

ECO 2210Y

Topics in the Economic and Social History of Later Medieval Europe, 1260 - 1600

Topic 7: The Expansion of Serfdom in Eastern Europe, 14th - 17th Centuries

- * 1. Jerome Blum, 'The Rise of Serfdom in Eastern Europe,' American Historical Review, 62 (July 1957), 807-36.
- * 2. F. L. Carsten, 'The Origins of the Junkers,' English Historical Review, 62 (1947), 145 - 78.
- * 3. Robert Brenner, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe,' Past and Present, no. 70 (February 1976), 30-74; in T. Aston and C. Philpin, eds. The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe (1985), pp. 10 - 63. See also Brenner, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe: The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism' [Past and Present, no. 97 (1982)], pp. 213-327.
4. Heide Wunder, 'Peasant Organization and Class Conflict in East and West Germany,' Past and Present, No. 79 (1978), 47-5, reprinted in Aston and Philpin, The Brenner Debate (1985), pp. 91-100; see also Heide Wunder, 'Serfdom in Later Medieval and Early Modern Germany,' in T. H. Aston, et al, eds. Social Relations and Ideas: Essays in Honour of R. H. Hilton (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 249 - 272. For Brenner's reply, see Aston and Philpin, The Brenner Debate (1985), pp. 275-83.
- * 5. William Hagen, 'How Mighty the Junkers? Peasant Rents and Seigneurial Profits in Sixteenth-Century Brandenburg,' Past & Present, no. 108 (August 1985), 80 - 116.
6. Evsey D. Domar, 'The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: An Hypothesis,' Journal of Economic History, 30 (Mar. 1970), 18-32. Focuses on eastern Europe.
7. Arcadius Kahan, 'Notes on Serfdom in Western and Eastern Europe,' Journal of Economic History, 33 (Mar. 1973), 86-99.
8. Robert Millward, 'An Economic Analysis of the Organization of Serfdom in Eastern Europe,' Journal of Economic History, 42 (1982), 513-48.
9. Michael North, 'Wage Labour versus Corvée Labour in East Prussian Agriculture, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,' in Michael North, From the North Sea to the Baltic: Essays in Commercial, Monetary and Agrarian History, 1500 - 1800, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS 548 (Aldershot: 1996), pp. 1-11.
10. Marion Malowist, 'The Problem of the Inequality of Economic Development in Europe in the Later Middle Ages,' Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 19 (1966), 15-28.
11. Jerzy Topolski, 'Economic Decline in Poland from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries,' in Peter Earle, ed., Essays in European Economic History, 1500-1800 (Oxford, 1974), pp. 127-42.

12. Jerzy Topolski, 'The Development and the Crisis of the Manorial System based on Serf Labour: A Tentative Explanation,' in P. Klep and E. Van Cauwenberghe, eds., Entrepreneurship and the Transformation of the Economy, 10th-20th Centuries (Leuven: 1994), pp. 135-46.
13. Z.P. Pach, 'The Development of Feudal Rent in Hungary in the Fifteenth Century,' Economic History Review, 2nd ser., 19 (1966), 1-14.
14. Arnost Klima, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Bohemia,' Past and Present, no. 85 (Nov. 1979), 49-67; reprinted in T.H. Aston and C.H.E. Philpin, The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 192-212.
15. Ludolf Kuchenbuch, 'Links Within the Village: Evidence from Fourteenth-Century Eastphalia,' in Del Sweeney, ed., Agriculture in the Middle Ages: Technology, Practice, and Representation (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 138-162.
16. Eric Hobsbawm, 'The General Crisis of the European Economy in the 17th Century: I,' Past & Present, no. 5 (May 1954), 33 - 53; and 'The Crisis of the 17th Century: II,' no. 6 (November 1954), 44 - 65. Republished as 'The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century,' in Trevor Aston, ed., Crisis in Europe, 1560 - 1660: Essays from Past and Present (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 5 - 58. Focus only on the sections concerning the 'crisis in eastern markets,' which is very relevant indeed to this current debate.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did serfdom increase, expand its extent, in eastern Europe while it was dying out as an institution in western Europe? Explain the regional variations in the spread of serfdom in eastern Europe, from the 14th to 17th centuries in East Prussia, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Hungary, etc. Is there any common explanation for the spread of serfdom?
2. Discuss the Brenner thesis:
 - a) how valid and valuable are demographic, commercial or market models in explaining the expansion of serfdom in the East?
 - b) What is the relevance of institutional factors, especially feudal and state or monarchical institutions in this debate?
 - c) Can institutional factors alone explain the fundamental reasons for the expansion of serfdom in eastern Europe; or do economic and other social factors also have to enter into any essentially institutional model, i.e. as a catalytic agents? How well does Brenner handle this problem?
3. Discuss the arguments presented by the opponents of the Brenner thesis: who is the more or most convincing?