The Agrarian Question In The Neoliberal Era Primitive Accumulation And The Peasantry


The Agrarian Question and Reformism in Latin America epitomizes the emerging tradition of conflict-oriented approaches to problems of economic, agricultural, and rural development in Third World nations. Drawing on firsthand observations of the agrarian crises in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and ten other Latin American nations, Alain de Janvry effectively blends Marxist theories of worldwide economic development with empirical analysis and policy recommendations. This is an age of neo-liberalism, in which the advantages and virtues of private property are often taken for granted. Post-socialist governments have privatized and broken up state farms and socialist cooperatives. However, economic outcomes and the social insecurity now experienced by many rural inhabitants highlight the need for a broader anthropological analysis of property relations, which go beyond changes of legal form. A century after Kautsky addressed "The Agrarian Question" in Germany, it is necessary to address a post-socialist Agrarian Question throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and China. The studies collected here derive from the first cycle of projects carried out at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. They are prefaced by a substantial introduction by Chris Hann. Chris Hann is Director of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/ Saale. In this book, Leon Zamosc provides an account of the history of ANUC and its struggle on three main fronts: for land, for the defence of the colonists, and for the protection of smallholders. The main focus of the book is on the land struggles. Professor Zamosc adopts a structural perspective, examining the agrarian contradictions that propelled the peasant struggles, the changing relationship between the peasant movement and the state, and the political and ideological content of the peasant challenge. He explores these issues in the light of the shifting patterns of class alignments and antagonisms that marked the rise and decline of peasant radicalism during the 1970s, and offers some suggestions about the significance of ANUC’s struggles for the understanding of peasant movements in general. This is the first collection of its kind. It presents a critical political economy of the agrarian question in post-apartheid South Africa, informed by the results of research undertaken since the transition from apartheid started in 1990. The articles, by well-known South African, British and American scholars, cover a variety of topical theoretical, empirical and policy issues, firmly rooted in an historical perspective. This book explores the changing face of US imperialism in the context of a system that is in crisis. At issue are the devastating effects of the turn of many multinational corporations towards 'extractivism'—a pillage of society's natural resources. In recent decades, the various strands of the food movement have made enormous strides in calling attention the many shortcomings and injustices of our food and agricultural system. Farmers, activists, scholars, and everyday citizens have also worked creatively to rebuild local food economies, advocate for food justice, and promote more sustainable, agroecological farming practices. However, the movement for fairer, healthier, and more autonomous food is continually blocked by one obstacle: land access. As long as land remains unaffordable and inaccessible to most people, we cannot truly transform the food system. The term land-grabbing is most commonly used to refer to the large-scale acquisition of agricultural land in Asian, African, or Latin American countries by foreign investors. However, land has and continues to be “grabbed” in North America, as well, through discrimination, real estate speculation, gentrification, financialization, extractive energy production, and tourism. This edited volume, with chapters from a wide range of activists and scholars, explores the history of land theft, dispossession, and consolidation in the United States. It also looks at alternative ways forward toward democratized, land justice, based on redistributive policies and cooperative ownership models. With prefaces from leaders in the food justice and family farming movements, the book opens with a look at the legacies of white-settler colonialism in the southwestern United States. From there, it moves into a collectively-authored section on Black Agrarianism, which
details the long history of land dispossession among Black farmers in the southeastern US, as well as the creative acts of resistance they have used to acquire land and collectively farm it. The next section, on gender, explores structural and cultural discrimination against women landowners in the Midwest and also role of “womanism” in land-based struggles. Next, a section on the cross-border implications of land enclosures and consolidations includes a consideration of what land justice could mean for farm workers in the US, followed by an essay on the challenges facing young and aspiring farmers. Finally, the book explores the urban dimensions of land justice and their implications for locally-autonomous food systems, and lessons from previous struggles for democratized land access. Ultimately, the book makes the case that to move forward to a more equitable, just, sustainable, and sovereign agriculture system, the various strands of the food movement must come together for land justice.

Most developed economies are characterized by high levels of inequality and an inability to provide stability or opportunity for many of their citizens. Mainstream economics has proven to be of little assistance in addressing these systemic failures, and this has led both scholars and students to seek alternatives. One such alternative is provided by Marxian economics. In recent decades the field has seen tremendous theoretical development and Marxian perspectives have begun to appear in public discourse in unprecedented ways. This handbook contains thirty-seven original essays from a wide range of leading international scholars, recognized for their expertise in different areas of Marxian economics. Its scope is broad, ranging from contributions on familiar Marxist concepts such as value theory, the labor process, accumulation, crisis and socialism, to others not always associated with the Marxian canon, like feminism, ecology, international migration and epistemology. This breadth of coverage reflects the development of Marxian economic and social theory, and encompasses both the history and the frontiers of current scholarship. This handbook provides an extensive statement of the current shape and future direction of Marxian economics. The Routledge Handbook of Marxian Economics is an invaluable resource for students, researchers and policy makers seeking guidance in this field. It is designed to serve both as a reference work and as a supplementary textbook for courses in economics, sociology, political science, management, anthropology, development studies, philosophy and history.

Hunger and obesity sit side by side in the world today because a food system dominated by wealth, markets and profits allows those with money to obtain above and beyond their needs while those without cannot get the fundamentals of life. The result is a growing polarization of global agriculture, between the haves and an ever-increasing number of have-nots. In “Hungry for Change,” the author explains how capitalism was introduced into farming and how it transformed the terms and conditions by which farmers produce the food we eat. Written in accessible language and incorporating accounts from farmers and agricultural workers, “Hungry for Change” explains how the creation, structure and operation of the capitalist world food system is marginalizing family farmers, small-scale peasant farmers and landless rural workers as it entrenches us all in a global subsistence crisis. Building upon the idea of food sovereignty, Akram-Lodhi develops a set of solutions that together can resolve the current crisis of the world food system. One of the most serious problems facing the Middle East and North Africa is the region’s growing inability to feed its expanding population. Rapidly escalating demand has made the region highly dependent on food imports, and policy initiatives intended to increase domestic production have met with mixed success at best. The contributors to this volume examine the historical origins of state policies toward agriculture, recent policy changes and their effects on domestic supply, and the social and political implications of these shifts. Focusing on the region’s largest agricultural economies, contributors analyze Turkey’s strong performance as well as Egypt’s weak response to its agricultural problems. Pricing, investment strategies, irrigation policies, and the impact of large-scale labor migration on agricultural sectors are discussed, and a common theme of the interplay between politics and economics runs throughout. An original interpretation of the development of Australian colonial society and economy. A compelling and critical destruction of both the English agricultural revolution and the theory of comparative advantage, upon which unequal trade has been justified for three centuries, this account argues that these ideas have been used to disguise the fact that the North—from the time of colonialism to the present day—has used the much greater agricultural productivity of the South to feed and improve the living standards of its own people while impoverishing the South. At the same time, the imposition of neoliberal “reforms” in the African continent has led to greater unemployment, spiraling debt, land and livestock losses, reduced per capita food production, and decreased nutrition. Arguing that political stability hangs in the balance, this book calls for labor-intensive small-scale production, new thinking about which agricultural commodities are produced, the redistribution of the means of food production, and increased investment in rural development. The combined effort of African and Indian scholarly work, this account demands policies that defend the land rights of small producers and allow people to live with dignity. Development processes are never neutral. They impact various groups and classes of people differently. A high food price may benefit some rich peasants who produce and sell food surplus, but it may disadvantage landless rural laborers. A project on irrigation may benefit those who own the land, but not the landless tenants. Nowadays, official documents by governments and development agencies tend to lump different groups of people into vague categories like rural poor. This might be useful in some cases, but in large part this thinking can harm the poorest of the poor. Using Marx’s theory of capitalism, Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change argues that class dynamics should be the starting point of any analysis of agrarian change. It provides an accessible introduction to agrarian political economy while showing clearly how the argument for bringing class back in provides an alternative to inherited conceptions of the agrarian question. It illustrates what is at stake in different ways of thinking about class dynamics and the effects of agrarian change in today’s globalized world. Modern economic writings do not possess a correct theory of rent arising specifically from
ownership of landed property. This conceptual famine has seriously affected the analysis of agriculture in developing economies, where agriculture employs two-thirds of the work force, and where three-fifths of the land is owned by less than a tenth of the landowners. It also hampers us in understanding the agrarian crisis that is engulfing many countries of the Third World. The selection of readings put together in this volume is in three parts. The first part deals with Marx’s writings on pre-capitalist relationships, and that aspect of the primitive accumulation of capital which relates to the formation of a propertyless labour force. The second part is devoted to the Marxist theory of rent, in particular to understanding the crucial distinction made by Marx between what he termed ‘absolute ground rent’, and Ricardo’s concept, which he termed ‘differential rent’. The third part relates to the process of capitalist development in agriculture and the formation of a class of capitalist producers. The editor’s erudite and lucid Introduction lays out the terrain of the argument and makes Marx’s theory of rent more accessible and comprehensible to the lay reader. In 2007, for the first time in human history, a majority of the world’s population lived in cities. However, on a global scale, poverty overwhelmingly retains a rural face. This book assembles an unparalleled group of internationally-eminent scholars in the field of rural development and social change in order to explore historical and contemporary processes of agrarian change and transformation and their consequent impact upon the livelihoods, poverty and well-being of those who live in the countryside. The book provides a critical analysis of the extent to which rural development trajectories have in the past and are now promoting a change in rural production processes, the accumulation of rural resources, and shifts in rural politics, and the implications of such trajectories for peasant livelihoods and rural workers in an era of globalization. Peasants and Globalization thus explores continuity and change in the debate on the ‘agrarian question’, from its early formulation in the late 19th century to the continuing relevance it has in our times, including chapters from Terence Byres, Amiya Bagchi, Ellen Wood, Farshad Araghi, Henry Bernstein, Saturnino M Borras, Ray Kiely, Michael Watts and Philip McMichael. Collectively, the contributors argue that neoliberal social and economic policies have, in deepening the market imperative governing the contemporary food system, not only failed to tackle yet underlying causes of rural poverty but have indeed deepened the agrarian crisis currently confronting the livelihoods of peasant farmers and rural workers. This crisis does not go unchallenged, as rural social movements have emerged, for the first time, on a transnational scale. Confronting development policies that are unable to reduce, let alone eliminate, rural poverty, transnational rural social movements are attempting to construct a more just future for the world’s farmers and rural workers. Papers, chiefly on land tenure with partial focus on Andhra Pradesh, presented at a 1990 seminar organized by the Dept. of Political Science & Public Administration, Kakatiya University, Warangal. In this book, Leon Zamosc provides an account of the history of ANUC and its struggle on three main fronts: for land, for the defence of the colonists, and for the protection of smallholders. The main focus of the book is on the land struggles. Professor Zamosc adopts a structural perspective, examining the agrarian contradictions that propelled the peasant struggles, the changing relationship between the peasant movement and the state, and the political and ideological content of the peasant challenge. He explores these issues in the light of the shifting patterns of class alignments and antagonisms that marked the rise and decline of peasant radicalism during the 1970s, and offers some suggestions about the significance of ANUC’s struggles for an understanding of peasant movements in general. This volume investigates why peasants defend themselves against the predations of politics by using such “everyday” forms of protest as footdragging, feigned ignorance, false compliance, etc. With a cross-section of countries, historical time periods, and ideologies, the case studies illustrate the variety of forms of everyday peasant resistance and their consequences. Between 1905 and 1949, the economic and political map of the world was altered decisively. The basis was created for the first experiments for establishing an egalitarian social order. Prolonged and intense debates on the nature of agrarian relations, and on the role of the peasantry in relation to the working class, took place in the course of these revolutionary movements. These debates were actuated by the need to theorise the specific class configuration and the class alliances appropriate for achieving the aim not only of overthrowing the old semi-feudal order but of establishing the conditions for transition to a more egalitarian and just society. These debates remain of immense interest because they were not abstract or scholastic but addressed the very concrete and immediate questions of the class nature of the state and the question of who were the friends and who were the enemies of the revolutionary movement. This question in turn was linked closely to the analysis of the trend of development of capitalist relations and assessment regarding the nature of the principal contradiction at a given point of time. This volume brings together selections from the writings of V.I. Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Mao Zedong. The editor’s Introduction is a masterly exposition of the main themes of these debates, and their connection with our times. The Agrarian Question and its resolution in the global context of capitalist development has a protracted scholarship developed over last one century and more. Capitalism in its last two centuries history has evolved through different historical stages since mercantile phase to industrial, national to imperialist and to post-imperialist post-colonial regimes. The agrarian question, understood as a process of transformation of agrarian sector towards capitalist modes, dispensing much of its small and petty producers, producing surplus for the industrial sector and supplying the industrial proletariat, with a clear resolution towards formation of industrial society remained as varied as it could be in the uneven development of capitalist system. The structural transformation that happened successfully for privileged countries in the capitalist centre, proved to be a formidable challenge for a vast number of post-colonial countries in the capitalist periphery. The global and local condition and the political and economic conditions of the contemporary times makes it a considerable challenge for political economists to explain. This reader aims to provide an understanding on range of conceptual and empirical issues of the role of
agrarian transformation for capitalist system, with a special focus on Indian agrarian transition. The reader consists of short summaries of fourteen selected works on agrarian question in the Indian and global context. Please note: Taylor & Francis does not sell or distribute the Hardback in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. This book argues that property rights in land and tenure systems represent important relations not only between individuals, genders and classes but also between the state and different groups in society. In this first monograph on the Russian cooperative movement before 1914, economic and social change is considered alongside Russian political culture. Looking at such historical actors as Sergei Witte, Piotr Stolypin, and Alexander Chaianov, and by tapping into several newly opened Russian local and state archives on peasant practice in the movement, Kotsonis suggests how cooperatives reflected a pan-European dilemma over whether and to what extent populations could participate in their own transformation. This book evaluates the relevance of classical debates on agrarian transition and extends the horizon of contemporary debates in the Indian context, linking national trends with regional experiences. It identifies new dynamics in agrarian political economy and presents a comprehensive account of diverse aspects of capitalist transition both at theoretical and empirical levels. The essays discuss several neglected domains in agricultural economics such as discursive dimensions of agrarian relations and limitations of stereotypical binaries between capital and non-capital, rural and urban sectors, agriculture and industry, and accumulation and subsistence. With contributions from major scholars in the field, this volume will be useful to scholars and researchers of agriculture, economics, political economy, sociology, rural development and development studies. This collection celebrates T.J. Byres’ seminal contributions to the political economy of the agrarian question. Uniting the various themes is the demonstration of the continuing relevance of a critical, historical and comparative materialist analysis of agrarian question. Lenin described The Agrarian Question as the first systematic Marxist study of capitalism and agriculture and the most important event in economic literature since the third volume of Capital. This great work is regarded as Kautsky’s main achievement and is a classic work of analysis. Kautsky’s pariah status in the eyes of revolutionary Marxists resulted in many years of neglect, but his role and work are now commanding great attention. The analysis of the transformation of peasant economies by capital in The Agrarian Question is now seen as particularly relevant to contemporary Third World peasant economies. This remarkable translation, which brings out the humanity - and the humour - in Kautsky’s writing, is more than a work of economic analysis: in a manner ahead of his time, Kautsky integrates questions of political strategy, ecology, sexuality and the family. The illuminating reassessment of The Agrarian Question in the introduction by Professor Teodor Shanin and Hamza Alavi examines in detail the political context, Kautsky’s own life, the development of Kautsky’s ideas within the work, and its contribution to our understanding of the world.

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Page 4/4