hands to meet peak demands for labor within the allotted time...[T]he timeliness of labor inputs is

everything. A shortage of hands when the crop must be harvested can jeopardise the 'productivity' of all previously applied labor; a rotting cotton boll in an unharvested field turns high-quality cultivation labor into a low yield.[58] And nature makes it so that a botched job cannot be redone. [Whatley, 1987: 49]

It was this extreme seasonality that intensified that 'employer apprehension about the supply of hands during peak periods' (loc. cit.). So it was, then, that landlords sought to maintain workers on an annual basis, and hence the annual sharecropping agreement. Otherwise, Whatley argues, they would have had to

hire and fire most of their labor force several times a season. Massive quantities of laborers were involved, and local concentration in cotton meant everyone was hiring or firing large numbers of workers at the same time. A year of unexpected good weather would raise everyone's yield and everyone's demand for harvest hands, causing the kind of havoc in harvest labor markets that could threaten the profitability of the entire year's operation. [Whatley, 1987: 49]

Where plantations were close to urban labour markets these might be tapped for labour via short-term wage contracts. But most plantations were not so located. Southern landlords, then, opted to secure the labour force via the annual sharecropping contract. This had the effect, as we have seen already, of tying labour to the landlord's land, and ensuring its availability at both the periods of peak demand for labour.

Now, appropriate mechanisation has the capacity to release this labour constraint, and that is why it is so appealing to capitalist farmers. There are two forms of mechanisation necessary here: tractorisation, which would take care of the preparation/cultivation peak; and harvesters, which would do the same for the harvesting peak. But we note – and it is important in the present context – there were two operations that the tractor did not mechanise: weeding and hoeing.[59] It is also possible that one form of mechanisation might precede the other, so that partial mechanisation may the forerunner of complete mechanisation. Clearly, this may be a perfectly rational, i.e. cost-effective, outcome. It assuredly has been a common sequence elsewhere. It happened, certainly, in the North. But it did not in the South. So why, when mechanisation was proceeding so rapidly in other parts of the United States (as we have seen), was it so slow in the South? Why did partial mechanisation not proceed? We have noted and commented on some of the explanations. We are interested here in that explanation which focuses on the sharecropping annual contract. This latter, and all that accompanied it in tying labour to the land, clearly was a solution to the labour problem 'and this partially explains why the contracts were so attractive to southern employers' [Whatley, 1987: 50]. But why did mechanisation not prove a more attractive solution? It would eventually. But why did that take so long?

First, we may consider the availability of suitable technologies (maintaining, at this point, a neutral stance on whether this was an exogenous or an endogenous phenomenon). Tractors certainly were available, by the mid-1920s, if not before. But, while mechanical wheat harvesters had been introduced in the 1830s and were widespread in the Midwest by the 1850s [David, 1980: 187–8], and while the first patent on a mechanical cotton picker was taken out in 1850, it was not until 1942 that the International Harvester Company marketed the first commercial mechanical cotton picker [Whatley, 1987: 64]. We have two questions to address. Firstly, why was tractorisation not introduced in the 1920s? Secondly, why did the mechanical cotton picker not arrive before 1942? Whatley argues that the answer to each question may be sought in the prevalence of the sharecropping annual contract. Or, if we may translate that into other language, the relations of production in the Cotton South were a powerful fetter upon the productive forces.

As far as tractors, and the possibility of partial mechanisation, at least, were concerned, the Southern landlord was caught in a dilemma. He was attracted by the possibility of tractors as a way of resolving one of his labour peak problems, the preharvest peak, or part of it (hoeing and weeding, we have pointed out, were not so mechanised), but prevented from choosing this option by his need for labour at the peak period, harvesting. That tractors did not mechanise hoeing and weeding clearly had some significance,[60] but more important was the continued importance of the harvest peak. In Whatley's words:

But landlords were caught in a web of counteracting forces that made it difficult to establish the proper conditions for mechanisation. Uncertain, and potentially costly, labor increased the profitability of adopting labor-saving tractors, but it also restricted the amount of land amenable for mechanisation by driving landlords to use [or retain, rather – TJB] annual share-tenants contracts. In this way southern share tenancy impeded partial mechanisation by redirecting the impact of high labor cost away from the adoption of labor-saving machinery and towards the the adoption of small family-based tenancies that could not be mechanized profitably. [Whatley, 1987: 52]

As Whatley points out: 'most opportunities to use the tractor were found on land cultivated by wage laborers' [Whatley, 1987: 52]. Not only that, but had the large plantation holdings that were divided into sharecropping units been transformed into capitalist farms, their size would have allowed the realising of considerable economies of scale. The calculation of landlords, clearly, was that the quantum of surplus that they could appropriate continued to be higher in retention of the sharecropping system than it would have been in a switch to wage labour. That would have to wait.

The importance of the absence of a mechanical cotton harvester was clearly great: 'Before the harvester was available tractor adoption had little effect on the allocation of land between the two labor systems because it did not reduce the

dominant labour peak' [Whately, 1987: 62]. Even the continued existence of the weeding and hoeing peak was substantially weakened in its significance by its coming.[61] It has been suggested that the late arrival of such a machine lay essentially in the peculiar technical difficulty associated with mechanising the 'picking motion of the fingers' [Whately, 1987: 64].[62] Whatley argues that this is an unlikely explanation for the 92-year hiatus between the registering of the first patent in 1850 and the commercial appearance of the machine in 1942. He prefers a demand-driven to a supply-driven explanation.

His argument is as follows. Of the two labour need peaks faced by southern landlords, the harvest peak was the higher; i.e. 'the cotton picker saved more labor hours' (p. 64). One might, therefore, have expected, *a priori*, that 'the picker [would have] been a more profitable technological breakthrough than the tractor, and the picker problem to have attracted inventors and their resources first' (p. 64). But this was not the case. As he says, 'the picker did not precede the tractor' (loc. cit.) and 'part [of the delay]...may have been caused by the adverse effects southern labor contracts had on profit signals' (loc. cit.). Thus, he suggests,

> The picker was a machine demanded by southerners only, and the southern constraints on partial mechanisation [i.e. a mechanical cotton picker would have faced the same problem as the tractor, because, in the absence of a tractor, the preharvest peak would have remained] may have made it difficult for the picker to find a market *of its own*. The tractor, in contrast, was in demand throughout most of the farming world because it mechanized *universal* farming activities like plowing, harrowing, and disking. Its general utility explains why the tractor problem was attacked first. Once available, however, the tractor should have increased the profitability of of developing a mechanical picker. A picker in conjunction with a tractor would permit *complete* mechanisation to proceed, and complete mechanisation faced far fewer institutional impediments than partial mechanisation. (pp. 54–65, emphases mine)

It is a plausible hypothesis, which finds support in the activities of 'the International Harvester Company... the largest farm implement manufacturer in the world...[which] was the first to develop commercially successful versions of the all-purpose tractor and the cotton picker' (p. 65), at least with respect to its research and development programme (pp. 65–8). Whatley suggests that certainly by 1907 the technical knowhow necessary to make the breakthrough was fully available. He postulates:

> as long as the invention of the cotton picker had to wait for the invention of the tractor – annual [sharecropping] labor contracts would endure as a low-cost arrangement for securing harvest labor – an arrangement which, in turn, contributed to a history of technological backwardness in the Cotton South. (p. 68)

In other words, the relations of production acted as drag upon the productive forces.

With the arrival of the mechanical cotton-picker in 1942, the stage was set for the first scene in the final act of the lengthy drama that had started in 1492. In the first act, the appropriation of the land of native populations and their savage destruction had begun. Thus was the 'land problem' and primitive accumulation in North America addressed. That first act had included, too, the arrival of 20 black slaves at Jamestown in 1619. So was the 'labour problem' confronted. More than two centuries of slavery was succeeded by almost a century of sharecropping as a dominant mode of surplus appropriation. Now the writing was on the wall.

Before proceeding to the demise of sharecropping, we turn first and briefly to that class of yeoman farmers which we considered in the Antebellum South, and secondly to a consideration of the implications of sharecropping for industrialisation in the American South.

6 YEOMAN FARMERS IN THE SHARECROPPING MILIEU OF THE POSTBELLUM SOUTH

Research on this class in the Postbellum era seems to have been meagre. The 'full story of the Southern yeomanry', as one writer has it [Hahn, 1983: viii] remains to be told. That writer is the author of one of the few studies on 'yeoman farmers', relevant to our present concerns, that relates to the Postbellum period. As he says, 'much still remains in the shadows' (loc. cit.). His own study is of part of one state, Georgia, and relates to the years 1850–90. Nevertheless, we may take it to have more general relevance. We are fortunate to have that, at least. What we say here, however, must be seen as tentative and speculative.

Ransom and Sutch (writing before the publication of Hahn's book) take up the story in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, and the absence of accompanying documentation there is striking:

> The white population engaged in agriculture worked primarily on small family farms growing food for their own consumption both before and after the war. This class of white farmers produced only a limited fraction of the total cotton output of the South. Apparently the per capita output of these white family farms was not significantly affected by either the war or emancipation. While the group sustained the heaviest casualties in the fighting, it seemed to be able to carry out agriculture on much the same pattern after as before the war. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 325, n.15]

If this is accurate (and only detailed research can yield the necessary information), then the absence of any strong processes of differentiation presumably continued into the 1860s. Certainly, that is consistent with Hahn's findings.

But what happened thereafter? Is there any evidence of tendencies towards capitalism from below, or, indeed, of advanced simple commodity production (such as prevailed in the agriculture of the North and the West – see below for a detailed discussion) from this source, in the Postbellum South? By 1880 '28 per cent of all the farms in the Cotton South were operated by white owners who had 50 acres or less under cultivation. Many of these white owner-operators were undoubtedly the heirs of the pre-war yeoman class, if they were not themselves the prewar owners of the land' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 105]. But now they were not protected from merchant capital by a planter class (as was the case, we have seen, in the Antebellum period).

They had always relied on merchants for supplies, although previously to a limited extent. Now: 'Farmers did not simply rely more heavily upon merchants for supplies. They encountered a rather new system of exchange relations' [Hahn, 1983: 181]. The qualifier 'rather' is ill-chosen. It was, for yeoman farmers, a dramatically 'new system of exchange relations'. Now, they were subject to crop liens, increasingly enmeshed in debt, and coerced into 'producing much larger quantities of cotton' [Hahn, 1983: 181].[63] Their subsistence orientation was broken, as they were forced into (if we may borrow Amit Bhaduri's powerful formulation from another context, but one that is strikingly relevant) 'a scheme of exchange which is dominated by merchant's and usurer's capital' [Bhaduri, 1983b: 17]; one in which 'the extraction of agricultural surplus through "unequal exchange" takes place' [Bhaduri, 1983b: 18;]; a system, in which 'commercial exploitation stands in contrast to capitalistic exploitation' [Bhaduri, 1983b: 19;]. It was, as Bhaduri has it, 'a system of forced commercialisation' (p. 21), characterised by 'accumulating debt' (p. 29), in an economy 'in the grip of merchant's and usurer's capital' (p. 21). It is a system in which capitalist relations of production clearly do not predominate.

They were subject to the merchant/moneylender in much the some way as sharecroppers. But there was a crucial difference in the ensuing outcome. Sharecroppers owned no land, or means of production, or property that they could mortgage. Only the crop could be mortgaged. Yeoman farmers did own land and other forms of property. Inexorably, they were driven into mortgaging their land and property, as well as their crops, and 'as the years passed, the amount of property under mortgage grew rapidly' [Hahn, 1983: 196]. There was a fierce reluctance to mortgage land, and mortgages on personal property far outnumbered those on land. But the mortgaging of land could not be resisted, and in the 1880s there was 'an expansion of various forms of farm tenancy' [Hahn, 1983: 197].[64] Yeoman farmers, indeed, were part of that great upsurge in tenancy that we noted above: from 36% in the South as a whole in 1880, to 47% by 1900 and 50% by 1920 (see Table 7.1). There was set in motion 'a process of dispossession that turned independent proprietors into tenants and farm laborers and supply merchants into agricultural employers' [Hahn, 1983: 193]. Here was no prospective class of capitalist farmers. Nor did it become a class of dynamic

advanced simple commodity producers, of a kind that emerged in the North and the West (see Chapter 8 for a full treatment).

There was, indeed, a dramatic transformation in the class relations of yeoman farmers, and with it the emergence of a new agrarian class, which gained control of the means of production in this segment of the countryside of the South. Thus:

> Beginning as an effort to safeguard their furnishing businesses against the risk of defaulting customers, merchandisers were able to lay claim to the real and personal property, as well as to the crops, of their yeoman clientele by taking advantage. As a consequence, they assumed increasingly direct control, if not outright ownership, of the means of production and thereby made themselves into an agrarian bourgeoisie, further reshaping...class relations. [Hahn, 1983: 193]

It was an 'agrarian bourgeoisie' which, starting off as a deployer of merchant's capital, became an amalgam of merchant's, usurer's and landlord capital, thereby availing itself of those inter-linked modes of exploitation noted above. It was an 'agrarian bourgeoisie' which, if we may again use a phrase of Bhaduri's, helped constitute 'a precapitalist agrarian system' [Bhaduri, 1983b: 17]. Capitalist relations of production had yet to capture the countryside of the South. Such an 'agrarian bourgeoisie' clearly was a powerful bulwark against such capitalist transformation.

There seems to be little evidence of any processes of differentiation, or of any strong tendencies of capitalism from below. Nor is there evidence of any of the dynamism attached to petty commodity production in the North and West. The landlord class and the merchant/moneylender dominated the countryside of the South. When capitalism came, it was from the ranks of the landlord class that large capitalist farmers would emerge. If 'yeomen farmers' became capitalist farmers it could only have been a tiny minority.

7 SHARECROPPING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDUSTRIALISATION IN THE SOUTH

We have considered above the clearly negative implications that slavery had for industrialisation in the South. Industrialisation was inconceivable without the eradication of slavery as the dominant institution in the countryside. Did sharecropping improve the prospects for industrial transformation?

The answer to the question posed must be that sharecropping, and all that went with it, did not have the suggested, possible effect. Ransom and Sutch generalise as follows:

> the curse of King Cotton that worried southerners the most was the lack of industrialization and economic diversification implied by a single-minded

> devotion to a cash crop...The South of the late nineteenth century was without a growing industrial sector and without significant outmigration [which would have raised the land-labour ratio and created the possibility of raising the productivity of agricultural labour]. There were no employment opportunities for those who would be displaced by agricultural productivity advances...The advocates of a New South argued that a manufacturing sector would stimulate growth and modernization of the southern economy and that agriculture would share in the expanding prosperity at the same time it released the labour necessary for industrial production. But appeals to develop manufacturing went unheeded despite the logic of the argument. Even without the stimulation of an expanding industrial sector, modernization and economic development might have still come to the South from another direction. If the agricultural sector had been able to improve labor productivity on its own, the expansion in agricultural incomes might have stimulated industrialization. But...agricultural productivity was held in check by the impediments to capital formation. The South had chosen its King, but Cotton had failed the South. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 193]

That seems clear enough. The failure of industrialisation to proceed in the South is beyond doubt. In Ransom and Sutch's formulation: 'Southern industry...remained a small sector on the periphery of the agrarian economy' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 8–9]. Ransom and Sutch identify some important aspects of this, but so to lay the failure so squarely at the door of King Cotton is simplistic.

In a recent article, Angelo posits that 'the policies of the planter-dominated state and local governments played a crucial role in promoting the growth of the textile industry and inhibiting the growth of the steel industry' [Angelo, 1995: 603].[65] This, it is postulated, was predicated on a strong desire not to lose black labour to high-wage industries. She further argues:

> By the second decade of the 20th century the South found itself trapped in the pattern of an underdeveloped economy, supplying raw materials and low value manufactured goods to the industrial North. To make matters worse, any attempts at industrial development in the South after 1910 encountered opposition from an already established and powerful industrial North. [Angelo, 1995: 605]

Now, at least, industry was receiving some state support (unlike the Antebellum situation discussed above). But that support was limited in scope and geared to the least dynamic industrial sectors.

There were, indeed, no endogenous forces at all emanating from the system that might, break the tight grip of King Cotton. But we must seek the essential causes, or some of them, in the relations of production that were established immediately after the Civil War and which persisted for so long: Marx's

'specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of the direct producers, [which] determines the relationship of domination and servitude, as this grows directly out of production itself and reacts back on it in turn as a determinant' [Marx, 1981: 927], which we have found useful to mention above. This captures precisely one of the the loci of explanation that we must explore. Marx goes on to say:

> On this is based the entire configuration of the economic community arising from the actual relations of production...It is...the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the immediate producers – a relationship whose particular form naturally corresponds always to a certain of level of development of the type and manner and labour, and hence to its social productive power – in which we find the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social edifice. [Marx, 1981: 927]

We may argue that, quite precisely, 'the entire configuration of the economic community' of the South was based on the 'actual relations of production' in the countryside. In our present instance, it is there that part, at least, of the 'innermost secret, the hidden basis' of the failure to industrialise is to be sought. Ransom and Sutch do identify something of the relevant elements. Let us consider them in political economy terms.

The manner in which capitalist industrialisation depends upon the countryside is complex in its specifications. We have stated some of that above. Here we do not seek to pursue that complexity. Rather, our aim is to identify the immediate senses in which the productive relations we have sought to uncover were decisive in blocking industrialisation. These were relations of production that were to the considerable advantage of landlord and merchant, landlord capital and merchant capital, but which were incompatible with effective and dynamic industrialisation. We have already noted, in support of landlord interests, the lack of strong state support for industrialisation, and the opposition to establishing the more dynamic industries. There were, in addition, three sets of reasons why the relations of production embedded in shareropping exercised an immediate and powerful constraint upon any strong impulses towards industrialisation.

The first derived from the relentlessly low levels of income imposed upon direct producers. To be sure, the situation was an advance upon slavery, inasmuch as direct producers did have a disposable income. But that income was kept relentlessly close to subsistence. As Ransom and Sutch put it, 'What little income was generated in excess of the bare essentials of life was exploited by monopolistic credit merchants'[Ransom and Sutch, 197: 198]. This meant that the creation of a flourishing home market in the South for industrial commodities, in the first instance consumer goods, 'articles of consumption', was preempted. Department II industries, then, received little stimulus from a countryside in which sharecropping was dominant.

Secondly, the continuing prevalence of inferior instruments of production, along with the absence of mechanisation, meant the Department I industries, those industries producing the means of production, capital goods, lacked a critical stimulus (apart from lack of support by the state, in deference to landlord interests). The contrast with the North and the Mid-West is striking. Writing of the Antebellum Mid-West, Paul David argues most cogently as follows:

> The widespread adoption of reaping machines by Midwestern farmers during the years immediately preceding the Civil War provides a striking instance of the way that the United States' nineteenth century industrial development was bound up with *concurrent* transformations occurring in the country's agricultural sector...[A] highly market-oriented, vigorously expanding, and technically innovative agriculture did provide crucial support for the process of industrialization...Such support in the form of sufficiently large demands for manufacturing and supplies of raw materials suitable for industrial processing would, undoubtedly, have been less readily forthcoming from a small, or economically backward agrarian economy...[W]ith the adoption of mechanized reaping...an important element was added to the set of linkages joining those two sectors [agriculture and industry] of the mid-nineteenth century economy...The spread of manufacturing from the eastern seaboard into the transmontane region of the United States during the 1850s derived significant impetus from the rise of a new demand for farm equipment in the states of the Old Northwest Territory...[A] substantial segment of the total income generated by industrial activities was directly attributable to the manufacture of durable producers' goods specifically identified with the farmers' needs – leaving aside the lumber and related building materials flowing into construction of farm dwellings, barns, sheds, and fences...[We note the importance of] the production of agricultural implements and machinery...wagons and carts, saddles and harnesses, and the variety of items turned out by blacksmiths' shops...Among the items of farm equipment being introduced on a large scale in the Midwest during the 1850s were steel breakers and plows, seed drills and seed boxes, reapers and mowers, threshers and grain separators. [David, 1980: from 184–7 emphasis in original]

This is part of Lenin's argument triumphantly vindicated. We will come back to it below. The South had no such stimulus. The absence of almost all of the elements identified by David as central to the industrialisation of the Mid-West is striking, as we have seen.

Thirdly, the existence of a labour force with a significant degree of immobility (a feature that, along with others, has, in other contexts, prompted some to identify the circumstances as those of semi-feudalism) made the creation of an urban proletariat difficult. There was no readily accessible source, in the countryside, of free wage labour. Angelo argues: 'Historical evidence indicates that the pattern of Southern industrial development was dictated by the desire to exclude black labor from industrial development' [Angelo, 1995: 604].[66] That may be so. But it may also be the case that black labour, because it was tied to the soil (unfree to move), was not readily available. It was also the case, as she points out (p. 605), that there was strong landlord opposition to this possible poaching of their cheap labour.

To capture the forces that kept the South economically backward, we have made a comparison with the Mid-West. It is the case, indeed, that the Postbellum economic stagnation and failure of economic transformation contrasted with rapid economic growth and significant structural change in the North and the West.[67] We turn in the next chapter to the North and the West. The puzzle here is why, further, within a supposedly 'unified national economy' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 193] there was such an absence of linkage between North and South: with neither labour moving significantly from the South, certainly until 1910, nor capital from the North. That is a complex issue which we cannot address here. But part of the explanation, at least, might be sought in the South's relations of production in the countryside. Labour did not move in significant numbers partly because it was tied to the soil and partly because it was prevented by the costs of transportation, by its illiteracy and by its lack of access to information.[68] These were all a function of its class position, and most important was its essential unfreedom.[69] Capital did not move, presumably, because of difficulties associated with the formation of an urban proletariat. That, assuredly, derived from the existing production relations. The circle was closed.

There was, to be sure, a massive migration of blacks after 1910,[70] but it has been suggested that this had nothing to do with endogenous forces:

> the post-1910 Negro exodus was stimulated by events and forces external to the southern economic system. The American involvement in World War I, the reduction in foreign immigration that produced labor shortages in the northern urban area, and improvements in interregional transportation were undoubtedly all factors of importance. But none of these factors worked from within. It required a series of shocks from without to awaken the southern economy from the stupor into which it had fallen. [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 196]

These 'exogenous shocks', it seems, were sufficiently powerful to unleash dramatic movement. But significant structural change did not take place. The South remained backward.

It would take the sweeping away of the South's agrarian structure and relations of production before the central barrier to economic transformation might be breached. To that we now turn. But the legacy would last at least until the 1960s: 'The historical legacy of planter domination of Southern politics was a regional economy of low wage manufacturing industries, low wage service industries, and excess labour supply' [Angelo, 1995: 608].

8 THE SWEEPING AWAY OF SHARECROPPING

In an article published in 1967, and entitled 'The Economics of Technological Change and the Demise of the Sharecropper', Richard Day considered the ending of a system whose final phase had only recently been marked. That process had started in earnest in the 1940s, with the mechanical cotton picker becoming available in 1942, and had run its course by the late 1950s. Effectively, in a decade, sharecropping, which had lasted for some ninety years, was swept away.

In concentrated form, and highlighting the major features of this period of transformation, Day portrays this process as follows:

> The economic history of a region is determined by a complicated interaction among geological, biological, technological, social and economic forces. A vivid portrayal of this process is found in the recent history of the rural American south; the resulting interplay of economic and social movements has been displayed there with irony and violence. Beginning gradually in the late 1930s, the adoption of labor saving technology increased rapidly through the late 1940s and early 1950s. In some cases, the diffusion of a new technique grew by more than 100 per cent per annum. Greatly lowered physical labor coefficients of new techniques created relatively profitable investment opportunities by substituting capital intensive, low variable cost methods for labor intensive, high variable cost methods of production...From 1940 to 1960 the index of man hours of farm work dropped...in the Delta States of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi from 247 to 93. On the other hand, output per man hour in the production of cotton alone increased more than threefold from an index of 36 to one of 127...The human counterpart of these technical facts was an exodus of 17 million people from U.S. farms [i.e. for the United States as a whole – TJB]. In Mississippi, where the concentration of population was much higher than for the nation as a whole, almost a million people left agriculture – a decline of 62 per cent in two decades. In the ten counties of the Mississippi Delta the decline in the rural farm population was also 62 per cent – a drop of 54 per cent occurring from 1950 to 1960 alone. [Day, 1967: 427–8]

Thus is the process, and some of its implications, identified in orthodox parlance.

We may view this in political economy terms. The organic composition of capital rose dramatically. Clearly, the methods of appropriating relative surplus value (via dramatic increases in labour productivity) took over from those of extracting absolute surplus value (through extension of the working day, intensification of labour, and the declining living standards of direct producers) as the major mode of appropriation, although the latter by no means disappear.[71]

Formal subsumption of labour gave way to real subsumption.[72] Agriculture's productive potential was massively increased. Labour – former sharecroppers – was swept from the land in quite remarkable numbers. Those that stayed in agriculture became wage labourers. Those that left, either for local urban destinations, or futher afield in the South, or for the North, became part of an urban proletariat.

Day provides a formal model of how the process of technological change took place. Viewed literally, this may be seen as perhaps excessively schematic. But models should not be viewed literally. Nor would the more intelligent model-builders expect one to do so. Historical change, we know, is less neat and clear-cut, more messy, more subject to lingering continuities, than can be conveyed in a formal model. Day's model has the merit of identifying those elements that replaced 'sharecroppers with mule-powered small-unit production' [Day, 1967: 429], i.e. Whatley's 'folklore technology'. He abstracts from almost all of the considerations laboured over by Ferleger, Whatley and others, and simply starts with ready-made technologies, complete in their ability to mechanise the South, freely available, and encountering no obvious obstacles in the relations of production (the 'agrarian institutions' of the South). If we grant all that (which, of course we do not – and we have already given a detailed treatment of that which we do not grant) Day has the great merit of identifying the technical changes and some of their important consequences.

He divides the period of transition into stages. He suggests the following sequence:'Mechanization was introduced in stages, first affecting land preparation and cultivation as tractor power displaced mules, then handweeding as flame throwers and herbicides were applied, and finally harvesting as mechanical cotton pickers replaced the sharecropper and his family' [Day, 1967: 429]. This is not too distant from the account we have given already. In quite rapid succession, the essential labour peaks were overcome. The important point is that sharecropping landlords knew that each of the necessary technologies was available. He presents a little more fully the sequence that culminated in full mechanisation:

> To summarise this picture, four representative technologies were constructed. They were: *Stage* I: Sharecropper unit. Mule-powered cultivation, hand picking of cotton and corn. *Stage* II: Practical mechanization of preharvest operation on the operator's share of the plantation. Tractor-powered land preparations; mule-powered cultivation; handpicking on cotton and corn; small-scale combines for harvesting soybeans, oats; three-man hay balers for hay crops. *Stage* III: Complete mechanization of pre-harvest operations except some handweeding of cotton and corn. Handpicking of cotton. Complete mechanization of corn. Self-propelled combines for oats and soybeans; one-man hay balers for hay crops. *Stage* IV: Complete mechanization, introduction of rice, a very small amount of hand-weeding of cotton remaining. [Day, 1967: 429–30]

As we have said, this is schematic and oversimplified. But there is no reason to doubt its central thrust.

A technology was available by the 1940s that was vastly more productive than what was available previously. The full emergence of that technology, we have argued, had been prevented by the existing relations of production – sharecropping and the annual contract – but that had been overcome. It was now available. We can date its availability to 1942, when the mechanical cotton picker was first marketed. Significant profit possibilities now existed for landlords – far more than the rental surplus generated by sharecropping and its accompanying technology. But the new technology, in its final form (by Stage IV), reduced the need for labour dramatically; and the reaping of the available profit possibilities required a dramatic shedding of labour.[73] Whatley observes:

> When the harvester became available after the war circumstances changed. In fact, when the tractor was adopted along with the harvester (as it almost always was [and here we see that reality was less schematic and the process more concentrated than Day's model – TJB]), the peak-load number of hands was cut in half – reduced from the harvest peak of approximately 30 hands per acre to the remaining preharvest peak of about 15. With the maximum labor peak now 50 per cent lower, landlords wanted to hold approximately half as many tenants on annual contract. [Whatley, 1987: 62]

The profit possibilities could not be realised within the sharecropping system. In Day's formulation:

> This meant that the maintenance of sharecroppers the year round became uneconomic. Instead, a combination of resident wage labor and labor hired from nearby villages was favored. [Day, 1967: 439]

The profit possibilities were more than sufficient to make the landlord class look anew at sharecropping as the dominant form of surplus appropriation, and to opt for the wage relationship. The advantages of free wage labour, previously cancelled, apparently, by the surplus-maximising property of sharecropping, might now be secured.

Day captures the process by which the sharecropping landlord was transformed into a capitalist farmer:

> The implications of these patterns for farm organization may best be viewed by considering the contrast with agriculture outside the south. Labor demand in middle-western agriculture is predominantly satisfied by the 'farm operator'. That is, management and labor are combined. But the tenure pattern in the deep south at the beginning of our period displayed a quite different arrangement. Here the farm operator [i.e. the landlord or his agent – TJB] participated, if at all, only in the mechanized phases of the work [which, as we have seen, were little in evidence – TJB]. He reserved the remainder of his time for supervising the plantation's portion of the sharecropper's work and attended to the financial aspects of the plantation as a whole...As a result of technological change this pattern changed radically. The operator himself more and more participated in the work of his now predominantly mechanized enterprise. His decision to invest in machinery also meant a decision to change the status of the sharecropper. [Day, 1967: 438]

The 'operator', i.e. landlord, had become a capitalist farmer, and the sharecropper, if he remained on the plantation, a wage labourer. Formal subsumption of labour had given way fully to real subsumption.

It is worth pursuing a little further the manner in which sharecroppers became fully proletarianised. Day both distinguishes what he terms a 'two-stage push off the farm' and identifies the forms taken by wage labour on the capitalist farm.

The 'two-stage push off the farm' appeared to unfold thus. To start off with, during the war and the immediate post-war period there was an initial increase in the demand for labour, as the acreage under cotton expanded and before the full labour-saving effects of the new technology began to bite. Labour was, during that period, a 'bottleneck', but that ceased to be the case from about 1949. It then became a 'surplus'. Day argues, plausibly, that labour was driven off the land by technical change, rather than pulled off by the demand for industrial labour. He argues that in the first half of the period of transition (say up to about 1950) 'the labor released by mechanization was at least partially absorbed by the burgeoning economy in the industrial centers of the south and north' (p. 441). One might identify 'pull' factors then. Thereafter, however, 'external growth in demands for displaced sharecroppers was too sluggish and one may infer that such migration as may have occurred was induced more by a push than a pull effect' (p. 441). He points to two stages in the 'push'.

The first stage in the 'push' was a shift of sharecroppers off the farm, to the village 'where they provided a conveniently located labor pool that could be inexpensively transported to surrounding plantations and farms' [Day, 1967: 442]. Sharecroppers are then transformed into 'rural nonfarm workers, or 'wage labor...either on the farm or in the vilages and small towns' (loc. cit.) Thereafter, came 'the second-stage push of labor out of the agricultural sector altogether and out of the region in search of some other way of life' [Day, 1967: 442]. We now witness 'a movement of population from the rural to the urban sectors' and a fall in the population of the region in question. Sharecroppers are fully proletarianised.

With respect to the forms taken by wage labour, Day points to a situation qualitatively distinct to what had gone before:

> The labor inputs included unskilled labor for chopping weeds, handpicking labor for cotton, tractor drivers, and special machine operators. The first two were almost always provided by sharecroppers, or by displaced sharecroppers

> in the form of resident or non-resident day laborers. Special machine operators receive a wage premium above tractor drivers and represent a special skill level because of their requirement to make timely repairs in the field in addition to routine opearations. [Day, 1967: 430]

The transition to capitalist agriculture had taken place.

Our odyssey ends here. Southern landlords were at last transformed into a class of capitalist farmers, having tried and failed to make that transition immediately after the Civil War: now employing free wage labour and advanced forms of the productive forces; sharecroppers were now fully proletarianised, either as wage labourers in agriculture (the small minority) or as part of the urban labour force (the great majority) in both North and the South. Now that free wage labour came into its own, all of those advantages of free wage labour, by comparison with unfree labour, identified by Marx, were available. Extraction of absolute surplus value gave way more or less completely to that of relative surplus value. The organic composition of capital rose dramatically. The full transition to capitalism in the countryside of the American South had taken place.

Notes

1. On the end of the Civil War see, for example, Brogan [1986: 353–5], Bailyn *et al.* [1985: 478–80], Levine *et al.* [1989: 460–3].
2. Hugh Brogan observes:

   > Roughly 359,000 Union soldiers, 258,000 Confederates, had died either on the battlefield or in military hospitals, which means that it was and is the bloodiest war in American history in terms of absolute numbers as well as in the proportion of casualties to the population. It left indelible traces on the American consciousness. [Brogan, 1986: 355]

3. The quotation is, of course, from Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, and refers to the problem of the emergence of a communist society in the aftermath of capitalism.
4. We are referred to Shugg [1939: 87].
5. We are referred to Takaki [1971] for 'a complete discussion of the attempt to reopen the slave trade'.
6. Angelo refers the reader to Berthoff [1951].
7. Ransom and Sutch point out that such withdrawal of labour by former slaves was experienced in other slave-economies in which slavery was abolished. This was so, for example, in the British West Indies, Mauritius and the Portuguese colonies. See Ransom and Sutch [1977: 324, note 14]. They cite Kloosterboer [1960: 191–4]. They draw attention, also, to Adamson's work on emancipation in British Guiana [Adamson, 1972].
8. For clear evidence for the 1860s, see Ransom and Sutch [1977: 46–7, and 326, notes 18–21].
9. The details of their estimate are given in Ransom and Sutch [1977: appendix C, 232–6]. It is done with care. They tell us that: 'While the estimate is conjectural, it is nevertheless solidly based on an extensive review of contemporary commentary as well as census samples and contemporary agricultural surveys' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 44].

10. On migration of ex-slaves, see Ransom and Sutch [1977: 61–4]. That considerable migration to towns took place is clear. Ransom and Sutch suggest that the net effect of this may, however, may be exaggerated. They hold that much of the migration was not permanent; that many blacks returned to the countryside 'where employment could be procured' (p. 62). They calculate that the growth in urban black population in 1870, in the South, was less than 4% of the rural black population in that year; or no more than 75,000 people in the five cotton states (loc. cit.). None of this is inconsistent with a very grave view being taken by planters of the phenomenon. They did not have a careful estimate based on Census figures. Their view was based on what they observed, what they thought they saw, on gossip, on newspaper reports, and on sheer prejudice. What they *perceived*, after all, is what is important to any decisions that they made.
11. On the wages paid in 1865 and 1866, see Ransom and Sutch [1977: 60].
12. On wages and methods of wage payments in 1865 and 1866, see Ransom and Sutch [1977: 60–1].
13. See, for example, Ransom and Sutch [1977: 60] where bargaining over share wages is noted.
14. Ransom and Sutch quote from a South Carolina act of 1865: 'persons of color...are not entitled to social or political equality with white persons' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 66].
15. There is an excellent literature on the Black Codes. For a brief treatment, see, for example, Angelo [1995: 588–9 and 599], Levine *et al.* [1989: 483–5, 497–9, 511–12], Brogan [1986: 362–3, 373, 376], Degler [1984: 231–2], Bailyn *et al.* [1985: 499, 506]. For detailed examination, see Brooks [1914], Cohen [1976], Foner [1988], Trelese [1981], Wilson [1988] and Woodman [1979].
16. See Ransom and Sutch [1977: 64–5].
17. The figures are as follows:

Annual wages earned by black males in five cotton states: 1867 and 1868

	Annual Wage ($)		
State	*1867*	*1868*	*Percent Decline*
South Carolina	100	93	7.0
Georgia	125	83	33.6
Alabama	117	87	25.6
Mississippi	149	90	39.6
Louisiana	150	104	30.7

Source: Ransom and Sutch [1977: 65]. This is taken from US Department of Agriculture [1867: 416].

18. See Ransom and Sutch [1977: 66].
19. Exponents of the 'new' neo-classical view are, for example, Cheung [1969] and Stiglitz [1974], followed by a host of others. Cheung was the first to state this view rigorously and at length.
20. See Woodward [1951: 17, 20–1].
21. Mann refers us to Kirby [1987: 1] and Bartley [1987: 440–2].

22. See Kolchin [1995: 217–18].
23. The Marshallian view is stated in remarkably brief compass by Alfred Marshall in his *Principles*, in two pages, albeit tightly argued [Marshall, 1949: 535–7].
24. As well as Table 7.2, which is taken from Ransom and Sutch [1977] see Ransom and Sutch [1977: 87–8].
25. The 1969 version appeared in mimeo form and had a wide circulation [Bharadwaj, 1969]. It was not published until 1974 [Bharadwaj, 1974]. For her early brief treatment of 'interlocking of markets', see Bharadwaj [1974: 4–5].
26. See, for example, Bardhan [1980], Braverman and Stiglitz [1982], Basu [1983] and Braverman and Srinivasan [1984].
27. See previous note for references.
28. For a critique from within the political economy position, see Ghose and Saith [1976]. From a more eclectic viewpoint, see Griffin [1979: appendix to ch. 3]. See also Bardhan and Rudra [1978] for an empirical treatment. Among neo-classical criticism see, for example, Newbery [1975] and Srinivasan [1979].
29. The evidence includes an independent survey in 1869, and comprehensive surveys by the US Department of Agriculture and by the Census Office, in 1876 and 1879. It also includes much else. See Ransom and Sutch [197: 89 and 337 n. 30].
30. Cf. Bell and Zusman [1976: 58].
31. See Marshall [1949: 536], Mill [1987: book II, ch. 8, 302–17] and Johnson [1950].
32. Interestingly, Krishna Bharadwaj, one of the major exponents of the political economy view of interlinkage, writing in the 1960s, suggests a very similar device in India:

> given the superior bargaining position of the big landlord, he may choose to parcel out land...to the very small tenants, who in turn, will be compelled by economic necessity to cultivate their small plots intensively, applying owned inputs (particularly labour) far beyond the point of maximum net return. The landlord by so parcelling out land may be in a position to extract a maximum return. [Bharadwaj, 1974: 4]

In the Indian context, it is a compelling argument. It is made, also, by Amit Bhaduri, with respect to sharecropping rentals [Bhaduri, 1983].

33. See also Wright and Kunreuther [1975: 549–50]. There it is emphasised that 'one of the most effective devices for enforcing the terms of a tenant contract, and ensuring that sharecroppers did not practice undesirably *extensive* farming, was simply to limit the size of plot available to the tenant'. This is backed up by Wright and Kunreuther through reference to Gale Johnson's emphasis, noted above [Johnson, 1950], on the need for the sharecropper, therefore, to exert maximum effort simply to secure subsistence income for himself and his family.
34. They direct attention to the examples cited by Joseph Reid of 'side adjustments' in sharecropping rental contracts, although not the precise form that they took. See Reid [1973: 116–17], cited Ransom and Sutch [1977: 337, n. 33]. They are not wholly convincing in their assertion that 'in several of the cases cited by Reid it is clear that the size of plot was not easily amenable to adjustment'. That may be so, but landlords were very likely to have deployed all of the available devices to ensure maximum rental surplus. In effect, that is implicit in the thrust of the Ransom and Sutch argument. There are two questions: one whether varying the size of holding was enough on its own to maximise surplus appropriation; and the second whether sharecroppers were able to resist the 'side adjustments'.
35. See, for example, Reid [1973: 114–15, 118–20], Ferleger [1993: 32, 40–3], Mandle [1978: 48], Woodman [1979: 336], Wright [1986: 99], Hahn [1983: 171], Fite [1984: 85], Parker [1980: 1027], Wayne [1983: 129–30]. The papers by Reid and by Ferleger are especially useful on this issue.

36. The following is a paraphrase of the Ransom and Sutch article. I have concentrated on the thrust of the argument and have not referred to the empirical material they draw upon.
37. Angelo argues (although she does not produce very much evidence to support her argument) that 'the landlord, not the merchant class, was the chief architect and beneficiary of the debt peonage system' [Angelo, 1995: 584]. If, of course, the landlord and the merchant/creditor were one and the same, this is incontestably so. They then did not exist as separate classes. That, in some instances, they did exist separately seems likely; and that the 'merchant class' then did benefit considerably also seems probable.
38. Ransom and Sutch [1975: 406, n. 2] draw our attention to, for example, Woodman [1967], Saloutos [1960] and Shannon [1945].
39. Again, Ransom and Sutch direct us to the relevant literature [Ransom and Sutch, 1975: 406, n. 3]. See, for example, Brown and Reynolds [1973], DeCanio [1973], Higgs [1973], Reid [1973]. It is usually extreme neo-classicals who take such a view.
40. They cite a Tennessee sharecropping landlord who observed that sharecroppers 'will not make a rail or a board, or clean off a ditch or do anything to keep up the place, unless they are paid extra' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 101].
41. They are here citing Loring and Atkinson [1869: 32].
42. The evidence he produces relates to the Yazoo-Mississippi delta in 1913 and to the whole of the South (and the seven selected states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana) for 1920.
43. See, for example, Reid [1973: 128], cited by Ferleger.
44. Ferleger quotes J.S. Newman, of the South Carolina Experiment Station, writing in 1904: 'The chief enemy of progressive agriculture in the Southern States is the "one-horse farm"...The equipment of the one-horse farm is generally a weak mule, too weak, as usually fed, to do good work, a boy Dixie [a one-horse turning plow] and a scooter plow provided with shovel, scooter and half-shovel.' See Ferleger [1993: 45]. Ferleger takes the quotation from Fite [1984: 70–1].
45. See Ferleger [1993: 38–40].
46. See Ferleger [1993: 40–3].
47. Whatley refers us to David [1975] on the wheat harvester and Street [1957] on the cotton picker.
48. See Whatley [1987: 45]. Whatley cites Musoke and Olmstead [1982: 405–6] on this.
49. See Whatley [1987: 45].
50. Whatley [1987] provides a useful account, brief but critical, of the relevant literature on mechanisation in the South. I draw on that account here, and consider Whatley's own very interesting contribution.
51. Paul David was an early exponent of this notion, in work on the United States [David, 1980, which was published originally in 1966; David, 1969] and England [David, 1971]. One cannot but comment on the pleasure in reading David's work. He is at once rigorous, eminently sane and possessed of an elegant English prose. It is refreshing to read his admonition that

> the substitution of horse-powered machines for manual labour on Britain's farms was a more complex affair than naive neo-classical models of factor substitution allow. [David, 1971: 146]

and that the study of the mechanical reaper

> forces an encounter with technical and institutional conditions whose significance has for too long passed without adequate consideration from either economists or historians. (loc. cit.)

In a scholarly (if that is the right word) world increasingly dominated by naive neo-classical models (models which are at once 'rigorous', even 'theoretical *tours de force*', and utterly divorced from any recognisable historical situation, such sanity is rare.

Whatley draws attention to the following writers who have shown 'that large farms contemplating adoption of new technologies had a cost advantage over smaller farms' [Whatley 1987: 45–6]: Whatley [1983: ch. 3], Sargen [1979], Musoke [1981], Ankli [1980] and Ankli, Helberg and Thomson [1971].

52. See, for example, on India, in the context of the so-called 'new technology' or 'green revolution', Byres [1981: 415].
53. As pointed out in Whatley [1987: 46]. Whatley refers the reader to United States Department of Agriculture [1924], United States Department of Agriculture [1935], Pederson and Raper [1954], Welch [1943], Mississippi Agricultural Experimental Station [1931] and National Research Project [1938]; and to Fite [1950] and Street [1957: 104–6].
54. Whatley cites Street [1957: 34], Fleisig [1965: 706] and Mandle [1978: ch. 5] .
55. Whatley brackets the two together as exponents of the same approach [Whatley, 1987: 47].
56. See Whatley [1987: 47–9]. James Agee's detailed account of the 'making of the cotton crop' (to use Whatley's phrase) in Alabama in 1936, as sharecropping was approaching its demise [Agee and Walker, 1965: 321–48], is an evocative, passionate and eloquent first-hand description that may be read along with Whatley's more detached treatment. The two complement each other admirably, although Whatley makes no mention of Agee. Indeed, one searches the sharecropping literature in vain for any reference to the Agee and Walker book. One cannot but be surprised at such silence.
57. This included turning last year's soil with the plough, cutting sprouts, cleaning ditches and drains, harrowing/pulverising the soil, bedding and rebedding the field, applying fertilizer before planting, and, very important, weeding and hoeing. See Whatley [1987: 48 and 69]
58. As the song has it:

> When them cotton bolls were rotten,
> We didn't pick very much cotton.

59. See Whatley [1987: 62].
60. See Whatley [1987: 62].
61. See Whatley [1987: 62].
62. Such a view is held by, for example, Fite [1980: 190–1] and Street [1957 : 107–29]. See Whatley [1987: 64, n. 38].
63. See Hahn [1983: 180–2, 193] on these developments.
64. Hahn [1983: 196–7].
65. Angelo refers us to Oates [1975] and Wiener [1978].
66. She refers the reader to Oates [1975: 120–31].
67. See Ransom and Sutch [1977: 193–5]. There some comparative data are given.
68. See Ransom and Sutch [1977: 193–5].
69. This is the essential theme, indeed, of Angelo [1995]. In short, she argues, the South did not possess 'the social, legal and political institutions that are necessary for the operation of a free wage labor market' (p. 583).
70. See Ransom and Sutch, [1977: 195–7]. There it is described as 'one of the largest migrations in human history' (p. 195).
71. Cf. Marx [1976: 643–54, especially 645; 1021–5] and Brenner [1977: 30–1] for a *general* statement with respect to capitalism.

72. For a discussion of formal and real subsumption of labour, see the *Resultate* [Marx, 1976: 1019–38].
73. Steinbeck, in *The Grapes of Wrath*, has the following exchange between landlord, or his spokesmen, and sharecroppers:

> What do you want us to do? We can't take less share of the crop – we'r half-starved now. The kids are hungry all the time. We got no clothes, torn an'ragged. If all the neighbours weren't the same, we'd be ashamed to go to meeting. And at last the owner men came to the point. The tenant system won't work any more. One man on a tractor can take the place of twelve or fourteen families. Pay him a wage and take all the crop. We have to do it. [Steinbeck, 1940: 38, i.e. ch. 5]

He captures the logic of accumulation precisely.

8 The North and the West: From Early to Advanced Petty Commodity Production

1 THE BROAD QUESTIONS AND THE NEED FOR REGIONAL SPECIFICATION

We turn, finally, in our long quest, to the North and the West. We have identified above the states and territories that came to constitute these regions (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2). We have considered already the brutality with which American Indians were driven from the land, as part of the process of primitive accumulation in the North and West. We must now consider the social formations that were established in place of the original, native social formations. We have noted the particularly strong resistance of the Northern colonies to the attempts to introduce feudalism in the seventeenth century; and the failure of slavery to take root there. Neither feudalism nor slavery, we have seen, proved a solution to the problem of endemic labour shortage. Another answer to the labour question was necessary.

What forms of productive relations, then, what modes of surplus appropriation, did take root in the North and the West? How did these change between the seventeenth and the early twentieth centuries? What was their significance for the productive forces in agriculture? What manner of agrarian transition took place? What were the major forces of change? What were the implications for accumulation, both in the countryside and more widely? These are the broad questions that we address.

2 THE JEFFERSONIAN VISION

We may identify here the Jeffersonian vision, since it has carried such a heavy ideological charge in American perceptions of the agrarian question. In its glorification of the 'family farm' and its romanticising of the qualities of the 'independent farmer', qualities seen as almost mystical, it has become the stuff of myth. Its powerful influence continues right down to the present, both in the way that agrarian relations in the North and the West are conceived and in policy prescriptions. It became for Jefferson (1743–1826) a vision, essentially, of how the push westwards by 'U.S. settler colonialism' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 301] would be achieved by a particular agrarian form. Among subsequent

generations of Americans (including many historians), it became a view, perhaps the standard view, of how that was achieved; and, moreover, not only of how the West was settled, but also of how the North had been settled and would continue so to be characterised. It is our aim to consider how it actually happened in both the North and the South.

There are echoes in Jefferson's vision of Horace's idyll of the first century B.C.:

> Beatus ille, qui procul negotiis,
> Ut prisca gens mortalium,
> Paterna rura bubus exercet suis
> Solutus omni faenore
>
> Happy the man who, far from the schemes of business,
> Like the early generations of mankind,
> Ploughs and ploughs again his ancestral land,
> with oxen of his own breeding,
> With no yoke of usury on his neck
> *Epodes*, ii, Trans. Wickham

It was an idyll, we note, which did not reflect the realities of the countryside of the Roman Empire.[1] Jefferson was certainly familiar with the writings of Horace, which were among the books on 'antient history' which he commended to his nephew and ward, Peter Carr, and which, in a letter from Paris, written on August 19, 1785, he insisted should be read 'in the original and not in translations' [Peterson, ed., 1975: 382].[2]

We find classical historians linking an idealised view of classical history to 'the admirable values and virtues of Jeffersonian America [which] are both agrarian and classical (with a small 'c')' [Cartledge, 1995:138]; with an invocation from one, influential American classical historian that: 'It is therefore up to Americans urgently to rediscover their classical, that is agrarian roots' [Cartledge, 1995:138].[3] What, then, are the 'admirable values and virtues of Jeffersonian America'? What are the supposed 'classical, that is agrarian roots' of which Jefferson was the champion?

His glorification of the 'cultivators of the earth' and his deep antipathy towards 'manufactures' and those employed therein are Physiocratic in their insistence that all value derives from agriculture,[4] and Manichaean in their representation of the agrarian as good and the urban as evil. We may pursue that.

We have quoted above, in the context of our discussion of American Indians and primitive accumulation in North America, Miller's attribution to Jefferson the view that 'the best life known to man [is] the life of an American farmer' [Miller, 1991: 70]. In his *Notes on Virginia*, of 1782,[5] he avowed:

> Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which He keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth. [Peterson, ed., 1973: 217]

In a letter from Paris of August 23, 1785, to John Jay, the then Secretary of Foreign Affairs, he again expounded that view, this time in less mystical terms:

> We have now lands enough to employ an infinite number of people in their cultivation. Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and welded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bands. [Peterson, ed., 1973: 384]

That such an avocation was superior to all others he has not the slightest doubt.

But, tilling the soil was not enough. That superiority required, for its full flowering, that important conditions be met: that the 'cultivator' be an owner-occupier; that he live on his land and work it himself; that the farms be 'family farms' run without wage labour; and that, therefore, the farms be small in size. In a letter to Dr Thomas Cooper, on September 10, 1814, in comparing Great Britain and the United States, and contemplating the 'condition of the English poor' and the absence of poverty in the United States, he stresses:

> The great mass of our population is of laborers...Most of the laboring class *possess property, cultivate their own lands, have families*, and from the demand for their labor are enabled to demand from the rich and the competent such prices as enable them to be fed abundantly, clothed above mere decency, to labor moderately and raise their families. [Padover, 1965: 11, emphases mine][6]

'Self-sufficiency' clearly did not mean a complete isolation from the market, since their ability to obtain reasonable prices for their produce is stressed. It did mean that these 'yeomen' were not *ruled* by the market. As has been noted by a recent writer on Jefferson:

> Simplicity, simplicity, and yet more simplicity was the burden of the message handed down from Monticello [his estate in Virginia] but, unhappily, not always practiced there. Jefferson wanted to do away with all economic complexities and to strip down to essentials. The economy he believed to be best suited to the American people was the kind of semi-subsistence practiced by the small yeomen farmers of western Virginia – almost devoid of money, self-sufficient except for a small surplus with which to buy salt, sugar, and coffee

> 'and a little finery for his [the farmer's] wife and daughters'. In such a society no one would want for the necessities of life and neither would any one get rich. [Miller 1991: 82–3]

It was a heady vision.

One cannot but comment, however, on the remarkable fracture of vision involved in all this. As the same scholar of Jefferson writes: 'Although he himself owned ten thousand acres of land and over a hundred and fifty slaves, Jefferson prized the small self-sufficient family-sized farm as the ideal agricultural unit' [Miller, 1991: 82]. Slaves, it seems, did not count; and neither did his own practice, so flagrantly at variance with his vision.

These convictions translated into a strong view of the desirable structure of American society and the American economy. In his letter to Jay, he offered the following advice:

> As long therefore as they can find employment in this line, I would not convert them into mariners, artisans, or anything else. But our citizens will find emploiment in this line till their numbers, and of course their productions, become too great for the demand both internal and foreign. This is not the case as yet, and probably will not be for a considerable time. As soon as it is, the surplus of hands must be turned to something else. I should then perhaps wish to turn them to the sea in preference to manufactures, because comparing the characters of the two classes I find the former the most valuable citizens. I consider the class of artificers as the panders of vice and the instruments by which the liberties of a country are generally overturned. [Peterson, ed., 1973: 384]

Quite how these mariners, unleashed upon the seas of the world, would, in their ever-increasing numbers, earn their living is not indicated. The image of hordes of American pirates, plying their trade on the seven seas, leaps to mind. Jefferson's distaste for the urban and for manufacturing industry never deserted him. In an apposite phrase, a recent author writes of 'Jefferson's "anti-urban" bias' [Miller, 1991: 8]. Jefferson, as we have noted, was preoccupied with the corrupting influence of urban existence. He 'deplored large cities as a "canker" upon republicanism and a danger to social stability' [Miller, 1991: 86]. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XIX, he observes: 'generally speaking, the proportion which the aggregate of the other classes of citizens bears in any state to that of its husbandmen, is the proportion of its unsound to its healthy parts' [Petersen, ed., 1973: 217]. He 'hoped, [then], to keep the proportion of urban and rural inhabitants approximately at the ratio which existed in his own lifetime – ninety percent on farms, plantations, and small rural communities' [Miller, 1991: 86]. Such was his notion of desirable structural change in the United States of his time.

He had, by extension, a clear position on the desirable international division of labour for the United States:

> While we have land to labour then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a work-bench, or twirling a distaff. Carpenters, masons, smiths, are wanting in husbandry: but, for the general operation of manufacture, let our workshops remain in Europe. It is better to carry provisions and materials to workmen there, than bring them to the provision and materials, and with them their manners and principles. The loss by the transportation of commodities across the Atlantic will be made up in happiness and permanence of government. The mobs of great cities add just as much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body. It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserves a republic in vigour. A degeneracy in these is a canker which soon eats to the heart of its laws and constitution. [Peterson, ed., 1973: 217][7]

Thirty years later, he had modified his views. In a letter written on January 9, 1816, to a prominent Boston merchant, he explained that exclusion from the oceans by the British and the French had taught him that 'manufactures are now as necessary to our independence as to our comfort' [Petersen, ed., 1973: 549]. But that was said with hesitation and regret. There is no evidence that he changed his views on the superiority of agriculture to manufacturing industry.[8]

For the expansionary Jefferson, the Louisiana Purchase created vast possibilities for indulging his supremely populist vision. He believed that 'only by moving westward...could Americans maintain their republican society of independent yeoman-farmers and avoid the miseries of the concentrated urban working classes of Europe' [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 261]. The Louisiana Purchase offered great scope for a shift westwards that would allow the flowering of his vision: of an access of land that would extend the number of cultivators to unimagined heights. We will examine presently the reality of that 'society of independent yeoman-farmers'. We have noted, already, the horrendous implications of the shift westwards for native Indian populations. What of the settlers themselves?

3 SOME RECAPITULATION AND A NOTE ON CHARLES POST'S WORK

We have already encountered the North at several points in our exposition. We have established its constituent elements, and considered the manner of its historical formation.

We have examined how native Indian populations were dispossessed of the land and driven out, as part of the process of primitive accumulation; how first feudalism and then slavery were resisted and rejected as means of addressing the

'labour problem' and appropriating surplus. We have also hinted at, or made brief reference to, the way in which the land taken from native populations was settled by incoming settlers; and at differing perceptions of that (one of which is an extension of the 'Jeffersonian vision'). We must now treat this systematically, with our problematic in mind.

Here I would draw attention to my detailed use of a recent article by Charles Post [Post, 1995]. It is obvious that I have leaned heavily on particular authors throughout this work. But such close attention to a single article needs, perhaps, comment. That article is, without doubt, a *tour de force*, displaying a quite remarkable command of the existing historiography – such as to make the heart of the comparativist leap with pleasure. That degree of command can, surely, only be within the grasp of the specialist. For the comparativist it is invaluable to secure it at second-hand, so to speak. In an earlier paper [Post, 1982], he raises some of the issues treated with such skill and in that later piece – including some attempts to categorise the dominant social form in the North and the West. That discussion, too, is of considerable interest. But it is the later article that is the *chef d'oeuvre*.

Post's article is immensely valuable for the present study, since its political economy framework matches mine, and he raises precisely the questions relevant to my notion of agrarian transition. It could not be more apposite. Comparative political economy would be altogether more straightforward if more articles of that kind existed. On Prussia, Hartmut Harnisch's 1986 article [Harnisch, 1986] proved similarly valuable.

It did, however, need some 'unpacking', inasmuch as the argument, although perfectly clear, is, on occasion, somewhat dense, in the sheer intensity of its unfolding; while it proved necessary to reassemble some of its component parts. It is not, then, simply a case of appropriation.

Moreover, analytically, we will interrogate the appropriateness of Post's use of the categories *independent household producer* and *simple/commodity producer* in this context. That we must consider carefully in our treatment of agrarian transformation in the North (and the West).

We have noted, while examining the South's experience of change, the significant increase in tenancy in the North (as well as the West) between 1880 (the first year for which we have systematic figures) and 1920: a rise in the North, we recall, from 19% to 28%. That casts some doubt on the idea of a region exclusively of independent owner-occupiers, after 1880, but also in the preceding years. It also suggests a need to identify the landlord class. But, clearly, we need, also, to consider the pre-1880 situation, from its very beginnings, in this respect.

We have cited Degler above, to the effect that in New England, from the very outset, there was no experimenting with feudal structures and that, as early as 1623, with the repudiation of 'communal property arrangements' by William Bradford, 'individual ownership of land, so typical of American land tenure ever since, was thus symbolically begun' [Degler, 1984: 4]. Of course, it was not

typical of American land tenure in the South, while the tenancy figures suggest that by the last quarter of the nineteenth century that idea needed significant qualifying in the North. It may also need qualifying for the earlier period.

4 THE COLONIAL AND ANTEBELLUM ERAS: FROM EARLY SIMPLE COMMODITY PRODUCTION TO ADVANCED SIMPLE COMMODITY PRODUCTION

(i) A Burgeoning Literature and a Debate

As Charles Post points out, since about 1980 there has been 'a burgeoning literature on the nature and dynamics of agriculture in the northern US before the Civil War' [Post, 1995: 391]. This has given rise to 'a new debate on the social character and logic of antebellum rural production and exchange' (loc. cit.). It is a debate about 'the relationship of family farmers to markets for farm products, wage labour and capital' (loc. cit.) . It is a debate, then, of central concern to this study.

One might consider this in relation to two periods: the colonial era and the antebellum years. But, in this context, as with the South, the temporal division is somewhat artificial, since the processes we wish to confront are not usefully identified in terms of such a break. Just as slavery straddled the two eras, so the relevant processes in the North are to be found in both periods.

The 'enormous volume of new historical evidence' (loc. cit.) so generated is at once of great potential value to the comparativist and daunting in its need for a critical synthesis. We have, in Charles Post, a valuable guide to that literature and a formidable synthesiser, in the political economy tradition. As I have indicated, I shall draw on him heavily, although, where necessary, critically. If I enter into critical dialogue with him, it is with the clear sense that I cannot possibly match his familiarity with and mastery of this vast body of literature. We may, however, differ on theoretical or analytical judgements. With that proviso, we may proceed.

(ii) A Prefiguring of the Debate

We may prefigure the debate with some observations on the forms of land settlement made in the Northern colonies, and the dominant outcome. That will give our rendering of the debate some essential moorings. We start with the Northeast: with New England and the 'middle colonies'. We will then proceed to the Northwest, the Ohio valley and the Great Plains (or the Midwest). There is an obvious difference of timing. The former were settled first, in the colonial era, and the latter as the shift westwards proceeded in the antebellum years. But we may take them to have been dominated by the same social form until the 1830s in the former case, and the 1840s and 1850s in the latter.

First, then, the Northeast. As one excellent text-book encapsulates it (and the comparatavist, and others, should not dismiss the value of the best text-books, and their distillation of the relevant monograph literature), with respect to those settlers who would work the land:

> The first goal of the British invaders was to change the land. They wanted to clear the forest, fence in their fields, build houses and barns and churches and stores, and plant European crops. They wanted to raise sheep and cattle and fowl rather than hunt deer and wild turkeys. They wanted, in short, America to look like Europe. [Levine *et al.*, 1992: 91]

Those apparently laudable goals faced a problem. The land, of course, was possessed by Indians when the colonists first descended upon North America. Moreover, there was an apparently irreconcilable difference of view between European settler and American Indian:

> Indians and Europeans...had very different understandings of what is meant to possess the land. For Indians a title was collective and relative: all members of a tribe owned the land; there was no such thing as rent or purchase. For Europeans, ownership was individual and absolute: the holder of a legally recognised title had the right to forbid the use of the land by anyone else. The result of this difference of understanding was tragic. For Europeans, land that the Indians had not actually cleared was not really theirs. For Indians 'selling' the land to Europeans meant no more than allowing them some right to use it. A conflict developed not simply over ownership, but between two completely different ways of understanding humankind's place in the landscape. [Levine *et al.*, 1989: 91–2]

As we have seen, the colonists were hell-bent on dispossessing the Indians, by whatever means came to hand. They did so, backed up by the full power of the colonial and post-colonial states, with duplicity, brutality, and savage effect. Such was primitive accumulation in North America.

As settlers moved in, in ever-increasing numbers, to the Northern colonies (those of the Northeast), under the watchful eye of British colonial administrations, so private property rights in land, taken by force from Indians, were created, and vested with European settlers. The colonists shaped the land according to their own preconceptions and so particular social forms were established. One particular social form would, however, emerge as dominant in the colonial era and in the first six decades or so of the antebellum years.

There were, of course, different kinds of 'colonist', and different forms of control over land were created. As in other British colonies (for example, India), there were varying forms of land settlement, depending on the immediate goals and needs of colonial administrations (India, however, differing fundamentally, in that settlement, for the most part, was with native landholders, who were not,

by and large, forcibly removed from the land *en masse*, to be replaced by European landholders, or, as in the North, European direct producers). Such colonial administrations were motivated, in part, by the need for revenue. Such revenue, however small, might be raised via taxation, and a tax base might be created via commodity production – whether tax revenue was realised in the form of direct taxation (most probably a land tax) or indirect taxation (taxes on goods). To the extent that they might represent the interests of either big landlords or merchants, the encouragement of commodity production was, again, likely. That commodity production might be encouraged by particular forms of land settlement.

Post, then, argues that – after the initial scattered settlements in the seventeenth century, the relatively slow spread of settlement by Europeans, a succession of Indian wars, extermination, driving-out, and the clearing of the way for settlers (all of which we have discussed above, in the section on 'American Indians and Primitive Accumulation in North America') – settlement by Europeans began in earnest by the last quarter of that century. He sums up the aims, or some of them, of colonial administrations, as follows:

> European settlement of the northern British colonies began ['in earnest', one might add, for it surely began before then – TJB] in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, after native Americans were forcibly removed from the eastern seaboard. The goals of the British colonial administrations, representing large landholders and merchants, was to promote commodity production in the colonies. [Post, 1995: 415]

Certainly, the Crown had already created large landholders in some of the colonies. Equally certainly, merchant capital existed in several forms. It seems not unreasonable to posit that the interests of these classes were represented by colonial administrations (collectively, perhaps, the colonial state). Those interests, to be sure, required healthy forms of commodity production. The forms established would be those of simple commodity production. That we will wish to discuss in some detail later. For the moment, we wish to note how these colonial administrations went about pursuing their goals.

To start off with, as we have suggested, it was essential to establish private property rights in land. But what manner of private property rights? Significantly differing possibilities existed. Let us distinguish two that found favour in the Northern colonies. Firstly, there were those who sought to acquire large areas of land, and who, when successful in that aim, faced the problem of how to appropriate surplus from it. The Crown, indeed, favoured the creation of such a class of large landholders in the 'middle colonies' of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. These large landholders might, of course, seek to appropriate surplus in a variety of ways. To that we will return. Secondly, if there were those who attempted to monopolise the land as landlords, there were far more (in numerical terms) who sought to resist that fiercely: some seeking to work the land as communities;[9] but most to own and work individual holdings. They predominated and they won out in the New England colonies. Of the former (those who sought to work the land as communities) it has been said: 'Until the American Revolution their greatest social fear was that landlordism and tenantry would rear their ugly heads among them.' [Levine *et al.*, 1989: 92] It was the latter (those who sought to own and work individual holdings) who triumphed in New England, and, indeed, more generally in the Northern colonies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. That is of central significance. But we anticipate.

The colonial administrations set out to achieve their aims via the land grants that they made.[10] There were, in the North, two major forms of land grant: one followed in New England, and the other in the 'middle colonies'.

In the former case, we need to distinguish initial settlements, and, then, their subsequent implications. Thus,

> In New England, colonial governments granted land to groups of settlers in the form of townships. These original settlers, or 'proprietors', divided land among themselves as freeholds and common lands. [Post, 1995: 414]

Individual ownership prevailed. But, we note the following : 'Later settlers, faced with the proprietors' possession of the most fertile and best located land and their exclusive use of commons, were forced to either buy or lease from the original settlers' [Post, 1995: 416]. It would seem, then, that tenancy was created as a possible way of landholding. Not only that, but a basis for social differentiation had been established in the New England colonies. Would tenancy grow significantly in its incidence? Would social differentiation proceed powerfully? To these questions we will return.

One ominous development was the emergence of land speculators. These were 'urban merchants [who] had invested their revenues from the colonial trade in large tracks of land, which [they]...hoped to sell to "enterprising" farmers for a considerable profit' [Post, 1995: 416]. But, as yet, their grip was tenuous. Indeed, the land they had acquired title to proved to be a safety-valve:

> In New England, settlers took up illegal possession of lands in the Connecticut River valley and in uninhabited areas of Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. Some pioneers eventually established legal 'freehold rights' to these lands at minimal cost, and new waves of illegal occupation kept land prices relatively low throughout New England before the Revolution. [Post, 1995: 416]

These 'squatters' were able to occupy speculators' land, 'so long as the colonial militia could not enforce the land speculators' private property rights in the frontier' [Post, 1995: 416]. This enabled 'farmers and rural artisans...[to] establish, maintain and expand their landholding *without extensive commodity production*'

[Post, 1995: 416, emphasis mine].[11] That was important. But it would not, necessarily, survive in the post-Revolution era.

The second form of land grant contained more powerful possibilities of a deeply-rooted system of tenancy and significant inequalities. It had the following cast: 'In the "middle colonies", the colonial governments of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey granted land to large mercantile companies, who in turn sold land to large landowners, who leased land to tenant farmers' [Post, 1995: 416]. We may pause to consider various *a priori* possibilities, before proceeding to examine how this worked out in practice.

Once that land was acquired, the possibility existed of there emerging, with ownership of the land, a landlord class, who might let the land in feudal tenure, in a sharecropping relationship, or for fixed money rent; a planter class of slave-owners; or a class of large capitalist farmers. We have seen that slavery, although by no means absent, did not strike deep roots in the North. We have considered, albeit briefly, the unsuccessful attempts to introduce feudal structures. Large capitalist farms seem nowhere to have been attempted. Out of the feudal initiatives, however, there emerged tenancy: in the valley of the Hudson, as we have seen; to a certain extent in Maine and New Hampshire, where quit rents were established; and in some parts of Pennsylvania.

Where, as in the Hudson and Mohawk valleys, such tenancy existed on a significant scale, 'the result was a society sharply divided along class lines' [Levine *et al.*, 1989: 194], with rent the major form of surplus appropriation, a powerful landlord class and a truly subject tenantry.[12] Such relationships turned out, however, to be in the minority in the North. As a result of concerted struggle by tenants (class struggle), and the availability of land to which they could move, 'in the end there was no re-creation of a traditional landlord system' [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 117]. It is worth reproducing in detail an account of this (again from an excellent text-book), since it is important in identifying and locating some, at least, of the social forces at work in the North that were critical to the eventual outcome. The following succinct statement captures the processes that unfolded. Thus :

> In...[those] few places in the [Northern] colonies ...[where] landowners did seek to establish themselves as landlords in the traditional sense...they encountered sharp and at times even violent opposition. On a few estates along the Hudson River, and in New Jersey to a lesser extent, many of the traditional forms of landlordism were recreated: high perpetual rents, incidental taxes and fees, and insecurity of tenure. These burdens could be enforced because the landlords had political influence, because their land claims were carefully protected in law, and because they controlled the courts through which tenants would normally have sought relief...[But] such a [traditional landlord] system produced more trouble than could easily be handled. Many of the tenants simply refused to accept the burdens. They protested continually, and they resorted to all sorts of devices to destroy the landlords' control. From Indians or from New England land speculators, they commonly acquired dubious titles to the land they worked, and they sought to validate these claims legally...By the 1770s the situation on the tenanted estates in eastern New York and New Jersey was explosive. The tenants refused to pay rents and duties, and when the courts tried to extract the payments due, the tenants rose up in armed rebellion. The climax came in 1766 in a wave of rioting. Tenants simply renounced their leases and refused to get off the land when ordered to do so. In Westchester County in New York, rebellious farmers formed mobs, opened the jails, and stormed the landlords' houses. It took a regiment of regular troops with militia auxiliaries to put down the uprising. Yet even after the rebellion had been forcibly put down, tenancy could not be uniformly enforced. Many of the farmers simply moved off to the nearest vacant land. One of their chief destinations was Vermont, which as a result of this exodus from the Hudson River estates, and of a parallel migration of discontented New Englanders, was opened to settlement for the first time. [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 117]

We have seen that much of this land was speculators' land to which they were unable to enforce their title. Clearly, however, landlordism found it very difficult to survive, let alone spread, in the eighteenth century colonies of the North.

Resistance was considerable, and, very important, if labour could not be tied to the land (as in feudalism or slavery), the existence of easily available land made flight relatively straightforward. Thus: 'The existence of unoccupied land within easy reach of poor and "middling" settlers undermined the ability of land owners to create a social monopoly of land in the eighteenth century' [Post, 1985: 416]. So it was, then, that, along with the capacity to flee 'the "rent wars" of the mid-eighteenth century resulted in the abolition of tenancy and the rise of "freeholding" in most of the mid-Atlantic region [i.e. in the 'middle colonies]' [Post, 1995: 416]. We recall, however, that the easy availability of land depended upon its having been appropriated from Indians. That was crucial. It also depended on the inability of land speculators to enforce their private property rights in the land on the frontier that they had accumulated.

One of the aims of the land grants, we recall, was to encourage commodity production. Indeed, that aim was, to a degree, achieved. Not only that, but there were significant inequalities, in both New England and the 'middle colonies'. But, the outcome was important: 'Despite growing social inequalities in land distribution and the rapid increase in the size of agricultural "surpluses" (grain, timber, meat and dairy, and "homespun" cloth) sold to the northern cities and towns and the plantations of the southern colonies and the Caribbean in the 1740s and 1750s, the "yeomanry" of the northern colonies retained their autonomy from "market discipline"' [Post, 1995: 416]. We will discuss this in detail. It is extremely important. We do note, however, that commodity production did proceed, and that these commodity producers, although they were not subject to

the dictates of the market, were producing not only use-values but also exchange-values, albeit not on a systematic basis.

If we take the whole of the Northeast (i.e. the New England colonies and the 'middle colonies'), we may say: 'Tenancy was abolished almost completely...during the Revolution, when landlords (mostly British sympathisers) were expropriated and their lands distributed among their former tenants' [Post, 1995: 416]. That is to say, a class of 'yeoman' freeholders, of Jeffersonian owner-cultivators, appeared to be in existence. At the same time, the land speculators waited in the wings. They were frustrated in their intent, because of illegal occupation ('squatting'). But their day would come. Let us now consider the Northwest, before examining with greater care the dominant social form in the countryside of the North from the seventeenth century to, roughly, the 1830s. By the 1830s, a transition to a new, dominant social form was under way.

In the Northwest, a pattern similar to that of the New England states was established, in the early nineteenth century:

> as native Americans were forcibly 'removed' and white settlers took initial possession of land in most areas for little or no cost. Although federal land law promoted the transfer of the massive 'public domain' into the hands of private landholders, 'squatters' were often able to defend their holdings against the claims of speculators and investors before the 1840s. [Post, 1995: 421][13]

To start off with, they, too, were able to resist integration into systematic commodity production: as with those discussed already, producing surpluses for urban markets, and so engaged with exchange-values, but able to produce most of their subsistence as use-values.[14] They did, obviously, have exchange relations with merchants, but were able to resist, to a degree, an unequal relationship with merchant capital, and pressure from it to engage in systematic commodity production.[15]

But that ability to maintain 'autonomy from commodity production' [Post, 1995: 423] was here strongly circumscribed by 'federal land policies [which] radically altered the relationship of rural households to landholding, making the appropriation, maintenance and expansion of land dependent upon successful commodity production' [Post, 1995: 423]. Federal land policy is complicated, but its details need not detain us here. Post sums it, and its results, up as follows:

> the federal laws administering the distribution of the vast 'public domain' stretching from the Appalachian mountains westwards promoted land speculation and raised the cost of landed property to small farmers who sought secure legal title to the land they cultivated as 'squatters'...Conceived between 1796 and 1820, antebellum federal land policy provided for the survey and auction sale of public land after all native American and foreign claims on the public domain were settled through wars of conquest and treaties. The federal government set *minimum* prices and acreage to be purchased but put no restriction on the *maximum* size of purchase, allowing the operation of 'market mechanisms' to set the maximum price obtained at public auction. Despite reductions in minimum price per acre from $2.00 to $1.25 in 1820 and in minimum acreage from three hundred sixty acres to eighty acres between 1804 and 1817 no maximum prices or acreage were set. [Post, 1995: 423, emphasis mine][16]

Such was land settlement in the Northwest.

(iii) The Dominant Social Form in the Countryside of the North from the Seventeenth Century to the 1830s, and some Important Implications

We may examine, then, the social form that was dominant in the countryside of the North from the seventeenth century until the 1830s. Its demise came first in the Northeast (in New England and in the Middle Atlantic states); it survived longer in the Northwest, in the Ohio Valley and the Great Plains, but it was unable to survive there, either, beyond the two decades that preceded the Civil War.

First, Post argues that, on a basis of the extant evidence, one characteristic is clear: 'despite the existence of large tenant-farmed estates in the Hudson River valley of New York state in the eighteenth century...the vast majority of farmers legally owned their farms' [Post, 1995: 392].[17] So, as we have suggested, as a result, in part, of class struggle and land that was relatively freely available, the majority of direct producers owned the land they worked. Clearly, they owned, too, the instruments of production. To that extent, the 'Jeffersonian vision' had some validity, in that era at least. From the great bulk of historical work that has been done, it emerges that these farmers had certain, further empirical characteristics. These we will identify, before considering their analytical significance.

They were, next, 'family farms', inasmuch as they were worked with very predominantly family labour. There was a clear absence of wage labour, on anything other than a minor basis. We need to be careful in our representation of this characteristic. Post points to the 'relative unimportance of wage-labour in the northern US countryside before the Civil War' [Post, 1995: 392]. He puts it thus: 'While rural waged work was more common in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than was once believed, it was not an essential feature of northern agriculture' (loc. cit.). Wage labour, then, was of relatively marginal significance.

A further characteristic of this social form was, to use Marx's phrase, 'the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry' [Marx, 1979: 128]. Men worked in both the fields and in artisan workshops, producing, perhaps, farm implements; while women, as well as performing domestic work, produced 'cloth and clothing for domestic consumption' [Post, 1995: 400].[18]

What of their involvement with the market? This is clearly of critical importance in our representation of this social form. Post categorises them as 'non-

commercial farmers' [Post, 1995: 397]. The following is said to be the case: 'Non-commercial farmers only sold "surpluses" (that portion of their output over and above what was consumed by family and neighbours) in local and long-distance markets. Cash was needed only for the limited number of commodities that could be produced locally (salt, gunpowder, coffee, tea, glass, patent medicine) and to buy relatively inexpensive land for the farmers and their sons in order to ensure inter-generational maintenance of the farm household' [Post, 1995: 397]. But, that surely did indicate some market involvement, however limited. Moreover, some of the 'surpluses' of domestic manufacture, especially the output of richer households, found its way on to the market, although the primary orientation was clearly the production of use-values. All in all, it is difficult to sustain the position from this either that these 'non-commercial farmers' were self-sufficient – as some ask us to accept[19] – or that they did not produce in order to generate cash, however little. That, I think, is important.

Post next suggests that there was an absence of any significant processes of social differentiation: larger, wealthier farmers, he stresses, did not appropriate the land of their poorer neighbours [Post, 1995: 403]. In an interesting rendering, he turns what might seem to be promising Chayanovian material into a political economy outcome:

> social inequality among farm households corresponded to the age of the eldest male in non-commercial agriculture, rather than the soil fertility, technique, location [or, one might add, class power – TJB] and other factors shaping costs of production in petty commodity [by which he means the social form that was dominant from the 1830s onwards, and which we consider below – TJB] or capitalist production. Older farmers, with fewer dependents tended to have the largest farms and marketed the largest surpluses; younger farmers, with the most dependents, tended to have the smallest farms, rarely marketed surpluses and often engaged labour services for food or manufactured goods produced in the households of better off farmers and farmer artisans (including those of their parents or other relatives). [Post, 1995: 397]

We do not have complete information, but we may say the following. In a Chayanovian universe, characterised by 'demographic differentiation', 'younger farmers' would, as their family grew, and with freely accessible land, increase the size of their holding; while 'older farmers with fewer dependents' would, ultimately, decrease their size of holding. On a basis of the information given, it would seem that Chayanov's basic proposition – 'that the connection between family size and size of agricultural activity should be understood as a dependence of area of land for use on family size rather than conversely' [Chayanov, 1966: 68] – does not hold. So, while there is an absence of powerful currents of social differentiation, it is not 'demographic differentiation', in the Chayanovian sense, that we witness. Moreover, the existence of 'the households of better off farmers' suggests that some social differentiation existed, albeit neither cumulative nor antagonistic.[20]

We have seen that the 'yeoman farmers' of the antebellum South were insulated from merchant's and usurer's capital through the intervention of the planter class, and those of the postbellum era subjected to its domination. In the North, in the colonial era and immediately thereafter, it appears that the independent household producer was substantially free from the tentacles of these forms of capital (in Horace's terms, *Solutus omni faenore* – With no yoke of usury on his neck) – again, an apparent meeting of Jefferson's vision). Thus:

> By the time of the Revolution, 'freeholding' independent farmers and artisans with minimal mortgages and other expenses (taxes, debts etc.) populated the northern colonial countryside. While able to reproduce themselves economically without recourse to the market, these farmers engaged in exchange relations with local and regional merchants. Small 'country merchants', often in partnership with more substantial merchants in the larger inland towns (eg., the 'River Gods' of the Connecticut River Valley), gathered together the farmers' scattered surpluses of grain, timber, cattle, and dairy products for shipment to the major coastal urban markets of New York, Philadelphia and Boston. These rural and small town entrepreneurs also sold imported manufactured and agricultural goods (glass, iron, gunpowder, medicine, tea, sugar) that could not be produced in the self-sufficient rural communities. Local merchants continually encouraged farmers to buy more items of consumption in order to widen the scale of operations and enrich themselves. However, the farmers' and rural craftsmen's non-market access to land enabled them to produce the bulk of their own subsistence and prevented them from being drawn into dependence on the market. [Post, 1995: 416–17][21]

It is important to note precisely what is involved here.

We will return to this extremely important feature of this social form when discussing Post's characterisation 'independent household production'. We will argue, indeed, that the feature noted accords with Marx's 'simple' circulation of commodities, which distinguishes, for Marx, 'simple' commodity production. There seems to be no good reason to deny such a categorisation here. On the contrary, it seems perfectly appropriate. This we will pursue below.

Next, before 1790 there was, Post suggests, price divergence: that is to say, there was a variety of prices paid for the same commodity in different parts of the same region; and, certainly, no convergence towards anything approaching 'equilibrium prices'. Such price convergence has been demonstrated, for the period from the 1790s onwards, by Rothenberg.[22] But no such evidence exists for the years before. Nevertheless, although the evidence on this is not terribly clear, or necessarily convincing,[23] we may take it, perhaps as likely. If we do, then we may say that it suggests 'the sporadic and irregular character of market

exchange' [Post, 1995: 397]. We may take that as an empirical characteristic of the years before 1790.

We need to confront what underpinned, what made possible, this social form, however we categorise it. I shall turn to categorisation presently. Abstracting from that, for the moment, we may note that Post poses the important question, when responding to the work of James Henretta [Henretta, 1978: 19–20] and David Weiman [Weiman, 1989: 259–60], and their stress on the significance of ties of community and kinship (interwoven with common religion, ethnicity and language) in these communities:

> Clearly, ties of family and community facilitated the ability of rural producers to pursue 'subsistence-surplus' strategies and limited the development of unequal landholding...[But there are fundamental questions to be posed]. What social and economic conditions allowed the obligation to provide subsistence to family and neighbours to assume such a great importance in the activities of rural households? What allowed these producers to devote the majority of their labour time to providing consumption goods as use values? What prevented larger, wealthier farmers from appropriating the land of their less fortunate neighbours? What allowed fathers to obtain land for their sons without becoming embedded in the logic of commodity production? [Post, 1995: 403]

Surely, indeed, we have here, in plural form, one of the central questions of the political economy of agrarian change. What are the influences which prevent processes of social differentiation from exploding in rural communities? It is Charles Post's great strength that he poses the question so sharply and so appositely.

Post, also, provides an answer that is powerful and convincing. Thus, he insists: 'None of these questions can be answered by reference to kinship and communal relations...Their answers must be sought in the structure of social property relations' [Post, 1995: 403]. We have pointed to apparently easy access to land in the colonial era. That continued for some time thereafter. Post argues that, in fact, 'the main condition of non-commercial household production in the antebellum northern countryside...[was] *relatively inexpensive land*, continually renewed through the *expropriation of native American tribal societies*' [Post, 1995: 403, emphases mine]. It is quite remarkable how infrequently the 'expropriation of native American tribal societies' is mentioned. Post, himself, in an otherwise excellent article, mentions it only infrequently. Yet it is central to the very possibility of the property relationships in question, and to their continuing reproduction. It was this, and the easy access to land that it gave, that allowed the preservation of such a society. Post goes on: 'The general ease of obtaining landed property in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century allowed the development of a distinctive social property relation that provided the basis for the entire structure of non-commercial household production in the rural north' [Post, 1995: 403]. That is, surely, so. But, let us stress, the 'ease of obtaining landed property' was a function of the capacity to drive Indians from their lands, and settle that land with white settlers. The human cost, as we have seen, was immense. It was with the 'disappearance of unoccupied land' [Post, 1995: 410] (i.e. when all possible Indian land in the North had been stolen and the Indians had been driven west) that the forces of change were set relentlessly in motion. To that we will come.

These farmers he identifies as independent household producers. The nature and rationale of independent household production as a 'rural social form', he argues, is clear:

> the ability of the direct producers to reproduce their possession of landed property without recourse to commodity production determined both the nature of exchange relations with other farmers, artisans and merchants, and the importance of kinship and community in organizing the social structure of the antebellum northern countryside. Free from the constraint to produce for the market in order to survive economically, northern rural households in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries [i.e. in the colonial and early antebellum years] were able to devote the bulk of their labour time to the production of consumption goods as use-values, providing the basis for the dense web of kinship and communal relations that structured 'neighbourly' non-commodity exchange among households. Households and communities, secure in their possession of landed property, could pursue a 'subsistence-surplus' strategy of combined use-value and commodity exchange...[T]he preservation and expansion of family landholding was a perfectly rational goal in a class structure where maintaining and enlarging landed property did not require production for the market. As long as land remained relatively cheap and easily accessible (had not become monopolized by a class of land speculators or landlords), appropriating sufficient land to provide for male heirs did not pose any obstacle to the reproduction of independent household production. [Post, 1995: 404]

Critically, in Post's formulation: 'The farmers' autonomy from market coercion during the eighteenth century was the consequence of their ability to maintain their status as small property owners without recourse to effective production for the market' [Post, 1995: 406]. The market posed little threat to either wealthier or poorer households:

> On the one hand, wealthier households could participate in the market without risk. If agricultural prices and their revenues fell, richer farmers could redeploy most of their household labour to the production of use-values without danger of losing their farms. On the other, the successful commodity production of richer households could not threaten the poorer households' possession of land. Secure in their ownership of their farm, poorer farms could ignore

price signals and still keep their farm. In sum, there was no necessary tension between use-value and exchange-value production...[Post, 1995: 413]

It may be that, as the colonial era neared its end, this form of production came under some pressure. Post, however, argues that the critical 'turning-point' came in the 1790s and 1800s; while the essential underpinning condition had gone by the 1830s [Post, 1995: 396]. That we will pursue presently, after contesting his 'independent household production' categorisation. From the recent historical research, it emerges clearly that the forces of change were under way, and that 'a transition from this form to a commercial, family based form began during the last decade of the eighteenth century in New England and other part of the northeast' [Post, 1995: 406].[24] By the 1830s, the beginnings of an upsurge in the productive forces might be discerned. The dominant social form would be replaced by one of fundamentally differing logic and with profoundly distinct implications. That new social form we will discuss presently. But let us, at this juncture, first consider some important implications of this social form, and then contest the 'independent household production' category.

(iv) The Productive Forces and the Prospects for Industrialisation

A crucial outcome follows from the foregoing, with respect to the nature of the productive forces within such a form of production, and, by extension, the development of manufacturing industry and of capitalism. Post captures these important implications.

Firstly, the productive forces were, as yet, subject to no powerful pressures to change. Equally, the relations of production were not in significant contradiction with the existing forces of production. The two were in 'correspondence': 'the absence of market compulsion to specialize productive activities and lower costs per unit of output (or suffer loss of landed property)...meant that the development of labour productivity through the introduction of new instruments and techniques was sporadic, occasional and of a "once and for all" character' [Post, 1995: 405–6]. That is clear enough. Thus, for example, the wooden ploughs of the eighteenth century, pulled by slow-moving oxen, might have been replaced by cast iron ploughs, but those same slow-working oxen [echoes of Horace's lines] and the continuation of hand-sowing of seeds [Post, 1995: 429] indicated, if not stasis, then at least an absence of dynamism in the productive forces.

Secondly, any impulses towards the development of manufacturing industry, and an unleashing of capitalism, were muted:

> The independent household producer's ability to maintain and expand their land holdings without commodity production put strict limits on the development of labor productivity in agriculture and handicrafts, As a result, labour was not 'freed' from agriculture for manufacturing and industry, and the countryside did not provide a growing market for factory produced means of production or consumption. In other words, independent household production , where and when it shaped rural production, was an obstacle to the development of capitalism. [Post, 1995: 406]

Just, then, as first slavery and then sharecropping in the South placed a brake upon a dynamic capitalist transformation, so the dominance of what Post terms the 'independent household production' form in the countryside of the North had similar implications.

5 CONTESTING THE 'INDEPENDENT HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTION' CATEGORISATION: THE NOTION OF EARLY 'SIMPLE' COMMODITY PRODUCTION

Why might one wish to contest the 'independent household production' categorisation? The essential reason is that, as I have suggested already, the social form so constituted accords quite clearly with Marx's notion of 'simple' commodity production, and its condition of 'simple' circulation of commodities. Not to adopt it is simply confusing. To support such a view, we need to discuss briefly Marx's treatment 'simple' commodity production.

Marx distinguished simple commodity production from capitalist commodity production, as part of his effort to show how the law of value operates as commodity production develops. Commodity production is the production of goods for exchange on a market. Such commodity production has its origins in the distant past, in modes pf production long preceding capitalism. But it is only with capitalism that such activity comes to 'dominate the whole economic scene' [Meek, 1973: 38]; and the social division of labour becomes 'overwhelmingly a division between separate producers of goods for the market' [Meek, 1973: 38]. Under capitalism, labour itself becomes a commodity.

Such commodity production, then, originated in the mists of history. Thus, Marx suggested: 'The appearance of products as commodities pre-supposes such a development of the social division of labour, that the separation of use-value from exchange-value, a separation that first begins with barter, must already have been completed' [Marx, 1961: 170]. It began, Marx tells us, 'on the boundaries of primitive communism...it existed in systems based on slavery and increased in extent under feudalism' [Meek, 1973: 152]. In those 'systems', Marx proposed, there existed 'simple' commodity production, which had to be distinguished from capitalist commodity production. For the purposes of his theoretical exercise, of exposing the nature of the operation of the law of value under capitalism, and in sharp distinction to his practice elsewhere in his writing, 'he tended to abstract in this connection from the specific features differentiating one form of pre-capitalist production from another, and to concentrate on distinguishing the way in which the law of value operated under all

these earlier systems taken together in so far as they were characterised by "simple" commodity production in which the normal exchange was one of "value" for "value"' [Meek, 1973: 154–5].[25] As Meek observes, 'under simple commodity production the law of value operated so as to make exchange ratios roughly equivalent to embodied labour ratios' [Meek, 1973: 156]. Such was the theoretical provenance of simple commodity production.

As Meek points out, in simple commodity production, 'the direct producers owned their own means of production' [Meek, 1973: 155] – or, one might say, possessed their own means of production. In agriculture they possessed, obviously, the land which they worked. Further, simple commodity production was characterised by the 'simple' circulation of commodities, encapsulated in the formula C-M-C (Commodities-Money-Commodities), in which 'independent' producers, employing no wage labour, 'sell in order to buy', as Meek tells it (loc. cit.): 'The typical case is that of the peasant who sells corn in order to buy clothes, or that of the independent craftsman who sells clothes in order to buy corn' (loc. cit.). Meek directs us to Marx's formulation:

> The circuit C-M-C starts with one commodity, and finishes with another, which falls out of circulation and into consumption. *Consumption*, the satisfaction of wants, in one word *use-value*, is its end and aim. [Marx, 1961: 149, emphases mine][26]

Exchange activity, then, is motivated simply by the satisfaction of wants, and not by the pursuit of profit.

Such, then, is simple commodity production, according to Marx. Collapsed, as it is, into all pre-capitalist modes of production, it nevertheless serves as a useful abstraction for Marx's immediate purposes. It is also useful in allowing us to categorise the social forms in the countryside of the colonial and antebellum North. Thus identified, it is difficult to see how one can deny its applicability to the social form whose characteristics and logic we have identified above. In that social form, the direct producers own their land and their instruments of production; they employ little or no wage labour; they have gone well beyond barter (Marx's starting point); they have clearly separated use-values and exchange-values; they do produce surpluses, which they exchange with the satisfaction of needs in mind; their circuit is, surely, C-M-C; they are not motivated by the pursuit of profit. They are simple commodity producers. The notion of 'independent household producers' is unnecessary, and, indeed, somewhat confusing.

In fact, there may be more doubt about categorising the social form that succeeded it in the countryside of the North as simple commodity production. That we will come to. To anticipate, we do need to distinguish it from what preceded it, but we will retain the categorisation simple commodity production, and term it advanced simple commodity production, on the analogy of early and advanced capitalism.

6 TRANSITION TO A NEW SOCIAL FORM IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OF THE NORTH

What, then, were the immediate and conjunctural manifestations of transition? That transition was towards systematic commodity production. But transition is neither sudden nor immediate. Such profound structural change does no happen overnight. It may take place relatively slowly, and it may take 'various *intermediary* forms, as rural households respond...to the new requirements of commodity production, while simultaneously attempting to preserve their independence from the "dictates of the market"' [Post, 1995: 395, emphasis in original]. It is this that we wish to capture.

A powerful set of forces was loosed, and it was to these that early simple commodity producers responded, diffidently, uncomprehendingly and contradictorily: 'It is quite clear that land prices, taxes and debts rose sharply in the late eighteenth century' [Post, 1995: 411]. These were interwoven in a compelling need for cash. Most seriously: 'Throughout the northeast land prices rose precipitously (as the result of land speculation) in the decades after the revolution, making the maintenance and expansion of landholding more and more dependent upon production for the market' [Post, 1995: 405, emphasis mine].[27] That could not be avoided.

There was, in one formulation, 'increasing population pressure on the land',[28] but that is just another way of saying that land had now become scarce in relation to labour. That scarcity was, in part, the outcome of easy access to the land of Indians ceasing. There was, also, 'social causation' (or, one should say, further 'social causation', inasmuch as appropriation of Indian land was profoundly social), in the activities of land speculators – 'the speculators' growing monopolization of land': 'Land speculation on the New England frontier (northwestern Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine) began to raise land prices in the 1740s and 1750s, and intensified during and immediately after the Revolution' [Post, 1995: 411]. Land could no longer be easily had.

But, this was more than merely conjunctural. It was the harbinger of fundamental structural change. The era of free and easy access to land was coming to an end, and with it the continuing existence of early simple commodity production, to the extent that this was its underpinning condition.

In the Northwest, there were waves of land speculation (peaking in 1818, 1836 and 1856), which reached 'unprecedented heights in the 1830s' [Post, 1995: 424]. The outcome was that: 'Independent speculators, land companies and railroad and canal companies were able to monopolise the best located and most fertile lands, forcing "squatters" or prospective settlers to purchase land from them at prices well above the federal minimum' [Post, 1995: 424]. The result was a sharp rise in the cost of establishing a viable farm.[29] The conditions underpinning early simple commodity production in the Northwest were destroyed. The content of social property relations changed dramatically, and with that

change the pressure towards systematic commodity production became intense and irresistible:

> [Land]...prices were usually greater than the cash resources of either 'squatters' or possible settlers, who also had to make considerable investment in fencing, seed, livestock, housing and farm implements. As a result, the great majority of [north-] western farmers seeking fertile and well-located land in the 1840s and 1850s had to obtain mortgages (generally older farmers with some capital), or become tenants (generally younger farmers with little or no capital) of land companies. [Post, 1995: 424–5][30]

This was not the Jeffersonian vision. Vision was transformed into myth, and myth into ideology.

There were other, equally significant, changes under way. Thus, the aforementioned 'union between agriculture and manufacturing industry' was under pressure. Drawing on the work of Thomas Dublin in New Hampshire, on capitalist rural 'outwork' [Dublin, 1991], Post points out:

> Before 1820, better off farm households utilized female and child labour to produce cloth at home for sale on the market. After 1820, local merchants paid poorer farm women and children to fabricate palm-leaf hats in their homes, which the merchants then sold to farmers and planters in the west and south. [Post, 1995: 396]

In western Massachusetts, under the pressure of 'the rising cost of providing land to male heirs' [Post, 1995: 410], as well as changing agricultural practices we find another response:

> the labour of rural women and children was directed to the production of shoes and linen and other textiles. Nearly one in every five or six households engaged in rural manufacture of both use-values for local consumption and exchange-values for the northern urban and southern plantation markets. [Post, 1995: 410][31]

The union of agriculture and manufacturing industry was still intact, but both were increasingly oriented towards the production of exchange-values, and that union was, surely, under great strain.

In the literature on 'proto-industrialisation',[32] a distinction is made between the *Kaufsystem* and the *Verlagsystem*, both variants of simple or petty commodity production, and 'ruled by the laws of petty commodity production' [Schlumbohm, 1981: 99]; but with differing implications for the formal independence of the petty producer (if not for his ultimate survival). That distinction is useful in the context of the Northern countryside.

In the *Kaufsystem* (literally, buying-system), we may identify certain important characteristics:

> The direct producer owned the product which he made. For its manufacture he used home-made or purchased raw materials, his own tools, his own labour power as well as the labour power of his family, though not – or at least to a much smaller extent – wage labour. He took the product to market as a commodity and exchanged it for money to buy other commodities [i.e. the circuit C-M-C – TJB]. For part of the money he exchanged commodities needed to replace his means of production, i.e. new raw and auxiliary materials as well as replacement for worn out production tools. The remainder constitute the net income of the family. [Schlumbohm, 1982: 98]

That is to say, the direct producer owns the means of production (say, a loom) and the product, and has a degree of independence from merchants and manufacturers, who might at most supply raw materials or buy the product [Post, 1995: 420].

Such a system (or one very like it), it seems, was introduced in the countryside of the Northeast:

> The growth of handicraft production in the northeastern countryside accompanied the farmers' and artisans' attempts to revolutionise agricultural production without abandoning the production of 'subsistence' in the household. The production of woollen, linen and other cloth, both for the household and community consumption and increasingly for sale, grew markedly before 1820 in both New England and the mid-Atlantic region. This increase took place primarily on the basis of a *Kaufsystem* of "proto-industrialization" in which the households continued to own their means of production (looms). [Post, 1995: 419–20]

There was, then, a degree of autonomy from merchant capital, in contrast to the other broad form of proto-industrialisation: 'These producers enjoyed a much greater autonomy from merchants and manufacturers, whose role was limited to occasionally supplying raw materials and buying up finished products, than the de facto wage labourers of the verlag or capitalist system of "proto-industrialization"' [Post, 1995: 420]. But, a transition was under way, and one that was being forced by the need for survival:

> Nonetheless, there is evidence of growing intra-regional specialization, with some townships becoming centres of craft production and others centres of agricultural production in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In other words, the growth of handicraft output for market in this period was not a by-product of a thriving independent household economy of 'subsistence-surplus' production, but was evidence of the growing dependence of north-

eastern households on commodity production for their economic survival. [Post, 1995: 420][33]

The union of agriculture and manufacturing industry was under pressure.

Under the *Verlagsystem* (or putting-out system), control by merchant capital was far greater, and, in its strongest variant, 'capital had clearly begun to go beyond the sphere of circulation, i.e. of trade, and penetrated into the sphere of production' [Schlumbohm, 1982: 102]. Here,

> the petty producer worked only upon being commissioned by a trader...[and] he lost the formal equality with which he had offered his products to the merchant under the *Kaufsystem*. For the trader, the opportunity to bind numerous petty producers exclusively to himself arose...from his economic superiority, especially when the producers were indebted to him or depended on his raw materials...Such putters-out came either from the class of merchants or, sometimes, from the ranks of producers, and in the latter case often from the ranks of 'finishers', i.e. those who carried out the last stages of the production process...Within the putting-out system the step towards the penetration of capital into the sphere of production could be a very small one. Once the petty producers were indebted and received their raw materials from the same putter-out to whom they had to deliver their finished products, no great barrier separated them from the situation where the putter-out remained owner of the raw materials throughout the production process... Some of the means of production no longer belonged to the direct producers but had been transformed into capital...In industries which used new and expensive machinery the instruments of production often became the property of the putter-out as well. In this case capital dominated the production process almost completely...To the extent that the ownership of the means of production passed from the domestic producer to the putter-out, the power to decide whether, what, how, and how much should be produced also shifted from the former to the latter. [Schlumbohm, 1982: 101–2]

Such was the *Verlagsystem*.

In the countryside of the Northeast, there is evidence that with the falling prices of 1819–21 there was great pressure upon rural women to add to their already onerous tasks (domestic activities, child rearing etc.) by producing more cloth and greater dairying output. This became intolerable, and the outcome appears to have been a 'shift of female labour from weaving cloth to dairying and other commodity producing activities' [Post, 1995: 420].[34] Thereafter, there was

> a growth of capitalist domestic outwork. The capacity to work of women and children in poorer rural families, unable to raise sufficient cash to pay mortgages, taxes and other debts through agricultural production, became available to merchants and manufacturers who organised a *verlag* system of 'proto-industrialisation' in the northeast. The merchants and manufacturers no longer traded with essentially independent producers, but instead provided the raw materials and means of production (tools etc.) to rural wage workers who produced finished or semi-finished products owned by the 'proto-industrial' capitalist. While the merchants in palm-leaf hat manufacture operated autonomously, organising a self-contained production process carried out entirely in rural households; those in button, shoe, boot and other capitalist domestic manufacture were often partners of manufacturers, who organised a centralised labour process in a small workshop and 'put out' parts of the production process to workers in the countryside. [Post, 1995: 420–1]

A further, significant step had been taken on the path that would see the final cutting, of the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry.

The period of the 1790s and 1800s, then, was an era of transition. Post sums up the changed situation: 'the rapid transformation of land into a commodity during the 1830s made successful commodity production a necessary condition for the acquisition, maintenance and expansion of landholding; transforming the "yeomanry" from independent household [early simple commodity] into petty [advanced simple] commodity producers' [Post, 1995: 425]. That included an 'uprooting' of the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry, that was already under way. The transition from one social form to another had taken place in the Northwest as well as the Northeast. We may now consider that social form in detail.

7 ADVANCED SIMPLE COMMODITY PRODUCTION

From the 1790s onwards (in Massachusetts certainly, but probably throughout New England), 'farmers began to increase the output of marketable goods (flax, livestock, broomcorn, dairy, eggs) to an extent that even the largest farmers began to purchase some new consumer goods previously produced in the household or the community' [Post, 1995: 396].[35] This increasing market-orientation signalled the arrival of systematic production for the market. We note the existence of 'large farmers'. Hitherto, we may stress, whatever differentiation existed was, if we may use the distinction made above, *quantitative* rather than *qualitative*. That is to say, there were no processes of cumulative and transformative differentiation at work. But what now? Had new forces been unleashed in the countryside of the North, that would change this?

Certainly, new forces were at work. Whether they would bring with them 'classical' processes of social differentiation was, however, less sure. Let us consider, from a political economy viewpoint, the new characteristics

We have noted the likely existence, under early simple commodity production, of price divergence. It was a distinguishing feature of advanced simple

commodity production that this was no longer the case. There was, now, an increasing convergence of prices, which reflected both systematic production for the market and, further, a new dominance of the market. Thus: 'The most important evidence for the dominance of the "market process"...was the increasing convergence of prices for key agricultural commodities after the last decade of the eighteenth century' [Post, 1995: 394].[36] Post attributes considerable significance to this. We will comment on that significance presently, when considering, in theoretical terms, the nature of advanced simple commodity production.

But why the new market-orientation of early simple commodity producers? Post insists that 'their progressive subjugation to commodity production in the nineteenth century was the consequence of their new found need "to sell to survive"' [Post, 1995: 406]. That new compulsion would set in motion forces that would see their transformation into what I choose to call advanced simple commodity producers.

In the same period (and again illustrated in Massachusetts), there was an initial re-structuring, in response to the new, commercial pressures that had begun to make themselves felt:

> farmers reorganised household labour processes in order both to maximise the amount of labour-time devoted to the production of commodities, and to increase their output of commodities per person *without introducing new technologies* – through the *intensification of labour*. In sum, farmers...were devoting greater and greater quantities of human labour to the production of exchange-values rather than use-values. [Post, 1995: 396, emphases mine][37]

Such intensification of family labour obviates the need for wage labour. But, with a need for increasing production and surpluses, with unchanging technology, clearly, it could only be carried so far. When the marginal product of family labour is driven to zero, then further output increase requires the dynamic possibilities of new technology.

Before that happened, however, the old and the new commingled as the imperatives of the market began to assert themselves. It was not only in New England that these changes were afoot: 'There is considerable evidence of the northeastern "yeomanry" attempting to meet the new conditions for the acquisition, maintenance and expansion of landholding while continuing to produce the bulk of their "subsistence" through the first two decades of the nineteenth century' [Post, 1995: 419]. Throughout the Northeast, there was

> increased and reorganized labour devoted to the production of marketable 'surpluses'...From around 1790 until the commercial crisis of 1819, northern farmers noticeably expanded their output of grain, meat and other agricultural commodities for sale in US urban and European markets. [Post, 1995: 419]

New, and more productive, methods of production were introduced, at least in the mid-Atlantic states, as a way of enhancing marketable surpluses, and so generating cash income. These were labour-using. They did not yet include mechanisation. This was the response of 'transition', in which an old technology was improved and taken to its productive limits:

> In the mid-Atlantic region, increased commodity production in response to the changed social conditions of economic survival led many farmers to reorganise their agricultural labour process. 'Up and down' husbandry, the crop rotation method between fields, pasture and meadows that allowed the interdependent growth of animal and arable output associated with the development of capitalist agriculture in England in the seventeenth century, radically increased labour and soil productivity in the northeastern US in the early nineteenth century. [Post, 1995: 419]

Other crucial changes came with this increasing 'market coercion', including land consolidation and, very important, the '*relative product specialisation* required for "up and down" husbandry '[Post, 1995: 419, emphasis mine]. Such product specialisation would be a central feature of the fully-formed advanced simple commodity production that replaced early simple commodity production, and which was fully in place by the 1840s in the Northeast.[38] We may stress its significance.

By comparison with independent household production, a new set of compulsions emerges: 'capitalist and petty commodity class relations, where the survival of both non-producers and direct producers depend upon market competition, necessitates continuous and progressive development of new methods, tools and machinery' [Post, 1995: 406]. This raises issues of fundamental importance. We will deal separately with the course, nature and significance of mechanisation of the productive process in the agriculture of the North and the West.

It meant, also, that agricultural specialisation could not co-exist with domestic manufacture. The extinguishing of such domestic manufacture we will also treat separately. That, too, is of fundamental importance.

The relative absence of wage labour remained as a feature of this new social form in the pre-Civil War years. One might have expected a significant increase in wage labour, with the powerful forces of commercialisation that were at work, but that was not the case. There was, to be sure, substantial proletarianisation, but this did not translate into a rise in the incidence of permanent wage labour. The new technology came. It would be both significantly more productive and labour-saving. Thus:

> Even after the 1820s, when the number of poor and landless families increased with the intensified commercialization of agriculture, rural wage labour did not become a *permanent* class situation for a large portion of the

> population of the north. The poorest rural families were commonly engaged in capitalist 'outwork' or migrated to the burgeoning urban-industrial centres. Nor did wage labour ever provide the majority of labour for even the most 'market-embedded' farmers. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, despite the major transformations in rural class structure, household-family members were the chief source of labour for northern agriculture. [Post, 1995: 392, emphasis mine][39]

We note the indication of a thriving process of capitalist industrialisation, absorbing labour from the countryside. We have already had occasion to refer to this, when we cited Paul David with respect to agriculture's important role in stimulating such industrialisation in the north. We will return to it later. We must note, however, that the industrial working class was not created predominantly from this source, but from immigrant labour (this we will discuss below). We will also examine rather more closely this absence of permanent rural wage labour. I have attached the qualifier permanent when noting the absence of rural wage labour, although Post does not give this prominence. As we shall see, the possibility of a class of rural wage labour that was temporary, i.e. a class of migrant labour, exists. Nevertheless, the absence of a class of permanent rural wage labour in the North, right through to the twentieth century, is of major significance. It is this that, primarily, distinguishes this social form as an advanced form of simple commodity production, and signals the absence of a transition to capitalist commodity production.

What of the processes of differentiation? The seeds of some differentiation were sown. Thus: 'Faced with new pressures flowing from the transition from independent household [our early simply commodity] to petty-commodity [our advanced simple commodity] production, those farmers who did innovate and increase their output (usually the largest and wealthiest) would best be able to survive the competitive battle in the marketplace' [Post, 1995: 405]. What did this portend? How, in practice, did it work out? There were inequalities, albeit not as marked as elsewhere:,

> By 1860, the Ohio valley and Great Plains was no longer, if they had ever been, an egalitarian utopia of small producers [the Jeffersonian vision – TJB]. Wealth (land, structures, implements, etc.) was much more equitably distributed among rural petty-producers in the north than between planters, slaves and slaveless farmers in the south, or industrialists, merchants, professionals and wage workers in the northern urban-industrial centres. [Post, 1995: 431]

Moreover, there was social differentiation: 'However, there was considerable social differentiation among the northern agricultural population, with five per cent of the northern rural households commanding thirty one per cent of the wealth' [Post, 1995: 431–2]. It was a particular kind of differentiation – not that one might associate with a capitalist social formation:

> Wealth distribution tended to follow age. Older farmers' accumulation of wealth...gave them superior access to the credit needed to purchase the best located and more fertile land, seeds, draft animals, tools and machinery. [Post, 1995: 432]

Certainly, it was marked by social divisions, proletarianisation, and some wage labour, but not by a class of capitalist farmers:

> While a prosperous agrarian petty-bourgeoisie was able to appropriate a disproportionate share of land and tools, a growing portion of the rural population found themselves without access (through either purchase or rental) to adequate land to survive. Slightly over one in four inhabitants of the northern countryside (541,719 out of 2,056,286) were farm labourers in 1860. Although wage labour never became the main source of labour for northern agriculture (there was no transition from petty-commodity to capitalist production) competition among rural households spawned a class of property-less rural wage earners. Simultaneously, the rising cost of establishing a farm during the two decades before the Civil War effectively eliminated the possibility of even the most well paid and thrifty worker escaping wage labour by settling on the land. [Post, 1995: 432]

Of course, another way in which agriculture contributed to capitalist industrialisation was in its supplying part of the labour force, part of the urban proletariat. That, surely, was the destination of a proportion of the 'class of property-less rural wage earners', although, as we shall see, they did not constitute the major part. That came from immigrant labour.

But why did social differentiation not fuel that full-blooded transition to capitalism – to capitalist relations of production, appropriation of surplus via the wage relation, growing resort to permanent wage labour – as Lenin predicted? That is the central puzzle of the continuing existence of advanced simple commodity production. We will address it below.

This new 'social-property form' (to use Post's phrase) was, then, one 'embedded in competitive markets' [Post, 1995: 415]. It has been summed up as follows:

> The development of petty-commodity production in the Ohio valley and the Great Plains in the two decades before the Civil War spawned an 'agricultural revolution' – the growth of the size and proportion of output produced as commodities, increasing specialization in cash crops, rising labour productivity with the introduction of new seeds, fertilizers and improved implements and machinery, and growing social inequalities among rural households. While antebellum farmers in the north west (like thoroughly commercial farmers today) continued to produce elements of their own subsistence (meat, dairy, eggs, vegetables and some hand tools) they radically reoriented their

productive activity towards the production of marketable 'surpluses' during the 1840s and 1850s. Rural households not only increased the size of their commodity output, but shifted the proportions of production for immediate consumption and for sale. By 1860, northwestern farmers were selling approximately 60% of their total yield, well over the 40% that marked the transition from 'subsistence' to 'commercial' agriculture. In other words, these farmers were marketing not only their 'surplus' product but a major proportion of their 'necessary' product, necessitating the purchase of elements of their subsistence, and making them increasingly dependent on the sale of commodities for their economic survival. [Post, 1995: 428][40]

That is to say, production of exchange-value rather than use-value had become dominant. We will consider more carefully the analytical significance of the characteristics we have identified.

First, however, we will look at the implications of this social form for the productive forces, and for capitalist industrialisation. In so doing, we will note the final, and irrevocable, uprooting of the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry, that characterised early simple commodity production in its heyday.

8 THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND THE PROSPECTS FOR INDUSTRIALISATION

We have commented on the intensification of labour and the absence of new technology in the initial stages of advanced simple commodity production. We have stressed, however, that this could be of only limited duration, given the compelling need to raise output on a regular basis; and that the pressure to introduce new technology – 'new methods, tools and machinery' – fairly quickly became considerable. We noted, also, the signs of a thriving process of industrialisation, with large quantities of labour from the countryside being so absorbed. Let us now examine these issues in greater detail.

(i) Productive Forces

With cash crop specialisation in Northern agriculture, there was ushered in an era of remarkable growth: of output, of labour productivity and of land productivity. That era extended well into the twentieth century. It is its antebellum beginnings that are our concern here. Advanced simple commodity production showed itself to have great productive capacity. That productive capacity was clearly based upon dramatic advance in the productive forces. The base was very securely laid in the three decades before the Civil War. Their subsequent development we will consider in the next sub-section.

As we have stressed in the previous chapter, agriculture, by its very nature (and in a way that manufacturing industry is not), is a time-bound activity. That

is to say, it consists of a series of sequential operations, subject to the 'rhythms of nature' which must be performed in strict rotation: while, in general, unless each of these operations is completed within a particular time-period, yields, and, therefore, agricultural growth, are likely to suffer. All agricultural operations are time-bound, and that will be so for so long as agriculture is subject to the 'rhythms of nature'. We may, however, say that some operations are especially time-bound. These include the seeding of crops and the harvesting of most grain crops and hay. Technical advance, and especially mechanisation, is likely to be particularly important in these operations, and this will be *a fortiori* the case when labour is relatively scarce and wages relatively high.[41]

We may, next, distinguish agricultural operations that are (a) power-intensive, and (b) control-intensive. The former (whether human, animal or mechanical power is used) include primary tillage, as well as processing (i.e. milling, threshing), pumping, transport, sugar-cane crushing, oil crushing. The latter, where particular care and attention involving human judgement are important, include the harvesting of certain crops (for example, cotton, fruit, vegetables). Of these, the former are those that historically have experienced the first technical breakthrough. It is important for agriculture's productive potential that such a breakthrough takes place.[42]

In the antebellum years, agriculture in the North experienced important advances in these respects. Thus: 'Technical innovation in antebellum northern agriculture tended to be concentrated in soil-preparation, planting and harvesting phases of grain growing, the phases requiring the greatest and most intensive labour [i.e. the phases that were especially time-bound and control-intensive – TJB]' [Post, 1995: 429]. A technology appropriate to the needs of early simple commodity production could not deliver the increases in output and productivity now needed for survival and reproduction. A superior technology was available and was adopted. That technology related to ploughs, the animals that drew them and seed drills:

> Before 1840, cast iron plows pulled by oxen prepared the soil and seeds were hand-broadcast in planting. While cast iron plows made deeper and more regular furrows than the wooden plows used in the eighteenth century, improving soil yields, they worked poorly on the hard prairie soils that came under cultivation in the late 1830s and 1840s. The use of the slow working oxen and hand sowing seeds also placed severe limits on the development of yields and labour productivity. Pressures to lower costs in the two decades before the Civil War led to the rapid diffusion of the horse-drawn 'self-scouring' steel plow (originally developed by John Deere) and a variety of seed drills, that together improved soil and labour productivity. [Post, 1995: 429][43]

The productive forces in agriculture were acquiring an unprecedented elasticity – in marked contrast to contemporary agriculture in the South.

Most remarkable, however, was the mechanisation of the grain harvest. Central to this was the mechanical wheat harvester. Mechanical wheat harvesters had been introduced in the 1830s and were widespread in the Midwest by the 1850s on individual farms [David, 1980: 187–8]. In addition, the mechanical thresher was introduced, although it was costly and spread via a healthy rental market. Harvesting is a significantly time-bound operation. A rental market is difficult to establish in such circumstances. Threshing, however, is not time-bound, and lends itself to such markets [Binswanger, 1984: 13]. These developments are summed up as follows:

> Perhaps the most dramatic improvements in rural labor productivity came with the mechanization of grain harvesting. Prior to the introduction of the mass-produced McCormick mechanical reaper, the main tool for harvesting wheat was the wheat cradle, a hand tool. With a cradle, one person could reap two to three acres per day, with additional labour being expended raking and gathering the cut wheat. The horse-drawn mechanical reaper combined the tasks of reaping and raking, increasing the acreage a single person could harvest to twelve acres per day, an increase in labour productivity of approximately 75%. Along with the reaper, the mechanical thresher, which separated the wheat from the chaff, also radically reduced the amount of labour needed to prepare grain for the market. The thresher's cost was usually well beyond the means of all but the most wealthy commercial farmers, promoting the development 'specialists' who travelled throughout the midwest preparing grain for milling. [Post, 1995: 429–30][44]

These were critical developments, not only for agriculture itself but, as we shall see, as a powerful stimulus for manufacturing industry.

In the previous chapter, I have pointed to the threshold model, according to which the largest units should mechanise first.[45] and noted that this has been borne out in recent work on contemporary poor countries.[46] It has been suggested that the threshold in the antebellum midwest was 78 acres. In the midwest, however, 95% of farmers adopting it farmed less than that amount of land. They were able to do so, partly because the 1850s were years of booming wheat prices; they had to do so because their survival depended upon it.[47] We will return below to a discussion of mechanisation and its role, alongside other critical elements, in allowing the continuing existence of advanced simply commodity production as the dominant social form throughout the North right down to the present.

(ii) Industrialisation

The industrialisation of the North is of particular interest since it allows one to see with remarkable clarity agriculture's central significance in that whole process, and the manner in which accumulation in the countryside was critical to overall accumulation: that is to say it shows how the roots of overall capitalist accumulation lie, most emphatically, in the countryside. Not only that but it reveals, over a remarkably short period, a transformation from that almost primeval state, of union between agriculture and manufacturing industry, to a severing, or 'uprooting', of that union and to a dynamic process of capitalist industrialisation. Here we see a thoroughgoing overall capitalist transition, to which agriculture contributes critically, yet in circumstances in which there is no transition to capitalism in agriculture, or, at least, no transition to capitalist relations of production. It was, however, an overall capitalist agrarian transition enabled by advanced simple commodity production.

First, we may note that final rupture of the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry that cleared the way for capitalist industrialisation: 'A final indication of the reallocation of rural labour to commodity production in the midwest [and the north-east] in the last two antebellum decades was the decline of household manufacture of items for family and community consumption' [Post, 1995: 428]. There was, between 1840 and 1860, a dramatic decline in per capita household output of goods like cloth, tools, implements, fencing, packed or processed meat and grain (flour); that showing up in an equally dramatic fall in the category 'independent craft production'.[48] The separation of crafts from agriculture is revealed, also, in a remarkable shift in the proportion of agricultural improvements made with actual farm materials in the percentage of all improvements to productive capacity: a fall from 50% in 1834–43 to only 2% in 1899–1908.[49] That takes one beyond the antebellum years, but the shift was well under way by the early 1860s. This has been summed up as follows:

> In other words, there is evidence that goods (implements, tools and the like) that had been produced in rural households for immediate consumption were being purchased on the marketplace in the 1840s and 1850s. In the case of meat packing and farm implements production, their separation from farm households led to the industrialisation of their labour-processes and their relocation in the urban centers of Chicago and Cincinnati. [Post, 1995: 429][50]

The 'uprooting' was complete.

We have seen that in the South the continuing prevalence of inferior instruments of production, along with the absence of mechanisation, meant the Department I industries, those industries producing the means of production, capital goods, lacked a critical stimulus. The contrast with the North and the Mid-West is striking. We have already drawn attention to it. We need not repeat it.

Thus, agriculture – advanced simple commodity production – made a massive contribution to the remarkable dynamism of capitalist manufacturing industry in this era. Capitalist industrialisation had its roots in the countryside; capitalist accumulation had its nutrient base there. This was so, firstly, inasmuch as there existed in the countryside a massive, growing and vibrant home market for both

Department I and Department II industries, for the 'means of production' and 'articles of consumption': as a result of 'the subjugation of western [and northern] family farmers to market competition' [Post, 1995: 433].[51] Indeed, it is suggested, 'the massive home market created by the expansion of petty commodity production...[was] the largest in the capitalist world economy' [Post, 1982: 51].

This emerged from the expansion of demand for both consumer goods and producer goods. If we may take consumer goods first: 'As family farmers specialised in the production of agricultural goods, they were compelled to purchase a wide variety of consumer goods they previously produced for themselves or obtained through "neighbourly exchange"' [Post, 1995: 433]. That was irrevocable. So, too, was the dramatic transformation with respect to the means of production, spurred on by the constant need to secure the technical means of survival and reproduction: 'Similarly, as rural householders sought to reduce production costs through technical innovation, they sought to purchase "cutting-edge" machinery, tools and the like, rather than make these implements or procure them from local blacksmiths' [Post, 1995: 433]. The home market contribution was immense.

So it was that 'the impact of the transformation of the rural class structure on industrialisation in the 1840s and 1850s' [Post, 1995: 433] showed itself in the growth of an agro-industrial complex. A series of powerful backward and forward linkages was created, seen in the input–output needs of the constituents of the complex. One can say, with confidence, that:

> The industries producing farm machinery, tools and supplies, and processing agricultural raw materials (meat packing, leather tanning, flour milling, canning, flour milling, baking etc.) were at the centre of the US industrial revolution. Farm implements and machine production alone made up 19.4% of all machine production in 1860, rising to 25.5% in 1870. [Post, 1995: 433][52]

From these industries the linkages were strong and transforming: 'these industries experienced important developments in their labour-processes (eg. mechanisation of flour milling, the development of the first "disassembly" line in meat packing, and the use of standardised parts in the construction of reapers) and stimulated technical transformations in other crucial industries' [Post, 1995: 433].[53] One important example is the iron industry:

> the formation of the 'agro-industrial complex' spurred technological innovation in the antebellum iron industry. Specialised industrial producers (who needed lower quality and versatile iron to produce a wide variety of products) replaced rural blacksmiths and farmers as the main consumers of iron, providing the impetus for the centralisation of iron production and the use of coal rather than charcoal, in the smelting process. [Post, 1995: 434–5][54]

Prometheus was, indeed, unbound.

The argument developed, based upon Charles Post, seems the most plausible view of likely causation. If there is a *primum mobile* to be identified, then there is a strong case for seeking it here. Clearly, it was not and could not have been, a one-way process. The impact of the development of manufacturing industry on the countryside was great. In any case of capitalist industrialisation, that has been so. But, might one not explain the transformation of the countryside as the result of 'the spread of commodity production that accompanied the development of industrial capitalism' [Post, 1995: 413]? That is Alan Kulikoff's thesis [Kulikoff, 1989: 141–2; see Post, 1995: 413–15]. It attributes causal primacy, then, to industry.

It was, according to this view, the growth of capitalist manufacturing industry that created a market for food and other agricultural products; and which drew labour from the household (especially women and juveniles), so creating purchasing power and encouraging the buying of consumer goods. These, it is argued, were the seeds of agrarian change. What do we make of this?

Such processes obviously took place. But these were, one might argue, permissive rather than compulsive. So long as those early simple commodity producers were able 'to preserve their landholdings without recourse to successful market production' [Post, 1995: 415], they, or their family members, were under no compulsion to leave agriculture or to increase labour productivity on a continuous basis. Charles Post captures the essential point:

> the transformation of rural social relations – making 'yeoman' farmers incapable of maintaining their landholding without commodity production – was the essential precondition for the development of capitalist manufacture and industry. Only when rural households were subject to the 'dictates of the market' (law of value) were they forced to innovate and develop labour productivity to survive, economically compelling a growing portion of the rural population (those who lost the competitive battle) to work in manufacture and industry, and providing a growing market for factory produced means of production and consumption. [Post, 1995: 415 enplosis in original]

Here lay the compulsions. There was nothing permissive about these processes. That, I think , is an unassailable position.

Equally, one might seek the driving-force of capitalist industrialisation elsewhere altogether – other than in 'social-property relations and the role of class conflict in their transformation' [Post, 1995: 432]. One such, extremely influential, explanation is that of Douglas North, whose stress is upon 'the completion of transportation infrastructure (canal and railroad system) during the 1830s' [Post, 1995: 433] as the key element [see North, 1966: ch. VII, especially 69–70]. One can argue about this. Obviously, the creation of an adequate transportation infrastructure was a *sine qua non* of capitalist industrialisation, with a remarkable power to open the country up, with powerful backward- and forward-linkages, and powerful implications for Department I industries. One

recalls Marx's famous prediction about the building of the railways in India (based, in part, on his reading of capitalist industrialisation elsewhere):

> You cannot maintain a net of railways over an immense country without introducing all those industrial processes necessary to meet the immediate and current wants of railway locomotion, and out of which there must grow the application of machinery to those branches of industry not immediately connected with the railways. The railway system will therefore become in India truly the forerunner of modern industry. [Marx, 1979a: 220]

In the event, because of colonialism, these effects did not follow in India. But they assuredly did in the United States.

But, having said that, one cannot possibly understand capitalist industrialisation, and its accompanying dynamic, without unravelling and comprehending its roots in the countryside, its agrarian origins. We may say, indeed, that the nature and manner of agrarian transition has a decisive influence upon the pace, manner, limits and very possibility of capitalist industrialisation. It was this that made capitalist accumulation possible, and so enabled overall capitalist transformation. If there is an inner secret of the early unleashing of capitalist accumulation, then it is to be sought here.

In a sense, our story is at an end, inasmuch as the full agrarian transition that was our *quaesitum* had unfolded in the antebellum north. Its extension in the West does not raise further *substantive* analytical issues, although matters of considerable interest do arise. We do, however, need to consider our categorisation 'advanced simple commodity production', and as a part of that address the puzzle of why that, rather than full-blooded capitalism, prevailed. It is one of the central puzzles of the American path. We will first consider postbellum trends, and, in particular the extension of advanced petty commodity production to the West.

9 THE POSTBELLUM ERA (WITH SOME ANTEBELLUM ANTECEDENTS): A BRIEF EXCURSUS

(i) The West

The North had been settled – both the Northeast and much of the Northwest – and advanced simple commodity production established in the antebellum years. As we have suggested, the capitalist agrarian transition had taken place. There were, of course, further critical developments in the North after the Civil War, but these, strictly, take us beyond our essential problematic. Nevertheless, we will highlight some of them that are of especial interest in casting analytical light upon the social form that has engaged our attention: advanced simple commodity production. We will come to them presently (in the final section). First, however, we may briefly consider the extension of petty commodity production to the West.

The postbellum period has been portrayed as that of America's 'Second Empire',

> that period covering the last half of the 19th century when the U.S. federal government undertook the overland colonization of the vast regions lying west of the Mississippi River. It was during this era that non-capitalist producers of wheat became established in a region which had previously been considered the 'Uninhabitable American Desert'; indeed, the centres of American wheat production continued to shift westward during this period marking the beginnings of the American wheat belt as we know it today. [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 290].

This included some of our Northwest (for example, parts of Wisconsin and Iowa) and part of the South (for example, Oklahoma), but for the most part it was the states we have included in the West. Those 'non-capitalist producers of wheat' were advanced simple commodity producers, much as we have identified them. We recall Jefferson's assumption that this region would be inhabited forever by Indians. The Jefferson vision, he assumed, was not to be extended there. But, if the 'Jefferson vision' did not, in practice, so extend there, advanced simple commodity production, which bore little relation to it, did.

Once the Indians had been, yet again, driven off their lands (see above), the public domain had to be transformed into private property. This happened via the Homestead Act of May 20, 1862, which 'grant[ed] 160 acres of public land to settlers after five years of residence' [Milner, 1994: 153]; or the possibility of purchase from the government at $1.25 an acre after six months' residence [Bailyn *et al.*, 1985: 523]. This Act appeared to epitomise Jefferson's vision [Bogue, 1994: 289], inasmuch as 'its "avowed" intention was to provide free land for small producers' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 294]. A Jeffersonian intent, indeed.

The reality was different. It did, indeed, transform the public domain into private property, but 'as several historians have pointed out, the petty producer was not the major beneficiary of the government's "free land policy". Indeed, it has been estimated that homesteaders, including those who were mere pawns of land speculators, received only one out of every six or seven acres of the land that came as a "free gift" from the government' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 294].[55] As one noted agricultural historian, Allan Bogue, observes of the Homestead Act: 'Congress established a system of land disposal that also served the interests of capitalists and developers' [Bogue, 1994: 289] The same historian insists that it did serve to settle the west and 'for seventy years...gave legions of Americans inexpensive access to the land market and farm ownership' (loc. cit.). But that needs to be qualified by two observations.

Firstly, the costs of actually setting up a farm were by no means negligible, as was first pointed out in 1949 by Clarence Danhof, in a classic article [Danhof, 1949; see also Atack, 1982, Atack and Passel, 1994: 275–9]. Danhof showed that, in the antebellum period , in the decade 1850–60, in the Northwest and the West, '[$1,000] must be considered as the minimum required for western prairie farm-making under the conditions as they existed in the 1850s' [Danhof, 1941: 354].[56] These costs, for a farmer purchasing a 40-acre farm on the frontier, included the price of the land, transport west, land clearing, animals, seed, implements, fencing, housing, subsistence. That was a sizeable amount. Even if one accepts that it might, in some instances, or even on average, have been less [Ankli, 1974; Klein, 1974; Atack, 1982], it remains the case that it was a considerable obstacle to outright ownership. This was *a fortiori* the case in the postbellum era, as the push west proceeded.

Secondly, as we have seen, already in 1880 14% of farms in the West were operated by tenants, and that proportion had risen to 18% by 1920 (see Table 7.1). As Gavin Wright points out:

> those who sought farm ownership had to go farther and farther west into regions where the minimum viable scale of farming was ever larger. And as the continuing efforts of commercial farmers [i.e. advanced petty commodity producers – TJB] to expand production reshaped farm technology toward higher levels of mechanization and larger scale operation, farm making costs increased to the point where most new farmers had to begin their careers with a lengthy tenancy of a period of mortgage indebtedness. [Wright, 1988: 189]

To that we will return in the final section. Another distinguished agricultural historian, Paul W. Gates, in a significant body of writing, 'Argued that the very institutions that were supposed to have promoted owner-occupancy through the progressive liberalization of terms, in fact, promoted land speculation, monopolization and tenancy' [Atack, 1988: 6].[57] Gates insisted that:

> Cheap land was a double-edged sword. Not only was it more affordable for the person with limited means, but in the absence of restrictions on the size of holdings the wealthy could buy huge tracts at minimal cost. Passage of the Homestead Act in 1862 did little to relieve this because of the ability of speculators to find dummy entrymen and take advantage of the commutation privilege. As a result, large tracts of land were acquired by speculators, land companies, and the wealthy. Moreover, the railroads were given vast acreages through federal land grants...In Gates' view, speculative landholdings and railroad land grants reduced the market supply of land and bid up the price. Since demand was inelastic, would-be farmers were therefore compelled to spend more of their income on land than would otherwise have been the case. Those who could not afford to pay the higher prices or borrow were faced with a choice of farming a smaller area or becoming tenants and some may have been excluded from the market altogether. Gates made a persuasive case. [Atack, 1988: 12][58]

So much for the Jeffersonian vision. It did not include land speculators, monopolisation of land, debt, mortgages and tenancy. One notes that it was from the ranks of these land speculators, land companies and railroads that, to a large extent, the landlord class in the West must have emerged.

This is an era of considerable interest for a variety of reasons. One, certainly, is that capitalist wheat farms were established, but existed only briefly: but the 'day was short...[of these] bonanza wheat farms of the Red River Valley of Minnesota and Dakota' [Gates, 1973: 314]. Thus, it was a period which

> saw the rise and decline of the much acclaimed bonanza wheat farms and hence for a limited period during the 19th century, capitalist wheat farms existed alongside and in competition with rural petty commodity producers of wheat. However, while the former proved to be a relatively short-lived phenomenon, the family labor farms survived the era and underwent unprecedented growth and expansion. [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 290][59]

Advanced simple commodity production quickly became the dominant social form in the West, as it had, previously, in the North.

The manner of demise of these 'bonanza farms' is of some significance, since it suggests something of why advanced simple commodity producers were able to survive and constitute the dominant social form, here as in the North (an issue which we will address below in detail). According to one writer, those who attempted to run these 'large capitalistic estates' found that 'over time wage labor became scarce, unreliable and irresponsible' [Wright, 1988: 195]. That is one possibility. No doubt scarcity of labour, the perennial problem of the United States (which we have had frequent occasion to note), may have had an influence in the lack of success of these enterprises.

But the explanation is likely to have been rather more complex than that. It is suggested that 'the bonanza farms could only exist as long as they were able to acquire cheap and fertile lands. Here the temporary "super profits" from differential rent offset the problem of profit maximisation' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 321, n. 51]. The problems associated with profit maximising, especially in the context of wheat production, we will discuss in a subsequent section. They are of obvious significance. The capitalist bonanza farmers were quite soon caught in the grip of rising land prices and declining commodity prices: 'with the increased settlement of the region not only did land prices begin to soar, but also the increased volume of wheat production coupled with the general economic crises of the 1880s and 1890 sent wheat prices plummeting downwards' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 321, n. 51]. Petty commodity producers are able to ride such crises, in a way that capitalists cannot, since they do not have to take the average rate of profit: that is to say, they can retreat from the circuit of M-C-

M to that of C-M-C. They have no wage costs and are able to survive without it. But capitalists cannot. Thus: 'Under these conditions the bonanza farmers were incapable of making the average rate of profit and these capitalist enterprises disintegrated, leaving wheat production in the hands of petty producers' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 321, n. 51]. We will carry this discussion further below, when we examine in greater detail the persistence of advanced petty commodity production.

Interestingly, that class of large capitalist farmers, so inadequately constituted and so briefly in existence, was transformed into a landlord class: 'gradually the holding were subdivided and assigned to tenants' [Wright, 1988: 195]. Surplus would be appropriated through rent rather than through the wage relationship. Land speculators, who might accumulate massive amounts of land, were also transformed into landlords. Some of the land they acquired they sold at inflated prices, but some of it they rented out to tenants.[60]

So, as in the North, land speculators were active and significant. Resort to credit was important and debt and mortgages considerable. That is to say, the very pressures that drove the petty commodity producers of the North to systematic production for the market, and produced price convergence and subjection to market discipline, operated powerfully here also. This has been captured as follows:

> On the one hand, as a direct consequence of the land monopolization which followed the Homestead Act, many settlers had no option but to *buy land at high prices* from the railroad and land speculation companies as well as *borrow their transport and initial outlay expenses* from these vested interests. Thus, from the very beginning, *indebtedness* was inevitable and a *condition of existence* for many settlers...On the other hand, even settlers who might have started out 'independently' were later compelled to borrow either to tide themselves over from one harvest to the next or in order to expand the scale of their operation. [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 295–6, emphases mine]

Credit facilities were meagre, and state banks were created in several states to meet these credit needs. While this enabled petty commodity producers to escape the clutches of merchant's and usurer's capital, they were 'in no way able to escape the enmeshing effects of credit and instead found [themselves] under the more rational domination of finance capital' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 296–7]. The dominance of finance capital may have been more rational than that of merchant's and usurer's capital, but it was no less real. We note the important role of the state in extending credit to these advanced simple commodity producers. We will comment on this further below.

As in the North, the productive forces proved to be a dynamic element.[61] If we go back to the first European settlers, of the early nineteenth century, who were undoubtedly early simple commodity producers, their technical endowment was very similar to that of those who had settled the states of the North. The instruments of production were primitive, and any compulsion towards the adoption of new, and more productive, technology had not yet arrived. This is evocatively described by Allan Bogue:

> When American farmers moved into the trans-Mississippi West in the early nineteenth century, their implements were much the same as those used by colonial farmers. Two-wheeled carts or crude waggons, mold-board plows of wood with an iron point and – perhaps – share, drags of heavy planks or tree trunks, harrows of wooden spikes set in triangular plank frames, double-shovel plows for row crops, harnesses, ox yokes, and fittings – these were the major items, along with smaller tools such as scythes, sickles, forks (often of wood), shovels, and coopered pails. The husbandman of the early nineteenth century broadcast his seed from a bag slung over his shoulders; he cut the ripened crop with a sickle or a scythe while others raked it into sheaves and bound them with knotted grain stalks. Eventually, the farmer flailed the grain, taken from barn mow or stack, and winnowed it on a canvas. The settler planted Indian corn with a hoe or, of the crop was sod corn on new breaking, sometimes used an ax. Gathering techniques varied by region; but however it was gathered, ripened corn was stored in cribs while the stalks and leaves provided fodder. [Bogue, 1994: 294]

This does not capture the back-breaking toil, patriarchal dominance and isolation of those early settlers. They are, however, probably as near to Jefferson's vision and Horace's idyll as was ever the case, and their technical endowment is vividly captured.

Already, by the 1820s, however, those very tensions that we identified as existing in the North began to manifest themselves in the West, too. By the 1840s and 1850s, significant breakthrough in ploughs, in harvesting techniques and in threshing had been made and were widely adopted, with, of course, the spread of the mechanical harvester especially in the 1850s (although it had been invented in the 1830s):

> As settlement spread into the prairie states, *mechanization* accelerated. By about 1820, Jethro Wood had developed the prototype of the walking *plow*, with all of its earth-turning parts made of iron. Though Wood's plow was an improvement, the dense, matted prairie grass and forb roots defied conventional plows and, once turned, revealed soils that clogged iron-mold boards. Prairie blacksmiths developed massive beamed plows to break the sod, and during the 1830s and 1840s, John Deere and William Oliver led in manufacturing plows with mold boards of steel or polished chilled iron to which these soils did not adhere...The agricultural inventors worked wonders in reducing work hours for the *harvest* of wheat and other small grains, hitherto cut with scythe or cradle and bound into sheaves by hand. Cyrus H. McCormick and

other machine-inventors mechanized and melded several processes. For the scythe's short cutting blade they substituted a long cutting bar with serrated edges within a framework of metal guide teeth, or fingers, attached to the front of a platform on wheels and pulled by draft animals. In forward motion, gearing motivated by a drive-wheel at one end of this platform caused the cutting bar to whicker-snicker within its frame and cut the stalks of grain a few inches above the ground as an elevated reel and guide teeth steered them to the blade. A worker with a rake followed McCormick's contraption of the 1830s, periodically clearing the table of cut grain; but soon this worker was replaced by automatic devices...The final process of *separating the grain from the straw* had long since left the flail or tramping-floor stage. By the 1840s, crude grain separators that flailed the grain and blew away the chaff and straw with internal fans were in use. Initially, horse treadmills and circular horsepowers drove such machines...Meanwhile, mechanization proceeded in other areas of husbandry. Practical, if not always reliable, horse-drawn broadcast seeders, grain drills, mowing machines, rakes, and hay loaders had appeared by the 1850s. [Bogue, 1994: 294–5 emphases mine]

It is an impressive catalogue. These advances, widely adopted by advanced petty commodity producers, served to increase agriculture's productiveness markedly.

These advances continued in the 1870s, in the wake of the Homestead Act of 1862, further enhancing agriculture's productive capacity, and enabling advanced simple commodity producers to achieve yet further rises in output and productivity:

The Marsh harvester of the 1870s revolutionized the sheafing and binding process by introducing moving canvases that elevated the cut grain over the drive wheel and dropped it on a shelf for sheaf binders standing on a step attached to the machine. These workers vanished with the introduction of an automatic twin knotter. The resulting grain binder was found in many harvest fields of the trans-Mississippi by the 1890s. Such binders reduced field labor still more when manufacturers attached sheaf carriers that accumulated the bound bundles. When the driver judged there were enough to make a stook of grain, he tripped the device...[B]y the 1880s, Pitts or Case threshing machines were trundling down western roads behind steam engines, followed in turn by a horse-drawn water waggon to keep the engine puffing. In the Far West, imaginative rural inventors consolidated the stages of the grain harvest; by the 1870s, huge, cumbersome combines drawn by twenty or thirty horses were rattling through the grain fields of central California, leaving a trail of filled grain sacks behind them. At the turn of the century, combines were conquering the hilly wheat fields of interior Washington. The binder-driver of the Plains country encouraged his three or four horses with imprecations and a long whip; the driver of the combine's multiple hitch hung a pail of rocks under his elevated seat and threw them at lazy members of the his huge team. [Bogue, 1994: 295]

And so one might go on. It is a remarkable tale.

Relentlessly, we witness a rising organic composition of capital, as agriculture grew rapidly and became steadily more productive, under the aegis of advanced petty commodity producers. There were dramatic rises in output and yields. The new forms of constant capital, moreover, were labour-saving. Between 1840 and 1900, work hours per hundred bushels of wheat more than halved, falling from 233 to 108; while those per hundred bushels of corn declined similarly, from 276 to 135 [Bogue, 1994: 296.] These advances in mechanical power were such that the significant rises in output could always be achieved by predominantly family labour. It is as if the technical advances were designed with that in mind. Permanent wage labour was not necessary. But we need to examine this issue a little more carefully. Its class aspects are in danger of being obscured. We shall do so presently.

As in the North, it has been suggested, the contribution to the creation of a home market for manufactures, and so to stimulating capitalist industrialisation, was considerable. Clearly, this operated at the level of both Department I and Department II industries. With respect to the former: 'the expansion of agricultural commodity production [in these frontier regions] increases the demand for manufactured farm implements and other inputs, thus enhancing the development of those specific industrial capitalist enterprises which specialise in the production of agricultural means of production' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 298]. In the latter instance, 'the market within the frontier itself is expanded' (loc. cit.), and, at a somewhat further, but no less real, remove: 'it supplies centers of industrial capitalism, both nationally and internationally, with cheap items of subsistence for variable capital, thus stimulating industrial capitalist development as a whole' (loc. cit.). In other words, via a possible terms of trade effect, favouring industrial capital, 'cheap items of subsistence', i.e. food, enhance the market for non-agricultural consumer goods, by releasing purchasing power.

(ii) The North

Similar technical advances might be noted for the North. We need not repeat them. Similar tendencies with respect to advanced petty commodity producers might also be discerned. We have noted the increase in tenancy already. Certainly, the market pressure upon such producers did not diminish. More than that we need not say. We have identified already the nature of the agrarian transition there. That was a phenomenon of the antebellum years.

We have now completed our treatment of agrarian transition in the North and the West. We may now proceed to a more concerted definition and defence of the advanced simple commodity production categorisation. We will proceed, finally, to a consideration of proletarianisation in the North and the West, and ask the question: was Lenin right? We will then have returned to our point of departure.

10 DEFINING AND DEFENDING THE ADVANCED SIMPLE COMMODITY PRODUCTION CATEGORISATION

(i) Two Forms of Simple Commodity Production

Post, as we have seen, distinguishes 'independent household production', as the social form dominant up to the 1830s and 1840s, and 'simple or petty commodity production' as that in dominance thereafter. We have argued that, in fact, variants of simple or petty commodity production existed in both eras, and these we have termed 'early simple commodity production' and 'advanced simple commodity production'.

They are both to be categorised as simple commodity production inasmuch as in each there is an absence of wage labour. In each it is, predominantly, family labour that is mobilised to set in motion and complete the production process.

(ii) The Need to Distinguish These Forms: Harriet Friedmann's Formulation

But they do need to be distinguished. Harriet Friedmann, an important contributor to our understanding of simple commodity production in the North American context, makes a crucial distinction. She refers us to Arthur H. Johnson's classic work *The Disappearance of the Small Landowner*, which was first published in 1909 [Johnson, 1963], and Johnson's argument that the decline of 'small landowners' – i.e. *peasants*, in another terminology, early simple commodity producers in ours – can be dated from the sixteenth century, as a result of the growth of commercial agriculture. Friedmann stresses that 'small holders [of the North American variety]...are not survivors in any sense from the sixteenth century, but a new kind of household producer, a specialised commodity producer' [Friedmann, 1978b: 549]. That is an important point.

But what Friedmann omits to say is that her 'small holders of the North American variety' themselves need historical treatment in the context of North America: that we need to distinguish, in the North and the West of the United States, differing social forms, before and after the 1830s/1840s. The 'small holders' she is analysing are, in fact, our advanced simple commodity producers. They, certainly, are not 'survivors' from an earlier period. They are, as we have seen, qualitatively different, representative of a new social form: in her words, indeed 'a new kind of producer, a specialised commodity producer.

Here, if we maintain the terminology, we have two distinct categories. The first is that of 'peasants' (in our usage, early simple commodity producers), who will tend to be subsistence producers, or who produce surpluses irregularly, and, perhaps, as 'distress surpluses'. Post reminds us that this is a variant of what Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg called the 'patriarchal peasant' or 'natural economy' [Post, 1982: 42].[62] The second is that of petty commodity producers,

who produce a regular, perhaps large surplus, on a commercial basis, and who are specialist, i.e. one crop, producers. These latter (in our terminology, advanced petty, or simple, commodity producers) have the distinguishing characteristic that 'ownership and labour are combined in the household, and production takes place under *conditions of competition*' [Friedmann, 1978, emphasis mine]. We are now beginning to labour the point. But it is an important one.

(iii) Separation of Exchange-Value from Use Value, But to Different Degrees: A Qualitative Difference, a Similarity with Capitalism, But the Need to Distinguish Capitalism

In each of the two variants of simple commodity production, there is a separation of exchange-value from use-value, to use Marx's own criterion (see above), and each produces exchange-values as well as use-values, although to very differing degrees: a difference of degree that becomes a qualitative difference. Each, then, is subject to the 'law of value', to the market: but in the former case 'marginally', with normal exchange being one of 'value' for 'value' (see above); and in the latter totally and systematically, with normal exchange no longer being that of rough equivalents.[63]

One problem is that, of course, 'normal exchange no longer being that of equivalents' is a crucial distinguishing feature of capitalist commodity production. We need, also, to distinguish 'advanced simple commodity production' from capitalism. It is not capitalism, essentially because of the absence of wage labour. But one can see why, for the reason stated, among others thought to be substantive (which we will identify presently), some writers in the Marxist tradition [for example, Sherry, 1976; Banaji, 1977; Gibbon and Neocosmos, 1985; Llambi, 1988] wish to reach for a categorisation that attempts to capture the 'capitalist' nature of these producers and mark them off from petty commodity producers. That is why I suggested above that there may be more doubt about categorising the latter than the former social form as a variant of simple commodity production. We will come to these categorisations presently.

(iv) Advanced Simple Commodity Production: Post's View of Price Convergence and Its Implications

Those two variants of simple commodity production do, then, need to be distinguished, since they are fundamentally different. We have considered the transition between the two, analysed the qualitative changes, and identified the profoundly differing implications of each, with respect to accumulation, both inside agriculture and more generally. We may consider what we have called advanced simple commodity production more closely.

Post, at one juncture, gears his analytical discussion to a consideration of that price convergence (demonstrated by Rothenberg) noted above. He argues:

In a Marxian framework, *price convergence* indicates that producers are *subject to the 'law of value'*. Competition compels each and every producer to produce commodities at or preferably *below* the 'socially necessary average labour-time' which is manifested in the price around which all other prices for a given good or service tend to oscillate. Those producers who produce above the social average, whose costs of production are too high, are penalised by shrinking market shares, *falling profit margins* and possible bankruptcy; while those producers who produce at or below the social average, whose costs of production are low, are rewarded by growing market shares, rising profit margins and growth in the scale of their operation (accumulation). In other words, the operation of the 'law of value' – 'the discipline of the market' – forces producers to raise the productivity of labour, either through the intensification of labour or mechanisation...Producers are subject to the operation of the law of value only when they depend upon the sale of goods and services on the market to maintain their possession of land or other means of production. [Post, 1995: 394, emphases mine, except for the third one][64]

We may pause and consider this.

(v) Price Convergence, Price Divergence and the Two Circuits: The Circuit M-C-M, Advanced Simple Commodity Production and Capitalism

There are two important points to be made. Firstly, it is, indeed, the case that price convergence suggests subjection to the 'law of value', in a more or less total sense, and systematic production of exchange-values. But, I would wish to insist, circumstances of price divergence, such as seem to have prevailed in the earlier era, do not suggest, necessarily, the absence of any influence of the 'law of value'. But that influence is partial, and is encapsulated in the exchange of 'value' for 'value' (as we have seen).

Secondly, we have pointed out above that, in Marx's own rendering of simple commodity production, that form was characterised by simple circulation of commodities, i.e. by the circuit C-M-C. Yet here, it appears, this may not be the case. There is a difference of view. We note that, where profit becomes a major goal of the enterprise, as is suggested by Post, we are no longer in the realm of simple circulation of commodities. We have entered that of what is usually regarded as capitalist commodity production: the apparently capitalist form of circulation, M-C-M.[65]

Mann and Dickinson wish to hold to the position that we do continue to be confronting simple circulation of commodities:

> since petty commodity production operates *only at the level of simple circulation*, it cannot, unlike the capitalist firm, accumulate or expand via the reinvestment of surplus value extracted in production. Expanded reproduction for the petty producer therefore requires access to an additional source of capital which is usually borrowed and hence acquired through credit. Thus unless the petty producer can generate sufficient savings from the advantages of differential rent, an increase in the scale of production requires increased indebtedness. [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 296, emphasis mine]

But, this is doubtful as a general proposition. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that these producers do, if not always then certainly preponderantly, as Robert Sherry has argued [Sherry, 1976], operate in the M-C-M circuit.

Thus, as paraphrased by Post, Sherry argues as follows, in support of his proposition:

> For Sherry, the free farmers of the West and Northeast marketed not merely their surplus product, but nearly their entire product. As a result, the free farmers of the antebellum North were dependent on commodity production and exchange for their economic reproduction, and were not governed by the circuit of subsistence (C-M-C), but by the circuit of competition of competition and accumulation (M-C-M). The competitive and accumulationist dynamic forced the family farmers to undertake the continual technical reorganization of their labour processes in order to survive. [Post, 1982: 38–9]

This, indeed, is the central thrust of our interpretation of advanced petty commodity producers, given above. If that interpretation is correct (as I think it is), then, debt notwithstanding, we do need to distinguish the two categories very sharply, in this respect, and there is, indeed, more doubt over identifying the latter as simple commodity production than the former.

Sherry, we note, wishes to locate this social form as one of capitalist production: 'Since self-organized commodity production shares a dynamic of accumulation with the capitalist mode of production...Sherry conceives of [it]...as a form of capitalist production, the "petty-bourgeois form of capital"' [Post, 1982: 40]. But this is unacceptable, precisely because of the absence of wage labour. Yes, these producers operate on the circuit M-C-M; but no they are not capitalists. They do not appropriate surplus value via the wage relation. A very important point emerges from the absence of wage labour, which points to this social form's contradictory nature.

As Mann and Dickinson point out [1980: 300], advanced petty commodity producers are not compelled to achieve the average rate of profit. They can continue to produce so long as their costs of production do not exceed the realised value of the commodities they produce. That, indeed, distinguishes them, very basically, from capitalist producers. Because they do not have to earn the average rate of profit, and because they do not have to pay wage costs, they are able, where necessary and for prolonged periods, to withdraw from the M-C-M circuit into the C-M-C circuit, in the sense that, while, indeed, they have a compelling need to acquire money, in order to survive, it is subsistence that is their

goal and not money. This, indeed, is part of the secret of their remarkable survival-power, and their ability to out-compete capitalist farmers.

Post, of course, is aware that there is a problem here (a conceptual or, one might say, a categorical overlap). He observes,

> This is of course a central feature of capitalist production, where the transformation of capital (means of production) and labour-power (labour services) into commodities bought and sold on the market creates a situation of 'generalised commodity production'. In other words, the economic survival of both capitalists and workers depends upon successful production for the market. [Post, 1995: 394]

He continues:

> Marxian economics also recognises a form of household-based production that is subject to the operation of the law of value – 'simple' or 'petty' commodity production. In situations where household producers (independent artisans or family farmers – usually the eldest male – organising the labour of women and children and occasional wage-labourers) depend upon production for the market for their survival as small property owners, a dynamic of specialisation, competition, accumulation and technical innovation similar to capitalism ensues. [Post, 1995: 395]

But, whatever 'Marxian economics'[66] recognises, Marx himself, as we have seen, does not identify simple, or petty, commodity production thus. The properties identified may be those of a variant of simple commodity production, but they are sufficiently distinct to require its specification as qualitatively different from Marx's notion of simple commodity production (our 'early simple commodity production'). We have called it 'advanced simple commodity production', and it does bear a striking similarity, in certain crucial respects, to capitalist commodity production. The critical differences are, as we have observed: firstly, the absence, not of proletarianisation, but of permanent wage labour as a dominant form, and of the wage relationship as the essential mode of surplus appropriation; and secondly, the absence of the need to earn the average rate of profit. That, I think, is sufficient to deny the category 'capitalist'.

(vi) Lenin's Expectations Unfulfilled

If we revert to Lenin, and his expectations, what he did not envisage was the extent to which 'the homesteads of "independent" small farmers' would persist tenaciously, and retain a central characteristic: their operation by predominantly family labour. Family labour would remain of crucial significance in North America.

Thus, although our analytical task is at an end, inasmuch as we have identified the essential capitalist agrarian transition traversed in the North and the West

and its implications, if we project forward in time, we find the following: while between 1900 and 1960 self-employed and unpaid family workers fell, as a proportion of the *total* US employed labour force, from 50.5% to 16.9%, in agriculture the decline was only from 78.5% to 68.4% [Friedmann, 1978: 73]. There were, to be sure, regional variations, with family labour of greater significance in some areas of agriculture than others [Friedmann, 1978: 74]. But the overwhelming significance of family labour, overall, is clear. The regional incidence was, of course, greatest in the North and the West.

(vii) The Debate Over Categorisation and Implications

As has been observed, 'the debate over the predominance of family farms in the United States and Canada has lasted almost a century' [Llambi, 1988: 350]. That debate has included argument over their appropriate characterisation and the reasons for their persistence. We have already provided a characterisation. We may comment further on that characterisation, by considering other characterisations.

As we have already stressed, they are obviously not capitalist farmers, in the classical sense, since they do not appropriate surplus value via the wage relation. An attempt has, however, been made to identify them as 'petty capitalist producers' [Llambi, 1988: 353–4], on the grounds that such producers 'sustain a capital accumulation process' while simple or petty commodity producers, properly conceived (i.e. as by Marx), 'sustain a simple reproduction process'. That attempt one can understand, but we resist it.

This is part of a more general debate, which ranges far beyond North America, and which relates to contemporary poor countries as well as advanced capitalist social formations. Various authors have addressed this issue, usually departing from a particular empirical situation but presenting a general argument.

Llambi, whom I have cited, writes with respect to Latin America, and, in particular, Venezuela. Especially influential have been Bernstein [1977; 1979; for a recent development of his argument see 1988], whose essential concern was with African 'peasantries'; and Chevalier [1982: ch. 4; 1983], who grappled with the complexities of eastern Peru; while more recent contributions include Gibbon and Neocosmos [1985] and Lem [1988] (Lem concerned with contemporary French wine-growers).

The issues at stake are many and controversial. For example, while Friedmann argues that within petty commodity production the domestic domain resists the commoditisation of social relations, Chevalier holds that commodity relations do penetrate to the core of the domestic domain (for an account of the differences between the two, cf. Lem [1988]).

In another controversy, we find further attempts to deny petty commodity producers independent identity, and co-opt them into the capitalist category, whether as proletarians or capitalists: Banaji [1977] insisting that petty com-

modity producers are 'pre-capitalist in form but capitalist in content in that small commodity producers are "disguised" proletarians' [Bernstein, 1988: 259]; while Gibbon and Neocosmos are resolute in their insistence that they are 'capitalists who employ themselves' [Gibbon and Neocosmos, 1985: 1985].

That debate we cannot enter here. Its full scope we can no more than hint at (for a brief, lucid and cogent treatment of the issues at stake, see Bernstein [1988]). For present purposes we choose to refer to these North American 'family farms', whose dominating survival was not anticipated by Lenin, as advanced simple/petty commodity producers. The important point, however we theorise petty commodity production, is the relative absence of permanent wage labour in this particular, and historically significant, agrarian transition.

We may now attempt an explanation (or at least the outlines, or beginnings, of an explanation) of why Lenin was, in this respect, wrong.

11 TOWARDS AN EXPLANATION OF THE PERSISTENCE OF SIMPLE COMMODITY PRODUCTION

(i) The Issue

One may pose the question as follows. Why, when the wage relation emerged relatively early elsewhere, did it fail to do so pervasively in American agriculture?

As Brewster points out:

> But machines are equally compatible with larger-than-family units as they introduce no new obstacle to expanding a farm substantially beyond the capacity of a family to do the work in any particular operation. It is as easy (or difficult) for a large operator to grow more corn than a family can harvest when harvesting is done with a mechanical picker as when it is done with a husking peg. [Brewster, 1970: 5]

Why, then, did capitalism not drive out family farms and replace them with large-scale, mechanised farms, worked with wage labour? After all, while technical progress has not made this inevitable, it is perfectly compatible with such an outcome. We will outline no more than the beginnings of an answer to that puzzle.

(ii) Agriculture Tied to the 'Rhythms of Nature'

It has been suggested that the remarkable survival of petty commodity production finds part of its explanation in agriculture's peculiarity that while the productive forces have undergone massive change, they have yet to shift agriculture from organisation according to the 'rhythms of nature' to organisation according to the 'rhythms of machines'. The tenacity of the 'family farm' and petty commodity production derives, at bottom, from this, it is argued [Burbach and Flynn, 1980: 27–30].

Putting this another way, we may say that while the productive forces have changed significantly, these have not come into conflict with the existing relations of production (as constituted by the 'family farm' and simple commodity production). The latter have not become a fetter upon the former. A powerful impulse towards change has not come from such a contradiction.

The argument needs to be examined, and has some force. It is not clear, however, that it should be seen as, in itself and alone, necessarily, determining. Let us, first, consider the nature of that argument.

(iii) Mechanisation and the Difference Between Agriculture and Manufacturing Industry

It has been suggested that only when agriculture is fully 'industrialised' will wage labour take over from the family farm. The process began long ago, and then appeared to reach a critical stage when, in the mid-nineteenth century, mechanical reapers, threshers and cultivators were introduced, and thereafter tractors. The result was to increase massively the amount of land a single individual could cultivate by himself, or which a family could handle [Burbach and Flynn, 1980: 27–8]. This mechanisation massively increased the labour power – the productivity – of the direct producer in agriculture. Technical change also produced an immense magnification of labour power in manufacturing industry. But there is a significant difference between agriculture and manufacturing industry.

We may appreciate this by first considering agriculture and industry before the advent of the Industrial Revolution: before the 'machine process' became widespread in either. In those 'pre-machine days, farming and manufacturing were alike in that operations in both cases were normally done sequentially, one after another; usually by the same individual or family' [Brewster, 1970: 3, emphasis mine]. Such was the case in pre-capitalist agriculture and in pre-capitalist, domestic or artisanal manufacturing. Mechanisation would have very different effects in the two activities.

We may first consider manufacturing industry. Here mechanisation allowed the simultaneous performance of the many operations in the production process. So it was that the signal contribution of the Industrial Revolution was to produce a 'revolution in the sequence...in which men use their implements' [Brewster, 1970: 4]. It was a fundamental change which unleashed an immense increase in productive powers. From it there emerged, necessarily and as a precondition of the unleashing of the productive forces, the factory system and a huge expansion in the scale of operation. As has been observed, 'family units of production are unthinkable in car and steel manufacture' [Brewster, 1970: 3]. So it is that in 'true factory production',

work is organised around the rhythms of machines. Such a production system means a continuity of flow from raw material to finished product, automation of control, subdivision of work into detailed functions, unitary power source, and the continuous refinement of all these through the application of science. [Burbach and Flynn, 1980: 28]

In modern manufacturing industry, the essential processes can be pursued simultaneously, and, moreover, they are all mechanical. In a factory, the process of production has no biological elements.

In agriculture, however, mechanisation did not produce this fundamental change with respect to the production process. Substantial advance in mechanisation did not transform agriculture from an activity in which operations had to be done sequentially. It has taken long to produce the possibility of this kind of production system. Here, the very considerable mechanisation which has taken place has had a character quite distinct from manufacturing industry. Here,

individual machines have been employed to magnify the labour power or productivity of the farmer at his or her various tasks, but the overall labor process has remained much as it has for centuries; plowing, planting, harvesting, threshing. It is still caught up in the rhythms of nature. Agriculture involves both mechanical and biological processes and whereas the former have been mechanised, the latter consist of the natural rhythms of growth that are not easily changed into a machine production system. [Burbach and Flynn, 1980: 28]

Thus it is that 'the "Industrial Revolution" in agriculture is merely a spectacular change in the implements of production, [but without a] revolution in the sequence in which men use their implements' [Brewster, 1970: 4]. So what has been the outcome, in terms of our problematic?

It is the case that 'both family and larger-than-family units are as common in agriculture after mechanization as before' [Brewster, 1970: 3]. That we have observed already. But why? The answer, or part of the answer, lies, it is suggested, in the nature of the production process. Obviously, 'in agriculture...machine methods remain as compatible as hand techniques with either (1) family or (2) larger-than-family units' [Brewster, 1970: 5]. This compatibility with family units, as the productive forces develop greatly and in marked contrast with manufacturing industry, has been explained as follows: '(it)...lies in the fact that farm operations are as widely separated by time intervals after mechanization as before; hence, the number of things that must be done at the same time on a farm remain as close as ever to the number of workers in an ordinary family' [Brewster, 1970: 5]. Each of the farm operations may be mechanised, so increasing immensely the productivity of family labour. So long, however, as they cannot be performed simultaneously, then family operation remains technically possible and economically viable.

Here, then, we have an explanation for our puzzle in terms of the form taken by the productive forces in relation to the production process in agriculture, such that an essentially unchanging labour process may be seen. But, to the extent that this has validity, it can only be partial. We need to carry the analysis further. It may well be that operation via family units remains technically possible, unlike manufacturing industry. But why does it remain economically viable, in the face of possible capitalist intrusion and competition?

(iv) Production Time, Labour Time, the Rate of Turnover of Capital, and the Rate of Profit

We may further say, following Mann and Dickinson [1978 and 1980], that the foregoing unchanging character of agriculture, in response to mechanisation and the great increase in the productive powers, encompasses two crucial features which make the penetration of capitalist relations more difficult than in manufacturing industry. These relate to production time, labour time, the rate of turnover of capital and the rate of profit.

The first feature is that certain spheres of agricultural production are characterised by a relatively fixed and 'lengthy total production time, as is the case where the crop only matures annually' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 286]. Mechanisation, it is postulated, has not reduced significantly production time in agriculture. The effect of this continuing, lengthy production time is to constrain significantly the rate of turnover of capital, and so the rate of profit. In manufacturing industry, by contrast, the rate of profit can be raised by increasing the frequency of capital turnover.

Then, secondly, 'some spheres of agricultural production...are characterised by a significant gap between total production time and labor time such that for many agricultural commodities there are lengthy periods when the application of labor is almost completely suspended as for example when the seed is maturing in the earth' (loc. cit.). The effect of this is twofold. On the one hand it generates seasonal labour requirements which give rise to labour supply and management problems. On the other, it gives rise to underutilisation of constant capital (i.e. farm machinery), with machinery lying idle for long periods: a problem which is particularly important given the high organic composition of capital in agriculture.

The net effect of these factors is to 'make agriculture a relatively risky and hence comparatively unattractive area for profit maximisation [i.e. for capitalists]. Consequently, it is not surprising that those spheres of agricultural production marked by these factors tend to be left in the hands of petty commodity producers' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 286–7]. There is some plausibility in this argument. But we note, at once, that this cannot constitute the full explanation, in the case of the USA. The labour process in agriculture has remained similarly unchanging for other social formations. Yet this did not prevent the significant emergence of wage labour in agriculture: in, say, England or Prussia.

If the argument has validity, it is in relation to the specific circumstances of North America. We must identify what those circumstances are. Yet further elements need to be considered. One important element relates to the supply and price of labour. A counteracting element, which might have attracted capitalists into agriculture, would have been abundant supplies of cheap labour (as in, say, England or Prussia).

(v) Labour Scarcity

A possible part of the American explanation which is worth pursuing derives from the US being, in essence, a labour-scarce economy. Labour, therefore, was relatively costly. Had labour been abundant, and cheap, one might well have seen petty commodity producers – or many of them – expanding production, in part, by resorting to increasing quantities of wage labour, along with mechanisation. The family farm might then have been driven out, or at least reduced significantly in importance, as differentiation proceeded among petty commodity producers and the capital/wage labour relationship expanded.

But labour was not abundant. It was scarce, as we have seen. That has been one of our abiding themes. Instead, one saw the steady expansion of mechanisation – moving from power-intensive to control-intensive activities [Binswanger, 1984]: such that steady expansion of output could be achieved without increase in labour beyond the size of the family, but, instead, through increasing mechanisation. That mechanisation, we have seen, gives no necessary advantage to great size (unlike the case of manufacturing industry). In a labour-abundant economy, a shift to wage labour might have come far more quickly.

If, then, the persistence of petty commodity production is a possible likely characteristic of 'an agrarian transition from below', and if there is any validity in the argument just considered, that persistence may be especially expected where (a) labour is scarce and (b) the appropriate form is taken by the productive forces. The former, we note, is not a feature of contemporary poor countries.

(vi) The Crucial Role of the State

The foregoing are plausible parts of an explanation of the persistence of petty commodity production in the North and West of the United States. But they do not constitute a total explanation. Such an explanation, I suggest, must, in part, run in terms of the nature of the state and the manner of state intervention in the countryside. This, in its turn, depended upon the existence of an abundance of land: again, a feature not in evidence in poor countries today.

This part of our explanation of the persistence of petty commodity production in the United States needs to start with an examination of the origins of family farms there, and the accompanying action by the state then. It needs thereafter to proceed to subsequent state policy towards family farms.

We have noted the early origins of petty commodity production, and the role of class struggle in its rooting in the northern colonies. There was a struggle against the colonial state, which was won.

It was in the in the second half of the nineteenth century that the state's role became critical, during the period of America's so-called 'Second Empire'. The federal government (the American state) proceeded to the colonisation of the great area west of the Mississippi. It was then that production of wheat by family farms 'became established in a region which had previously been considered the Uninhabitable American Desert'" [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 290].

It has been argued that this form of production was peculiarly suited to the colonisation of the west: that

> petty commodity production has a number of features not present under capitalist forms of production which facilitate its expansion on to undeveloped frontiers. The familial nature of this form reduced the necessary infrastructural developments which had to be undertaken by the colonial state. The nature of expansion, through fission provided an extensive and geographic moment which dovetailed with the territorial designs of the expansionist state. Finally, the ability of petty commodity production to survive without receiving the average rate of profit made this form more amenable to the type of agricultural production most viable on the western prairies. Consequently, while U.S. settler colonialism was indeed a capitalist state form, its expansion on to the western frontier was more easily facilitated by the expansion of this non-capitalist form of commodity production. [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 300–1]

Here, then, we have a plausible explanation of the persistence of the American family farm, in the second half of the nineteenth century: of why its insertion, at that juncture, as the dominant form of production in agriculture had compelling underpinning in the needs of the expansionist American state.

What of its persistence? We have identified characteristics of agriculture which suggest an unattractiveness to capitalist, profit maximisers [Mann and Dickinson, 1978 and 1980]. But that is not enough. We also see, in the activities of the American state, powerful intervention which served to reinforce significantly the survival of the family farm/petty commodity production. It is most doubtful that such survival would have been secured to the degree in question without such state intervention.

That state intervention acted to maintain and support agricultural overproduction and so sustain the widespread existence of family farms. The origins of overproduction lie in that period of expansion often portrayed as the 'Golden Age of American Agriculture', from the end of the Civil War to 1914: when the number of farms, agricultural production, and labour productivity all rose impressively. The First World War served further to stimulate production. Prices declined, bankruptcies reached high levels, and economic distress was wide-

spread in the 1920s. Agricultural overproduction continued. That distress did not, however, have the ultimate effect which might have been expected (on the foregoing see [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 304–5]). It seems clear that the remarkable survival of petty commodity production owes much to the intervention of the American state.

Clearly, where an agrarian transition from 'below' takes place, the strong possibility exists that this will take the form not of 'capitalism from below', with the dominance of the capitalist farmer/wage labour relationship, as expected by Lenin, but, rather, of 'petty commodity production from below'. We may hypothesise, however, that such an outcome will require the powerful mediation of the capitalist state.

12 PROLETARIANISATION IN AMERICAN AGRICULTURE. WAS LENIN RIGHT AFTER ALL?

(i) A Questioning of the Persistence and Ascendancy of the 'Family Farm' and an Invoking of Lenin

Gavin Wright questions the notion that the family farm was not only persistent, but ascendant in American agriculture (perforce, the agriculture of the North and the West) [Wright, 1988].[67] Or, at least, if he doesn't actually question it, in a substantive sense, he seeks to suggest that processes of proletarianisation were more widespread than is commonly acknowledged. It is a bold undertaking, in view of the great body of evidence that exists, and some of which we have considered.

It is *a fortiori* bold, inasmuch as he cites Lenin's remarkable *Capitalism and Agriculture in the United States*, of 1915 [Lenin, 1964a].[68] Quoting Lenin is quite remarkably unusual among American historians (the only other who leaps to mind is Eugene Genovese – see above). If Lenin's 1915 text is known among American scholars, they studiously avoid mentioning it. But not only does Wright cite Lenin (bad enough), he insists that Lenin was correct in his central argument. This is to carry boldness to the point of foolhardiness. As summarised by Wright, Lenin, on a basis of 'an extremely detailed review of the 1910 published census material...went on to argue that American agriculture was becoming more and more capitalistic, including the use of hired labor, which he called the "principal earmark and index of capitalism in agriculture"' [Wright, 1988: 183]. Wright argues:

> Close examination of the evidence suggests that Lenin's diagnosis was substantially correct for the time when it was written, not just in terms of the data but in terms of underlying economic forces. The long-run tendency, however, was more strongly towards mechanization than towards wage labor in agriculture. [Wright, 1988: 183]

Such is Wright's bold postulate. We will wish to address it, and consider the evidence he brings to bear. It is a convenient issue on which to finish our treatment of the United States, i.e. at the point at which we began. We have come full circle.

The detailed evidence and the argument presented above bear out the essential point of the last sentence in the passage from Wright just quoted. We have stressed the manner in which, in a remarkable race, mechanisation constantly subverted the need for wage labour, and so enabled the continuous existence and reproduction of advanced petty commodity production. But, despite the boldness of the initial claim, this does not amount to a serious questioning of the persistence and ascendancy of the 'family farm', or more accurately, in our terminology, petty commodity production. But what Wright does enable us to do is consider a more nuanced view of the processes at work, by relating these to the complex operation of the process of proletarianisation, in its different manifestations. We have noted, at various points, such a process. We may examine it a little more closely.

Wright's article is valuable, further, in providing a convenient analytical peg upon which to hang a treatment, albeit brief, of tenancy. We have referred to tenancy at various points, and we have noted the increase in tenancy, in both the North and the West, between 1880 and 1920. Although this takes us somewhat beyond our analytical brief, it does not do so totally, and a short consideration is appropriate.

Wright also demonstrates the care with which Lenin examined the American data – a remarkable performance for someone without close familiarity with the United States; the accuracy of his assessment of it for the moment at which he was examining it (up to 1910); but the reversal, after 1910, of trends with respect to the shift towards wage labour that seemed to be established. Lenin, we may say, was correct with respect to the dynamism he attibuted to the agriculture of the North and the West; and correct in his interpretation of its implications, with respect to the productive forces and capitalist industrialisation. What he did not anticipate was the remarkable power of advanced petty commodity production to survive, for reasons we have examined above.

Wright's argument is that in American agriculture there were powerful forces of proletarianisation – defined as 'the rise of a class of farm laborers owning no capital and working only for wages' (p. 182) – at work, but that these did not translate into permanent wage labour. Let us examine the argument. But first we may consider, on a basis of the existing evidence, the trends in wage labour, upon which Lenin focused.

(ii) Lenin Vindicated and Lenin Wrong: The Wage Labour Evidence and 'Moment' and 'Trend'

The available data are presented in Tables 8.1 to 8.3. These tables, although problematic in several ways, do allow us to identify likely trends in the incidence of

Table 8.1 Labourers as percent of those engaged in agriculture (home farm plus hiring out)

	1860	*1870*	*1880*	*1890*	*1900*	*1910*	*1920*
North Atlantic	29	35	33	33	39	47	39
South Atlantic	19	58	59	49	52	47	38
North-Central	24	36	31	25	35	39	32
South-Central	17	58	54	31	48	45	39
Western	29	32	27	30	36	48	40
US	25	49	43	35	43	50	39
Non-South	27	35	31	27	36	42	35

Source: Wright [1988: 194]. Taken from Eighth Census (1860), Vol. 1, pp. 656–79; Ninth Census (1870), vol. 3, pp. 812–13; and George K. Holmes, 'Supply of Farm Labor', USDA Bureau of Statistics – bulletin 94 (1912); Thirteenth Census (1910), vol. 4, *Population*, Table II.
Note: Wright tells us:

> Beginning in 1860, the federal census began to enumerate 'farm laborers', and counted in that category 795,679 persons, or about one-fourth of the free persons employed in agriculture...For a number of reasons we will never know precisely what the figure means. For practical purposes it refers to males only. Since it includes unpaid members of the farmer's own family, it may be considered a drastic overstatement of the incidence of wage labor in agriculture. On the other hand, the census also reported 969,301 'laborers', many of whom may have done agricultural work for at least part of the year. But whether the figures are too high or too low, they are in a range that makes it clear that wage labor was not the prevailing system in American agriculture. Following the same indicator through time does not suggest that this characterisation changed in any fundamental way. [Wright, 1988: 193]

We may take the changes per decade and the trend as significant.

These figures, moreover, as Wright points out, are likely not to include workers who are seasonal and migratory, 'who may not be present at the time of the count, or [who] may be assigned to other locations, or [who] may not identify themselves as "farm laborers" at all' [Wright, 1988: 193].

permanent wage labour in the North and the West). What they show is extremely interesting.[69] If we concentrate on the North and the West (i.e. the 'non-South'):

> [There was a] marked increase in farm labor in the northern states between 1860 and 1870, particularly in the north central states [i.e. the states of the Northwest and the West]. This increase was not a long-term trend, however, because the incidence of farm labor subsequently declined in the 1870s and 1880s, returning roughly to its 1860 level...by 1890. The tables do show that at the time of the 1910 census, when Lenin was analyzing American developments, there did seem to be a more sustained trend towards the use of farm labor...Outside the South, the relative importance of farm labor had indeed reached an all-time peak in 1910. And if we focus not on the 'wheat factories' of the north central region (which Lenin said were less capitalistically developed than elsewhere) but on the truck farms of the northeast, the sugar beets of the rockies, or the fruit orchards of the Pacific coast, the reliance on farm labor was greater than at any previous time. These trends, however, were largely reversed by 1920. [Wright, 1988: 193]

Lenin, then, if we use terminology that he employed himself, in another context, got the *moment* absolutely right, in a way that few others did; but the *trend* wrong, in a way far more illuminating than those who seemed to get it right.

Table 8.2 Farm labourers per farm, 1860–1920

	1860	*1870*	*1880*	*1890*	*1900*	*1910*	*1920*
North Atlantic	0.49	0.58	0.50	0.54	0.61	0.74	0.56
South Atlantic	.35	2.17	1.48	1.08	.97	.72	.50
North-Central	.39	.65	.50	.40	.56	.62	.46
South-Central	.15	1.10	1.28	.88	.92	.75	.51
Western	.34	.41	.56	.67	.62	.88	.63
US	.39	.97	.83	.66	.81	.90	.51
Non-South	.46	.69	.50	.45	.57	.67	.51

Source: Wright [1988: 194]. Drawn from same sources as Table 8.1, plus Fourteenth Census (1920), vol. 5, *Agriculture*.
Note: See previous table.

Table 8.3 Expenditure for wage labour as percentage of gross value of agricultural output

	1870	*1890*	*1910*	*1920*
North Atlantic	13.7	10.7	11.9	8.6
South Atlantic	19.0	8.0	7.1	3.9
North-Central	9.3	6.1	6.0	5.8
South-Central	14.4	5.6	5.8	4.6
Western	19.3	16.7	16.9	13.1
US	12.7	7.7	7.7	6.3
Non-South	11.4	8.1	8.3	7.3

Source: Wright [1988: 195]. Drawn from Compendium of Ninth Census (1870), p. 692, *Agriculture*, Part 1, p. cxxviii; Fourteenth Census (1920), vol. 5, *Agriculture*, pp. 18, 506.
Note: These figures are the outcome of a response to a question that first appeared in the 1870 census, but not again until 1900.

We may pause to consider that other context in which Lenin wrote of moment and trend, since the comparison is illuminating. It was that of Russia, and the development of capitalism there. In this instance, Lenin himself pointed out that in his *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, published in 1899 [Lenin, 1964a], he had identified the trend correctly, but not the moment – the opposite, it seems, of his misjudgement in the United States case. He stressed, in his *The Agrarian Programme of Social Democracy in the First Russian Revolution 1905–1907*, of 1907, that

> while we correctly defined the *trend* of development, we did not correctly define the *moment* of that development. We assumed that the elements of capitalist agriculture had already taken full shape in Russia, both in landlord farming...and in peasant farming...[This was] an *over-estimation of the degree* of capitalist development in Russian agriculture...The survivals of serfdom appeared to us then to be a minor detail, whereas capitalist agriculture on the peasant allotments and on the landlords' estates seemed to be quite mature and well-established in the countryside...But the survivals of serfdom in the countryside have proved to be much stronger than we thought. [Lenin, 1962: 291–2, emphasis in original]

Had he written of the United States twelve years after his 1915 text, he might, equally, have written that 'the survivals of family farms in the countryside have proved to be much stronger than we thought'. It seems likely that, with the available data, Lenin *would* have so written.

I have said that his misreading was the opposite of that in the North American case. That is so unless one takes an impossibly long view of 'trend', according to which, even now, a century later, that 'trend' (manifested in the shift to permanent wage labour) has not yet worked itself out. On that basis, Lenin was correct. That is clearly not the case.

Interestingly, he went on, in his 1907 text, to argue the need, in the Russian context, 'to think out to its logical conclusion our new evaluation of the degree of capitalist development in Russian agriculture ' (p. 292). This involved the recognition that 'the wide development of capitalism calls for new agrarian relationships ' (loc. cit.). This, in turn, included the possibility of 'the wide and free development of capitalism on the basis of *renovated small farming*' (loc. cit., emphasis mine). He went on:

> The renovation of small farming is possible even under capitalism...That is the way small farming was renovated in America...and the conditions were created for the most rapid development of capitalism. (pp. 292–3)

If for 'small farming' one reads 'early simple petty commodity production', and if for 'renovated small farming' one substitutes 'advanced simple commodity production', then we have the situation of the North and the West of the United States. He was, of course, correct in his assessment of the overall capitalist transformation of the North and the West of the United States. But he misread the dominant trend in the countryside: it was not capitalism from below, but petty commodity production from below, that was the dynamic element in the countryside.

There is, perhaps, a timely reminder here (let us say, for those concerned with developments in contemporary poor countries) of the pitfalls inherent in any treatment of the process of transition as it is actually taking place, and before the dust of history has settled. One can get 'moment' wrong (Lenin in 1895, with respect to Russia), or 'trend' wrong (Lenin in 1915, with respect to the United States). The utmost care is required, and even with that, a mis-definition or misreading is only too possible. Here, indeed, we have a cautionary tale.

(iii) In Search of Proletarianisation

Wright, in his attempt to dispel the idea, firmly entrenched among Americans, that 'their country's agricultural history has not much to do with proletarianization' [Wright, 1988: 182], and so reinstate a version, at least, of Lenin's view, examines a variety of indicators. We have noted, already, his treatment of the data on permanent wage labour (our phrase, not his), which appear, in fact, not to support the proletarianisation thesis.

Tenancy, Mortgage Loans and the 'Agricultural Ladder' Thesis: For 'Ladder' Read 'Treadmill'

He considers, also, the evidence on tenancy and mortgage loans. We have already had occasion to note the increase in the incidence of tenancy in the North and the West between 1880 (the first year for which precise figures exist) and 1920: from 19 to 28% in the North, and from 14 to 18% in the West (see Table 7.1). As he points out, 'an alternative to land rental is land purchase on the basis of a mortgage loan' [Wright, 1988: 183]. The figures here, too, show a significant rise, from 40% in 1890 (the first year for which we have systematic figures) to close on 50% in 1920 (see Table 8.4). One observes of Wright's presentation that he proceeds as if tenancy and mortgage loans are the first step on a ladder that leads to ownership. That may not be the case. The figures, in fact, may reflect a substantial stratum of owners who have become tenants, or who have had to have resort to mortgage loans. But however one reads it, these figures do not, necessarily, reflect a process of proletarianisation. That would require dispossession. There is no evidence of that happening, on a significant scale, in this period.

What we can say, however, is that this evidence of increasing tenancy and a rising incidence of mortgage loans strongly suggests an intensifying of those market-induced pressures upon advanced petty commodity producers that is the driving force of this social form. Wright refers to the 'elements of pressure and

Table 8.4 (a) Percentage of owner-occupied farms mortgaged (of those reporting)

	1890	*1900*	*1910*	*1920*
New England	28.3	34.1	34.9	39.8
Middle Atlantic	37.0	40.3	38.3	41.1
East North-Central	37.6	39.4	40.9	46.1
West North-Central	48.0	44.3	46.1	56.9
South	5.7	17.2	23.5	29.0
Mountain	14.1	14.4	20.8	44.4
Pacific	28.7	27.6	26.8	52.1
US	28.2	31.0	35.6	41.4
Non-South	39.9	39.1	40.1	49.4

(b) Mortgage Debt/Farm Value on Mortgaged Farms

	1890	*1900*	*1920*
New England	40.4	31.8	38.8
Middle Atlantic	43.2	34.5	36.3
East North-Central	33.2	28.6	31.2
West North-Central	33.6	25.8	26.5
South	41.3	26.8	28.6
Mountain	31.8	23.9	30.5
Pacific	30.1	23.4	29.8
US	35.5	27.3	29.1

Source: Wright [1988: 187]. Drawn from 13th Census (1910), vol. V, *Agriculture*, pp. 159–60; 14th Census (1920), vol. V, *Agriculture*, pp. 484–6.

coercion in market relations' [Wright, 1988: 184], and suggests that 'reduction in the scope for free choice for a significant number of American farmers' [Wright, 1988: 189], although he does relapse into a neo-classical rationalisation (his basic impulses are good, his final judgements are suspect). Those 'elements of pressure and coercion', as we have seen, forced early simple commodity producers out of self-sufficiency, and then kept advanced petty commodity producers to the treadmill of constant improvement of the productive forces and exploitation of family labour. Tenancy (the burden of rent) and mortgage repayments (the burden of debt), surely, turned the screw still further. But they did not, yet, necessarily generate proletarianisation.

Wright, from the neo-classical straitjacket that he suddenly dons, states that 'the opportunity to borrow capital or rent land through such a contract may be an important means of social and economic advancement' [Wright, 1988: 185]. That is the American myth: not the Jeffersonian myth (a classically populist

myth), but one dressed in more modern garb (a classically neo-populist one). The 'opportunity' in question may, however, be the means to intensification of effort and significant appropriation of surplus by finance capital, through rent and interest. Wright continues:

> for the mainstream of northern and western agriculture, historians have generally portrayed farmers as eager players in the market game, borrowing money not out of desperation but in the hope of making profits and accumulating wealth. Even the agrarian insurgencies of the 1880s and 1890s did not so much deny the legitimacy of credit or production for the market, but instead called for reform and regulation of the existing credit markets. [Wright, 1988: 185]

Not all historians, of course. We have drawn heavily on Charles Post's alternative analysis. Significantly, the source he cites with respect to the 'agrarian insurgencies' of the late nineteenth century [Palmer, 1980] is an examination of the '*Populist* Critique of American Capitalism' (the book's subtitle, emphasis mine). The position taken by Wright, here, is precisely, a *neo-populist* one (decked in neo-classical clothes). The political economy view is fundamentally different. I will not labour the point.[70]

He also embraces the 'farm tenancy and the agricultural ladder' position. He tells us:

> Authorities are agreed that mortgages and tenancies were devices for getting started in farming. Cases where former owners 'fell into' tenancy were exceptional though of course not utterly unknown. In a surprisingly large number of cases, renters were in fact related by blood or marriage: as of 1930, this was the case for 35 to 50 per cent of farm tenants in the north central and northwestern section of the country. The evidence on tenant status by age shows a well-established 'farm ladder' in operation...[S]ince credit and mortgage facilities improved over time, one might...well say that the institutions of tenancy and farm mortgages *allowed* increasing numbers to purchase the land and necessary equipment. [Wright, 1988: 189–91, emphasis in original][71]

We have now come a long way from Lenin (with whom we started).

The 'agricultural ladder' thesis is by no means universally accepted. It certainly was not by Paul Gates (whom we have cited above). Rather, 'Gates and others...thought that tenants were yeomen who had fallen on hard times and were slipping back down the agricultural ladder towards landless wage labor' [Atack and Passel, 1994: 411]. Had this been the case – had they actually so slipped into landless wage labour in sizeable numbers – then the proletarianisation thesis would be proved. Our problematic – that of agrarian transition – does not take us beyond 1920 in the North and the West. Until then, this seemed not to be the case. Certainly, however, the 'agricultural ladder' thesis is by no means

proven [see Atack and Passel, 1994: 409–11]. Rather, the ladder metaphor – whether one conceives of stepping up the ladder (Wright *et al.*), or slipping down (Gates *et al.*) is ill-chosen. Rather, if one wishes to choose a metaphor, that of a *treadmill* seems more appropriate. Tenancy and mortgages might get some on to the treadmill, who otherwise could not make it (via owning their land outright); while for others (those who fell out of outright ownership) they represented a treadmill that required ever greater effort to operate.

Those Who Left the Land: Proletarianisation in the Cities?

What of those who left the land? Did they join the ranks of the urban proletariat: to man the factories being created through the dynamic process of capitalist industrialisation to which we have referred above? The evidence does not support very strongly that reading of proletarianisation either.

According to one reading, in New England, in the antebellum period, such a contribution to the formation of an industrial class was made: 'Prior to the 1840s, the differentiation of artisan producers and the progressive impoverishment of New England farm families produced an industrial and manufacturing labour force' [Post, 1982: 44]. That some such contribution was made in both the antebellum and postbellum years seems beyond dispute. But, equally certainly, it was not enough: 'However, the restricted size of the available labour force posed problems for industrial capital, especially in cotton production ' (loc. cit.). The solution lay in 'massive immigration from Europe' (loc. cit.). Wright tells us:

> we can say with confidence that the raw labor for American industrialization was not supplied by the population of American farmers' sons. Foreign immigrants comprised only about one sixth of the national population in the late nineteenth century, yet immigrants and their children accounted for more than half of all employees in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits. In 1910 the foreign born and the sons of foreign born were more than 60 per cent of the machine operatives in the country, and more than two-thirds of the laborers in mining and manufacturing...[M]any of the nation's basic industries – agricultural implements, clothing, iron and steel, furniture, meat packing – had foreign-stock labor percentages well in excess of even these figures. Though a small fraction of the sons of the foreign born may have come from American farms, the overwhelming majority of these workers had no connection with American agriculture...Allowing for various local exceptions, we may say that American agriculture did not experience proletarianization as a precursor to industrialization in the classic Marxian sense. [Wright, 1988: 201][72]

That seems to be a valid statement for the agriculture of the North and the West.

But what Wright fails to take account of is the flood of black labour that came north, from the countryside of the South, to constitute part of the urban proletariat. They, certainly, were part of a powerful process of proletarianisation. But, we have seen, that massive migration of blacks did not come until after 1910. It was assuredly part of the agrarian transition in the South.

Migrant Labour and Proletarianisation

Wright attempts to give support to the proletarianisation thesis via his consideration of the significance of migrant labour. Thus, he draws attention to the fact that between 1900 and 1920 the percentage of enumerated farm labourers who were not members of the cultivator's family rose quite dramatically (see Table 8.5). So who were they?

They were not permanent wage labour. Moreover, those that were enumerated were only the tip of the iceberg. There were many more who were 'socially invisible' [Wright, 1988: 209] and statistically anonymous. It is the case that 'farm labor was not quantitatively large, [and] nor was relative expenditure on farm labor growing' [Wright, 1988: 196] (see Table 8.3). But, 'social observers [did] describe the emergence of a new class of proletarianized farm laborers' [Wright, 1988: 196]. These were migrant labourers, he argues.

Those migrant labourers met the demands created by 'the seasonality of labor requirements in commercial crops' [Wright, 1988: 196]. We have mentioned seasonality and peak demands for labour above, with respect to mechanisation. Ultimately, mechanisation did meet these demands:

> The dominant mode of escape from this dilemma [that of an itinerant labour force not acceptable to local communities] was mechanization, a strategy in

Table 8.5 'Home farm' workers as a percentage of farm labour

	1900	*1910*	*1920*
New England	25	19	10
Middle Atlantic	34	24	17
East North-Central	49	38	30
West North-Central	55	49	35
South Atlantic	58	56	50
South Central	62	59	51
Mountain	35	18	18
Pacific	25	15	8

Source: Wright [1988: 197]. Drawn from Twelfth Census (1900), *Special Reports: Occupations*, pp. 94–5, 104–5; Thirteenth Census (1910), vol. IV, *Population: Occupation Statistics*, pp. 96–7, 110–11, 124–5, 138–9; Fourteenth Census (1920), vol. IV, *Population: Occupations*, pp. 56–7, 74–5, 92–3, 110–11.
Note: Wright tells us that in 1900 the phrase used was 'Farm laborers (members of family'; while in 1910 and 1920 the distinction was between 'homefarm' and 'working out'.

> which the United States was the world leader. But where mechanization was technically difficult...[there emerged] a migrant labor system. [Wright, 1988: 208]

In the nineteenth century, 'as pressure gradually built up for farmers to extract the maximum possible value from their improved farm land' [Wright, 1988: 197] – the pressure, one might add, that constantly drives advanced petty commodity producers – so 'increasing specialization led to increasing pressure on seasonal labor supplies, especially at harvest' [Wright, 1988: 197]. At first the wheat harvest attracted 'young unmarried men from neighbouring farms or towns on a temporary basis' [Wright, 1988: 198]. But that became increasingly problematic. Thereafter, it was foreign migrant labour, who could be paid low wages: Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese. So the decline in the expenditure on farm labour was a reflection 'of two different effects: mechanization and outmigration, which reduced the number of farm laborers employed, and the development of a low-wage migrant system, which reduced the cost of labor in those states where migrant labor was extensively used' [Wright, 1988: 203]. That such migrant labour was part of a proletarianisation process is undeniable. But how major was it?

Its existence should not allow an obscuring of the fact that the race between 'pressure...toward the use of wage labor on a more lasting basis' [Wright, 1988: 195–6] and mechanisation was won by the latter. Had it not, then advanced commodity production would have experienced the tensions of growing differentiation and capitalist transformation. It did not. The wage relationship did not prevail. Capitalist relations of production did not become dominant. Petty commodity production remained the dominant social form in the North and the West long after our chosen terminal date of 1920. As I have suggested already, if we may return to Lenin, it was a case of advanced petty commodity production from below (where else?). It did, we recall, secure striking advance in the productive forces, and enable dramatic capitalist industrialisation. About that Lenin was unerringly correct.

Notes

1. This is made abundantly clear in Ste. Croix' s remarkable book. See Ste. Croix [1981: 205–75, i.e. ch. IV].
2. In that letter, the reading recommended was: 'Goldsmith's history of Greece', followed by Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophontis Hellencica, Xenophontis Anabasis, Quintus Curtius, Justin; and Virgil, Terence, Horace, Anacreon, Theocritus, Homer [Peterson, ed., 1975: 382]. Those were the days. In a recent book, Miller suggests:

   > Jefferson's idealised farmer was, in fact, a lineal descendant of the literary shepherd of the Greek and Roman pastoral: the innocent, virtuous farmer of classical antiquity metamorphosed into the innocent, virtuous American farmer. By the same token, in his political philosophy, Jefferson fused the pastoral dream of antiquity with American democracy. He made the American farmer a figure out of Virgil's *Eclogues*. Deprived of his land and the independence it begot, the American farmer, like his Roman counterpart, became a prey to anxiety and alienated from society. The expropriated farmer lost all civic virtue: he was now willing to sell his vote to his employer or to the highest bidder. [Miller, 1993: 82]

3. Paul Cartledge is here paraphrasing the American classical historian, Victor Davis Hanson, in a review essay which covers Hanson's recent book, *The Other Greeks. The Family Farm and the Agrarian Roots of Western Civilization* [Hanson, 1995]. Hanson, a distinguished classical historian, has, Cartledge tells us, an 'ideological commitment' in his identification with the family farmers of Ancient Greece, inasmuch as 'he too is a farmer, struggling to maintain a fifth-generation family farm...in California's San Joaquin Valley' [Cartledge, 1995:133].
4. Cf. Saul Padover, who tells us that: 'Jefferson's agrarian and anti-urban philosophy was influenced by the eighteenth century Physiocratic doctrines' [Padover, 1965:14]. That influence was there from an early date. Jefferson, we note, was appointed Minister to France in 1785, succeeding Benjamin Franklin. He spent five years there. Although his views were formed before then, he would certainly have encountered Physiocratic ideas while in France, and, indeed, possibly some of the surviving French Physiocrats themselves. His views would have been thereby reinforced.
5. His *Notes on the State of Virginia* started as a response to questions asked by the secretary of the French legation in Philadelphia. They were written in 1781, enlarged in 1782,and first published in 1787 (while he was in France – see note 4). See Peterson, ed. [1973: xxii, 25]. This is surely one of the classics of American letters. It is republished *in toto* in Peterson, ed. [1973: 23–232], and it is from this that I quote.
6. Cf. Miller [1991: 84].
7. His views are in fundamental contrast to those of his rival and adversary, Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804), who was an advocate of industrialisation for the United States. Schumpeter, indeed, points out that Hamilton was notable for the early, and clear, statement he gave of the 'infant industry' argument for protection, in his famous *Report on Manufactures* of 1791. See Schumpeter [1954: 199]. In Gore Vidal's remarkable novel, *Burr*, we read: 'Hamilton...did see the American future as being dominated by manufacture and commerce which, in turn, required banks, taxation, cities ' [Vidal, 1974: 230]. That puts it neatly. As Miller has it: 'Because he conceived of America in the image of a garden, Jefferson recoiled from the prospect, unveiled by Alexander Hamilton, of large industrial and commercial cities dotting the unspoiled agricultural landscape of the United States' [Miller, 1991: 84–5]. It was the 'agrarian' versus the 'industrialiser', the past versus the future, a populist vision of 'natural economy' (more or less) versus capitalism.
8. The letter was to Benjamin Austin and is reproduced in Petersen, ed. [1973: 547–50]. Despite the yielding to *realpolitik*, there are statements of pure Physiocracy: for example, 'to the labor of the husbandman a vast addition is made by the spontaneous energies of the earth on which it is employed: for one grain of wheat committed to the earth, she renders twenty, thirty, and even fifty fold, whereas to the labor of the manufacturer nothing is added' (p. 548). Clearly, he was a most reluctant convert.
9. These, the 'closed, corporate, Christian utopian communities' of early Massachusetts, are described briefly in Levine *et al.* [1989: 92–3].
10. The following treatment of the two forms of land grant derives from Post [Post, 1995: 415–16]. Post bases his arguments on the following sources: Bidwell and Falconer [1925: 49–62], Henretta [1988: 48–55, 58–60, 64–7], Main [1965: 8–30].
11. On this we are referred to Henretta [1988: 67–8] and Nobles [1989: 647–50, 654–6].
12. See, for example, Levine *et al.* [1989: 93–4] for a brief statement.

13. Post refers us to Bogue [1958: 231–1].
14. See Post [1995: 421–2]. The relevant sources allowing such a judgement are Atack and Bateman [1987: 202–7], Danhof [1969: 3–15] and Gates [1960: 48–50].
15. See Post [1995: 422–3]. A useful source, upon which Post draws in this regard, is Atherton [1971: 18–19, 145–6].
16. The following sources are drawn upon to support this statement: Gates [1960: 54–67, 67–9, 71–5], Hibbard [1939: 56–115], Opie [1991: chs. 1–3] and Robbins [1976: 3–34].
17. Post refers to Berthoff and Murrin [1973: 256–88] and Kim [1978: chs. 5–8] on tenancy in the North in the eighteenth century; and to Atack and Bateman [1987: 109–11] and Gates [1943] and Gates [1960: 66–9 and 197–8] on tenancy in the mid-nineteenth century.
18. Post refers the reader to Clark [1990: 23–44] on this.
19. According to Post [1995: 397], this is the consensus view of the so-called 'social historians'. These include Christopher Clark, James Henretta, Michael Merrill and David Weiman. For references see note 24. Their notion of 'self-sufficiency' as stated by Post (loc. cit.) is as follows:

> While individual farmer or artisan-farmer households (organized along a strict sexual and generational division of labour) did not produce all the food or handicrafts needed for household subsistence, most rural communities were 'self-sufficient'. Exchanges between farmers and between farmers and artisans, while quite extensive, did not take the form of commodity or market exchange. Most 'neighbourly exchange' took the form of barter (most frequently the labour services of poorer farmers were exchanged directly for food produced on the farms of better-off farmers). Debts between neighbours and extended family members (including local merchants and artisans) were payable in labour, produce or cash, often ran for years before being wholly or partially forgiven, and interest was rarely if ever charged on unpaid balances. While most farmers and merchants assigned monetary values (derived from urban markets) to the exchange of goods and services with neighbours in their account books, custom, not 'supply and demand' (or, in Marxian terms, socially average labour relatively time or relative costs of production), determined the proportions exchanged. (loc. cit.)

Post does well to place 'self-sufficient' within inverted commas. It is, surely, stretching the notion beyond its limits to ignore their, albeit limited, market involvement to achieve this representation. It seems to be an unacceptable logical procedure to infer from their being not *fully* commercialised, and not subject to the rule of the market, that they were 'self-sufficient'. This is important with respect to how we categorise this social form, as I suggest in the text. For strong, and convincing, evidence against the self-sufficiency position see the excellent paper by Carole Shammas [Shammas, 1982].

20. On Chayanov's notion of demographic differentiation see Chayanov [1966: xvi–xvii, 12, 67–8, 245–9, 254]. For a powerful critiques see Patnaik [1979: especially 379–86] and Harrison [1975; 1977a].
21. Post refers the reader to Nobles [1990: 12–13] and Szatmary, [1980: 19–23] on this.
22. For references see note 24.
23. Post bases his presumption on a statement by Kulikoff, a propos of Rothenberg's demonstration of increasing *price convergence* after 1790: 'to write of increasing market embeddedness and increasing price convergence as Rothenberg does, after all, suggests a time when market exchange was less common' [Kulikoff, 1989: 128]. That hardly is a terribly convincing demonstration of price divergence before 1790.

24. Post stresses the importance, in particular, of Winifred B. Rothenberg's work. Rothenberg, in a series of publications [1981; 1985; 1988; 1992], working within a strictly neo-classical framework and employing sophisticated econometric techniques, examined the degree of price convergence in Massachusetts agriculture from the end of the eighteenth century, and generated important findings that cast light upon a possible transition of the kind indicated (her own interpretation of those findings is, of course, different from the political economy one). Christopher Clark's work is also important in pointing to such a transition (again in Massachusetts) [Clark, 1990: ch. 3], although, again, he does not interpret them in the way Post does. Michael Merrill [Merrill, 1986: chs. 2 and 3], too, with yet another interpretive framework, produces evidence that supports the transition thesis. Significant evidence bearing on transition, in the indicated sense, may also be found in the work of James Henretta [Henretta, 1978] and David Weiman [Weiman, 1989], although the significance they attribute to their findings is not that given here. For Post's excellent treatment of these studies, and the convincing conclusions he draws on transition from them, see Post [1995: *passim*].
25. As Meek comments: 'In other contexts, of course, it was precisely these "varying historical features" which Marx was concerned to emphasise' [Meek, 1973: 155].
26. This is cited in Meek [1973: 155].
27. We are referred to Henretta [1978: 24–25].
28. This is Clark's argument. See Clark [1990] as represented in Post [1995: 411].
29. Drawing upon the available empirical work, Post provides an estimate of the scale of the costs involved:

> It has been estimated that as a result of land speculation, the costs of 'farm building' – the costs of establishing a viable farm – rose sharply in the 1840s and 1850s. By the 1850s, the cost of tillable land in Illinois, available primarily from private land companies and speculators, ranged from three to ten dollars per acre, making the price of a medium sized farm of eighty acres between $240 and $800. By 1860, the average cost of the same-sized farm in Illinois had risen to $1,345. [Post, 1995: 424]

For the sources used by Post see note 30.

30. The empirical basis for this is: Atack and Bateman [1987: ch. 8], Bogue [1951: 56–89], Danhof [1941: 317–59], Danhof [1969: chs. 4–5], Gates [1964: 182–93], Severson *et al.* [1966: 147–68]. Danhof's 1941 article is especially important, and has attracted much attention.
31. We are again referred to the work of Christopher Clark. See Clark [ch. 3].
32. Space forbids a detailed treatment here of the proto–industrialisation idea, and the large literature that now exists on it. The idea is certainly useful, but whether it merits such remarkable attention is doubtful.

    As Post points out, 'Marx, of course, presents the classical analysis of the relationship of domestic production to capitalist manufacture and industry' [Post, 1995: 438, n. 17]. This Marx does in volume 1 of *Capital* [Marx, 1976: 455–639 chs. 14 and 15]. That remains extremely enlightening.

    The first statement, in as many words, of the proto-industrialisation thesis was made by Franklin F. Mendels (the term is his) in 1972 [Mendels, 1972]. Since then, there has been an explosion of literature on this subject. Hans Medick followed Mendels with an important article in 1976 [Medick, 1976]. A landmark volume, containing important papers by Peter Kriedte, Hans Medick, Jurgens Schlumbohm, Herbert Kisch and Franklin F. Mendels appeared in German in 1977, and in English in 1981 [Kriedte, Medick and Schlumbohm, eds, 1981]. These all relate to Europe.

The notion of proto-industrialisation has, however, been applied to a large variety of non-European cases.

For a brief, incisive and critical overview of that literature, with pre-colonial South Asia in mind, see Perlin [1983]. See also Quaetart [1988] for an interesting treatment; and Clarkson [1985] for a useful survey of the literature. See also Ogilvie ed. [1993]. The papers therein by Wolfgang Mager, on the one hand, and by Peter Kriedte, Hans Medick and Jurgens Schlumbohm (a jointly written paper), on the other, are especially interesting, not least because of a lively polemical exchange between the authors (polemical, but illuminating).

33. The evidence for this Kaufsystem type of proto-industrialisation is Clark [1990: ch. 3], Dublin [1991: 538–48] and Henretta [1988: 76–84].
34. The evidence for this is Clark [1990: ch. 3], Dublin [1991: 534–48] and Henretta [1986: 76–84].
35. Post points out that this is amply documented in Clark [1990: ch. 3], Clark, however, draws very different conclusions from it.
36. Post refers to Rothenberg [1981: 303–5].
37. This conclusion may, again, be drawn from Clark [1990: ch. 3], though it is not one that Clark draws.
38. For this paragraph the following sources are referred to by Post on the United States: Appleby [1982: 838–84], Clark [1990: ch. 3] and Rothenberg [1992: 218–33]; and for 'up and down husbandry' and the development of agriculture in north-west Europe in the seventeenth century: Brenner [1985b: 308–10, 315–16] and Kerridge [1969: 109–10, 124–7].
39. Post refers us to Schob [1975] on the extent of agricultural wage labour in the pre-Civil War North; and Dublin [1979; 1991] on rural 'outwork' and migration of female labour from the countryside to the factory in New England. See Post [1995: 436, n. 2].
40. The relevant sources drawn upon by Post here are: Atack and Bateman [1987: 202–4, 208–25] and North [1961: 146–53].
41. On some of this paragraph, see Binswanger [1984: 14].
42. See Binswanger [1984: Abstract, 17, 1921, 23].
43. Post bases this statement on the following sources: Danhof [1969: 142–4, 189–203, 206–17] and Gates [1960: 280–2].
44. The following sources were utilised to make these judgements: Atack and Bateman [1987: 194–200], Danhof [1969: 2211–49], David [1971a: 214–27].
45. See note 51 in chapter 7.
46. On India see, Byres [1981: 415].
47. See Post [1995: 430–1]. These issues are discussed in David [1971a], Olmstead [1975], Fleisig [1976], Headlee [1991], Gates [1960: 287] and Mann [1990: 28–46].
48. Thus, over the two decades of the 1840s and 1850, the per capita output of the former category of goods fell by 73%, i.e. from $1.34 to $0.36; while the latter fell in the Northeast by 76% (from $1.16 per capita to $0.28), and in the Northwest by 65% (from $1.11 to $0.39). See Post [1995: 428–9]. The sources for these figures are Atack and Bateman [1987: 205] and Tyron [1917: 308–9].
49. See Post [1995: 429]. The source is Gallman [1966: 24].
50. The sources are: Pudup [1983: 104–8] and Ross [1985: chs. 4–5].
51. See also Post [1982: 43–4, 51].
52. The sources for these observations are US Department of Commerce [1865: clxxvii, ccxvi], US Department of Commerce [1872: 588–9, 614–15].
53. The sources are Headlee [1991: 23–38], Post [1983: 121–6] and Pudup [1983].
54. See also Post [1982: 49]. The source here is Hunter [1970: 87–112].
55. We are referred to Shannon [1945: 51] and George [1901: 89–90].

56. As Ankli points out: 'Danhof's original paper came in the midst of a lively debate about the working of a safety-valve – that free or at least cheap land in the West served to defuse labor unrest in the East' [Ankli, 1974: 52].
57. See, in particular, Gates [1936, 1939, 1941, 1942, 1945]. All but the 1936 article are republished in Gates [1973], which is an important collection.
58. Mann and Dickinson point out that 'over 183,000,000 acres of the public domain were given to or reserved railroad companies, an area equal to almost 1/10 of the entire land area of the U.S.A' [Mann and Dickinson, 1980: 320, n. 35]. Not only that, but 'the railroads later sold much of this land to settlers at almost triple the government's pre-Homestead Act price' (loc. cit.). See Shannon [1945: 64–6] and George [1901: 4].
59. The references are Shannon [1945: 162] and Briggs [1932: 26–7].
60. On the land speculators see the classic essay by Paul W. Gates, 'The Role of the Land Speculator in Western Development' [Gates, 1942, reprinted in Gates, 1973].
61. There is a useful brief account of mechanisation in Bogue [1994: 294–6], which I have drawn upon for the following account.
62. See Lenin [1964a: 37–8, 66, 167, 175, 192, 205–8, 229, 314, 331–4, 377–83, 597] and Luxemburg [1963: chs. 27 and 29].
63. We cannot here enter the complexities of Marx's theory of value. What we are seeking to do, after all, is identify a concrete, historical social form. We deploy only so much as is necessary to do that. I here rely on the excellent exposition in Meek [1973: 155–56].
64. Post refers the reader to the following: Marx [1976: chs. 13] and Mandel [1970, vol I:ch.2].
65. As Marx puts it: 'The circuit M-C-M, on the contrary, commences with money and ends with money. Its leading motive and the goal that attracts it, is, therefore, mere exchange value' [Marx, 1961: 149]. See Meek [1973: 155, n. 2]. Marx makes the comparison more fully:

> What...first and foremost distinguishes the circuit C-M-C from the circuit M-C-M, is the inverted order of succession of the two phases. The simple circulation of commodities begins with a sale and ends with a purchase, while the circulation of money as capital begins with a purchase and ends with a sale. In the one case both the starting–point and the goal are commodities, in the other they are money. In the first form the movement is brought about by the intervention of money, in the second by that of a commodity. [Marx, 1961: 148]

66 The references given by Post are: Engels [1981: 1028–45], Friedmann [1980: 161–4, 167–70] and Mandel [1970 vol. I: 65–71].
67. In so doing he refers us to Harriet Friedmann, who is, of course, a distinguished and stimulating representative of that viewpoint, and whom we have referred to above. Wright directs us to Friedmann [1978b]. He could also have referred us to other of her writing, which we have cited above: i.e. Friedmann [1978a, 1980]. He cites, also, William Parker [Parker, 1972: 393–4], another distinguished scholar, although one of a different tendency. He even brings in Mr Himmer, whom we quoted above in our treatment of Lenin's view of the American path: quoting, as we do, directly from Lenin's remarkable 1915 text, *New Data On The Laws Governing The Development of Capitalism in Agriculture. Part One. Capitalism and Agriculture in the United States of America* [Lenin, 1964b].
68. See previous footnote for full title.
69. See the notes to the tables for their precise content.
70. For my own detailed treatment of an Indian neo-populist critique of capitalism, and the remarkable political practice that went with it, see Byres [1988].

71. In fact, the only 'authority' he cites is Kirby [1987: 3], which is not actually about the North and the West. For a treatment of the 'farm tenancy and the agricultural ladder' thesis see Atack and Passel [1994: 407–11]. The early classic statement seems to have been in the famous Goldenweiser and Truesdell study of 1924, *Farm Tenancy and the United States* [Goldenweiser and Truesdell, 1924] (see the quotation in Atack and Passel [1994: 409].
72. The empirical support for this is provided by Hutchison [1956] and United States Senate [1911: 332, 343].

PART IV

Some Conclusions

9 The Comparison, Some Implications, and Some Contemporary 'Lessons'

Proteus, the prophetic old man of the sea...At midday Proteus rose from the sea and slept in the shade of the rocks. Any one wishing to learn futurity from him was obliged to catch hold of him at that time: as soon as he was seized he assumed every possible shape, in order to escape the necessity of prophesying, but whenever he saw that his endeavours were of no avail, he resumed his usual form and told the truth.

Everyman's Smaller Classical Dictionary

Procrustes, 'the stretcher', surname of the robber, Polypemon or Damastes. He tied his victims upon a bed: if they were shorter than the bed, he stretched their limbs; if they were longer than the bed, he made them of the same size by cutting off some of their limbs. He was slain by Perseus.

Everyman's Smaller Classical Dictionary

1 THE ISSUES

What, then, emerges from our consideration of the Prussian path and the American paths? We may proceed at three levels.

(i) The General Analytical Level

The first is the general analytical level. What analytical conclusions might we draw, in terms of the problematic addressed?

There may be substantive differences – substantive diversity – but does the treatment of those differences suggest robust analytical propositions for an agrarian comparative political economy? We noted, in Chapter 1, certain central propositions of political economy. What might we say of those propositions at the end of our treatment of Prussia and America?

(ii) The Comparison

The second level is the nature of the comparison between Prussia and America. How does Lenin's representation of the two paths survive an analytical scrutiny

based upon almost ninety years of historical scholarship? How, in effect, do they compare? What distinguishes each one?

We have continued to identify the Prussian path as 'capitalism from above' and considered some of its implications. There is no reason to drop that categorisation. On the contrary, it captures appositely the Prussian experience. We have found it necessary, however, to abandon the notion, in the United States, of a single 'capitalism from below'. Rather, it seems necessary to proceed in terms of a 'backward capitalism from above' in the South, traversing from slavery and then sharecropping as the dominant social forms in the countryside; and a vibrant petty commodity production from below in the North and West. We need, however, to draw out the comparison more fully. Indeed, ironically, the South's transition has been seen by some as a possible variant of the Prussian path. Is such a notion useful? Is it valid? That we must consider.

We might say, then, that , while the categories of political economy with which we have worked are relevant and illuminating, the models with which we started are not wholly so. That is an important conclusion.

(iii) Lessons?

Thirdly, are there analytical conclusions one might draw with respect to contemporary poor countries? That, after all, was my starting-point?

There may well be analytical conclusions deriving from the first level. These we need to consider. But, how useful, when addressing developments in poor countries today, is it to proceed in terms of a 'Prussian path', or a backward capitalism of the kind that emerged in the South, or 'petty commodity production from below? Does any of these offer possible analytical insight?

(iv) Some Dangers

The book is written from the relatively comfortable vantage-point of completed transition: that is to say, after the dust of history has settled. Lenin, we recall, wrote while the underlying, possibly contradictory and often ambiguous, processes had not yet worked themselves out. If, then, he did not catch hold of Proteus sufficiently firmly, that, perhaps, is not surprising.

Very clearly, writing in 1995 does not mean an absence of immense controversy and profound disagreement over the influences at work, and even the questions to be posed. We have seen something of that in our treatment above. Moreover, it is a formidable task, even if one is possessed of abundant evidence, to disentangle the intricate processes in operation.

There may be a strong temptation, when considering either past or present, to assume a degree of *a priori* inevitability. That, we may say, is what Lenin did, although, as we have seen, he revealed an awareness, at least in the Russian

context, of such an assumption being misplaced, and pointed to his own misjudgement in this respect.

In his *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, Maurice Dobb observes: 'The launching of a country on the first stages of the road towards Capitalism is no guarantee that it will complete the journey' [Dobb, 1963: 195]. The observation was made with respect to eighteenth century Holland. Holland did, of course, become a fully capitalist country. But the caution is a salutary one, in reminding us of the need to resist teleology and to beware of the assumption that transition will be unobstructed, swift and predictable.

It is especially salutary inasmuch as our starting-point was to assess these 'paths' from the less comfortable viewpoint of contemporary poor countries, in which, manifestly, an agrarian transition has not yet taken place fully, but appears to be unfolding *in vivo* and before one's very eyes. It is several times more formidable an undertaking to try and comprehend the nature of processes – their ramifications, how far they have gone, how far they are likely to go, their manifestations in a concrete situation – if, rather than having worked themselves out, they are still in motion. The temptation to impose a particular teleology upon the evidence is great. Do these examples of transition help in this respect? Does extended treatment of them help prevent analytical closure?

Let us start, then, with the analytical conclusions.

2 ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS

(i) Accumulation

Our concern is with capitalist transformation. At the heart of capitalist transformation lies capital accumulation, in both countryside and town. This book has been, essentially, about accumulation: about what makes accumulation possible, and so enables capitalist transformation.

Our basic theme, around which the whole argument turns, is an exploration of the nature, the prerequisites and the class agents of that accumulation: the accumulation that drives capitalist transformation. Our concern has been with the inner secret of capitalist accumulation in the earlier phases of capitalist transformation. Under what circumstances does it take place? What makes it possible? Our argument is that if we are to uncover that inner secret we need to do so in the countryside.

It is not only, however, that the roots of industrial capital may be traced to the countryside. What has emerged is that the *manner* in which the agrarian question is resolved has profoundly important implications: that, in the words of the distinguished Japanese Marxist, Kohachiro Takahashi, 'there is a deep inner relationship between the agrarian question and industrial capital, which determines the characteristic structures of capitalism in the various countries' [Takahashi, 1976: 96].

(ii) Capitalist Transformation and Substantive Diversity

The book, then, has had two broad, and intimately related, concerns. The first is with capitalist transformation and the general mystery of what makes it possible. An effort has been made to unravel something of that mystery by examining agrarian transition's relationship to overall capitalist transformation. Such transformation is, of course, that of agrarian societies, with all their individual complexity, into industrial societies, which are no less complex. By its very nature this is a prolonged and intricate historical process. It does not happen suddenly or cleanly. If we have made it seem cleaner than it was, and less problematic, then that is a heuristic device: the probably unfortunate concomitant of the urge to impose analytical tidiness and the search for clear underlying processes. In fact, transformation happens untidily in *la longue durée*. Here we seek its agrarian origins. The value of a comparative study at the most basic level, that of two case-studies, is that it allows the space in which such foreshortening may be guarded against and that temporal sweep may be addressed. We have, indeed, sought to start our treatment of each transition at its very beginnings.

Embedded in that complex and difficult problem, secondly, and compounding the mystery, we have the further enigma of substantive diversity in the forms taken, in both town and country, by such capitalist transformation, in its different national instances. Here it has been the agrarian forms that we have explored in detail, in two such instances. Even within them, we stress, it is crucial, analytically, to capture diversity. That did not prove necessary in the Prussian case (although Prussia's differences from the south and the west of Germany were noted). It proved essential when considering the United States.

(iii) Four Analytical Concerns

Four broad but closely inter-related analytical concerns have run through our treatment, and within each the nature of action by the state has recurred. They are inter-related inasmuch as they impinge upon one another in significant causal senses. These causal senses I have sought to unravel.

The first broad analytical concern is the precise nature of the class relationships which emerged in the countryside, and the reasons why these particular kinds of resolution of the agrarian question, in the given sense, proceeded. The second is the significance that differing outcomes have had for the capital accumulation that accompanies and is essential to capitalist transformation. Thirdly, the forms taken by the productive forces in the countryside have been critical in our treatment. Finally, we have been concerned with the implications for capitalist industrialisation of each of the resolutions discussed.

(iv) The Class Relationships Outcome

The first broad theme, then, is twofold. It is to capture the precise nature of the class relationships (the relations of production) which emerged in the countryside in our chosen instances of transition; and to unravel the logic of why particular kinds of resolution of the agrarian question, in that sense, proceeded.

Brenner's argument is that these outcomes are determined in the arena of class struggle. Our conclusion is, indeed, that such struggle is crucial, and that one cannot possibly understand these outcomes if we abstract from it. We conclude, however, that we need to consider more closely than he does two phenomena : the nature of dominant classes in each instance (and, of course, that means landlord classes or transformed landlord classes); and the processes at work of social differentiation of the peasantry. Each is of extreme importance.

It is essential, also, to analyse the manner in which state mediation, the wielding of state power, has been central to each of the transitions considered. It is impossible to grasp the dynamics of these transitions without understanding the nature and role of the state. We have done so for Prussia and America. We will summarise some of our conclusions, in this respect, in the next section.

(v) Significance for Overall Capital Accumulation

Clearly, in examining the nature of any individual path of agrarian transition it is essential to identify the particular class structure which characterises that transition. This was my initial primary concern. Indeed, at the very outset of my broad comparative study, this was what identified particular paths *tout court*. In a sense, there is clear validity in this. This, one might say, is the central distinguishing characteristic of a particular path of agrarian transition. The diversity of resolution, thus construed, is striking. But what are the implications of this diversity of resolution? This must certainly be our concern.

This takes us to the second broad theme: the significance that differing outcomes, in the aforementioned sense, have for the capital accumulation that accompanies and is essential to capitalist transformation in the broad sense. How does the agrarian class structure (determined, as I have suggested, by class struggle) influence the nature of overall capital accumulation: its very possibility, its pace, its pattern, its rhythms? Does the class structure allow the unleashing of the productive forces (which is reflected in an acceleration of the pace of capital accumulation) necessary to capitalist transformation and development?

A central conclusion is that the emerging agrarian class structure, and associated class power, are critical in influencing the outcome here, as capitalist transformation takes place and in the early, crucial phases of that transformation. That is to say, one needs to uncover the agrarian roots of the capital accumulation necessary to capitalist transformation. That is my general proposition. It has two crucial components.

(vi) Forms Taken by the Productive Forces in the Countryside

The third analytical concern, then, which encompasses the first component of my capital accumulation proposition, has been to identify and explain the forms

taken by the productive forces in the countryside – if you like, the technological transformation – in each of the cases of agrarian transition considered.

A narrow interpretation of the agrarian question may be concerned largely, if not exclusively, with class relationships. A full reading, however, I have suggested, should include the outcome with respect to the form taken by the productive forces. This is crucially important. We cannot identify a particular path without reference to the form taken by the productive forces. This outcome, surely, is an essential characteristic of each distinctive path. As with the emerging class structure, the diversity is considerable. We need to consider, with the greatest care, the relationship between forces and relations of production.

Our study allows us to state the following three analytical proposition. The first is that a characteristic of each of the pre-capitalist situations identified is that a limit to agriculture's productive capacity had been reached, or was being approached. That limit could be eliminated only by new and more powerful forms of the productive forces. The pre-existing class structure in each case constituted a powerful fetter upon those productive forces. There was a fundamental incompatibility between the existing class structure and a developing forces of production. That incompatibility is a driving force for change. We have argued this for both Prussia and for the USA: in the former case in the later stages of feudalism, in the middle to late eighteenth century; in the latter, in the South, within both slavery and sharecropping. Of significance has been petty commodity production's remarkable ability, in the North and the West of the United States, to absorb and to be sustained by, advanced forms of the productive forces.

Our second proposition may start with a question. With the new class structure, what form would the productive forces – the basis for the necessary enlargement of agriculture's productive capacity – take? Several possibilities exist. My second proposition is that the form actually taken, and the pace of advance, are determined, in part, by the nature of the emerging class structure in the countryside.

The third proposition is that once capitalism is established with respect to the whole social formation, and the new class relationships are formed in the countryside, then a particular class structure may require for its continuation a particular development of the productive forces. This is surely true of the United States. Petty commodity production – the 'family farm'– could not have survived, support from the state notwithstanding, without mechanisation of the kind which developed. A 'family farm' – a farm without wage labour – could not possibly have produced a sufficiently productive agriculture without that development.

(vii) Capitalist Industrialisation

The fourth broad concern has been to consider the implications for capitalist industrialisation of each of the resolutions discussed: the implications of both

the emerging class structure and the form taken by the productive forces. Capitalist transformation has involved, always and crucially, capitalist industrialisation: the growth, absolutely and relatively (to agriculture), of manufacturing industry. That capitalist industrialisation has its own pre-history: so-called proto-industrialisation. Capitalist industrialisation manifestly requires capital accumulation. Capital accumulation in manufacturing industry is that process whereby the means and instruments of production – constant capital – are changed dramatically, as, with capitalism, there is an unprecedented unleashing of the productive forces. These productive forces are concentrated in factories, the organic composition of capital rises, the rate of investment increases. There is an acceleration, a deepening and an increased scale of accumulation that are unprecedented. This study has not been concerned in detail with this. Rather it has addressed the ways in which complex change in the countryside makes it possible.

That industrialisation depends intimately, and in a variety of ways which I have considered, upon agriculture. It cannot be understood without reference to agriculture and agrarian change, and to the way in which capitalism penetrates agriculture – whether with the establishment of capitalist relations of production or not. Such understanding, in its turn, is of the nature of capital accumulation and the agents of accumulation in agriculture. It is the clarification of this that is the book's central *quaesitum.*

We have examined agriculture as a market, for both Department I and Department II industries; and agriculture and the making of an urban working class. We have also considered agriculture as a possible source of financial surplus. Accumulation in manufacturing will depend critically upon each of these. In this, in the 'early years of industrialisation', the countryside has a special role to play. Clearly, such accumulation, if it is to be successful, cannot proceed without some appropriate tapping of the relevant domestic sources of accumulation. With respect to the financial surplus, this, to a considerable degree, must reside in the countryside in the early phases of transformation. In contemporary poor countries, foreign sources of accumulation may be possible: private foreign investment, foreign loans, and aid. Very important, historically, in some instances, although not in the Prussian or the American cases, colonial surplus appropriation has proved decisive.

Access to these external sources of accumulation may take some of the pressure off domestic agriculture. That may be very important. But it cannot dispense completely with the need for domestic agriculture as a 'nutrient base'. Even with such access these cannot relieve agriculture of this task.

The agrarian social forms we have analysed are shown to have had profound implications for industrial capital and for the outcome of industrialisation. A central conclusion is that the nature of agrarian transition has a decisive influence upon the nature and the very possibility of capitalist industrialisation.

3 THE COMPARISON

(i) Efforts to Cope With the Land Problem and the Labour Problem

If we take the widest possible temporal sweep, we may say that at the very outset of their formation as distinct entities in both Prussia and the American colonies a land problem and a labour problem were confronted in each. In this essay we have addressed that confrontation and sought to consider its outcome.

Throughout their respective histories, part of their distinctiveness, which contributed to the manner in which the agrarian transition ultimately took place, derived from efforts to cope with these two problems: efforts by dominant classes, with the mediation of the state; and efforts by subordinate classes, through class struggle, which were sometimes successful in deflecting and transforming dominant class initiatives, and sometimes unsuccessful – but always present. That distinctiveness, which we have sought to explore, lay in their institutional solutions, in the modes of production, and accompanying modes of surplus appropriation, established.

(ii) The Land Problem, the Frontier, and Native Populations

It is, perhaps, not too fanciful to compare the 'East Elbian frontier society' of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with the frontier societies of both North and South in America, and, indeed, with the push westwards after the 1840s. On the one hand, there was the 'conquering and colonising movement' that burst across the river frontiers into the swamps and forests of the 'eastern wilderness', from Holstein to Silesia, overwhelming the existing Slavic tribes and converting them to Christianity, and on the other the relentless push westwards of settlers, again into swamps and forests, and cultivating what had been considered the 'Uninhabitable American Desert'.

In each case, of course, the land was inhabited. The difference, perhaps, was that in the former case, so far as one knows, a whole people was not exterminated to secure the end of settlement. In the latter, the chosen solution to the land problem was to clear away its inhabitants. That was done with murderous effect and with all the duplicity and force that first the colonial and then the post-colonial state could muster. In the Prussian case, the settlement required the creation of a 'free peasantry', and was a prelude to feudalism. In North America, the dispossession and 'clearance' we have identified as part of a process of primitive accumulation. In each case, as the land problem was solved, dominant classes faced the labour problem.

(iii) The Labour Problem and Its Different Solutions

The labour problem was one of labour scarcity. Such scarcity existed, from the outset, in both Prussia and North America. It was a problem that would remain

through the centuries, and which would invoke, in differing circumstances, a range of solutions.

In Prussia, it was a migrating peasantry from the west that settled the land as direct producers, under the aegis of a Prussian landlord class – the early Junkers. It became 'one of Europe's freest peasantries'. Thus was the labour problem solved initially. In Prussia, 'one of Europe's freest peasantries' by the late tenth century was transformed by the early sixteenth into one that was thoroughly unfree. The dominant class in the Prussian countryside, the Junkers, were successful, after a period of prolonged class struggle, in introducing a full-blooded classical feudalism, so resolving a labour problem that had become acute, in the wake of the Black Death and other visitations of its kind: and they did so at a time when the peasantry in England had resisted the seigneurial reaction and so brought feudalism there to an end. That Prussian feudalism would last until 1807, when the Emancipation Edict brought it to an end.

In the American colonies, in the seventeenth century, while feudalism was deeply-rooted and functioning actively in Prussia (and still in place in, for example, France and Japan among the other cases in our broader study), but a spent force in the 'mother country', serious attempts were made to introduce feudalism. These were unsuccessful, partly because of an active class struggle fought against them by white colonists. Feudalism could not be the solution in North or South. But those attempts were not without significance in the legacy they left. White indentured labour could not solve the labour problem. White slaves were not possible. Attempts to enslave Indians were unsuccessful. In the South, it was slavery – black slaves – that was established as the dominant mode of production. That would last until defeat in the Civil War brought it to an end, in 1865.

In Prussia, feudalism lasted for nearly three centuries, and in the American South slavery for two centuries. They were, indeed, phenomena of *la longue durée*. In the North, another, quite distinct path was embarked upon – another way of solving the labour problem – in the seventeenth century: petty commodity production. That would prove to have quite remarkable longevity, first as early petty commodity production, and subsequently (from the 1820s and 1830s on) as advanced petty commodity production – to use a formulation that seems useful.

So it was that Prussia was set on a course that would have as its outcome the Prussian path of agrarian transition; while in America, not one, but two quite distinct American paths unfolded. In both the Prussian case and that of the American South, a contradiction between productive forces and relations of production had reached serious proportions, so that agriculture's productive capacity was approaching a probable limit – more serious, possibly, in Prussia than in the American South. Prussian agriculture, with serfdom as its dominant property relation, had probably come closer to the limits of its productive potential than had the plantation South. Certainly, there seems to have been a greater awareness of it in Prussia than in the American South.

Yet in each case, without a dramatic external political event – in Prussia humiliating defeat by Napoleon, in the American South defeat in the Civil War – the old regime's demise would have been postponed. That external political event imposed, for a time, in Prussia. a disarticulation of state and class, and so created political space – sufficient autonomy – for the state to act. The Junkers fought it tooth and nail. Soon, dominant agrarian class and state were rearticulated. But feudalism was, assuredly, dead. The Junkers' battle was a rearguard action, but one, nevertheless, that ensured that it would be a transition from 'semi-feudalism' to 'semi-capitalism', before the final triumph of capitalist relations, rather than a swift transition. It was a capitalism, however, deeply marked by the Junkers' feudal past, in a way, perhaps, that would have been absent had the transition to capitalism had as its midwife class struggle (spearheaded, perhaps, by rich peasants), or revolution, rather than what remained a Junker state. It was capitalism with the stamp of feudalism still upon it; an agrarian capitalism, indeed, within which the productive forces were able to develop more freely than they had with serfdom as the essential relationship, although one where a free wage labour force was sufficiently cowed to act as a constraint upon technical transformation, and especially mechanisation.

In the American South, the victors, in the North, were able to ensure the uprooting and destruction of slavery. But the former planter class – the erstwhile slaveowners – retained ownership of the land, and were transformed into a landlord class: a landlord class powerfully in control of the state apparatus in the south – in the individual states. An initial, brief attempt to introduce capitalist agriculture proved unsuccessful. Sharecropping became the dominant mode of surplus appropriation. It would be another eighty years before a powerful set of productive forces swept away the relations of production embodied in sharecropping. The brake upon the productive forces was more powerful in the agriculture of the postbellum south, with its greater degree of unfreedom, heavily scarred, as it was by racism. Meanwhile, in the North and the West, the early petty commodity production introduced in the seventeenth century, sustained by strong support by the state, was transformed into an advanced form, in which there was an unleashing of the productive forces quite unlike the experience of either Prussia or the American South.

(iv) Differentiation

A crucial part of Lenin's 'capitalism from below', which he held to be the dominant tendency in the United States, was a powerful and dynamic process of social differentiation among peasants, or, in another terminology, petty commodity producers. We have considered this carefully in feudal Prussia, and noted that, while, clearly, differentiation existed, it was not differentiation that had matured to the stage of creating a seed-bed for a capitalist agriculture. It was a differentiation that was kept severely in check. Equally, in nineteenth century Prussia processes of differentiation were muted and without significance. In the

American South, in the antebellum era, differentiation among 'yeoman farmers' was kept severely in check, partly as a result of action of planters; while in the postbellum years the operation of merchant capital had the same effect, via different mechanisms.

In the North and the West, clearly differentiation existed, in both antebellum and postbellum years. But the failure of processes of differentiation to reach the stage of generating a class of capitalist farmer, and one of wage labour, is of particular significance. We considered various possible explanations, and noted the importance of the peculiar obstacles to capitalist agriculture that derive from production time, labour time and the rate of turnover of capital; the form taken by the productive forces; and the support given to petty commodity producers by the state. If the Jeffersonian vision was not realised, then a surviving and developing petty commodity production was.

We note the absence of dynamic processes of differentiation in each of our three cases, but for quite different reasons. In Prussia, a powerful Junker class simply obliterated such processes. In the South, within an essentially weak, and almost marginalised 'yeomanry', it was first the action of planters (in the antebellum era), and then the operation of merchant capital (in the postbellum years) that acted as a commanding restraint.

(v) The State

We note that the role of the state, with respect to the resolution of the land problem and the labour problem in both cases, was crucial. The state acted in North America to secure the dispossession and extermination of the American Indians; it acted consistently, in both Prussia and America, in favour of dominant classes, to quell struggle by subordinate classes (class struggle). It was a critical element in that class struggle. Its enacting of first the Slave Codes and then the Black Codes in the American South secured the subordination of slaves and then black sharecroppers.

At two critical junctures, it acted with some 'autonomy', against not necessarily the interests, but certainly against the strongly stated preference in favour of the status quo, of dominant classes: in the Emancipation of the Serfs in 1807 and the Abolition of Slavery in 1865. In each case, however, that required a 'cataclysmic external event', to create the necessary 'space'.

State and dominant classes were soon reunited, however, and, in Prussia, it was the failure of the state to tax Junkers and control food prices that served to impede, but not to prevent, successful industrialisation. In the American South, the state acted, quite perceptibly, to prevent any possible move towards a dynamic industrialisation from being set in motion, although it seems likely that, even with state action, the existing property relations would have acted to block that.

The successful 'petty commodity production from below', in the North and the West of the United States, and its concomitant industrialisation, owed much

to state action. It is doubtful whether, without it, petty commodity producers would have been able to reproduce themselves, and survive, so consistently. That is not to romanticise the outcome of state action. As we saw, land speculators were active and significant in those regions; tenancy increased and a landlord class was created; the incidence of debt and mortgages became heavy. But that is how capitalism works. This was not a Jeffersonian universe. If the wage relation was absent, and with it capitalist production relations, subordination to the capitalist accumulation imperative was not. Agriculture was not penetrated by capitalist production relations. But it was thoroughly taken over by capitalism and bent to its needs.

(vii) Lenin's Paths: Do They Survive?

We have devoted much attention above to Lenin's two paths and to the actual experience of Prussia and America. We may be brief in summing that up.

Lenin has proved to be remarkably accurate in his rendering of the Prussian path and its implications. The class relations that characterised Prussian agriculture, although clearly capitalist, did bear the vestigial traces of feudalism deeply upon them. The development of the productive forces was constrained, although not to the extent suggested by Lenin, and not to the degree of the American South in the postbellum years, while industrialisation proceeded in spite of, rather than because of, the contribution of Prussian agriculture.

But his American path does not survive scrutiny in certain significant respects. To start off with, there is no single American path. There are two substantive forms of agrarian transition, one in the South, from slavery through sharecropping to capitalism. Here the productive forces are powerfully constrained until the 1940s, and the retardative effect upon industrialisation is considerable. In the other, in the North and West, his central tenet, that of the dominance of wage labour, although it finds some support in the data he used in 1915, in fact is not supported. Ironically, it was in the South that wage labour came eventually, but only after a long delay, and not with the degree of freedom, or with the progressiveness, suggested by Lenin for his American path. In one respect he was, however, completely correct. In the North and the West, with 'petty commodity production from below', the productive forces have shown a remarkable dynamism, and the stimulus given to capitalist industrialisation has been considerable.

(viii) The American South as an Example of the Prussian Path?

We are left, in our comparison, with a last intriguing issue to ponder. How useful is it to see the American South as an example of a Prussian path? With Lenin's two paths in mind, that would be a supreme irony.

Such a comparison has, indeed, been made. It seems first to have been, suggested, as Genovese has pointed out, by William Dodd, an early twentieth

century American historian – somewhat ironically, just before Lenin wrote his monograph on the United States. It was not one that Lenin pursued. That comparison was between the *slaveowners* of the antebellum south and the Prussian Junkers. Genovese points, intriguingly (but with no supporting reference), to 'the Junkers, to whom the slaveholders were once compared by William E. Dodd' [Genovese, 1969: 229].[1] But the more appropriate comparison is with the *postbellum landlord class* in the South and the post-1807 Junkers.

It was, however, Barrington Moore who brought the comparison into currency, when he referred to 'Southern "Junkers"' [Moore, 1967: 115, 127]. One does note the inverted commas around Junkers, and, as has been pointed out [Bowman, 1993: 103], that he does not actually invoke the notion of a 'Prussian road' anywhere in his book. Nevertheless, he makes the comparison at a number of points (see also pp. 130, 141, 149, 152, 413]: all too briefly and tantalisingly, to be sure, but influentially.

Moore, unfortunately, denied us an adequate comparison, by choosing not to include Prussia among his detailed case-studies. That proved to be a great pity, since the Prussian example is one which, in his book, fascinates him, and which he clearly believes to be of great significance. Prussia (or Germany) recurs in Barrington Moore, and its experience is crucial to his thesis. But he chooses not to examine it in detail: since he felt that he could not add anything to the interpretation of its social history [Moore, 1967: xii] (he also omits Russia, for the same reason, but that does not concern me here). I have no illusions about so adding to understanding, in any original sense. But it is, I think, essential, within a comparativist perspective, to clarify and take a position on a particular, crucial aspect of that social history, on a basis of the available secondary sources. It is a pity that Barrington Moore did not do that in the Prussian case. Such treatment would have been illuminating.

Genovese did pursue the comparison [Genovese, 1968; 1969: 228–9]. He took issue with Barrington Moore's suggested analogy. But, again, we miss the backing of a detailed interpretation of the Prussian experience. It is not a fair match: Genovese's formidable historical scholarship on the American South against a most cursory notion of the Junkers.

In his 1968 essay, Genovese rejected, with clear justification, Barrington Moore's suggestion that slaveowners and post-1807 Junkers might both be seen as capitalists. That we need not pursue. As we have pointed out above, drawing heavily on Genovese, slaveowners cannot, within a Marxist framework, be seen as capitalists. He also took Barrington Moore to task for 'exaggerat[ing] the prebourgeois character of the post-Napoleonic Junkers' (pp. 118–19).

In his 1969 book, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, Genovese's concern is with the transition after 1807 in Prussia: 'the road of authoritarianism based on a coalition of industrialists and great aristocratic landowners...an aristocracy [that] effectively crossed over into the ranks of the capitalist class, bring with them much of their old notions of order, status and leadership' [Genovese, 1969: 228–9]. This he wishes to consider in relation to possible counter-factual trajec-

tories of the post-1965 South. His treatment is part of an argument about whether, in the absence of the Civil War, 'the South would have opted for a Prussian course' (p. 230). Genovese dismisses the argument on the grounds that such an outcome would have required 'an imminent political catastrophe, the nature and consequences of which, had it occurred, are beyond reach' [Genovese, 1969: 230]. It may, of course, be that although no such conscious 'opting' took place, something of the logic of the Prussian path may have obtained in the postbellum South. Did it?

Genovese, indeed, would later not dismiss such a possibility: i.e. that of a '"Prussian Road" to southern capitalism' ([Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 1983: 253 – in an essay published originally in 1975,[2] citing Moore, 1967 and Wiener, 1978]. Other American scholars, too, have reached for the comparison. Among them we may note three who have argued that the South conformed to a 'Prussian road' model of development: Jonathan Wiener, writing on Alabama, between 1860 and 1885 [Wiener, 1978]; Lewis Nicholas Wynne, on Georgia, between 1865 and 1882 [Wynne, 1986]; and Dwight B. Billings, on postbellum North Carolina [Billings, 1979]. In more general essays, Barbara Anne Fields [Fields, 1985], argues a strong and percipient case against the appropriateness of the analogy, in which she stresses the long, drawn-out nature of the South's ultimate transition to capitalism in agriculture (emphasising the persistence of sharecropping) ; while Steven Hahn [Hahn, 1990a and 1990b], unconvincingly, suggests that the South experienced a rapid transformation – confusing 'market relations', and the hegemony of merchant capital, with capitalist relations. The focus has now shifted to the postbellum South.

Can we, on a basis of our treatment above, make an adequate comparison between slaveholders, or, more usefully, the postbellum landlord class, and the Junkers? I think we can.

The American slaveowners and the Junkers had one thing in common. As we have seen, they were both a resident class. Not only that, but they were both used to being involved in the production process and in the circuits of accumulation. But did they embark upon similar paths?

We noted in the case of both Prussia, in the aftermath of Emancipation, and the American South in the aftermath of Abolition, the marked reluctance of former serfs and freed slaves to work directly for their former masters as wage labour. In the Prussian case, this contributed to the difficulty of creating a class of free wage labour and in the South to an abortive attempt to establish capitalist agriculture. But we must not push that justifiable analogy of response of direct producers in each case to an immediate past from which they wished to escape, into an unjustifiable analogy of a single mode of surplus appropriation adopted in the two cases. In Prussia, it was the creation of a class of free wage labour that was on the agenda; while in the postbellum south it was not.

While in the American South it was sharecropping that was unequivocally reached for as the dominant mode of surplus appropriation, in Prussia, equally unambiguously, it was a wage system. We have seen that there was, in the cottager system, some part of the cottager's income derived from a share of the sheaves threshed, but this was a share wage system, which is quite distinct from a sharecropping system. This was emphatically not 'a kind of semi-feudal sharecropping system' [Schissler, 1986: 48, n.66], an error repeated by Bowman, who writes of 'loosely analogous sharecropping systems' [Bowman, 1993: 111] in Prussia and the American South. This is to confuse two quite distinct systems. Anyway, this had gone by the time the *Deputatisten* system was established.

We note that while these two modes of surplus appropriation were reached for by dominant classes in Prussia and in the postbellum South, in the North and West of the United States, there was a significant absence of wage labour. Tenancy was never absent there, and it did increase from the 1880s onwards. That tenancy was, to a significant degree, sharecropping tenancy. But it was far less widespread than in the South. It did not become the dominant mode of surplus appropriation.

While there is, indeed, a certain apparent similarity between the Prussian and the Southern experience, the differences are too great to justify seeing them as variants of the same path. It is difficult to sustain the notion of a '"Prussian Road" to southern capitalism'. Thus, Prussia came from a feudal system . The South did not; it came from slavery. The two are completely different modes of production. Prussia experienced, quite clearly, a transition to capitalist agriculture; albeit not immediate, but unequivocally so. The South did not. Its transition – after an initial failed attempt to embrace capitalist agriculture – was to a fully-fledged system of sharecropping, which is qualitatively different from a system of wage labour. Capitalist agriculture did come, but that was a later, and quite distinct, transition.

One thing they did have in common. Neither lent support to capitalist industrialisation, other than, eventually, to the creation of a labour force for industrialisation outside their borders, in another part of the broader social formation of which they were part. Even here, the analogy is less than perfect. There were greater obstacles to the creation of such a labour force in the American South – at least until 1910 – than in Prussia.

So how do we conclude? I think we must insist that the South was *sui generis*. It was a path quite distinct from that traversed by Prussia. More is lost, analytically, by describing it as a 'Prussian path' than is gained.

4 SOME TENTATIVE CONTEMPORARY LESSONS

(i) Salient Themes, General Features and Unwarranted Methodological Conclusions

I conclude with some tentative observations on these variants of capitalist agrarian transition and their possible implications. This I do with possible transition in poor countries in mind. No extended treatment of contemporary poor coun-

tries is attempted. That must be the subject of a separate, detailed exercise, for which the present essay constitutes some of the necessary groundwork. Here I give no more than the most preliminary of sketches, in the barest possible outline, of how the present analysis might connect with analysis of contemporary poor countries. I start by drawing together some of the salient themes and general features which have recurred in the above treatment.

First, the fact of substantive diversity is obvious. Capitalist agrarian transition, in the context of our wider comparative study, emerges as truly protean, in its capacity to assume a variety of shapes. That is something to which Lenin drew attention long ago. Indeed, the paths considered in the broad comparative study surely do not exhaust either actual or possible diversity. In the broader study I identify five major and significantly differing forms taken by successful agrarian transitions to capitalism (in the broad sense). This does not constitute the full variety of the historical record. Other agrarian transitions, not explored here, have been negotiated.

Moreover, the history of successful transitions does not exhaust the possibilities in contemporary circumstances. Yet other paths of capitalist agrarian transition may be followed.

One must, however, beware the drawing of unwarranted methodological conclusions from this. The apparently protean quality of historical experience has suggested quite wrongheaded lessons for some. Two of these I would wish to contest vigorously.

The first is that if capitalist agrarian transition is protean in its manifest diversity, this clearly does not suggest the need to abandon theory (as some exponents of comparative history come close to suggesting: for example, E.L. Jones, in his two books [Jones, 1981, 1988]). On the contrary, it can only be understood if pursued within theoretical perspective: via theory which creates sufficient space for the analysis of substantive diversity, and which, in accommodating diversity, can cast a penetrating light upon it. Political economy, I would insist, is of this nature. I believe that my treatment above demonstrates that. Exponents of the comparative method like Anderson, Brenner, Barrington Moore clearly show it. There is no need to relapse into empiricism.

Secondly, the existence of diversity, moreover, does not exclude the possibility of reading from the historical experience lessons of analytical significance for contemporary poor countries. That experience needs to be confronted just as Proteus, the prophetic old man of the sea, had to be approached. If held firmly enough it yields some answers, or at least suggests how we need to address contemporary reality.

The paths considered so far do yield some implications. What emerges, in analytical terms, has been indicated already.

The value of the historical exercise is, I think: to suggest the compelling need for careful, concrete analysis of specific situations; to point to regional diversity within specific social formations; to emphasise the dangers of a narrowly dogmatic view which assumes that only a single (or maybe one or two forms) of

transition are possible; and to alert one to the recognition that agrarian transition is the outcome of a very long and complex historical process, and cannot be understood unless that process is examined in some depth.

One witnesses here the immense importance, not of empiricism, but of the empirical. One sees the crucial significance of historical enquiry, rigorously pursued within a flexibly deployed theoretical framework, in illuminating the present as well as the past.

(ii) Agrarian Transition from Below

Let us take, first, the possibility of agrarian transition from below. We have examined one example of that. We may state certain likelihoods.

Extirpation of existing landlord classes might open the way to an 'agrarian transition from below'. If one thing emerges clearly from our treatment it is that any such transition from below requires either a dismantling of existing state structures, and the class configurations which they underpin; or significant state intervention, as in the US case, to secure that end. The outcome, however, is unpredictable, and has been historically varied. In contemporary circumstances, this is the territory of agrarian reform. It requires a reconstituted, powerful state, with the capacity to move against the social, political and economic power of a strong landlord class. It is also likely to require sustained struggle by peasants. We note that such struggle and such an outcome do not necessarily benefit middle peasants, poor peasants or landless labourers (at least, not in the short- or medium-run). The immediate beneficiaries may be rich peasants. In the absence of such a state and such class struggle, the landlord class, where it exists, will remain paramount.

Our historical exposition suggests that a transition from below carries several possibilities. We note three. It may come as 'capitalism from below', as envisaged by Lenin, with rich peasants transformed into capitalist farmers. It may be 'petty commodity production from below', as witnessed in the USA, with the survival of the 'family farm' as the dominant form of production. It may entail a stubbornly resisting, and surviving, small-peasant economy, as in France (which we cover in the wider comparative study [for a brief treatment see Byres, 1986b, 1991].

All such possibilities must be contemplated, although none is guaranteed. The nature of the state and of state policy are central. Yet other possibilities might be envisaged. Only careful, concrete analysis of the objective circumstances, in a particular case, will identify what those possibilities are: analysis which remains sensitive, in Lenin's phrase, to the 'infinitely diverse combinations of elements of this or that type of capitalist evolution' [Lenin, 1964: 33]; and analysis which explores, seriously and rigorously, regional diversity.

(iii) Possible Contemporary Variants of the Prussian Path

Reverting to a large, semi-feudal landlord class, where such exists, if, instead of its extirpation, one considers the possibility of fundamental transformation, the

Prussian path, we find, comes readily to mind. Variants of a 'Prussian path' have been identified in various contemporary poor countries. The example of the American South reveals this as a seductive, but possibly treacherous, identification.

We may first consider those cases where there appears to be some *a priori* plausibility in so identifying such a dominant tendency, at least to the extent that it is impulses from above, from the landlord class, that are prominent. Such cases may be found in Latin America, in Asia, and in Africa.

It has, for example, been suggested that such a variant, a 'landlord road', is being followed in a variety of Latin American countries: in, for example, Peru, Bolivia and Chile [Kay, 1974; 1980]. Kay distinguishes two broad roads to capitalist agriculture, a landlord and a peasant one. He argues that it is 'the landlord path [that] is predominant in Latin America' [Kay, 1980: 5], although he is careful to stress that 'the transition to capitalist agriculture is not yet complete' (loc. cit.). To the examples Kay gives, de Janvry adds Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela [Janvry, 1981: 108]. De Janvry does, however, posit that a peasant or 'farmer' road emerged in Mexico after 1934, 'as a direct result of peasant revolution and government-sponsored land reform' [Janvry, 1981: 108]; and in the Dominican Republic, Peru after 1969 and Chile between 1967 and 1973, all following land reforms which broke up the large estates. But it does, indeed, seem to be the case that if a full capitalist agrarian transition is to take place in Latin America, it will be predominantly via a landlord route. The nature and strength of the landlord class seem likely to ensure this. There has been considerable peasant resistance, but not with any likelihood of a dominant peasant road. Kay observes, further, that while 'in some cases the State through the implementation of an agrarian reform has attempted to develop a peasant path...these attempts have largely been unsuccessful' (loc. cit.). In Latin America, it appears, the peasant road will be subordinate.

But is this a 'Prussian path'? De Janvry does describe such a 'landlord path' as a 'junker road', and he insists that 'the applicability of the junker road to the development of capitalism in Latin American agriculture is obvious in those areas with a strong legacy of *latifundia* domination in the agrarian structure and a relatively weak peasantry' (loc. cit.). Kay, too, categorises it thus [Kay, 1974: 87; Kay, 1980: 9]; while others analysing Latin America have used it – for example, Roger Bartra, to describe pre-1910 Mexico [Bartra, 1974], Agustin Cueva more generally [Cueva, 1977], and Anthony Winson [Winson, 1982: 385].[3]

In Asia, it would seem that in Pakistan it is a 'landlord path' that is dominant. Some have suggested that this is a variant of the Prussian path, set in motion in the wake of the 'new technology' [Joshi , 1974: 35–1; Herring, 1980: 602–3; Herring, 1983: 104].

It has been held that 'it was the "Prussian road" that agriculture took' in South Africa [Morris, 1976: 310]. Its roots, it is suggested, lay in 'the existence of a powerful landlord class based on the existence of large, feudal agricultural estates in the countryside with a high level of political and economic subordination of the African peasants to the landlord class on these estates' (loc. cit.). The South African landlord class, it is further argued, supported by state power, which maintained political and legal controls over direct labourers, transformed their estates into capitalist enterprises: 'Feudal bondage was transformed into capitalist relations of production but on the basis of the strongly entrenched labour service bondage system, with many of the legal forms of feudal land ownership maintained' (loc. cit.). There was no 'emerging rich peasantry which could smash the power of the feudal landlord holding' (loc. cit.). In no other part of Africa, however, has such a path been seen as likely.

In all these cases, a 'landlord path' seems to have predominated. Elsewhere, the attribution of a 'landlord path' is less convincing. Some have contemplated a variant of the Prussian path as a possibility in parts of India [Joshi, 1974: 341], while others, indeed, have argued that this is the form taken generally by capitalist development in India (see Dasgupta [1976], where this is the general theme: although Dasgupta there takes the Prussian and the Japanese paths as identical, which they most clearly are not). There is, however, little evidence of its having proceeded very far in India as a dominant form of agrarian transition. As Patnaik observes:

> It is a common argument nowadays that India is experiencing something resembling the Junker type of landlord capitalism...Anyone with some field experience would hesitate to make such a generalisation. It is indeed true that many landlords are switching to capitalist production: equally some are not. Certainly landlords as a class have not been dynamic enough to warrant comparison with Prussian Junkers; the formulation further ignores the real phenomenon of developing peasant capitalism. [Patnaik, 1972: 5]

This, surely, is an accurate and a judicious conclusion.

It is, however, dangerous, and possibly very misleading, to assume that where a landlord path appears to exist it will be one analogous to that traversed in Prussia. It is probably more likely to have an affinity with the American South, with sharecropping as a continuing, dominant mode of surplus appropriation. It may, indeed, have characteristics quite different from both. There is certainly no guarantee of an unambiguous transition to capitalist agriculture. There is even less guarantee of that process of dynamic industrialisation that was associated with, although hardly stimulated by, Prussian agriculture. That is a point that others have made – for example, Murmis [1980] and Mead [1978].[4] It is an important one.

(iv) Regional Diversity Within National Social Formations

In the broader comparative study, the English, the American and the French paths underline regional diversity within particular national social formations

[see Byres, 1986b, 1991]. But it is the American case that is of interest here. What it demonstrates most clearly is that, especially in large national social formations, the possibility of not a single agrarian question, but of a set of interrelated but quite distinct agrarian questions, must be contemplated. To proceed in terms of a single agrarian question, a single set of underlying processes, may be extremely misleading.

India has been where I have attempted to study the agrarian question most closely. It was the difficulties associated with that endeavour that gave rise to the present study. Let us, then, finish with India.

It is the case that successful capitalist transformation of agriculture is limited to the north-west (the Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh), and pockets elsewhere. That has been via a peasant route: a form of 'capitalism from below' – certainly *capitalism* from below, and not petty commodity production, inasmuch as it is not 'family-based', but 'wage-based' agriculture that is in view, while other criteria that establish capitalism are met. That required prior struggle by peasants, and successful action against landlords (to the benefit of rich peasants, but not other strata of the peasantry or landless labourers). It also entailed action by the Indian state.

The French example brings to our attention the possibility that capitalist transformation may spread from there only slowly, and possibly with difficulty. It is perfectly conceivable that non-capitalist forms will persist in the countryside in large parts of the Indian social formation for a long time to come. This, however, will be rooted in circumstances very different to those in France: those, perhaps, of tenacious semi-feudal structures, and modes of surplus appropriation that survive and are reproduced persistently, rather than of successful class struggle waged by small peasants.

They are circumstances, moreover, that may differ from those in the north-west of India, and which may differ from region to region. It is not the agrarian question in India, but agrarian questions that we need to analyse. If I suspected that before embarking upon this study, I am now wholly sure of it. Not to proceed thus would be to misconstrue the realities of the Indian countryside and to fail to capture change that may be proceeding, by judging those realities by too narrow a range of criteria. If Proteus is caught hold of, the truth he tells should not be placed upon a bed of Procrustes.

Notes

1. The relevant reference to Dodd may be Dodd [1911], which is cited in the References in Fogel [1989].
2. The essay is 'Yeoman Farmers in a Slaveholders' Democracy', and was published first in *Agricultural History*, vol. 49, 1975.
3. Roger Bartra and Agustin Cueva are referred to in Winson [1982: 344–5].
4. Again, these are referred to by Winson. See Winson [1982: 384–5].

Bibliography

These references are divided into two sections. For ease of use, it seems helpful to present the Prussian and the North American references separately.

In Section A, the Prussian references are given along with more general references and those relating to Chapters 1 and 2. Many of the more general references recur in the chapters on the American paths, but it is not necessary to repeat them.

In Section B, the North American references are listed, for the most part without general references. Where, however, such a reference is strictly specific to North America it is given here.

A. PRUSSIA

Abdel-Fadil, Mahmoud, 1975, *Development, Income Distribution and Social Change in Rural Egypt (1952–1970)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1935a, *Agrarkrisen und Agrarkonjunktur in Mitteleuropa vom 13. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, 1st edition, Berlin; 2nd edition, Hamburg-Stuttgart, 1962; 3rd edition, Hamburg and Berlin, 1978. English translation, Abel [1980].

Abel, Wilhelm, 1935b, 'Wachstumsschwankungen mitteleuropaischer Volker seit dem Mittelalter, Ein Bertrag zur Bevolkerungsgeschichte und Lehre', *Jahrb. f. National-Okonomie und Statistik*, 142.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1936, 'Wirtschaftliche Wechsellagen', *Berichte uber Landwirtschaft*, N.F. 21.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1937, 'Wandlungen des Fleischverbrauchs und der Fleischversorgung in Deutschland seit dem ausgehenden Mittelalter', *Berichte uber Landwirtschaft*, XXII.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1950, *Bevolkerungsentwicklung*, Munich.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1955, *Die Wustungen des ausgehenden Mittelalters*, 2nd edition, Stuttgart. 3rd edition, 1976.

Abel, Wilhem, 1960, 'Die landwirtschaftliche Grossbetriebe Deutschlands', *First International Economic History Conference: Contributions*, Paris.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1961a, 'Verdorfung und Gutsbildung in Deutschland zu Beginn der Neuzeit', in *Morphogenesis of the Agrarian Cultural Landscape*, XIe Congres International de Geographie, 1960, *Geogragrafiska Annaler*, XLIII.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1961b, 'Zur Entwicklung des Sozialproduktes in Deutschland im 16. Jahrhundert', in *Jahrb. f. National-Okonomie und Statistik, 1973*.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1962, 'Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft vom fruhen Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert', in G. Franz, ed., *Deutsche Agrargeschichte*, 11. 2nd edition, 1967; 3rd edition, 1978.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1964, 'Die Lage in der deutschen Land- und Ernahrungswirtschaft um 1800', in F. Lutge, ed., *Die wirtschaftliche Situation in Deutschland und Osterreich um die Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert (Forsch. z. Soz.-u Wirtschaftgesch.)*, 6. Stuttgart. Also in *Jahrb. f. National-Okonomie und Statistik*, 175, 1963.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1966a, *Der Pauperismus in Deutschland am Vorabend der Industriellen Revolution*, Dortmund.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1966b, *Die Drei Epochen der Deutschen Agrargeschichte*, Hanover.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1967, *Lehrbuch der Agrarpolitik*, 3rd edition.

Abel, Wilhelm, 1967a, *Geschichte der Deutschen Landwirtschaft vom fruhem Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart.
Abel, Wilhelm, 1970, 'Handwerksgeschichte in neuer sicht', *Gottinger handwerkswirtschaftliche Studien*, vol. 16, Gottingen.
Abel, Wilhelm, 1973, *Crises Agraires en Europe (XIIe–XXe siecle)*.
Abel, Wilhelm, 1974, *Massenarmut und Hungerkrisen im vorindustriellen Europa. Versuch einer Synopsis*, Hamburg and Berlin.
Abel, Wilhelm, 1980, 3rd edition, translated by O. Ordish, *Agricultural Fluctuations in Europe. From the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, London: Methuen. Originally published in 1935 [Abel, 1935a]; 2nd edition, 1966; 3rd edition appeared in German in 1978, and in English in 1980.
Abel, Wilhelm, Riemann. and F. Welling, eds, 1954, *Daten zur europaischen Agrarverfassung*, facsimile MS. of *Agrarsozialen Gesellschaft*, 3rd edition.
Aereboe, F., 1920, *Vergangenheit und Zukunft der Lohnungsmethoden in der Deutschen Landwirtschaft* (Betriebswirtschaftliche Vortrage aus dem Gebiete der Landwirtschaft, 5). Berlin.
Allendorf, Hans, 1901, *Der Zuzug in die Stadte...*, Jena.
Ambler, Charles Henry, 1910, *Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776–1881*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Anderson, Perry, 1974a, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, London: New Left Books.
Anderson, Perry, 1974b, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London: New Left Books.
Anderson, Perry, 1991, 'Nation-States and National Identity', *London Review of Books*, 9 May, vol. 13, no. 1.
Aston, T.H. and C.H.E. Philpin, eds., 1985, *The Brenner Debate. Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Atack, Jeremy and Peter Passell, 1994, *A New Economic View of Economic History: From Colonial Times to 1940*, 2nd edition, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
Aubin, Hermann, 1966, 'The Lands East of the Elbe and German Colonization Eastwards', ch. VII, 'Medieval Agrarian Society in its Prime', in M.M. Postan, ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe. Vol. I, The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages*, 2nd edition, London: Cambridge University Press.
Aycoberry, Pierre, 1968, *L'Unite Allemande (1800–1871)*, Paris.
Backhaus, E., 1903, 'Betrachtungen uber englische und deutsche Viehzucht auf Grund von Reisebeobachtungen', *Landwirtschaftliche Jahrbucher*, XXII.
Bailyn, Bernard, Robert Dallek, David Brion Davis, David Herbert Donald, John L. Thomas and Gordon S. Wood, 1985, *The Great Republic. A History of the American People*, 3rd edition, Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath & Company.
Banaji, Jairus, 1976, 'Summary of Selected Parts of Kautsky's *The Agrarian Question*', *Economy and Society*, vol. 5, no. 1, February.
Banaji, Jairus, 1977, 'Modes of Production in a Materialist Conception of History', *Capital and Class*, Autumn, no. 3.
Banaji, Jairus, 1990, 'Illusions About the Peasantry: Karl Kautsky and the Agrarian Question', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2, January.
Baran, Paul A., 1962, *The Political Economy of Growth*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House.
Barkin, Kenneth D., 1970, *The Controversy over German Industrialization, 1890–1902*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
Barraclough, Geoffrey, 1988, *The Origins of Modern Germany*, 2nd revised edition, reissued with new bibliography, Oxford: Basil Blackwell. First published in 1946; 2nd revised edition, 1947.
Bartra, Roger, 1974, *Estructura Agraria y Clases Sociales en Mexico*, Mexico City: Era.

Baxa, Jacob, ed., 1966, *Adam Muller's Lebenszeugnisse*, 2 volumes, Munchen, Paderborn and Wien: Ferdinand Schoningh.
Benaerts, Pierre, 1933, *Les Origines de la grande industrie allemande*, Paris: F.H.Turot.
Berdhal, Robert M., 1988, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility. The Development of a Conservative Ideology*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
Bericht der vom Mecklenburgischen Patriotischen Vereine ernannten Commission zur Beratung uber die Verhaltnisse der landlichen Arbeiterklasse, uber Auswanderung und Arbeitermangel, 1873, Rostock.
Berthold, Rudolf, 1972, 'Bemerkungen zu den Wechselbeziehungen zwischen der Industriellen Revolution und der Kapitalistischen Intensivierung der Feldwirtschaft in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Part 1.
Berthold, Rudolf, 1974, 'Der sozialokonomische Differenzierungsprozess der Bauernwirtschaft in der provinz Brandenburg wahrend der industriellen Revolution (1816 bis 1872/82)', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1974, II.
Berthold, Rudolf, 1977, 'Zur Herausbildung der kapitalistischen Klassenschichtung des Dorfes in Preussen', *Zeitschrift fur Geschichtswissenschaft*, 25.
Berthold, Rudolf, 1978, 'Die Entwicklung der deutschen Landwirtschaft von der Agrarreformen bis zum Ausbruch der allgemeinen Krisis des Kapitalismus', in *Agrargeschichte. Von der Burgerlichen Agrarreformen zur sozialistischen Landwirtschaft in der DDR*, in V. Klemm, ed., Berlin.
Berthold, Rudolf, 1978a, 'Die Veranderungen im Bodeneigentum und in der Zahl der Bauernstellen der Kleinstellen und der Ritterguter in den preussischen Provinzen Sachsen, Brandenburg, und Pommern wahrend der Agrarreformen des 19, Jahrhunderts', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Sonder, 1978.
Berthold, R., H. Harnisch and H.H. Muller, 1970, 'Der preussische Weg der Landwirtschaft und neuere westdeutsche Forschungen', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, IV.
Bhaduri, Amit, 1983, *The Economic Structure of Backward Agriculture*, London: Academic Press.
Bielefeldt, K., 1911, *Das Eindringen des Kapitalismus in der Landwirtschaft mit besonderer Berucksichtigung der Provinz Sachsen und angrenzenden Gebiete*, Berlin.
Binswanger, Hans P., 1984, *Agricultural Mechanization. A Comparative Historical Perspective*, World Bank Staff Working Papers No. 673, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
Bird, Richard, M., 1974, *Taxing Agricultural Land in Developing Countries*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
Bleiber, Helmut, 1965, 'Zur Problematik des preussischen Weges der Kapitalismus in der Landwirtschaft', *Zeitschrift fur Geschichtswissenenschaft*, 13.
Bloch, Marc., 1966, *French Rural History*, translated from the French, *Les Caracteres Originaux De L'Histoire* by Janet Sondheimer, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. Given originally as lectures before the Institute for the Comparative Study of Civilisations at Oslo in 1929, and first published in French in 1931.
Bloch, Marc, 1967, 'A Contribution Towards a Comparative History of European Societies', in Marc Bloch, *Land and Work in Mediaeval Europe. Selected Papers*, translated by J.E. Anderson, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. This article is an extended version of an address given in 1928 to the International Congress of Historical Sciences (mediaeval section) in Oslo.
Blum, Jerome, 1957, 'The Rise of Serfdom in Eastern Europe', *American Historical Review*, July, vol. LXII, no. 4.
Blum, Jerome, 1978, *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
Blumberg, Horst, 1960, 'Die Finanzierung der Neugrundungen und Erweiterungen von Industriebetrieben in Form der Aktiengesselschaften wahrend der funfziger Jahre des

19 Jahrhunderts', in Hans Motteck and others, eds., *Studien zur Geschichte der Industriellen Revolution in Deutschland*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
Borchardt, Knut, 1973, 'Germany 1700–1914', in Cipolla, ed. [1973].
Bottomore, Tom, with Laurence Harris, V.G. Kiernan and Ralph Miliband, eds, 1983, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, 1st edition, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Bowman, Shearer Davis, 1993, *Masters and Lords: Mid-19th-Century U.S. Planters and Prussian Junkers*, New York: Oxford University Press.
Braun, Rudolf, 1975, 'Taxation, Socio-Political Structure and State-Building: Great Britain and Brandenburg-Prussia', in Tilly, ed. [1975].
Braverman, Harry, 1974, *Labour and Monopoly Capital. The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, New York and London: Monthly Review Press.
Breinlinger, K, 1903, *Die Landarbeiter in Pommern und Mecklenburg*, Heidelberg.
Breman, Jan and Sudipto Mundle, eds., 1991, *Rural Transformation in Asia*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Brennecke, Werner, 1909, *Die Landwirtschaft im Herzogtum Braunschweig*, Stuttgart.
Brenner, Robert, 1976, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe', *Past and Present*, February, no. 70. Reprinted in Aston and Philpin, eds. [1985], and referred to here also as Brenner [1985a].
Brenner, Robert, 1977, 'The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism', *New Left Review*, July-August, no. 104.
Brenner, Robert, 1978, 'Dobb on the Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 2.
Brenner, Robert, 1982, 'The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism', *Past and Present*, November, no. 97. Reprinted in Aston and Philpin, eds. [1985], and referred to here also as Brenner [1985b].
Brenner, Robert, 1985a. See Brenner [1976].
Brenner, Robert, 1985b. See Brenner [1982].
Brenner, Robert, 1989, 'Economic Backwardness in Eastern Europe in Light of Developments in the West', in Chirot, ed. [1989].
Brewster, John, 1970, 'The Machine Process in Agriculture and Industry', in Karl A. Fox and D. Gale Johnson (eds), *Readings in the Economics of Agriculture*, London, Allen & Unwin. Originally published in *Journal of Farm Economics*, vol. XXXIII, no. 1, February, 1950.
Broesicke, Max, 1902 and 1907, 'Die Binnenwanderung im Preussischen Staate (2 parts), *Zeitschrift des Koniglichen Preussischen Statistischen Bureaus*, 42 (1902), 47 (1907).
Brose, Eric Dorn, 1993, *The Politics of Technological Change in Prussia. Out of the Shadow of Antiquity*, Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
Brunschwig, Henri, 1947, *La Crise de L'Etat Prussien at La Genese de La Mentalite Romantique*, Paris.
Buch-Hansen, Mogens, and Henrik Secher Marcussen, 1982, 'Contract Farming and the Peasantry: Cases from Western Kenya', *Review of African Political Economy*, January, vol. 23.
Burleigh, Michael, 1984, *Prussian Society and the German Order: An Aristocratic Corporation in Crisis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Busch, Otto, 1962, *Militarsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen 1713–1807*, Berlin.
Byres, T.J., 1972a, 'Industrialisation, the Peasantry and the Economic Debate in Post-Independence Period', pp. 223–47, in Ashok V. Bhuleshkar, ed., *Towards Socialist Transformation of Indian Economy*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
Byres, T.J., 1972b, 'The Dialectic of India's Green Revolution', *South Asian Review*, January, vol. 5, no. 2.

Byres, T.J., 1974, 'Land Reform, Industrialization and the Marketed Surplus in India: An Essay on the Power of Rural Bias', in David Lehmann, ed., *Agrarian Reform and Agrarian Reformism*, London: Faber & Faber.
Byres, T.J., 1977, 'Agrarian Transition and the Agrarian Question', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, April, vol. 4, no. 3. A review article on Abdel-Fadil [1977].
Byres, T.J., 1979, 'Of Neo-Populist Pipe Dreams: Daedalus in the Third World and the Myth of Urban Bias', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, January. A review article on Lipton [1977].
Byres, T.J., 1980, 'Peasants As Unfinished History', *Economic and Political Weekly*, August 2, vol. XV, no. 31.
Byres, T.J., 1981, 'The New Technology, Class Formation and Class Action in the Indian Countryside', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, July, vol. 8, no. 4.
Byres, T.J, 1982, 'India: Capitalist Industrialization or Structural Stasis?', pp. 135–64, in Manfred Bienefeld and Martin Godfrey, eds., *The Struggle for Development. National Strategies in an International Context*, Chichester and New York: John Wiley and Sons.
Byres, T.J., 1983, 'Historical Perspectives on Sharecropping', in T.J. Byres (ed.), *Sharecropping and Sharecroppers*, London: Frank Cass. Originally published as special issue of *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 10, nos. 2 and 3, January/April.
Byres, T.J., 1986a, 'The Agrarian Question and Differentiation of the Peasantry', Introduction to Rahman [1986].
Byres, T.J., 1986b, 'The Agrarian Question, Forms of Capitalist Agrarian Transition and the State: An Essay with Reference to Asia', *Social Scientist*, November-December, nos. 162–3.
Byres, T.J. 1988, 'Charan Singh (1902–87): An Assessment', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, January, vol. 15, no. 2.
Byres, T.J., 1991, 'The Agrarian Question and Differing Forms of Capitalist Agrarian Transition: An Essay with Reference to Asia', in Breman and Mundle, eds [1991].
Byres, T.J., 1992, review of Patnaik, ed [1990], *Journal of Peasant Studies*, January, vol. 19, no. 2.
Byres, T.J., 1994, 'State, Class and Development Planning in India', in T.J. Byres, ed., *The State and Development in India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Byres, T.J., 1995, *Political Economy, the Agrarian Question and the Comparative Method*, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Inaugural Lecture delivered on 27 October, 1994.
Byres, T.J., 1997, 'The Need for the Comparative Method in the Social Sciences, Its Clarifying Power and Some Problems: An Essay with the Agrarian Question in India in Mind', in Amit Bhaduri, Nirmal Chandra, N. Krishnaji, Deepak Nayyar, Prabhat Patnaik, and Krishna Raj, eds., *Economics as Ideology and Experience. Essays in Honour of Ashok Mitra*, London: Frank Cass.
Byres, T.J., and Peter Nolan, 1976, *Inequality: India and China Compared, 1950–70*, Milton Keynes: The Open University Press. D302 25-28 Part II. In the course, *Patterns of Inequality*.
Cameron, Rondo, 1961, *France and the Economic Development of Europe, 1800–1914*, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Campbell, Randolph B., 1989, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821–1865*, Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press.
Carsten, F.L., 1947, 'The Origins of the Junkers', *English Historical Review*, vol. lxii. Reprinted in Carsten [1985].
Carsten, F.L., 1954, *The Origins of Prussia*, London: Oxford University Press.
Carsten, F.L., 1985, *Essays in German History*, London: The Hambledon Press.
Carsten, F.L., 1989, *A History of the Prussian Junkers*, Aldershot: Scolar Press.

Carus-Wilson, E.M., ed., 1954, *Essays in Economic History, vol. 1*, London: Edward Arnold.
Chenery, Hollis and Moises Syrquin, 1975, *Patterns of Development, 1950–1970*, Oxford: Oxford University Press for the World Bank.
Chirot, Daniel, ed., 1989, *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe: Economics and Politics from the Middle Ages until the Early Twentieth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
Christiani, W., 1855, *Die Accordarbeiten im Landwirtshaftlichen Gewerbe*, Berlin.
Cipolla, Carlo M., ed., 1973, *The Fontana Economic History of Europe. Vol. 4 (1) The Emergence of Industrial Societies. Part One*, London and Glasgow: Collins/Fontana Books.
Ciriacy-Wantrup, Siegfried, 1936, *Agrarkrisen und Stockungsspannen: Zur Frage der Langen 'Welle' in der Wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung*, Berlin.
Cistozvonov, A.N., 1975, in Heitz *et al.* [1975].
Clapham, John H., 1921, *Economic Development in France and Germany, 1815–1914*, first edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Clapham, John H., 1936, *Economic Development in France and Germany, 1815–1914*, fourth edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Collins, E.J.T., 1969, 'Labour Supply and Demand in European Agriculture 1800–1880', in Jones and Woolf, eds [1968].
Craig, Gordon, 1964, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, London: Oxford University Press. First published in 1955.
Croon, Gustav, 1918, *Der rheinische Provinziallandtag bis zum Jahr 1874*, Dusseldorf.
Cueva, Agustin, 1977, *El Desarrollo del Capitalismo en America Latina*, Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.
Curtiss, J.S., 1963, *Essays in Russian and Soviet History in Honor of Geroid Tanquaray Robinson*, New York: Columbia University Press.
Das Gupta, Ranajit, 1976, *Problems of Economic Transition. Indian Case Study*, Calcutta: National Publishers.
Deane, Phyllis, 1979, *The First Industrial Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Deutscher, Isaac, 1970, *The Prophet Snarmer: Trotohy, 1921–1924*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Diefendorf, Jeffry M., 1980, *Businessmen and Politics in the Rhineland, 1789–1834*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
Dipper, Christo, 1980, *Die Bauernbefreiung in Deutschland, 1790–1850*, Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer.
Dobb, Maurice, 1950, 'A Reply', *Science and Society*, Spring. Reprinted in Hilton (introd.) [1976].
Dobb, Maurice, 1951, *Some Aspects of Economic Development*, Delhi: Ranjit Printers and Publishers. These are Dobb's Delhi lectures: 'Economic Development and its Momentum Under Capitalism', 'Some Problems of Industrialisation in Agricultural Countries' and 'The Process of Industrialisation in the U.S.S.R'. The first two are reprinted in Dobb [1967].
Dobb, Maurice, 1953, 'A Further Comment', *Science and Society*, Spring. Reprinted in Hilton, (introd.) [1976].
Dobb, Maurice, 1962, 'From Feudalism to Capitalism', *Marxism Today*, September. Reprinted in Hilton (introd.) [1976].
Dobb, Maurice, 1963, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, revised edition, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. First edition published in 1946.
Dobb, Maurice *et al.*, 1954, *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism. A Symposium*, London: Fore Publications. With a Foreword by Maurice Dobb and contributions by Maurice Dobb, Paul M. Sweezy, H.K. Takahashi, Rodney Hilton, and Christopher Hill.

Dobb, Maurice, 1967, *Papers on Capitalism, Development and Planning*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Dorpalen, Andreas, 1985, *German History in Marxist Perspective. The East German Approach*, London: I.B. Tauris.
Dovring, Folke, 1960, 2nd edition, *Land and Labour in Europe, 1900–1950. A Comparative Survey of Recent Agrarian History*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
Dovring, Folke, 1966, 'The Transformation of European Agriculture', in Habakkuk and Postan, eds [1966].
Eaton, Clement, 1975, *A History of the Old South*, 3rd edition, New York: Macmillan.
Elmsley, Clive, 1984, *Essays in Comparative History. Economy, Politics and Society in Britain and America 1850–1920*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978, 15th edition, in 30 volumes, Chicago, London, Toronto, Geneva, Sydney, Tokyo, Manila, Seoul: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc.
Engels, Frederick, 1965, 'On the History of the Prussian Peasantry', in *The Peasant War in Germany*, Moscow: Progress Publishers. Written in 1885.
Engels, Frederick, 1970, 'The Peasant Question in France and Germany', in *Selected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, vol. 3*, Moscow: Progress Publishers. Written in 1894 and first published 1894–5.
Engels, Frederick, 1981, 'Law of Value and Rate of Profit', in Marx [1981].
Evans, Richard and W.R. Lee, eds., 1986, *The German Peasantry*, London: Croom Helm.
Farr, Ian, 1986, '"Tradition" and the Peasantry: On the Modern Historiography of Rural Germany', in Evans and Lee, eds [1986].
Febvre, Lucien, 1966, Preface, in Bloch [1966].
Finckenstein, H.W. Graf Fink von, 1960, *Die Entwicklung der Landwirtschaft in Preussen und Deutschland*, Munich.
Fine, Ben, 1993, 'Towards A Political Economy of Food', typescript, Department of Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
Fink, Carole, 1989, *Marc Bloch. A Life in History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Fischer, G., 1910, *Die Entwicklungsbedingungen des landwirtschaftlichen Maschinenwesens und seine Bedeutung fur die Landwirtschaft* Arbeiten der Deutschen Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft, 177, Berlin.
Ford, Lacy K. Jr., 1988, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800–1860*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth, and Eugene D. Genovese, 1983, *Fruits of Merchant Capital. Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Fremdling, Rainer, 1986, *Technologischer Wandel und internationaler Handel im 18. Und 19. Jahrhundert. Die Eisenindustrien in Grosbritannien, Belgien, Frankreich und Deutschland*, Berlin.
Germany. Statistisches Reichsamt, 1913, *Die Deutsche Landwirtschaft: Hauptergebnisse der Reichsstatistik*, Berlin.
Gerschenkron, Alexander, 1966, *Bread and Democracy in Germany*, new edition, New York: Howard Fertig. First edition published by University of California Press, 1943.
Gerth, H., and C.W. Mills, eds, 1972, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, New York: Oxford University Press.
Goeldel, Herbert, 1917, *Wohlstandsverhaltnisse in Ostpreussen*, Jena.
Golding, Arthur, 1930, 'Diewanderbewegung in Ostpreussen seit der Jahrhundertwende', *Zeitschrift des Koniglichen Preussischen Statistischen Bureaus*, 69.
Goldschmidt, S., 1899, *Die Landarbeiter in der Provinz Sachsen, sowie der Herzogiumern Braunschweig und Anhalt*, Tubingen.
Goltz, T. von der, 1872, *Die Verhandlugen der Berliner Conferenz landlicher Arbeitgeber*, Danzig.

Goltz, T. von der, 1874, *Die landliche Arbeiterfrage und ihre Losung*, 2nd edition, Danzig.
Goltz, T. von der, 1875, *Die Lage der landlichen Arbeiter im Deutsshen Reich*, Berlin.
Goltz, T. von der, 1893, *Die landliche Arbeiterklasse und der Staat*, Jena.
Goltz, T, von der, 1902, *Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft*, 2 volumes, Stuttgart and Berlin.
Guha, Ranajit, 1963, *A Rule of Property For Bengal. An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement*, Paris: Mouton & Co.
Guttmann, G., 1908, *Uber die Lage der Landarbeiter in Pommern*, Greifswald.
Habakkuk, H.J., 1954, 'Economic Fortunes of English Landowners in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in Carus-Wilson, ed. [1954].
Habakkuk, H.J., 1962, *American and British Technology in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Cambridge University Press.
Habakkuk, H.J., 1968, 'Economic Functions of English Landowners in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in Minchinton ed. [1968]. Originally published in *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, vol. VI, 1953.
Habakkuk, H.J. and M. Postan, eds 1965, *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Volume VI, The Industrial Revolutions and After: Incomes, Population and Technological Change (I)*, London: Cambridge University Press.
Habakkuk, H.J. and M. Postan, eds 1966, *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Volume VI, The Industrial Revolutions and After: Incomes, Population and Technological Change (II)*, London: Cambridge University Press
Hagen, William W., 1985, 'How Mighty the Junkers? Peasant Rents and Seigneurial Profits in Sixteenth-Century Brandenburg', *Past and Present*, August, no. 108.
Hagen, William W., 1986, 'The Junkers' Faithless Servants: Peasant Insubordination and the Breakdown of Serfdom in Brandenburg-Prussia, 1763–1811', in Evans and Lee, eds [1986].
Haines, Michael R., 1982 'Agriculture and Development in Prussian Upper Silesia, 1846–1913', *Journal of Economic History*, June, vol. XLII, no. 2
Hamerow, Theodore S., 1958, *Restoration, Revolution, Reaction: Economics and Politics in Germany, 1815–1871*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Hansen, Johannes, 1916, *Die Landwirtschaft in Ostpreussen*, Jena.
Harnisch, Hartmut, 1968, *Die Herrschaft Boitzenburg. Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung der sozialokonomischen Struktur landlicher gebiete in der Mark Brandenburg vom 14, bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, Weimar.
Harnisch, Hartmut, 1969, 'Die Gutsherrschaft in Brandenburg: Ergebnisse und Probleme', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*.
Harnisch, Hartmut, 1972, 'Zur Herausbildung und Funktionsweise von Gutswirtschaft und Gutsherrschaft', *Jahrbuch fur Regionalgeschichte*, iv.
Harnisch, Hartmut, 1974, 'Statistische Untersuchungen zum Verlauf der kapitalistischen Agrarreformen in den preussischen Ostprovinzen (1811 bis 1865), *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, IV.
Harnisch, Hartmut, 1975, 'Klassenkampfe der Bauern in der Mark Brandenburg zwischen fruhburgerlicher Revolution und Dreissigjahrigem Krieg', *Jahrbuch fur Regionalgeschichte*, v.
Harnisch, Hartmut, 1977, 'Die agrarpolitischen Reformmassnahmen der preussischen Staatsfuhrung in dem Jahrzehnt vor 1806/07', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, III.
Harnisch, Hartmut, 1977a, 'Die Bedeutung der kapitalistischen Agrarreform fur die Herausbildung des inneren Markets und die Industrielle Revolution in den ostlichen Provinzen Preussen in der ersten Halfte des 19. Jahrhunders', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 4.
Harnisch, Hartmut, 1978, 'Vom Oktoberedikt des Jahres 1807 zur Deklaration von 1816. Problematik und Charakter der preussischen Agrarreformgesetzgebung zwischen 1807 und 1816', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*.

Harnisch, Hartmut, 1980, *Bauern – Feudaladel – Stadteburgertum: Untersuchungen uber die Zusammenhange zwischen Feudalrente, bauerlicher und gutsherrlicher Warenproduktion und den Ware-Geld-Beziehungen in der Magdeburger Borde und dem nordostlichen Harzvorland von der fruhburgerlichen Revolution bis zum Dreissigjahrigen Krieg*, Weimar.
Harnisch, Hartmut, 1984, *Kapitalistische Agrarreform und Industrielle Revolution. Agrarhistorische Untersuchungen uber das ostelbische Preussen Zwischen Spatfeudalismus und burgerlich-demokratischer Revolution*, Weimar and Cologne.
Harnisch, Hartmut, 1986, 'Peasants and Markets: The Background to the Agrarian Reforms in Feudal Prussia East of the Elbe, 1760–1807', in Evans and Lee, eds [1986].
Haushofer, Heinz, 1972, *Die Deutsche Landwirtschaft im Technischen Zeitalter*, Deutsche Agrargeschichte, volume 5.
Heitz, Gerhard, 1964, 'Bauernwirtschaft und Junkerwirtschaft', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, nos 2–3.
Heitz G., 1969, 'Varianten des preussischen Weges', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, III.
Heitz, Gerhard, 1972, 'Zum Charakter der "zweiten Leibeigenschaft"', *Zeitschrift fur Geschichtswissenschaft*, no. 1.
Heitz, Gerhard, 1975, in Heitz *et al.* [1975].
Heitz, Gerhard *et al.*, 1975, *Der Bauer im Klassenkampf*, Berlin.
Herbert, Ulrich, 1990, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880–1980: Seasonal Workers/Forced Laborers/ Guest Workers*, translated from the 1986 German edition by William Templar, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Herre, Paul, 1914, *Von Preussens Befreiungs – und Verfassungskamf: Aus den Papieren des Oberburggrafen Magnus von Brunneck*, Berlin.
Herring, Ronald J., 1980, 'Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and "Eradication of Feudalism" in Pakistan', *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 22, vol. XV, no. 12.
Herring Ronald, 1983, *Land to the Tiller. The Political Economy of Agrarian Reform*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Herzfeld, J., 1905, *Landarbeiter in Mecklenburg*, Rostock.
Hilton, Rodney, 1969, *The Decline of Serfdom in Medieval England*, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan.
Hilton, Rodney, 1973, *Bond Men Made Free. Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Rising of 1381*, London: Temple Smith.
Hilton, Rodney, Introduction, 1976, *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, London: New Left Books. With an Introduction by Rodney Hilton, and contributions by Paul Sweezy, Maurice Dobb, Kohachiro Takahashi, Rodney Hilton, Christopher Hill, Georges Lefebvre, Giuliano Procacci, Eric Hobsbawm, John Merrington.
Hilton, Rodney, 1978, 'Reasons for Inequality among Medieval Peasants', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, April, vol. 5, no. 3. This is reprinted in Hilton [1990].
Hilton, Rodney, 1983a, 'Feudal Society', entry in Bottomore *et al.* [1983].
Hilton, Rodney, 1983b, 'Serfdom', entry in Bottomore *et al.* [1983].
Hilton, Rodney, 1984, 'Feudalism in Europe: Problems for Historical Materialists', *New Left Review*, September/October, no. 147. This is reprinted in Hilton [1990].
Hilton, Rodney, 1990, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism*, revised second edition, London: Verso. First edition published in 1985.
Hintze, Otto, 1916, *Die Hohenzollern und Ihr Werk*, Berlin.
Hintze, Otto, 1929, 'Wesen und Verbreitung des Feudalismus', *Sitzungsberichte der Preussichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse*, vol. XIX.
Hintze, Otto, 1967, 'Preussiche Reformbestrebungen vor 1806', in his *Regierung und Verwaltung*, Gottingen.
Hobsbawm, E.J., 1954, 'The General Crisis of the European Economy in the 17th Century', *Past and Present*, May, no. 5.

Hobsbawm, E.J., 1962, *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
Hobsbawm, E.J., 1968, *Industry and Empire. An Economic History of Britain Since 1750*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
Hobsbawm, E.J., and George Rude, 1973, *Captain Swing*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin University Books.
Hobsbawm, E.J., 1975a, *The Age of Capital, 1848–1875*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
Hobsbawm, Eric, 1975b, 'From Babylon to Manchester', review of Anderson [1974a and 1974b], *New Statesman*, 7 February.
Hobsbawm, E.J., 1987, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
Hobsbawm, E.J., 1994, *The Age of Extremes – The Short 20th Century, 1914–1981*, London: Michael Joseph.
Hoffmeister, Arno, 1908, 'Die Wirtschaftliche Lage der Landarbeiter in Ostpreussen', Diss, Halle.
Hoffmann, J.G., 1840, *Die Lehre von den Steuern*, Berlin.
Hofgangerleben in Mecklenburg , 1896, Berlin.
Hoppenstedt, 1897, 'Die Betriebsorganisation und die landwirtschaftlichte Rente', *Landwirtschaftlichte Jahrbucher*, XXVI.
Hunt, James C., 1974, 'Peasants, Grain Tariffs and Meat Quotas: Imperial Germany Protectionism Reexamined', *Central European History*, VII, 4, December, 311–21.
Huschenbrett, F., 1934, *Geschichte der Landgemeinde Diesdorf. Kreis Wanzleben*, Magdeburg and Diesdorf.
Hussain, Athar and Keith Tribe, 1981, *Marxism and the Agrarian Question. Volume 1. German Social Democracy and the Peasantry, 1890–1907*, London: The Macmillan Press.
Ishikawa, Shigeru, 1967, *Economic Development in Asian Perspective*, Tokyo: Kinokuniya Bookstore Ltd.
Ishikawa, Shigeru, 1981, *Essays on Technology, Employment and Institutions in Economic Development*, Kinokuniya Company Ltd.
Jantke, Carl 1955, *Der Vierte Stand: Die Gestaltende Krafte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung im 19. Jahrhundert*, Freiburg.
Janvry, Alain de, 1981, *The Agrarian Question and Reformism in Latin America*, Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
Johnson, Arthur H., 1963, *The Disappearance of the Small Landowner*, London: Merlin Press. First published in 1909.
Jones, E.L., 1981, *The European Miracle. Environments, Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Jones, E.L., 1988, *Growth Recurring. Economic Change in World History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Jones, E.L. and S.J. Woolf, eds., 1969, *Agrarian Change and Economic Development*, London: Methuen & Co.
Jordan, Erich, 1914, *Die Entstehung der Konservativen Partei und die Preussichen Agrarverhaltnisse von 1848*, Munich and Leipzig.
Joshi, P.C., 1974, 'Land Reform and Agrarian change in India and Pakistan since 1947: II', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, April, vol. 1, no. 3.
Kaldor, N., 1965, 'The Role of Taxation in Economic Development', in E.A.G. Robinson (ed.), *Problems in Economic Development*, London: Macmillan. Originally published, in rather briefer form, as 'Taxation for Economic Development', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1963; which is reprinted in I. Livingstone (ed.), *Economic Policy for Development*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971.
Karshenas, Massoud, 1995, *Industrialization and Agricultural Surplus. A Comparative Study of Economic Development in Asia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Katz, E., 1904, *Landarbeiter und Lanwirtschaft in Oberhessen*, Stuttgart and Berlin.
Kautsky, Karl, 1899, *Die Agrarfrage. Eine Uebersicht uber die Tendenzen der modernen Landwirtschaft und die Agrarpolitik u.s.w.*, Stuttgart: Dietz.
Kautsky, Karl, 1900, *La Question Agraire. Etude Sur Les Tendances De L'Agriculture Moderne*, Paris: V. Giard & E. Briere. Republished by Maspero in facsimile, Paris, 1970.
Kautsky, Karl, 1988, *The Agrarian Question*, 1st English translation, by Pete Burgess, 2 volumes, London: Zwan Publications. First published in 1899 in German.
Kay, Cristobal, 1974, 'Comparative Development of the European Manorial System and the Latin American Hacienda System', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, October, vol. 2, no. 1.
Kay, Cristobal, 1980, 'The Landlord Road and the Subordinate Peasant Road to Capitalism in Latin America', *Etudes Rurales*, January-March, no. 77.
Kaye, Harvey J., 1984, *The British Marxist Historians. An Introductory Analysis*, Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell.
Kemp, Tom, 1969, *Industrialization in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, London: Longman.
Kemp, Tom, 1978, *Historical Patterns of Industrialization*, London: Longman.
Kerridge, Eric, 1967, *The Agricultural Revolution*, London: Allen & Unwin.
Kerridge, Eric, 1969, *Agrarian Problems in the Sixteenth Century and After*, London: Allen & Unwin.
Kitchen, Martin, 1978, *The Political Economy of Germany, 1815–1914*, London and Montreal: Croom Helm and McGill-Queen's University Press.
Klatte, Klaus, 1974, 'Die Angange des Agrarkapitalismus und der Preussicher Konservatismus', D.Phil. Diss., Hamburg University.
Knapp, Georg Friedrich, 1887, *Die Bauernbefreiung und der Ursprung der Landarbeiter in den alteren Teilen Preussens (The Emancipation of the Serfs and the Origins of the Rural Labourers in the Older Parts of Prussia)*, Leipzig.
Knapp, Georg Friedrich, 1891, 'Die Erbuntertanigkeit und die kapitalistische Wirtschaft', in idem, *Landarbeiter in Knechtschaft und Freiheit*, Munich and Leipzig. Reprinted in idem, *Einfuhrung in einige Hauptgebiete der Nationalokonomie (Selected Works, Vol. I)*, Munich and Leipzig, 1925.
Knapp, Georg Friedrich, 1893, 'Die Landliche Arbeiterfage', *Schriften des Vereins fur Socialpolitik*, LXVIII.
Knapp, Georg Friedrich, 1927, *Die Bauernbefreiung und den alteren Teilen Preussens*, 2nd edition, vol. 1, Munich and Leipzig.
Kohler, W., 1896, *Gesindiwesen und Gesinderecht in Deutschland*, Jena.
Kolchin, Peter, 1987, *Unfree Labor. American Slavery and Russian Serfdom*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
Konapatzki, Siegfried, 1936, 'Die Innerdeutsche Westwanderung der Ostpreussischen Bevolkerung', Diss., Leipzig.
Kosambi, D.D., 1977, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
Koselleck, Reinhardt, 1967, *Preussen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, Stuttgart.
Kosminsky, E.A., 1956, *Studies in the Agrarian History of England in the Thirteenth Century*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Kotelmann, A., 1853, *Die Preussiche Landwirtschaft nach dem amtlichen Quellen statistich dargestellt*, Berlin.
Kramm, Hans-Joachim and Roy E.H. Mellor, 1978, 'German Democratic Republic', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1978: vol. 8].
Kriedte, Peter, Hans Medick and Jurgen Schlumbohm, 1981, *Industrialization Before Indistrialization. Rural Industry in the Genesis of Capitalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. First published in German in 1977.
Kucherov, Alexander, 1963, 'Alexander Herzen's Parallel Between the United States and Russia', in Curtiss [1963].

Kunz, Andreas, 1989, 'Die Verknupfung von Markten durch Transport, Verkehrsstatistik und Marktintegration in Agrarregionen', in Toni Pierenkemper, ed., *Landwirtschaft und Industrielle Entwicklung – Zur okonomischen Bedeutung von Bauernbefreiung Agrarreform und Agrarrevolution*.

Kuznets, Simon, 1951, 'The State as a Unit in the Study of Economic Growth', *Journal of Economic History*, 11.

Kuznets, Simon, 1956–1967, 'Quantitative Aspects of the Economic Growth of Nations, I-X', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vols. V (1956, no. 1, October, and 1957, no. 4, Supplement, July); VI (1958, no. 4, Part II, July); VII (1959, no. 3, Part II, April); VIII (1960, no. 4, Part II, July); IX (1961, no. 4, Part II, July); X (1962, no. 2, Part II, January), XI (1963, no. 2, Part II, January); XIII (1964, no. 1, Part II, October); XV (1967, no. 2, Part II, January).

Kuznets, Simon, 1966, *Modern Economic Growth: Rate, Structure and Spread*, New Havena and London: Yale University Press.

Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel, 1985, 'A Reply to Robert Brenner', in Aston and Philpin, eds [1985]. Originally published as 'A Reply to Professor Brenner', in *Past and Present*, May, 1978, no. 79.

Lee Robert E., 1991, 'The Paradigm of German Industrialization: Some Recent Issues and Debates in the Modern Historiogrpahy of German Industrial Development', in W.R. Lee, ed., *German Industry and German Industrialisation. Essays in German Business and Economic History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, London and New York: Routledge.

Lenin, V.I., 1960, Review of Karl Kautsky, *Die Agrarfrage* (1899), in vol. 4 of *Collected Works*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. Written and first published in 1899.

Lenin, V.I., 1961a, *The Agrarian Question and the 'Critics of Marx'*, in vol. 5 of *Collected Works*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. Written in 1901.

Lenin, V.I., 1961b, *The Agrarian Programme of Russian Social-Democracy*, in vol. 6 of *Collected Works*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. Written and first published in 1902.

Lenin, V.I., 1962, *The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in The First Russian Revolution, 1905–1907*, in vol. 13 of *Collected Works*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. Written in 1907, and first published in 1908.

Lenin, V.I., 1963a, *The Agrarian Question in Russia Towards the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, in vol. 15 of *Collected Works*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. Written in 1908, and first published in 1918.

Lenin, V.I., 1963b, *The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the Russian Revolution. Autoabstract*, in vol. 15 of *Collected Works*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. This was published in 1908 and is a brief summary of Lenin [1962].

Lenin, V.I., 1963c, 'In Memory of Herzen', in vol. 18 of *Collected Works*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. This was published in 1912.

Lenin, V.I., 1964a., *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, in vol. 3 of *Collected Works*, Moscow: Progress Publishers. Written 1896–9 and first edition published in 1899.

Lenin, V.I., 1964b., *New Data On The Laws Governing The Development of Capitalism in Agriculture. Part One. Capitalism and Agriculture in the United States of America*, in vol. 22 of *Collected Works*, Moscow: Progress Publishers. Written in 1915 and first published in 1915.

Lewis, W. Arthur, 1958, 'Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour', in A.N. Agarwala and S.P. Singh, eds, *The Economics of Underdevelopment*, London: Oxford University Press. This was first published in *The Manchester School*, vol. 22, no. 2, May, 1954.

Leyser, K.J., and Charles Calvert Bayley, Theodore S. Hamerow, Helmut Dietmar Starke and editors, 1978, 'Germany, History of', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1978: vol. 8].

Lipton, Michael, 1977, *Why Poor People Stay Poor. A Study of Urban Bias in World Development*, London: Temple Smith.

Lütge, Friedrich, 1949, *Die bayerische Grundherrschaft*, Stuttgart.

Lutge, Friedrich, 1963, *Geschichte der deutschen Agrarverfassung*, Stuttgart.

Maddalena, Aldo de, 1974, 'Rural Europe, 1500–1750', in Carlo Cipolla, ed., *The Fontana Economic History of Europe, Vol. 2, The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, no place of publication: Collins/Fontana Books.

Mandel, Ernest, 1976, 'Introduction' to Marx [1976].

Mantoux, Paul, 1983, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century. An Outline of the Beginnings of the Modern Factory System in England*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. First edition published in 1928. This revised edition first published in 1961.

Marx, Karl, 1961, *Capital. Volume 1*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.

Marx, Karl, 1962, *Capital. Volume 3*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.

Marx, Karl, 1971, *Theories of Surplus Value. Part 3*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Marx, Karl, 1972, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Peking: Foreign Language Press.

Marx, Karl, 1973, *Grundrisse. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, translated with a Foreword by Martin Nicolaus, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books. Published later in the Collected Works of Marx and Engels, volumes 28 and 29 [Marx and Engels, 1986 and 1987].

Marx, Karl, 1976, *Capital. Volume 1*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Marx, Karl, 1978, *Capital. Volume 2*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Marx, Karl, 1979, 'The British Rule in India', in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works. Volume 12*, London: Lawrence & Wishart. Originally published in the *New York Daily Tribune*, on June 10, 1853. Also published in K. Marx and F. Engels, *On Colonialsm*, no date, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.

Marx, Karl, 1979a, 'The Future Results of British Rule in India', in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works. Volume 12*, London: Lawrence & Wishart. Originally published in the *New York Daily Tribune*, on August 8, 1853. Also published in K. Marx and F. Engels, *On Colonialsm*, no date, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.

Marx, Karl, 1979b, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works. Volume 11*, London: Lawrence & Wishart. Originally published in 1852.

Marx, Karl, 1981, *Capital. Volume 3*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Marx, Karl, 1986 and 1987, *Economic Manuscripts of 1857–58*, widely known as the *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Oekonomie*, in volumes 27 and 28, respectively of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, London: Lawrence & Wishart. See also Marx [1973].

Mead, T., 1978, 'The Transition to Capitalism in Brazil: Notes on a Third Road', *Latin American Perspectives*, V, 3.

Meek, R.L., 1963, *The Economics of Physiocracy. Essays and Translations*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Meinecke, Friedrich, 1906, *Das Zeitalter der deutschen Erhebung 1795–1815*, Leipzig.

Meitzen, August, 1869, *Der boden und die landwirtschaftliche Verhaltnisse des Preussichen Staates*, Berlin.

Milward, A. and S.B. Saul, 1973, *The Economic Development of Continental Europe, 1780–1870*, London: Allen & Unwin.

Milward, A. and S.B. Saul, 1977, *The Development of the Economies of Continental Europe, 1850–1914*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Mitra, Ashok, 1977, *Terms of Trade and Class Relations*, London: Frank Cass & Co.

Moeller, Robert G., 1981, 'Peasants and Tariffs in the Kaiserreich: How Backward Were the Bauern?', *Agricultural History*, LV, 4, October, 37084.

Moeller, Robert G., 1986, *German Peasants and Agrarian Politics, 1914–1924*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Moeller, Robert G., ed., 1986, *Peasants and Lords in Modern Germany. Recent Studies in Agricultural History*, Boston, London and Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
Moll, G., 1968, *Die kapitalistische Bauernbefreiung im Klosteramt Dobbertin (Mecklenburg)*, Rostock.
Moll, G., 1978, 'Zum preussischen Weg der Entwicklung des Kapitalismus in der deutschen Landwirtschaft', *Zeitschrift fur Geschichtswissenschaft*, 26.
Moll, G., 1982, 'Burgerliche Umwalzung und kapitalistishe Agrarentwicklung', *Zeitschrift fur Geschichtswissenschaft*, 30.
Mooers, Colin, 1991, *The Making of Bourgeois Europe*, London and New York: Verso.
Moore, Barrington, 1967, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press.
Morris, M.L., 1976, 'The Development of Capitalism in South African Agriculture: Class Struggle in the Countryside', *Economy and Society*, August, vol. 5, no. 3.
Muller, Hans-Heinrich, 1965, 'Die Bodennutzungssysteme und die Separation in Brandenburg vor der Agrarreformen von 1807', *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgesichte*, 3.
Muller, Hans-Heinrich, 1967, *Markische Landwirtschaft vor den Agrarreformen von 1807. Entwicklungstendenzen des Ackerbaues in der zweiten Halfte des 18 Jahrhunderts*, Potsdam.
Muller, Hans-Heinreich, 1987, 'Anfange der deutschen Landmaschinenindustrie. Beispiele aus den 30er bzw. 50er Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts', in *Jahrbuch fur Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 3.
Muncy, Lysbeth Walker, 1970, *The Junker in the Prussian Administration Under William II, 1888–1914*, New York: Howard Fertig.
Murmis, Miguel, 1980, 'El Agro Serrano y la Via Prussiana de Desarrollo Capitalista', in Murmis, ed., *Ecuador: Cambios en el Agro Serrano*, Quito: FLACSO/CEPLAES.
Narain, Dharm, 1961, *Distribution of the Marketed Surplus of Agricultural Produce by Size-Level of Holding in India, 1950–51*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
Neuhaus, Georg, 1911–1913, *Die Deutsche Volkswirtschaft und ihre Wandlungen im Letzen Vierteljahrhundert*, 2 volumes, Munich.
Nichtweiss, Johannes, 1959, *Die Auslandischen Saisonarbeiter in der Landwirtschaft...1890–1914*, East Berlin.
O'Brien, Patrick and Caglar Keyder, 1978, *Economic Growth in Britain and France 1780–1914. Two Paths to the Twentieth Century*, London: Allen & Unwin.
Ohkawa, Kazushi and Henry Rosovsky, 1964, 'The Role of Agriculture in Modern Japanese Economic Development', in Carl K. Eicher and Lawrence W. Witt (eds), *Agriculture in Economic Development*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. Originally published in *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, October, 1960, vol. 9, no. 1, part 2.
Orsagh, Thomas, 1968, 'The Probable Geographical Distribution of German Income, 1882–1963', *Zeitschrift fur die Gesamte Staatwissenschaft*, 124.
Paige, Jeffrey, 1975, *Agrarian Revolution. Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World*, New York: Free Press.
Palmer, Alan, 1976, *Bismarck*, London: Purnell Book Services.
Parker, W.N., and E.L. Jones, eds, 1975, *European Peasants and their Markets*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Patnaik, Utsa, ed., 1990, *Agrarian Relations and Accumulation. The 'Mode of Production' Debate in India*, Bombay: Oxford University Press for the Sameeksha Trust.
Perkins, J.A., 1981, 'The Agricultural Revolution in Germany, 1850–1914', *Journal of European Economic History*, Spring, vol. 10, no. 1.

Perkins, J.A., 1984, 'The German Agricultural Worker, 1815–1914', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, April, vol. 11, no. 3.
Perkins, J.A., 1986, 'Dualism in German Agrarian Historiography', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, April, vol. 28, no. 2
Plaul, Hainer, 1979, *Landarbeiterleben im 19. Jahrhundert*, Berlin.
Plaul, Hainer, 1986, 'The Rural Proletariat: The Everyday Life of Rural Labourers in the Magdeburg Region, 1830–1880', in Evans and Lee, eds [1986].
Poulantzas, Nicos, 1973, *Political Power and Social Classes*, London: New Left Books and Sheed & Ward.
Power, Eileen, 1932, 'Peasant Life and Rural Conditions (1100–1500)', *The Cambridge Medieval History, vol. VII*, London: Cambridge University Press.
Preobrazhensky, E., 1965, *The New Economics*, London: Oxford University Press.
Price, Roger, 1983, *The Modernization of Rural France*, London: Hutchinson.
Puhle, Hans-Jurgen and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, eds, 1980, *Preussen im Ruckblick*, Gottingen.
Rach H.-J., and B. Weissel, eds, 1978, *Landwirtschaft und Kapitalismus. Zur Entwicklung der okonomischen und sozialen Verhaltnisse in der Magdeburger Borde vom Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende des ersten Weltkrieges*, Berlin.
Rach H.-J., and B. Weissel, eds, 1982, *Bauer und Landarbeiter im Kapitalismus der Magdeburger Borde*, Berlin.
Ragin, Charles C., 1987, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
Rahman, Atiur, 1986, *Peasants and Classes. A Study in Differentiation in Bangladesh*, Dhaka and London: The University Press Limited and Zed Books.
Richards, Alan, 1979, 'The Political Economy of *Gutswirtschaft*: A Comparative Analysis of East Elbian Germany, Egypt, and Chile', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, October, vol. 21, no. 4.
Rogmann, Heinz, 1937, *Die Bevolkerungsentwicklung im Preussischen Osten in den Letzen Hundert Jahren*, Berlin.
Rosenberg, Hans, 1943 and 1944, 'The Rise of the Junkers in Brandenburg-Prussia 1410–1653', *American Historical Review*, October and January, vol. XLIX, nos 1 and 2.
Rosenberg, Hans, 1958, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy. The Prussian Experience, 1660–1815*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
Rosenberg, Hans, 1969, *Probleme der deutschen Sozialgeschichte*, Frankfurt am Main.
Rosenberg, Hans, 1978, 'Die Auspragung der Junkerherrschaft in Brandenburg-Preussen, 1410–1618', in his *Machteliten und Wirtschaftskonjunkturen: Studien zur neureren deutschen Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Gottingen.
Roth, H, 1982, *Uber den Einfluss des Zuckerrubenbaues auf die Hohe der landwirtschaftlichen Kapitalien besonders im Konigreich Sachsen*, Leipzig.
Schissler, Hanna, 1978, *Preussische Agrargesellschaft im Wandel*, Gottingen.
Schissler, Hanna, 1980, 'Die Junker: Zur Sozialgeschichte und Historischen Bedeutung der agrarischen Elite in Preussen', in Puhle and Wehler, eds [1980].
Schissler, Hanna, 1986, 'The Junkers: Notes on the Social and Historical Significance of the Agrarian Elite in Prussia', in Moeller, ed. [1986].
Schultz, Helga, 1972, 'Bauerliche Klassenkampfe zwischen fruhburgerlicher Revolution und Dreissigjahrigem Krieg', *Zeitschrift fur Geschichtswissenschaft*, no. 2.
Schulze, Hans K., 1979, 'Die Besiedlung der Mark Brandenburg im Hohen und spaten Mittelalter', *Jahrbuch fur die Geschichte Mittel-und Ostdeutschlands*, vol. xxviii.
Schumann, 1890, 'Die Inneren Wanderungen in Deutschland', *Allgemeines Statistisches Archiv*.
Schuchart, Theodor, 1908, *Die Volkswirtschaftliche Bedeutung der Technischen Entwicklung der Deutschen Zuckerindustrie*, Leipzig.

Schurmann, Hans, 1929, 'Die Bilanz der Wanderbewegungen in Mecklenburg-Schwerin in den Letzen 30 Jahren', Diss., Rostock.
Schwartz, Otto and G. Strutz, 1901–1904, *Der Staatshaushalt und die Finanzen Preussens*, 3 volumes, Berlin.
Scott, James, 1985, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Scott, James, 1990, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Scott, James and Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, eds, 1986, *Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance in South-East Asia*, London: Frank Cass. First published as a Special Issue of *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 13, no. 2, January, 1986.
Seddon, David and Ronnie Margulies, 1984, 'The Politics of the Agrarian Question in Turkey', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3, April.
Sering, Max, 1893, 'Die Bodensbesitzverteilung und die Sicherung des Kleinbesitzes', *Schriften des Vereins fur Sozialpolitik*, LVIII.
Sewell, William H., Jr., 1967, 'Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History', *History and Theory*, vol. VI, no. 2.
Shorter, Edward and Charles Tilly, 1974, *Strikes in France, 1830-1968*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Simon, Edith, 1978, 'Frederick II the Great, of Prussia', in [Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978: vol. 7].
Simon, Walter M., 1971, *The Failure of the Prussian Reform Movement, 1807–1819*, New York: Howard Fertig. First published by Cornell University Press, 1955.
Skalweit, A., 1911, 'Gutsherrschaft und Landarbeiter in Ostdeutschland', *Schmollers Jahrbuch*, XXXV.
Skocpol, Theda, 1979, *States and Social Revolutions. A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Skocpol, Theda and Margaret Somers, 1980, 'The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Enquiry', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 22.
Soboul, Albert, 1956, 'The French Rural Community in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Past and Present*, November, no. 10.
Solta, J., 1968, *Die Bauern der Lausitz. Eine Untersuchung des Differenzierungsprozesses der Bauernschaft im Kapitalismus*, Bautzen.
Spring, David (ed.), 1977, *European Landed Elites in the Nineteenth Century*, Ontario: Burns and MacEachern.
Stephens, John, 1979, *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism*, London: Macmillan.
Stern, Fritz, 1977, 'Prussia', in Spring, ed. [1977].
Stern, Fritz, 1987, *Gold and Iron. Bismarck, Bleichroder, and the Building of the German Empire*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books. First published in 1977.
Sutcliffe, R.B., 1971, *Industry and Underdevelopment*, London: Addison-Wesley.
Taylor, A.J.P., 1985, *Bismarck. The Man and the Statesman*, London: Hamish Hamilton. First published in 1955.
Taylor, A.J.P., 1978, 'Bismarck, Otto von', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1978: vol. 2].
Thaer, Albrecht, 1799, *Annalen der niedersachsischen Landwirtschaft*.
Thaer, Albrecht, 1831, *Grundsatze der Rationellen Landwirtschaft* (Fundamentals of Rational Agriculture), Berlin.
Thorner, Alice, 1982, 'Semi-Feudalism or Capitalism? Contemporary Debate on Classes and Mode of Production in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. XVII, nos 49, 50 and 51, December 4, 11, and 18.
Thornton, J. Mills III, 1978, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800–1860*, Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press.
Thudicum, B., 1867, *Rechtsgeschichte der Wetterau*, no place of publication given.

Tibebu, Teshale, 1990, 'On the Question of Feudalism, Absolutism, and the Bourgeois Revolution', *Review*, vol. XIII, no. 1, Winter.
Tilly, Charles, ed., 1975, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Tilly Charles, Louise Tilly and Richard Tilly, 1975, *The Rebellious Century, 1830–1930*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
Tilly Richard, 1966, 'The Political Economy of Public Finance and the Industrialization of Prussia, 1815–1866', *Journal of Economic History*, December, vol. XXVI, no. 4.
Tilly, Richard, 1966a, *Financial Institutions and Industrialization in the Rhineland 1815–1870*, Madison, Milwaukee, and London: University of Wisconsin Press.
Tilly, Richard, 1991, 'Germany', in Richard Sylla and Gianni Toniolo, eds, *Patterns of European Industrialization*, London: Routledge.
Tipton, Frank. B., Jr., 1976, *Regional Variations in the Economic Development of Germany During the Nineteenth Century*, Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.
Trebilcock, Clive, 1981, *The Industrialization of the Continental Powers, 1780–1914*, London and New York, Longman.
Tribe, Keith, 1979, 'Introduction to Weber', in Weber [1979].
Vallentin, Wilhelm, 1893, *Westpreussen Seit den Ersten Jahrzenten Dieses Jahrhunderts*, Tubingen.
Venturi, Franco, 1983, *Roots of Revolution. A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia*, London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Viebahn, Georg von., 1858–68, *Statistik des Zollvereinten und Norlichen Deutschlands*, 3 volumes, Berlin: Georg Reimer.
Vogler, Gunter, 1974, 'Probleme des bauerlichen Klassenkampfes in der Mark Brandenburg im spatfeudalismus', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae: Studia Historica* [Prague], xi.
Vogler, Gunter and Klaus Vetter, 1979, *Preussen. Von den Anfaengen bis zur Reichsgruendung*, Berlin.
Wallerstein, Immanuel, 1974, *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, New York: Academic Press.
Waterstadt, F., 1912, *Die Wirtschaftslehre des Landbaues*, Stuttgart.
Webb, Steven B., 1982, 'Agricultural Protection in Wilhelminian Germany: Forging an Empire with Pork and Rye', *Journal of Economic History*, June, vol. XLII, no2.
Weber, Max, 1892, 'Die Verhaltnisse der Landarbeiter im Ostelbischen Deutschland', *Schriften des Vereins fur Sozialpolitik*, 55.
Weber, Max, 1893, 'Die Landliche Arbeitsverfassung', *Schriften des Vereins fur Sozialpolitik*, LVIII.
Weber, Max, 1894, 'Entwicklungstendenzen in der Lage der ostelbischen Landarbeiter', *Preussiche Jahrbucher*, LXXVII. For an English translation, see Weber [1979].
Weber, Max, 1972, 'Capitalism and Rural Society in Germany', in Gerth and Mills [1972].
Weber, Max, 1979, 'Developmental Tendencies in the Situation of East Elbian Rural Labourers', *Economy and Society*, vol. 8. no. 2, May. Translated and with an Introduction by Keith Tribe. Originally published in German in 1894. For the original, see Weber [1894].
Wernicke, Kurt, 1962, *Untersuchungen zu den niederen Formen des Bauerlichen Klassenkampfes im Gebiet der Gutsherrschaft*, Diss Phil, Humboldt Universitat, Berlin.
Winson, Anthony, 1982, 'The "Prussian Road" of Agrarian Development: A Reconsideration', *Economy and Society*, vol. 11, no. 4, November.

Winson, Anthony, 1989, *Coffee and Democracy in Modern Costa Rica*, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan.
Wirminghaus, A., 1895, 'Stadt und Land unter dem Einfluss der Binnenwanderung', *Jahrbucher fur Nationalokonomie und Statistik*, 3rd series, 9.
Wittenberg, Max, 1893, *Die Lage der Landlichen Arbeiter in Neuvorpommern und auf Rugen*, Leipzig.
Wittenberg, Max, 1895, *Die geschlechtlich-sittlichen Verhaltnisse der evangelischen Landbewohner in den Grossherzogtumern Mecklenburg-Schwerin und Mecklenbeug-Strelitz und der Provinz Schleswig-Holstein*, Leipzig.
Wolf, Eric R., 1969, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row.
Wunder, Heide, 1985, 'Peasant Organization and Class Conflict in Eastern and Western Germany', in Aston and Philpin, eds [1985]. Originally published in *Past and Present*, February, 1978, no. 78.
Wunderlich, Frieda, 1961, *Farm Labor in Germany, 1810–1945*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Wydozinski, W., 1917, *Die Landarbeiterfrage in Deutschland*, Tubingen.
ZdLC-VdPS, *Zeitschrift des Landwirtschaftlichen Central-Vereins der Provinz Sachsen*.
Ziekursch, Johannes, 1927, *Hundert Jahre schlesische Agrargeschichte*, Breslau.

B. NORTH AMERICA

Aaron Richard I., 1978, 'John Locke', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia* [1978: vol. 11].
Adamson, Alan H., 1972, *Sugar Without Slaves: The Political Economy of British Guiana, 1838–1904*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
Agee, James and Walker Evans, 1965, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. Three Tenant Families*, London: Peter Owen Limited. First published in 1940.
Ajay, J. Ade and J.E. Inikori, 1979, 'An Account of Research on the Slave Trade in Nigeria', in *The African Slave Trade from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Paris: UNESCO.
Alston, Lee, 1981, 'Tenure Choice in Southern Agriculture, 1930–1960', *Explorations in Economic History*, April, 18.
Alston, Lee J., 1983, 'Farm Foreclosures in the United States during the Interwar Period', *Journal of Economic History*, 43.
Anderson, Perry, 1974a, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, London: New Left Books.
Anderson, Perry, 1974b, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London: New Left Books.
Andrews, Charles M., 1919, 'Introduction' to Bond [1919].
Angelo, Larian, 1995, 'Wage Labour Deferred: The Recreation of Unfree Labour in the US South', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 22, no. 4, July.
Ankli, Robert, 1974, 'Farm-Making Costs in the 1850s', *Agricultural History*, January, vol. XLVIII, no. 1.
Ankli, Robert E., 1976, 'The Coming of the Reaper', in Paul S. Uselding, ed., *Business and Economic History: Papers Presented at the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of the Business History Conference*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press: 1–24. Reprinted in Nash [1980].
Ankli, Robert E., 1980, 'Horses vs. Tractors on the Corn Belt', *Agricultural History*, January, 54.
Ankli, Robert, H. Dan Helberg and John H. Thompson, 1979, 'The Adoption of the Tractor in Western Canada', *Canadian Studies in Rural History*, April, 2.

Appleby, Joyce, 'Commercial Farming and the "Agrarian Myth" in the Early Republic', *Journal of American History*, vol. 68.
Atack, Jeremy, 1982, 'Farm and Farm-Making Costs Revisited', *Agricultural History*, October, vol. 56, no. 2.
Atack, Jeremy, 1988, 'Tenants and Yeomen in the Nineteenth Century', *Agricultural History*, Summer, vol 62, no. 3.
Atack, Jeremy and Fred Bateman, 1987, *To Their Own Soil: Agriculture in the Antebellum North*, Ames: Iowa State University.
Atack, Jeremy and Peter Passell, 1994, *A New Economic View of Economic History: from Colonial Times to 1940*, 2nd edition, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
Atherton, Lewis, 1971, *The Frontier Merchant in Mid-America*, Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press.
Axtell, James, 1981, 'The Scholastic Philosophy of the Wilderness', in *The School Upon a Hill. Education and Society in Colonial New England*, New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale University Press.
Bailyn, Bernard, Robert Dallek, David Brion Davis, David Herbert Donald, John L. Thomas and Gordon S. Wood, 1985, *The Great Republic. A History of the American People*, 3rd edition, Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company.
Ball, Charles, 1837, *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man*, New York.
Bartley, Numan V., 1987, 'The Southern Enclosure Movement', *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 71, 3.
Bardhan, Pranab, 1980, 'Interlocking Factor Markets and Agrarian Development: A Review of the Issues', *Oxford Economic Papers*, March, vol. 32, no. 1.
Bardhan, P.K. and A. Rudra, 1978 'Interlinkages of Land, Labour and Credit Relations: an Analysis of Village Survey Data in East India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 13, nos 6 and 7, Annual Number, February.
Basu, Kaushik, 1983,'The Emergence of Isolation and Interlinkage in Rural Markets', *Oxford Economic Papers*, July, vol. 35, no. 2.
Basu, Kaushik, 1984, *The Less Developed Economy. A Critique of Contemporary Theory*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Bell, Clive, 1977 'Alternative Theories of Sharecropping: Some Tests Using Evidence from Northeast India', *Journal of Development Studies*, July, vol. 13, no. 4.
Bell Clive and Pinhas Zusman, 1976, 'A Bargaining Theoretic Approach to Cropsharing Contracts', *American Economic Review*, September, vol. 66, no. 4.
Bernstein, Henry, 1977, 'Notes on Capital and Peasantry', *Review of African Political Economy*, 10.
Bernstein, Henry, 1979, 'Concepts for the Analysis of Contemporary Peasantries', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, July, vol. 6, no. 4.
Bernstein, Henry, 1988, 'Capitalism and Petty-Bourgeois Production: Class Relations and Division of Labour', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, January, vol. 15, no. 2.
Bernstein, Henry and B.K. Campbell, eds., 1985, *Contradictions of Accumulation in Africa*, Beverley Hills: Sage.
Berthoff, Rowland T., 1951, 'Southern Attitudes Towards Immigration: 1856–1915', *Journal of Southern History*, 17, August.
Berthoff, Rowland and John M. Murrin, 1973, 'Feudalism, Communalism, and the Yeoman Freeholder. The American Revolution as a Social Accident', in Kurtz and Hutson [1973].
Bhaduri, Amit, 1973, 'Agricultural Backwardness Under Semi-Feudalism', *Economic Journal*, March, no. 329, vol. 83.
Bhaduri, Amit, 1983a, 'Cropsharing as a Labour Process', in Byres, ed. [1983].
Bhaduri, Amit, 1983b, *The Economic Structure of Backward Agriculture*, London: Academic Press.

Bharadwaj, Krishna, 1969, *Production Conditions in Indian Agriculture. A Study Based on Farm Management Surveys*, Cambridge: Department of Applied Economics. Mimeo.
Bharadwaj, Krishna, 1974, *Production Conditions in Indian Agriculture. A Study Based on Farm Management Surveys*, London: Cambridge University Press.
Bharadwaj, Krishna, 1979, 'Towards A Macro-Economic Framework for a Developing Economy: The Indian Case', *The Manchester School*, September, vol. 47 , no. 3.
Bharadwaj, Krishna, 1985 'A View of Commercialisation in Indian Agriculture and the Development of Capitalism', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, July, vol. 12, no. 4.
Bidwell, Percy and John L. Falconer, 1925, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620–1860*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Foundation Press.
Billings, Dwight B., 1979, *Planters and the Making of the New South*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Binswanger, Hans P., 1984, *Agricultural Mechanization. A Comparative Historical Perspective*, World Bank Staff Working Papers No. 673, Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
Bogue, Allan G., 1955, *Money at Interest: The Farm Mortgage on the Middle Border*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
Bogue, Allan G., 1958, 'The Iowa Claims Clubs: Symbol and Substance', *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 45.
Bogue, Allan G., 1963, *From Prairie to Cornbelt: Farming on the Illinois and Iowa Prairies in the Nineteenth Century*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Bogue, Allan G., 1994, 'An Agricultural Empire', in Milner, O'Connor, and Sandweiss, eds [1994].
Bolt, Christine, 1987, *American Indian Policy and American Reform. Case Studies of the Campaigns to Assimilate the American Indians*, London: Allen & Unwin.
Bond, Beverley W., 1919, *The Quit-Rent System in the American Colonies*, New Haven, London and Oxford: Yale University Press, Humphrey Milford and Oxford University Press.
Bonilla, Luis, *et al.*, 1978, 'Slavery, Serfdom and Forced Labour', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia* [1978: vol. 16].
Borah, W., 1964, 'America as a Model: The Demographic Impact of European Expansion Upon the Non-European World', in *Proceedings of the 35th International Congress of Americanists* (Mexico City), vol. 3.
Borah, W., 1992, 'The Historical Demography of Aboriginal and Colonial America: An Attempt at Perspective', in Denevan [1992].
Borah, W. and S.F. Cook, 1963, *The Aboriginal Population of Central Mexico on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest*, Ibero-American 45, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press.
Bowman, John D., and Richard H. Keehn, 1974, 'Agricultural Terms of Trade in Four Mid-Western States, 1870–1900', *Journal of Economic History*, 34.
Bowman, Shearer Davis, 1993, *Masters and Lords: Mid-19th-Century U.S. Planters and Prussian Junkers*, New York: Oxford University Press.
Braverman A. and T.N. Srinivasan, 1984, 'Agrarian Reforms in Developing Rural Economies Characterized by Interlinked Credit and Tenancy Markets', in H.P. Binswanger and M.R. Rosenzweig (eds), *Contractual Arrangements, Employment, and Wages in Rural Labor Markets in Asia*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Braverman A. and Joseph E. Stiglitz, 1982, 'Sharecropping and the Interlinking of Agrarian Markets', *American Economic Review*, 72.
Bray, Warwick, ed., 1993, *The Meeting of Two Worlds. Europe and the Americas 1492–1650*, Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy.
Brewster, John, 1970, 'The Machine Process in Agriculture and Industry', in Karl A. Fox and D. Gale Johnson (eds), *Readings in the Economics of Agriculture*, London, Allen & Unwin. Originally published in *Journal of Farm Economics*, vol. XXXIII, no. 1, February, 1950.
Briggs, H, 1932, 'Early Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley of the North', *Agricultural History*, January, vol. VI, no. 1.
Brogan, Hugh, 1986, *The Pelican History of the United States of America*, London: Penguin Books.
Brooks, Robert Preston, 1914a, 'The Agrarian Revolution in Georgia in 1865–1912', *Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin*, 639.
Brooks, Robert Preston, 1914b, *The Agrarian Revolution in Georgia, 1865–1912*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
Brown, Dee, 1971, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, London: Barrie & Jenkins.
Brown, Stuart E., Jr., 1965, *Virginia Baron: The Story of Thomas, 6th Lord Fairfax*, Perryvale, Va.
Brown, William and Morgan Reynolds, 1973, 'Debt Peonage Re-examined', *Journal of Economic History*, December, 33.
Buley, Thomas, 1950, *The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period, 1815–1840*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Burbach, Roger and Patricia Flynn, 1980, *Agribusiness in the Americas*, New York: Monthly Review Press.
Cairnes, J.E., 1862, *The Slave Power: its Character, Career, and Probable Designs; Being an Attempt to Explain the Real Issues Involved in the American Contest*, London. This was republished in 1863, with a new Preface, Appendices and revisions. See also the 1969 reprint, with Introduction by Harold D. Woodman, New York: Harper & Row. First published in 1862.
Carey, Henry, 1853, *The Slave Trade. Domestic and Foreign*, Philadelphia: A. Hart.
Cartledge, Paul, 1995, 'Classical Greek Agriculture II: Two More Alternative Views', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, October, vol. 23, no. 1.
Censer, Jane Turner, 1984, *North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800–1860*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
Channing, Edward, 1886, *The Narragansett Planters: A Study of Causes*, Baltimore.
Chayanov, A.V., 1966, *The Theory of Peasant Economy*, edited by Daniel Thorner, Basile Kerblay and R.E.F. Smith, Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin Inc. For the American Economic Association.
Cheung, Steven N.S., 1969, *The Theory of Share Tenancy. With Special Application to Asian Agriculture and the First Phase of Taiwan Land Reform*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
Chevalier, Jacques, 1982, *Civilization and the Stolen Gift: Capital, Kin and Cult in Eastern Peru*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Chevalier, Jacques, 1983, 'There is Nothing Simple About Simple Commodity Production', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, July, vol. 10, no. 4.
Clark, Christopher, 1978, 'The Household Mode of Production. A Comment', *Radical History Review*, no. 18.
Clark, Christopher, 1979, 'Household Economy, Market Exchange, and the Rise of Capitalism in the Connecticut Valley, 1800–1860', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 13.
Clark, Christopher, 1990, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780–1860*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
Cobban, Alfred, 1964, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Cohen, William, 1976, 'Negro Involuntary Servitude in the South, 1865–1940: A Preliminary Analysis', *Journal of Southern History*, 42, February.
Collins, Robert, ed., 1967, *Problems in African History*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Conrad, Alfred H. and John R. Meyer, 1958, 'The Economics of Slavery in the Antebellum South', *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. LXVI, no. 2, April. Reprinted in Nash, ed. [1980].

Conrad, Alfred H. and John R. Meyer, 1964, *The Economics of Slavery and Other Studies in Econometric History*, Chicago: Aldine.

Cox, LaWanda, 1944, 'Tenancy and the United States, 1865–1900', *Agricultural History*, July, XVIII.

Craig, David, 1974, 'Novels of Peasant Crisis', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, October, vol. 2, no. 1.

Cranston, Maurice, 1957, *John Locke: A Biography*, New York: Macmillan.

Crittenden, Christopher C., 1924, 'The Surrender of the Charter of South Carolina', *North Carolina Historical Review*, I.

Crosby, Alfred W., 1976, 'Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation of America', *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 33.

Curtin, Philip, 1969, *The Atlantic Slave Trade. A Census*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Danhof, Clarence H., 1941, 'Farm-Making Costs and the "Safety-Valve": 1850–1860', *Journal of Political Economy*, 49.

Danhof, Clarence H., 1969, *Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820–1870*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

David, Paul A., 1966 'The Mechanization of Reaping in the Ante-Bellum Midwest', in Rosovsky, ed. [1966]. This is published, also, in David [1975] and is reprinted in Fogel and Engerman, eds [1971] and, with omissions, in Nash, ed. [1980]. We will refer to the 1971 republication as David [1971a].

David, Paul, 1969, 'A Contribution to the Theory of Diffusion', CREG Memorandum No. 71, Stanford University Press.

David, Paul, 1971a, see David [1966].

David, Paul A., 1971b, 'The Landscape and the Machine: Technical Interrelatedness, Land Tenure and the Mechanization of the Corn Harvest in Victorian Britain', in McCloskey, ed. [1971].

David, Paul A., 1975, *Innovation and Economic Growth: Essays on the American and British Experience in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

David, Paul, 1980, 'The Mechanization of Reaping in the Ante-Bellum Midwest', in Nash, ed. [1980]. A version of David, ed. [1966].

David, Paul A, and Herbert G. Gutman, Richard Sutch, Peter Temin and Gavin Wright, 1976, *Reckoning with Slavery. A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Davidson, Basil, 1961, *Black Mother: The Years of the African Slave Trade*, Boston: Little Brown.

Davis, Lance, Richard Easterlin and William Parker, eds, *American Economic Growth*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Day, R.H., 1967, 'The Economics of Technological Change and the Demise of the Sharecropper', *American Economic Review*, June, vol. LVII, no. 3.

DeCanio, Stephen, 1973, 'Cotton "Overproduction" in Late Nineteenth Century Southern Agriculture', *Journal of Economic History*, December, 33.

Degler, Carl N., 1984, *Out of Our Past. The Forces That Shaped Modern America*, New York: Harper & Row, third edition.

Denevan, W.M., ed., 1992, *The Native Population of the Americas in 1492*, revised edition, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Diamond, Sigmund, 1961, 'An Experiment in "Feudalism": French Canada in the Seventeenth Century', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, vol. XVIII.

Dobyns, Henry. F., 1966, 'Estimating Aboriginal American Population. An Appraisal of Techniques with a New Hemispheric Estimate', *Current Anthropology*, October, vol. 7.

Dodd, William E., 1911, *Statesmen of the South or from Radicalism to Conservative Revolt*, New York: Macmillan.

Domar, Evsey, 1989, 'The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis', in *Capitalism, Socialism and Serfdom*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Originally published in *Journal of Economic History*, vol. XXX, March, 1970.

Draper, Hal, 1985, *The Marx-Engels Register. A Complete Bibliography of Marx and Engels' Individual Writings. Volume II of the Marx-Engels Cyclopedia*, New York: Schocken Books.

Drummond, Boyce A., 1978, 'Arkansas', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia* [1978, vol. 2].

Dublin, Thomas, 1979, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826–1860*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dublin, Thomas, 1991, 'Rural Putting-Out Work in Early Nineteenth Century New England: Women and the Transition to Capitalism in the Countryside', *New England Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 4.

Duignan Peter and L.H. Gann, 1984, *The United States and Africa: A History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dunn, John, 1969, *The Political Thought of John Locke. An Historical Account of the Argument of the 'Two Treatises on Government'*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth, L., 1966-67, 'Who Intervened in 1788? A Commentary on *The Coming of the French Revolution'*, *American Historical Review*, LXXI.

Elkins, Stanley, 1976, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*, 3rd edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. First published in 1959; 2nd edition, 1968.

Elmsley, Clive, 1984, *Essays in Comparative History. Economy, Politics and Society in Britain and America 1850–1920*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Encarta Multimedia Encyclopaedia, 1994, Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978, 15th edition, in 30 volumes, Chicago, London, Toronto, Geneva, Sydney, Tokyo, Manila, Seoul: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc.

Fage, John Donnelly., 1969, 'Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History', *Journal of African History*, 10.

Fage, John Donnelly., 1978, 'West Africa, History', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [1978: vol. 19].

Ferleger, Louis, 1993, 'Sharecropping Contracts in the Late-Nineeenth Century South', *Agricultural History*, Summer, vol. 67, no. 3.

Fields, Babára Jeanne, 1985, 'The Advent of Capitalist Agricultur: The New South in a Bourgeois World', in Travolia Glymph and John J. Kushma, eds., *Essays on the Postbellum Southern Economy*, College Station Texas: Texas A & M University Press for the University of Texas at Arlinton.

Fite, Gilbert, 1950, 'Recent Progress in the Mechanization of Cotton Production in the U.S.', *Agricultural History*, January, 24.

Fite, Gilbert, 1980, 'Mechanization of Cotton Production since World War II', *Agricultural History*, January, 55.

Fite, Gilbert C., 1984, *Cotton Fields No More: Southern Agriculture, 1865–1890*, Lexington.

Fleisig, Heywood, 1965, 'Mechanizing the Cotton Harvest in the Nineteenth-Century South', *Journal of Economic History*, December, 25.

Fleisig, Heywood, 1976, 'Slavery, the Supply of Labor, and the Industrialization of the South', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 36.

Fogel, Robert William, 1989, *Without Consent Or Contract. The Rise and Fall of American Slavery*, New York and London: W.W. Norton.
Fogel, Robert William, with Ralph Galantine, Richard L. Manning and others, 1989, *Without Consent Or Contract. The Rise and Fall of American Slavery – Evidence and Methods*, New York and London: W.W. Norton.
Fogel, Robert William and Stanley L. Engerman, eds, 1971, *The Reinterpretation of American Economic History*, New York: Harper & Row.
Fogel, Robert William and Stanley L. Engerman, 1974, *Time on the Cross*, 2 volumes, *The Primary Volume: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (volume 1) and *A Supplement: Evidence and Methods* (volume 2), London: Wildwood House.
Fogel, Robert William, with Stanley Engerman and others, 1989, *Without Consent Or Contract. The Rise and Fall of American Slavery – Technical Papers: Markets and Production (Volume I)*, New York and London: W.W. Norton.
Fogel, Robert William, with Stanley Engerman and others, 1989, *Without Consent Or Contract. The Rise and Fall of American Slavery – Technical Papers: Conditions of Slave Life and the Transition to Freedom (Volume II)*, New York and London: W.W. Norton.
Foner, Eric, 1980, *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War*, New York: Oxford University Press.
Foner, Eric, 1988, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863–1877*, New York: Harper & Row.
Foner, Eric, 1995, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*, New York: Oxford University Press. With a New Introductory Essay. First published in 1970.
Foweraker, Joe, 1981, *The Struggle for Land: A Political Economy of the Pioneer Frontier*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Foweraker, Joe, 1982, 'Accumulation and Authoritarianism on the Pioneer Frontier of Brazil', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, October, vol. 10, no. 1.
Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth, and Eugene D. Genovese, 1983, *Fruits of Merchant Capital. Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Freeman, Joshua, Nelson Lichtenstein, Stephen Brier, David Bensman, Susan Porter Benson, David Brundage, Bret Eynon, Bruce Levine, Bryan Palmer and Joshua Brown, 1992, *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture and Society. Volume Two: From the Gilded Age to the Present*, New York: Pantheon Books.
Friedmann, Harriet, 1978a, 'Simple Commodity Production and Wage Labour in the American Plains', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, October, vol. 6, no. 1.
Friedmann, Harriet, 1978b, 'World Market, State, and Family Farm: Social Bases of Household Production in the Era of Wage Labor', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, October, vol. 20, no. 4.
Friedmann, Harriet, 1980, 'Household Production and the National Economy: Concepts for the Analysis of Agrarian Formations', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, January, vol. 7, no. 2.
Gallman, Robert E., 1966, 'Gross National Product, 1834–1909', in Conference on Research in Income and Wealth, *Output, Employment and Productivity in the United States After 1800*, Studies in Income and Wealth 30, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Gallman, Robert E., 1970, 'Self-Sufficiency in the Economy of the Cotton South', *Agricultural History*, vol. 44, no. 1
Gallman, Robert E., 1972, 'The Pace and Pattern of American Economic Growth', in Davis, Easterlin and Parker, eds [1972]
Garret, Richard D., 1978, 'Primitive Accumulation in the Antebellum Cotton South', Ph.D Dissertation, New York School for Social Research.

Gates, Paul W., 1936, 'The Homestead Law in an Incongruous Land System', *American Historical Review*, 41.
Gates Paul W., 1939, 'Land Policy and Tenancy in the Prairie Counties of Indiana', *Indiana Magazine of History*, 35. Republished in Gates [1973]
Gates, Paul W., 1941, 'Land Policy and Tenancy in the Prairie States', *Journal of Economic History*, May, 1. Republished in Gates [1973]
Gates, Paul W., 1942, 'The Role of the Land Speculator in Western Development', *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, July, 66. Republished in Gates [1973]
Gates, Paul W., 1943, *Frontier Landlords and Pioneer Tenants*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
Gates, Paul W., 1945, 'Frontier Landlords and Pioneer Tenants', *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, June, 38. Republished in Gates [1973]
Gates, Paul W., 1954, *Fifty Million Acres: Conflict Over Kansas Land Policy, 1854–1890*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
Gates, Paul W., 1960, *The Farmer's Age: Agriculture 1815–1860*, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Gates, Paul W., 1964, 'The Role of the Land Speculator in Western Economic Development', in Nash, ed. [1964].
Gates, Paul W., 1973, *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier. Studies in American Land Policy*, Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press.
Genovese, Eugene D., 1965, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*, New York: Pantheon.
Genovese, Eugene, 1968, 'Marxian Interpretations of the Slave South', in Barton Bernstein, ed., *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History*, New York: Random House.
Genovese, Eugene D., 1969, *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation*, New York: Vintage Books.
Genovese, Eugene D., 1971, *In Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History*, New York: Vintage Books.
Genovese, Eugene D., 1974, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, New York: Pantheon Books.
Genovese, Eugene D., 1979, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University.
Genovese, Eugene D., 1994, *The Southern Tradition. The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press.
George, Henry, 1901, *Our Land and Land Policy*, New York: Doubleday and McClure.
Ghose, Ajit K. and Ashwani Saith, 1976, 'Indebtedness, Tenancy and the Adoption of New Technology in Semi-Feudal Agriculture', *World Development*, vol. 4, no. 4.
Gibbon P. and M. Neocosmos, 1985, 'Some Problems in the Political Economy of "African Socialism"', in Bernstein and Campbell, eds [1985].
Gilbert, Martin, 1993, *The Dent Atlas of American History*, London: J.M. Dent, third edition.
Gipson, Lawrence, H., 1936–1969, *The British Empire Before the American Revolution*, rev. ed., Caldwell, Idaho and New York.
Goldenweiser, E.A. and Truesdell, Leon E., 1920, *Farm Tenancy in the US: An Analysis of the Results of the 1920 Census Relative to Tenure*, Census Monographs IV.
Goldenweisser, E.A. and Leon E. Truesdell, 1924, *Farm Tenancy in the United States*, Washington, D.C.
Gray, Lewis Cecil, 1958, *History of Agriculture in the United States to 1860*, two volumes, Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith. First published in 1933.
Greenidge, C.W.W., 1958, *Slavery*, London.

Gregson, Mary Eschelbach, 1993, 'Specialisation in Late 19th Century Midwestern Agriculture: Missouri as a Test Case', *Agricultural History*, 67.
Griffin, Keith, 1979, *The Political Economy of Agrarian Change. An Essay on the Green Revolution*, second edition, London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press. The Appendix to ch. 3 is entitled 'Sharecropping and Technical Change'.
Gutman, Herbert G., 1975, *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
Gutman, Herbert G., 1976, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Habakkuk, H.J., 1962, *American and British Technology in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Cambridge University Press.
Hahn, Steven, 1983, *The Roots of Southern Populism. Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850–1890*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hahn, Steven, 1990a, 'Emancipation and the Development of Capitalist Agriculture: The South in Comparative Perspective', in Kees Gispin, ed., *What Made the South Different?*, Jackson: University of Mississippi Press.
Hahn, Steven, 1990b, 'Class and State in Postemancipation Societies: Southern Planters in Comparative Perspective', *American Historical Review*, 95.
Haley, K.H.D., 1968, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Hanson, Victor Davis, 1985, *The Other Greeks. The Family Farm and the Agrarian Roots of Western Civilisation*, New York: Free Press.
Harley, C. Knick, 1978, 'Western Settlement and the Price of Wheat, 1872–1913', *Journal of Economic History*, 38.
Harris, Richard C., 1966, *The Seigneurial System in Early Canada*, Madison.
Harrison, Mark, 1975, 'Chayanov and the Economics of the Russian Peasantry', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, July, vol. 2, no. 4.
Harrison, Mark, 1977a, 'Resource Allocation and Agrarian Class Reform: The Problem of Social Mobility Among Russian Peasant Households, 1880–1930', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, January, vol. 4, no. 2.
Harrison, Mark, 1977b, 'The Peasant Mode of Production in the Work of A.V. Chayanov', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, July, vol. 4, no. 4.
Hartz, Louis B., 1955, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, New York.
Headlee, Sue E., 1991, *The Political Economy of the Family Farm: The Agrarian Roots of American Capitalism*, Westport, CT: Praeger.
Hennessy, Alistair, 1993, 'The Nature of the Conquest and the Conquistadors', in Bray [1993].
Henretta, James, 1978, 'Families and Farms: *Mentalite* in Pre-Industrial America', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, vol. 35.
Henretta, James, 1988, 'The War for Independence and American Economic Development', in Hoffman *et al*, eds [1988]
Hibbard, Benjamin H., 1924 and 1939, *A History of the Public Land Policies*, New York: Macmillan.
Higgs, Robert, 1970, 'Railroad Rates and the Populist Uprising', *Agricultural History*, 44.
Higgs, Robert, 1973, 'Race, Tenure, and Resource Allocation in Southern Agriculture, 1910', *Journal of Economic History*, March.
Hilton, Rodney, 1985, 'A Crisis of Feudalism', in Aston and Philpin, eds [1985].
Hodges, James A., 1978, 'Tennessee', in *Encyclopaedia Brittanica, Macropaedia* [1978, vol. 18].
Hoffman, R. *et al.*, eds, 1988, *The Economy of Early America: The Revolutionary Period, 1763–1790*, Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press.

Horowitz, Gary S., 1966, 'New Jersey Land Riots, 1745–1755', Ph.d diss., Ohio State University.
Hunter, Louis, 1970, 'Influence of the Market Upon Technique in the Iron Industry in Western Pennsylvania up to 1860', in Coats and Robertson, eds, *Essays in American Economic History*.
Hutchinson, E.P., 1956, *Immigrants and their Children*, New York: Wiley & Sons.
Jacobs, Wilbur R., 1972, *Dispossessing of the American Indian. Indians and Whites on the Colonial Frontier*, New York: Scribner.
Jacobs, Wilbur. R., 1974, 'The Tip of the Iceberg: Pre-Columbian Indian Demography and Some Implications for Revisionism', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 31.
Jefferson, Thomas, 1959, with an introductory essay by Dumas Malone, *Autobiography*, New York: Capricorn Books.
Jefferson, Thomas, 1782, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. It is here that the 'Jeffersonian vision' is announced – in his only book.
Johnson, Arthur H., 1963, *The Disappearance of the Small Landowner*, London: Merlin Press. First published in 1909.
Johnson, D. Gale, 1950, 'Resource Allocation Under Share Contracts', *Journal of Political Economy*, April, vol. 58.
Johnson, John, 1883, *Old Maryland Manors*, Baltimore.
Jones, Lewis R., 1977, 'The Mechanization of Reaping and Mowing in American Agriculture, 1833–1870: Comment', *Journal of Economic History*, 37.
Josephy, Alvin M., ed., and William Brandon, 1961, *The American Heritage Book of Indians*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
Kaplow, Jeffrey, Gilbert Shapiro and Elizabeth S. Eisenstein, 1966–67, *American Historical Review*, LXXII.
Kelly, Kevin D., 1979, 'The Independent Mode of Production', *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Spring, vol. 11, no. 1.
Kerridge, Eric, 1967, *The Agricultural Revolution*, London: Allen & Unwin.
Kerridge, Eric, 1969, *Agrarian Problems in the Sixteenth Century and After*, London: Allen & Unwin.
Kim, Sung Bok, 1978, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York: Manorial Society, 1664–1775*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
Kiple, Kenneth R. and Virginia Himmelsteib King, 1981, *Another Dimension to the Black Diaspora. Diet, Disease and Racism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kirby, Jack Temple, 1983, 'The Transformation of the Southern Plantations, 1920–1960', *Agricultural History*, 57, 3.
Kirby, Jack Temple, 1987, *Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920–1960*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
Klein, Judith L., 1974, 'Farm-Making Costs in the 1850s: A Comment', *Agricultural History*, January, vol. XLVIII, no. 1.
Kloosterboer, Willemina, 1960, *Involuntary Labour Since the Abolition of Slavery*, Leiden: E.J. Brill.
Kolchin, Peter, 1987, *Unfree Labor. American Slavery and Russian Serfdom*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
Kolchin, Peter, 1995, *American Slavery, 1619–1877*, London: Penguin Books. First published in 1993.
Koning, Niek, 1994, *The Failure of Agrarian Capitalism: Agrarian Politics in the United Kingdom, Germany, The Netherlands and the U.S.A. 1846–1919*, London and New York: Routledge.
Kriedte, Peter, Hans Medick and Jurgen Schlumbohm, eds, 1981, *Industrialization Before Industrialization. Rural Industry in the Genesis of Capitalism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. First published in German in 1977. This contains eight papers: two

by Kriedte; two by Medick; two by Schlumbohm; and one each by Franklin F. Mendels and Herbert Kisch.

Kroeber, A.L., 1939, *Cultural and Natural Areas in Native North America*, University of California Publications in Archaeology and Ethnology no. 38, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Kuczynski, Robert, 1936, *Population Movements*, Oxford: Oxford University Press [Clarendon Press].

Kulikoff, Alan, 1989, 'The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, vol. 46, no. 1.

Kulikoff, Alan, 1992, *Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism*, Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.

Kupperman, Karen Ordahl, 1980, *Settling with the Indians. The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580–1640*, London: Dent.

Kurtz, Stephen G. and James H. Hutson, eds, 1973, *Essays on the American Revolution*, Chapel Hill and New York: The University of North Carolina Press and W.W. Norton & Company.

Lem, Winnie, 1988, 'Household Production and Reproduction in Rural Languedoc: Social Relations of Petty Commodity Production in Murviel-Les-Beziers', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, July, vol. 15, no. 4.

Lemon, James, T., 1967, 'Household Consumption in the Eighteenth Century and Its Relationship to Production and Trade: The Situation among Farmers in Southeastern Pennsylvania', *Agricultural History*, vol. 41.

Lemon, James T., 1980, 'Early Americans and Their Social Environment', *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 6, no. 2.

Lemon, James T., 1976, *The Best Poor Man's Country. A Geographical Study of Early South Eastern Pennsylvania*, W.W. Norton & Co. First published 1972.

Levine, Bruce, Stephen Brier, David Brundage, Edward Countryman, Dorothy Fennell, Marcus Rediker, and Joshua Brown, 1989, *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture and Society. Volume One: From Conquest and Colonization Through Reconstruction and the Great Uprising of 1877*, New York: Pantheon Books.

Luxemburg, Rosa, 1963, with an Introduction by Joan Robinson, *The Accumulation of Capital*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. First published in 1913.

Lindert, Peter, 1988, 'Long-Run Trends in American Farmland Values', *Agricultural History*, 62.

Lindstrom, Diane, 1970, 'Southern Dependence on Interregional Grain Supplies', in William Parker, ed., *The Structure of the Cotton Economy of the Antebellum South*, Washington, D.C.,: Agricultural History Society.

Llambi, Luis, 1988, 'Small Modern Farmers: Neither Peasants nor Fully-Fledged Capitalists', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, April, vol. 15, no. 3.

Lockhart, James, 1969, 'Encomienda and Hacienda: The Evolution of the Great Estate in the Spanish Indies', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, August, XLIX, 3.

Loehr, Raymond C., 1952, 'Self-Sufficiency on the Farm', *Agricultural History*, vol. 26.

Loring, F.W. and C.F. Atkinson, 1869, *Cotton Culture and the South Considered with Reference to Emigration*, Boston: A. Williams & Co. Loring and Atkinson were a Boston firm which 'undertook an extensive survey of cotton planters in 1866–1869' [Ransom and Sutch, 1977: 363].

McCloskey, Donald N. , ed., 1971, *Essays on a Mature Economy: Britain after 1840*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.

McCulloch, J.R., 1843, *Principles of Political Economy*, Edinburgh.

McRady, Edward, 1897, *The History of South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government, 1670–1719*, New York.

MacLeod, William Christie, 1928, *The American Indian Frontier*, New York: A.A. Knopf.

McGuire, Robert, 1981, 'Economic Causes of Late Nineteenth Century Agrarian Unrest: New Evidence', *Journal of Economic History*, 41.

Main, Jackson T., 1965, *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America*, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Mandel, Ernest, 1970, volumes I and II, *Marxist Economic Theory*, New York: Monthly Review Press.

Mandle, Jay R., 1978, *The Roots of Black Poverty: The Southern Plantation After the Civil War*, Durham.

Mann, Susan Archer, 1990, *Agrarian Capitalism in Theory and Practice*, Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press.

Mann, Susan A. and James M. Dickinson, 1978, 'Obstacles to the Development of a Capitalist Agriculture', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, July, vol. 5, no. 4.

Mann, Susan A. and James M. Dickinson, 1980, 'State and Agriculture in Two Eras of American Capitalism', in Frederick H. Buttel and Howard Newby (eds), *The Rural Sociology of the Advanced Societies*, Montclair N.J. and London: Allanheld/Osmun and Croom Helm.

Marshall, Alfred, 1949, *Principles of Economics. An Introductory Volume*, London: Macmillan.

Marshall, John, 1994, *John Locke. Resistance, Religion and Responsibility*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mayhew, Anne, 1972, 'A Reappraisal of the Causes of Farm Protest in the United States 1879–1900', *Journal of Economic History*, 32.

Meek, Ronald L., 1973, *Studies in the Labour Theory of Value*, second edition, with a new Introduction, London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Mellafe, Rolando, 1975, *Negro Slavery in Latin America*, trns. by J.W.S. Judge, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Medick, Hans, 1976, '"Proto-Industrialization": The First Phase: The Structural Function of Household and Family During the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism', *Social History*, vol. 3. This is reprinted with elaborations in Kriedte, Medick and Schlumbohm, eds [1981].

Mendels, Franklin, 1972, '"Proto-Industrialization": The First Phase of the Industrialization Process', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 32.

Mereness, Newton D., 1901, *Maryland as a Proprietary Province*, New York.

Mereness, Newton D., with Charles A. Barker, 1940, *The Background of the Revolution in Maryland*, New Haven.

Merrill, Michael, 1976, 'Cash is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency in the Rural Economy of the United States', *Radical History Review*, September, vol. 3, no. 4.

Merrill, Michael, 1986, 'Self-sufficiency and Exchange in Early America: Theory, Structure, Ideology', Ph.D Dissertation, Columbia University.

Mill, John Stuart, 1987, *Principles of Political Economy*, edited with an Introduction by Sir William Ashley, Fairfield, N.J.: Augustus M. Kelley.

Miller, John Chester, 1991, *The Wolf by the Ears. Thomas Jefferson and Slavery*, Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia.

Milner II, Clyde A., 1994, 'Expansion. Introduction and Chronology', in Milner, O'Connor, and Sandweiss, eds [1994].

Milner II, Clyde A., Carol A. O'Connor and Martha A. Sandweiss, eds, 1994, *The Oxford History of the American West*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mingay, G.E., 1963, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, London.

Mississippi Agricultural Experimental Station, 1931, 'Farm Power in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta', Bulletin No. 295, November.

Mooney, James, 1928, *The Aboriginal Population of America North of Mexico*, Smithsonian Institution, Miscellaneous Collections, vol. 80, no. 7.

Moore, Barrington, 1967, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press.
Morgan, Philip D., 1982, 'Work and Culture: The Task System and the World of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700 to 1880', *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXXIX, October.
Morner, Magnus, 1973, 'The Spanish American Hacienda: A Survey of Recent Research and Debate', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 53.
Musoke, Moses S., 1981, 'Mechanizing Cotton Production in the American South: The Tractor, 1915–1960', *Explorations in Economic History*, April, 18.
Musoke, Moses S. and Alan L. Olmstead, 1982, 'The Rise of the Cotton Industry in California', *Journal of Economic History*, June, 42.
Naisbitt, John and Flaum, Thea K. , 1978, 'United States of America', in *Encyclopaedia Brittanica, Macropaedia* [978 vol. 18].,
Nash, Gary B., 1972, 'The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind', in Edward Dudley and Maximillian E. Novak, eds, *The Wild Man Within. An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press.
Nash, Gerald D., 1980, *Issues in American Economic History. Selected Readings*, 3rd edition, Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath & Company. First edition, 1964; and second edition, 1972.
National Research Project, 1938, 'Changes in Technology and Labor Requirements in Crop Production: Cotton', Report No. A-7, Philadelphia.
Newbery, D.M.G., 1975, 'Tenurial Obstacles to Innovation', *Journal of Development Studies*, July, vol. 11, no. 4.
Newson, Linda, 1993, 'The Demographic Collapse of Native Peoples of the Americas, 1492–1650', in Bray [1993].
Nissenson, Samuel G., 1937, *The Patroon's Domain*, New York.
Nobles, Gregory, 1989, 'Breaking into the Backcountry: New Approaches to the Early American Frontier, 1750–1800', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, vol. 46, no. 4.
Nobles, Gregory, 1990, 'The Rise of Merchants in Rural Market Towns: A Case Study of Eighteenth Century Northampton, Massachusetts', *Journal of Social History*.
North, Douglas C., 1966, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790–1860*, New York: W.W. Norton. First published in 1961.
Oakes, James, 1982, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
Oakes, James, 1990, *Slavery and Freedom*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
Oates, Mary J., 1975, *The Role of the Cotton Textile Industry in the Economic Development of the Southeast, 1900–1940*, New York: Arno Press.
O'Connor, James T., 1975, 'The Twisted Dream', *Monthly Review*, March, vol. 26, no. 10.
O'Connor, James T., 1976, 'A Note on Independent Commodity Production and Petty Capitalism', *Monthly Review*, May, vol. 28, no. 1.
Ogilvie, Sheilagh C., ed., 1993, Special Number on Proto-Industrialization of *Continuity and Change*, vol. 8, no. 2, August. This contains six papers: by Sheilagh C. Oglivie; Wolfgang Mager; Peter Kriedte, Hans Medick and Jurgen Schlumbohm; Calo Marco Belfanti; Markus Cerman; and Francois M.M. Hendrickx.
Olmsted, Frederick Law, 1856, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, New York: Dix & Edwards.
Olmsted, Frederick Law, 1857, *A Journey Through Texas*, New York: Dix & Edwards & Company.
Olmsted, Frederick Law, 1860, *A Journey in the Back Country*, New York: Mason Brothers.
Olmsted, Frederick Law, 1953, *The Cotton Kingdom*, Edited with an Introduction by Arthur M. Schlesinger, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. First published in 1861.

Olmstead, Alan L., 1975 'The Mechanization of Reaping and Mowing in American Agriculture, 1833–1870', *Journal of Economic History*, 35.
Opie, John, 1991, *The Law of the Land: Two Hundred Years of American Farmland Policy*, Lincon, NB: University of Nebraska Press.
Padover, Saul K., 1965, *Thomas Jefferson and the Foundations of American Freedom*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
Palmer, Bruce, 1980, *"Man Over Money": The Southern Populist Critique of American Capitalism*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Palmer, R.R., 1959 and 1964, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1900*, Princeton.
Parker, William, 1970, 'Slavery and Southern Economic Development', *Agricultural History*, January, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 115–25. Reprinted in Parker [1991].
Parker, William N., 1980, 'The South in the National Economy, 1865–1970', *Southern Economic Journal*, 46, pp. 1019–48. Reprinted in Parker [1991].
Parker, William N., 1991, *Europe, America and the Wider World. Essays on the Economic History of Western Capitalism. Volume 2, America and the Wider World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Parman, Donald L., *Indians and the American West in the Twentieth Century*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press.
Patnaik, Utsa, 1972, 'Economics of Farm Size and Farm Scale: Some Assumptions Re-Examined', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 7, nos 31–33, Special Number, August.
Patnaik, Utsa, 1979, 'Neo-Populism and Marxism: The Chayanovian View of the Agrarian Question and Its Fundamental Fallacy', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, July, vol. 6, no. 4.
Patnaik Utsa, 1983, 'Classical Theory of Rent and its Application to India: Some Preliminary Thoughts on Sharecropping', in Byres, ed. [1983].
Pederson, Harald and Arthur Raper, 1954, 'The Cotton Plantation in Transition', Mississippi Agricultural Experimental Station, January, No. 508.
Perlin, Frank, 1983, 'Proto-Industrialization and Pre-Colonial South Asia', *Past and Present*, February, no. 98.
Perman, Michael, ed., 1991, *Major Problems in the Civil War and Reconstruction. Documents and Essays*, Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath & Company.
Peterson, Merrill D., ed., 1975, *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*, New York: The Viking Press.
Phillips, Ulrich B., 1966, first published in 1918. *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
Post, Charles, 1982, 'The American Road to Capitalism', *New Left Review*, May/June, no. 133.
Post, Charles, 1983, 'Primitive Accumulation, Class Struggle and the Capitalist State: Political Crisis and the Origins of the US Civil War, c. 1844–1861', Ph.d dissertation: State University of New York-Binghamton.
Post, Charles, 1995, 'The Agrarian Origins of US Capitalism: The Transformation of the Northern Countryside Before the Civil War', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, April, vol. 22, no. 3.
Primack, Martin, 1962, 'Land Clearing under 19th Century Techniques', *Journal of Economic History*, 22.
Prucha, Francis Paul, 1994, *American Indian Treaties. The History of a Political Anomaly*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.
Pruitte, Bettye Hobbs, 1984, 'Self-Sufficiency and the Agricultural Economy of Eighteenth Century Massachusetts', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, vol. 41.
Pudup, Mary Beth, 1983, 'Packers and Reapers, Merchants and Manufacturers: Industrial Structuring and Location in an Era of Emergent Capitalism', MA thesis, University of California-Berkeley.

Puth, Robert C., 1993, *American Economic History*, 3rd edition, Fort Worth, Texas: The Dryden Press/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
Quaetart, Jean, 1988, 'A New View of Industrialization: "Proto-Industry" or the Role of Small-Scale, Labor-Intensive Manufacturing in the Capitalist Environment', *International Labor and Working Class History*, 33.
Ransom, Roger L. and Richard Sutch, 1972, 'Debt Peonage in the Cotton South After the Civil War', *Journal of Economic History*, September, 32.
Ransom, Roger L. and Richard Sutch, 1973, 'The Ex-Slave in the Post Bellum South: A Study of the Economic Impact of Racism in a Market Environment', *Journal of Economic History*, March, 33.
Ransom, Roger L. and Richard Sutch, 1975, 'The "Lock-in" Mechanism and Overproduction of Cotton in the Posbellum South', *Agricultural History*, April, 49.
Ransom, Roger L. and Richard Sutch, 1977, *One Kind of Freedom. The Economic Consequences of Emancipation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rao, C.H. Hanumantha, 1971, 'Uncertainty, Entrepreneurship, and Sharecropping in India', *Journal of Political Economy*, May/June, vol. 79, no. 3.
Rawley, James A., 1981, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade. A History*, New York: Norton.
Reid, Joseph D., 1973, 'Sharecropping as an Understandable Market Response: The Postbellum South', *Journal of Economic History*, 33, March.
Reid, Joseph D., 1975, 'Sharecropping in Theory and History', *Agricultural History*, 49, April.
Reid, Joseph D., 1976a, 'Antebellum Southern Rental Contracts', *Explorations in Economic History*, 13, January.
Reid, Joseph D., 1976b, 'Sharecropping and Agricultural Uncertainty', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, April, vol. 24, no. 3.
Reid, Joseph D., 1977, 'The Theory of Share Tenancy – Again', *Journal of Political Economy*, April, vol. 85, no. 2.
Rife, Charles, 1931, 'Land Tenure in New Netherlands', in *Essays in Colonial History Presented to Charles McLean Andrews by his Students*, New Haven.
Robbins, R.M., 1976, *Our Landed Heritage: The Public Domain, 1776–1970*, Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press.
Roberts, Penfield, 1947, *The Quest for Security, 1715–1740*, New York.
Rogin, Michael P., 1975, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian*, New York: Knopf.
Rohrbough, Malcom J., 1968, *The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands, 1789–1837*, New York: Oxford University Press.
Rosenblat, A., 1945, *La Poblacion Indigena de America desde 1492 hasta la Actualidad*, Buenos Aires, Cuadernos de la Serie Stirps Quaestionis, Institucion Cultural Espanola.
Rosenblat, A., 1954, *La Poblacion Indigena y el Mestizaje en America*, vol. 1, Buenos Aires, Editorial Nova, Biblioteca Americanista.
Rosovsky, Henry ed., 1966, *Industrialization in Two Systems*, New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1966.
Ross, Steven J., 1985, *Workers on the Edge: Work, Leisure and Politics in Industrializing Cincinatti, 1788-1890*, New York: Oxford University Press.
Rothenberg, Winifred B., 1981, 'The Market and Massachusetts Farmers, 1750–1855', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 41, no. 2
Rothenberg, Winifred B., 1984, 'Markets, Values and Capitalism: A Discourse on Method', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 44, no. 1
Rothenberg, Winifred B., 1985, 'The Emergence of a Capital Market in Rural Massachusetts, 1730–1838', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 45, no. 4.

Rothenberg, Winifred B., 1987, 'The Bound Prometheus', Review of S. Hahn and J. Prude, eds, *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation*, in *Reviews in American History*, vol. 15.
Rothenberg, Winifred B., 1988, 'The Emergence of Farm Labor Markets and the Transformation of the Rural Economy: Massachusetts, 1750–1850', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 48, no. 3.
Rothenberg, Winifred B. , 1992, *From Market Places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts 1750–1850*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Rothstein, Morton 1967, 'The Antebellum South as a Dual Economy: A Tentative Hypothesis', *Agricultural History*, 41.
Ste. Croix, G.E.M. de, 1981, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, London: Duckworth.
Salisbury, Neal, 1982, *Manitou and Providence. Indians, Europeans and the Making of New England, 1500–1643*, New York: Oxford University Press.
Saloutos, Theodore, 1948 'The Agricultural Problem and Nineteenth-Century Industrialism', *Agricultural History*, 22.
Saloutos, Theodore, 1960, *Farmer Movements in the South, 1865–1933*, Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Sanders, Ronald, 1992, with a Foreword by Michael Dorris, *Lost Tribes and Promised Lands. The Origins of American Racism*, New York: HarperCollins. First published in 1978.
Sapper, Karl, 1924, 'Die Zahl und die Volksdichte der Indianischen Bevolkerung in Amerika vor der Conquista und in der Gegenwart', *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Americanists*, The Hague, vol. 1, Leiden: E.J. Brill.
Sargen, Nicholas, 1979, *Tractorization in the United States and Its Relevance for Developing Countries*, New York.
Sauer, Carlo, 1935, *Aboriginal Population of Northwestern Mexico*, Ibero-American, 10.
Sauer, Carlo, 1966, *The Early Spanish Main*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Saunders, William, L., ed., 1886–1890, *The Colonial Records of North Carolina (1662–1776)*, Raleigh.
Scarborough, William H., 1976, 'Slavery – the White Man's Burden', in Harry P. Owens, ed., *Perspectives and Irony in American Slavery*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
Schlumbohm, Jurgens, 1981, 'Relations of Production – Productive Forces – Crises in Proto-Industrialization', in Kriedte, Medick and Schlumbom, eds [1981].
Schob, David C., 1975, *Hired Hands and Plowboys: Farm Labour in the Midwest, 1815–1860*, Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press.
Schumpeter, Joseph, 1954, *History of Economic Analysis*, London: Oxford University Press.
Scott, James C., 1985, *Weapons of the Weak. Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Severson, R.F., *et al.*, 1966, 'Mortgage Borrowing as a Frontier Developed', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 36.
Shammas, Carole, 1982, 'How Self-Sufficient Was Early America?', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 12, no. 2.
Shannon, Fred A., 1945, *The Farmer's Last Frontier. Agriculture, 1860–1897*, New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rhinehart Inc.
Sheehan, Bernard W., 1980, *Savagism and Civility. Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Sherry, Robert, 1976, 'Comments on O'Connor's Review of *The Twisted Dream*: Independent Commodity Production Versus Petty-Bourgeois Production', *Monthly Review*, May, vol. 28, no. 1.

Shugg, Roger W., 1939, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers During Slavery and After, 1840–1875*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
Sirmans, M. Eugene, 1966, *Colonial South Carolina: A Political History, 1663–1763*, Chapel Hill.
Smith, Adam, 1976, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 2 volumes, bicentenary edition, general editors R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner, textual editor W.B. Todd, Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press.
Smith Jr., Alfred Glaze, 1958, *Economic Readjustment of an Old Cotton State: South Carolina, 1820–1860*, Columbia, S.C.
Spinden, Herbert, 1928, 'The Population of Ancient America', *Geographic Review*, 18.
Srinivasan, T.N., 1979, 'Agricultural Backwardness Under Semi-Feudalism: A Comment', *Economic Journal*, June.
Srivastava, Ravi, 1989, 'Interlinked Modes of Exploitation in Indian Agriculture During Transition: A Case Study', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, July, vol. 16, no. 4.
Stampp, Kenneth, 1956, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
Stampp, Kenneth, 1976, 'Introduction', in David *et al.* [1976].
Steinbeck, John, 1940, *The Grapes of Wrath*, London: The Reprint Society. First published in 1939.
Steward, Julian H., 1949, 'The Native Population of South America', in *Handbook of South American Indians, vol. 5, Comparative Ethnology of South American Indian*, edited by Julian Steward, *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin*, 143.
Stiglitz, Joseph, 1974, 'Incentives and Risk Sharing in Sharecropping', *Review of Economic Studies*, April, vol. LXI, no. 2, 126.
Stock, James, 1984, 'Real Estate Mortgages, Foreclosures, and Midwestern Agrarian Unrest, 1865–1920, *Journal of Economic History*, 44.
Stoutenburgh Jr., John, 1990, *Dictionary of the American Indian. An A-to-Z Guide to Indian History, Legend and Lore*, New York: Wings books. First published in 1960.
Street, James H., 1957, *The New Revolution in the Cotton Economy: Mechanization and Its Consequences*, Chapel Hill.
Szatmary, David P., 1980, *Shay's Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
Tadman, Michael, 1989, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders and Slaves in the Old South*, Madison, Wisconsin.
Takahashi, Kohachiro, 1976, 'A Contribution to the Discussion', in Rodney Hilton, ed., *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, London: New Left Books. Originally published in *Science and Society*, Fall, 1952.
Takaki, Ronald T., 1971, *A Pro-Slavery Crusade: The Agitation to Reopen the African Slave Trade*, New York: Free Press.
Takaki, Ronald, 1980, *Iron Cages. Race and Culture in Nineteenth Century America*, London: Athlone Press.
Taylor, George V., 1961–62, 'The Paris Bourse on the Eve of the Revolution, 1781–1789', *American Historical Review*, LXVII.
Taylor, George V., 1964, 'Types of Capitalism in Eighteenth Century France', *English Historical Review*, LXXIX.
Taylor, George V., 1966–67, 'Non-Capitalist Wealth and the French Revolution', *American Historical Review*, LXXII.
Thompson, E.P., 1993, *Customs in Common*, London: Penguin Books.
Tocqueville, Alexis de, 1955, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, trans., Stuart Gilbert, New York.
Trelese, Allen W., 1971, *The White Terror: The KKK Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction*, Westport: Greenwood Press.

Tully, James, 1980, *A Discourse on Property. John Locke and his Adversaries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Turner, Frederick Jackson, 1920, *The Frontier in American History*, New York: Henry Holt.
Tyler, S. Lyman, 1973, *A History of Indian Policy*, Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs.
Tyron, Rolla M., 1917, *Household Manufactures in the United States, 1640–1860*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Uberlaker, D.H., 1976, 'Prehistoric New World Population Size: Historical Review and Current Appraisal of North American Estimates', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 45, 3.
United States Department of Agriculture, 1867, *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1867*, Washingon: GPO.
United States Department of Agriculture, 1924, 'Plantation Organization and Operation in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Area',Technical Bulletin No. 1269., October.
United States Department of Agriculture, 1935, 'Utilization and Cost of Power on Mississippi and Arkansas Plantations', Technical Bulletin No. 497, December.
United States Department of Commerce, 1865, *Manufactures of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, Washington DC: Government Printing Office.
United States Department of Commerce, 1872, *Ninth Census, 1870, vol. III: The Statistics of Wealth and Industry in the United States*, Washington DC: Government Printing Office.
United States Senate, 1911, *Report of the Immigration Commision*, vol. 1.
United State Special Committee on Farm Tenancy, 1937, *Farm Tenancy*.
Velho, O.G., 1973, 'Modes of Capitalist Development, Peasantry and the Moving Frontier', Ph.d thesis, University of Manchester.
Vidal, Gore, 1974, *Burr*, St. Albans: Panther Books.
Walsh, Lorena S., 1989, 'Rural African Americans in the Constitutional Era in Maryland, 1776–1810', *Maryland Historical Magazine*, LXXXIV, Winter.
Wayne, Michael, 1983, *The Reshaping of Plantation Society: The Natchez District, 1860–1880*, Baton Rouge.
Weiman, David, 1985, 'The Economic Emancipation of the Non-Slaveholding Class: Upcountry Farmers in the Georgia Cotton Economy', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 45.
Weiman, David, 1987, 'Farmers and the Market: A View From the Georgia Upcountry', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 47.
Weiman, David, 1988, 'Urban Growth on the Periphery of the Antebellum Cotton Belt: Atlanta, 1847–1860', *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 48.
Weiman, David, 1989, 'Families, Farms and Rural Society in Preindustrial Society', *Research in Economic History*, vol. 10, Supplement 5.
Welch, Frank, 1943, 'The Plantation Land Tenure System in Mississippi', Mississippi Agricultural Experimental Station Bulletin, June, No. 385
Whatley, Warren, 1983, 'Institutional Change and Mechanization in the Cotton South', Ph.D Dissertation, Stanford University.
Whatley, Warren, 1985, 'A History of Mechanization in the Cotton South: The Institutional Hypothesis', *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, November, 100.
Whatley, Warren, 1987, 'Southern Agrarian Labor Contracts as Impediments to Cotton Mechanization', *Journal of Economic History*, March, vol. XLVII, no. 1.
Wiener, Jonathan, 1978, *Social Origins of the New South: 1860–1885*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana: University of Louisiana Press.
Wilson, T.B., 1965, *The Black Codes of the South*, University of Alabama: University of Alabama Press.

Winters, Donald L., 1988, 'Postbellum Reorganization of Southern Agriculture: The Economics of Sharecropping in Tennessee', *Agricultural History*, no. 4.

Wolf, Eric, 1982, *Europe and the People Without History*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Wood, Neal, 1983, *The Politics of Locke's Philosophy. A Social Study of 'An Essay Concerning Human Understanding'*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Wood, Neal, 1984, *John Locke and Agrarian Capitalism*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Woodman, Harold, 1967, *King Cotton and His Retainers*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

Woodman, Harold D., 1979, 'Post Civil War Southern Agriculture and the Law', *Agricultural History*, 53, no. 1, January.

1951, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. This was volume 9 of Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter, eds, *A History of the South*. It was republished in 1971, by the same press.

Wootton, David, ed., 1993, *John Locke. Political Writings*, London: Penguin Books.

Wright, Gavin, 1978, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century*, New York: W.W. Norton.

Wright, Gavin, 1986, *Old South, New South*, New York: Basic Books Inc.

Wright, Gavin, 1988, 'American Agriculture and the Labor Market: What Happened to Proletarianization?', *Agricultural History*, 62.

Wright, Gavin, 1991, 'From Laborlords to Landlords: New Channels for Old Energies', an excerpt from Wright [1986: 33–50], reprinted in Perman, ed. [1991].

Wright, Gavin and Howard Kunreuther, 1975, 'Cotton, Corn and Risk in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Economic History*, September, 35.

Wright, Louis B., ed., 1940, *Letters of Robert Carter, 1720–1727: The Commercial Interests of a Virginia Gentleman*, San Marino, Calif.