

Harold Wolpe, "Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid," *Economy and Society* 1, no. 4 (1972), 425-456.

426 - Wolpe goes against the dominant narrative set by liberal historians, which stated that apartheid was different from previous South African institutions because the Nationalist Party was just more racist. Apartheid wasn't a white, capitalist institution, just a racist Afrikaner one. Wolpe seeks to show that apartheid is embedded in capitalism and apartheid is actually a quite efficient model, thus also critiquing the other liberal claim, which stated that capitalism would simply wither away apartheid structures.

428 - While his history is a little off sometimes, the thrust of his argument is quite strong, stating that segregation and apartheid, following the destruction of pre-capitalist African modes of production, created a system by which cheap *migrant* labour-power was provided. This also changed the way tribal institutions and economies functioned to reproduce this cheap labour power. [emphasis his].

431 - Borrowing from Laclau, he argues that there is a distinction between a 'mode of production' and an 'economic system', which can contain within it different modes in articulation with one another. "An 'economic system', on the other hand, designates the mutual relations between the different sectors of the economy, or between different productive units, whether on a regional, national or world scale. . . . An economic system can include, as constitutive elements, different modes of production - provided always that we define it as a whole." [quoted from Laclau]

431-2 - He tries to bring in notions of dual economy, that there was a capitalist economy integrating aspects of precapitalist social formations in the reserves, which were helping to subsidize the cost of labour power

433 - The only way this can be maintained is through the migrant nature of the labour.

435 - "The extended family in the reserves is able to, and does, fulfil 'social security' functions necessary for the reproduction of the migrant workforce. By caring for the very young and very old, the sick, the migrant labourer in periods of 'rest', by educating the young, etc., the reserve families relieve the capitalist sector and its State from the need to expend resources on these necessary functions." [Jock McCulloch parallels this]

436 - Meillassoux hints that the capitalist system does not provide adequately for old age care.

437 - "The second strategic problem arises from the necessity to maintain the production in the Reserves at a level which, while not too low to contribute to the reproduction of migrant workers as a class, is not yet high enough to remove the economic imperatives of migration."

440 - Wolpe, however, criticizes African farming methods as "relatively backwards and inefficient". But he also notes that state expenditure in the reserves was incredibly low [look into pauper relief in Namibia].

447 - Wolpe notes that this system must be migrant, "Above all, a *migrant* labour-force is labour-force which is both mobile *and* which as a particular economic basis in the pre-capitalist Reserve economy."

448 - He believes that the apartheid reserve policy, that of bantustans, is concerned first and foremost with the acquisition of cheap labour power. Wolpe doesn't seem to note decreasing labour demands by this period.

450 - "That is to say, the practice and policy of Separate Development must be seen as the attempt to retain, in a modified form, the structure of the 'traditional' societies, not, as in the past, for the purposes of ensuring an economic supplement to the wages of the migrant labour force, but for the purposes of reproducing and exercising control over a cheap African industrial labour force in or near the 'homelands', not by means of preserving the precapitalist mode of production but by the political, social, economic and ideological enforcement of low levels of subsistence."

Belinda Bozzoli, "Marxism, Feminism, and South African Studies," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9, no. 2 (1983), 139-171.

140 - Bozzoli wishes to critique those who ignore the "parallel" cleavage of sex/gender alongside race and class in South Africa.

141-2 - "Besides those concerned with rectifying past omissions there have been Marxists in South Africa and elsewhere who have attempted to provide a material explanation for female oppression. They have tended to place their primary emphasis on the relationship between that oppression, and the capitalist mode of production - they have attempted to show the 'functionality' of female oppression for the capitalist system. This argument, which has taken place over a whole range of issues, carries a certain conviction: female low wages and exclusion from participation in trade unions is a manifestation of capitalist manipulation and division of the working class; the nuclear family, and the isolated unpaid or low paid labour performed by the woman (wife or domestic servant) within it, serves to lower the cost of reproduction of labour power; the black woman in the reserve economies also functions to lower the cost of reproduction of labour power; women act as a reserve army of labour, to be absorbed and rejected by capitalism in times of economic prosperity and depression respectively, and so on. Female subordination and inferiority do in fact suit the capitalist mode of production in certain crucial ways, and those ways can be demonstrated to great effect." [This is similar to the 'Cheap Labour Power thesis' CLPT]

142 - Bozzoli further argues that because female oppression "performs certain functions for capitalism", it does not mean that these oppressive structures were built by capitalism. "This collapsing of female oppression into the capitalist mode of production has been the dominant tendency in analyses of women in South Africa today." Basically, the struggle against patriarchy and the struggle against capitalism are not always the same things.

143 - She seems to miss the point in, following Hartmann, critiquing the "sex-blind" labour categories under Marxian theory. They don't see purpose in Economic Categories Personified.

143 - She is wary of the CLPT because it fails to explain why it was men who migrated and women who stayed behind. This is a crucial historical question.

146 - She doubts the notion of articulation of modes of production, by stating that there isn't articulation, but conflict. This is true, to an extent, though she doesn't provide enough background to make this point safely.

151 - "Studies such as this one [Monica Hunter] seek to suggest that some change in the division of labour has taken place in these economies since the advent of migrant labour, implying that at some earlier stage the male contribution was more substantial. The assumption is that migrant labour has brought this change about. But this assumption needs far more complex and careful elaboration. It was not simply the men's *absence* that placed the burden of domestic and agricultural labour on the women; nor is it just that male tasks had been undermined by the destruction of the African states; it was *also* that these societies possessed a capacity to subordinate women's labour. Indeed, one might even suggest that the giving up of migrant labour by these societies partly rested upon their capacity to subordinate women's labour; and that it is in this capacity, that the resilience of these systems to 'full proletarianisation' may have rested."

155-6 - She argues that patriarchy *on the ground* was really the interaction of "many patriarchies", which each were based on differing social relations.

156 - She also doubts the CLPT because of its contention that because white workers were "fully proletarianized" and black were not, whites were paid higher wages because they did not have the reserve economy bolstering them. She is correct at critiquing this, because it removes class struggle from the wage structures. [Donham notes this too].

157 - Furthermore, there are issues with the CLPT on grounds that black workers whose families did not reside in the reserves were still paid poorly. [this was the case in Namibia too].

159 - She is also correct in questioning the family housing policies (as a way to secure stable labour for capital) alongside migrant labour for CLP, "Seeing *all* strategies, even dramatically opposed ones, as serving capitalist interests smacks of functionalism once again."

164 - Far too often, urban work for women (domestic, cooking, washing, etc), is not seen as productive but reproductive (not different from in the reserves). This is regardless of if the black domestics are

servicing white homes or migrant workers [like Louise White's work].

William Beinart & Peter Delius, "Introduction," in *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa*, edited by William Beinart, Peter Delius & Stanley Trapido (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), 1-55.

1 - "No other African country has witnessed comparable sustained growth in agricultural output on the basis of increasingly capitalist farming. But neither have countries elsewhere on the continent experienced the systematic and comprehensive displacement of the indigenous population which has been effected in South Africa. There white-owned farmlands have stood, for over three quarters of a century, in stark opposition to overcrowded and impoverished African reserves."

2 - Wine and Wheat estates owned by 'gentry' in the Western Cape existed simultaneously to hunting and pastoral economies in the interior. These transformations were slow and uneven, which played into the regional variations in rural society.

5 - "Macmillan's account provided the first systematic recognition of, and attempt to explain, both the nature of settler accumulation and the changing relationships of exploitation on South African farms." Macmillan also explored the 'insatiable demand for native labour'.

7 - "P.J. van der Merwe's study of trekboer society, which set new standards of scholarship amongst Afrikaner historians, dealt with frontier society more sympathetically, as a source of many of the strengths as much as the weaknesses, of Afrikaner society. But, although he was less concerned to find the burden of the past in the present, he too emphasized the frontier as the dominant issue for historians."

10 - Modernization theory, which held that racism would crumble under the "onslaught of market forces."

10 - "Trapido suggested that a comparable if 'uneasy union of maize and gold', predicated on a common demand for cheap and controlled labour, had played a decisive role in shaping South African industrialization."

11 - "While Trapido had suggested labour repressive societies as an appropriate comparative perspective, Morris drew on Lenin to suggest that rural society could only follow one of two predefined routes to capitalism: the 'Prussian path' of transformation from above under the auspices of a landlord class, or the 'American road' of change from below pioneered by a section of the peasantry."

12 - "Bundy argued that for a period in the second half of the nineteenth century significant interests within Cape Colonial society were not averse to the expansion of African production for the market. Some peasants - he includes tenants within this category - initially benefitted from the opportunities provided by a new demand for agricultural products. However, in the early period of industrialization the

dominant classes acted together to undermine this peasantry primarily in order to bolster labour supplies. Mine-owners, white farmers and colonial governments denied African producers access to land and markets while increasing labour and tax demands. This alliance spelled doom for the peasantry, and the twentieth century witnessed the deepening immiseration of African communities in the reserves and on the farms. While this approach differs from that of Morris, and his analysis makes much more of the early successes of peasant producers, both stress that the outcome of the transformations they chart was that the populations in the reserves became captive labour for the mines while tenants became trapped labour for farmers."

34 - Notions that sharecropping was more likely to attract "those 'progressive', sometimes Christian peasant families more deeply involved in commodity and produce exchanges."

36-7 - Most farmers did not use all of their land (because they often didn't have enough stock to anyway), and they could not pay full wages, hence sharecropping and work-for-grazing arrangements.

38 - "More generally, better capitalized farmers, those who advocated progressive agriculture, and those who lacked labour, attacked sharecropping, and particularly rent tenancy and squatting, as evils which had to be eradicated."

40-41 - "However, if the period around the turn of the century can be seen as that in which the initial foundations were laid for the development of a racially exclusive form of capitalist accumulation on the land, then the 1920s and 1930s witnessed the cementing of institutions which allowed those farmers who survived the numerous tribulations of these years to stride more purposefully down the road of agrarian transformations."

45 - "Given this context, it is not surprising that the agrarian class struggle in the first two decades of the century seems to offer little evidence of united political movements among tenants. Many of the essays suggest that the struggle on the farms was conducted in relative isolation, a constant contestation of the demands of landlords. Specific action could include refusal to pay rent, delays in supplying labour, refusal to perform certain types of work or holding back skills, reduction in the pace of work, direct damage to fences or hamstringing of cattle. The incidence of stock theft might seem to offer a reliable barometer of rural conflict; but the constant complaints amongst farmers that it was on the increase, and the difficulty of distinguishing claimed losses from real losses cloud the issue."

49 - "Similarly, although Africans on the farms were gradually dispossessed, and the terms of tenancy moved against them, their experience was not uniform."

Mike Morris, "Social History and the Transition to Capitalism in the South African Countryside," *Review of African Political Economy* 41 (1988), 60-72.

60 - Morris does acknowledge that some of these Marxian social scientists were rejected or criticized by

historians because they were not paying proper attention to historical detail or were far too over-conceptualized.

61 - He notes that while the new social histories (such as Beinart on Pondoland), can fill in much needed historical detail, they have (because of Thompson) distanced themselves from the Marxist schools.

61 - The History Workshop at Wits seeks historical explanation by "uncovering the history of the person in the street" in opposition to great men. He rejects this, not because it isn't good to seek history bottom-up, but because it doesn't change the method, theory, or frame, just the subject matter. "Essentially it locates itself on the wrong terrain by contrasting 'history from below' with that of 'great men' approaches. However, the latter is rejected by Marxists (structuralists as well as others not so inclined to describe themselves) not simply because it is a 'top down' view of history, but fundamentally because it attempts to reduce explanation to a micro framework based on individuals. The 'great men' approach either lapses into an abstracted idealism or an infinitely contingent empiricism. 'Views from below' based on the 'ordinary person in the street' suffer from the same flaws since they are indeed nothing other than the mirror image of the 'great men' views."

62 - This is therefore not a Marxist alternative to Liberal historians, just a populist one with emphasis on "experience" rather than structure.

63 - "Micro-studies are clearly of major importance for Marxist analyses of South African society. However, in order to grasp the essential class forces at play in any local context, they have to be informed by the wider structural relations and social forces characterising the society so that the unique manner in which these wider social relations are concretised and played out in the particular local context can be grasped."

64 - Many of these 1980s social histories are self-admittedly "anti-theoretical" and "anti-structuralist". [I believe that this is the main legacy of E.P. Thompson.]. It can have the effect of romanticizing rural masses.

65 - Morris goes so far as to say that under the banner of social history, South African historical writing has moved to empiricism.

65 - In *Putting a Plough to the Ground*, the authors do not frame their debate around any definition of capitalism beyond distancing themselves from "a definition of capitalism simply in terms of the absence or presence of wage labour."

66 - Further, Morris notes that in abandoning Marxism, these authors adopt Liberal historians such as MacMillan and de Kiewiet.

67 - Following Thompson and abandoning structural analyses leaves them theoretically ill-equipped to deal with issues of capitalism and proletarianisation beyond empirical issues of "experience".