

**CLASS HISTORY AND CLASS
PRACTICES IN THE PERIPHERY
OF CAPITALISM**

RESEARCH IN POLITICAL ECONOMY

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EDITED BY

PAUL ZAREMBKA

State University of New York at Buffalo, USA



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PREFACE

This volume focuses upon advancing understanding of societies outside the core capitalist countries and deepening knowledge of resistances in the periphery, consistent with utilizing a class analysis. Post-World War II scholars moved to theorize the distinction between the core – the center of capitalism – and peripheral countries, often with an added distinction to include the semi-peripheral. Perhaps the World Systems approach of Immanuel Wallerstein is most responsible for the ease with which the term periphery is now utilized. I myself appropriated it 40 years ago in the second issue of this *Research* (i.e., “Accumulation of Capital in the Periphery,” 1979), an outcome of research work at the World Employment Program, International Labor Organization in Geneva. By then, the concept of a capitalist periphery did not need to be described, nor did the idea need much elaboration that surplus value is transferred from the periphery to the core, even while surplus value is also directly appropriated from workers in the core.

Of course, the periphery is so diverse that even so stating seems pointless. Resistances are advancing against the cruelties in so many dimensions. Chapters in this volume describe specificities for Russia, Portugal, Argentina, and Mexico as well as broader perspectives on post-hegemonic Latin America and Asia generally, detailed analyzes of resistances across Africa, and the deeper meaning of neozapatismo for promoting a shift in the entire terrain of discussion. A different set of authors would be offering quite different historical perspectives and perhaps focusing upon other class practices.

The archival translation of Karl Kautsky on crises offered here is something different. Sometimes important historical works have never been translated out of their original, and research is thereby impeded. That was certainly the case when Nikolai Sieber had never been translated from Russian, although Marx himself had uniquely praised Sieber in his Afterword for the second German edition for Sieber’s understanding of *Capital*. The *Research* then offered two translations, in Volume 19 (2001) and Volume 27 (2011). Kautsky’s work translated here was more widely known, but still untranslated from the German while deserving to be.

It is appropriate to state that a core/periphery distinction was not made by Marx, yet it can be shown that he was not so far away from the distinction. And the history of Marx’s own work suggests that he was closer to this topic than presentations of his work seem to suggest. That is, Marx developed awareness that historical developments are much more complicated than in his original conceptions, resulting in his intense interest in Russian society, aiding by learning Russian. Marx’s study regarding Russian development is described by James White in the

first chapter of this volume, while also showing how Marxist political economy subsequently experienced deviation from Marx himself through Engels, Plekanov, and Lenin.

I believe the initiation of the deviation from Marx's own perceptions can be proven. Although the entire second German edition and most parts of French edition of *Capital* were prepared more or less simultaneously in Spring 1872, the French Parts VII and VIII of *Volume I* were prepared in *early 1875*. Thus, Marx had *almost three years* to reconsider and revise his presentation of accumulation of capital. In the French, the chapter "The Secret of Primitive Accumulation" now begins a new Part VIII. More importantly, he *delimits his discussion only to Western Europe and circumscribes it considerably*,¹ compared to the second German edition. Russia, India, China, etc. are not to be offered for inclusion. Although Engels' third and fourth German editions of *Volume I* included most preceding changes from the French within Marx's introductory presentation to the topic, Engels *stops* at making this last change, also failing to provide the new structure of *Volume I* explicitly desired. If Marx had lived somewhat longer, we would have had his own third edition.

In 1887, Engels supervised and published the first English edition, as translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. This English edition did have the divisions of the French, but did *not* have the delimitation to Western Europe explicitly desired by Marx. Engels in 1890 edited and published the fourth German edition, yet still without recognition of either of Marx's desires in these regards. To this day, anyone reading any German edition of *Volume I* is reading within a different structure than the English reader, and all German and English editions fail to include Marx's delimitation to Western Europe. These failures carry over in widespread fashion for editions in other languages, including, astonishingly, *even* for the modern French edited by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre. England is presented as the "classic form" of expropriations of the peasant from the soil, only having differing aspects and phases in disparate countries. There is no delimitation to Western Europe that Marx now desired, following the change he already made in the French edition. Why Engels behaved so can be for another occasion, but the main message is that all of us have a lot to study and apprehend from all corners of the Earth we habit.

Paul Zarembka, April 9, 2019

NOTE

1. Expropriation, Marx now says, "has been carried out in a radical manner only in England; therefore this country will necessarily play the leading role in our sketch. But all the countries in Western Europe are going through the same development, although in accordance with the particular environment it changes its local color, or confines itself to a narrower sphere, or shows a less pronounced character, or follows a different order of succession."