

3 Queer and (Anti)Capitalism II¹

The Development of Capitalism and the Immiseration of People

Heinz-Jürgen Voß

Global Capitalism

Before discussing gender and sexuality in their historical development under capitalist social relationships, we should define again what capitalism means – and that *the capitalism which became hegemonic* is to be investigated as a global system.

The basic condition for a capitalist economy – whether initially regionally-limited or, later, as a global system – is “the presence of larger masses of capital and labor power in the hands of commodity-producers”, as proclaimed by Karl Marx in the *Capital* chapter on primitive accumulation (MEW 23, 741). The capitalist can take *possession of labor power* by forcing people to hand over produced goods or by inducing them by other means to deliver him goods *in such a way that he can gain profit in their sale* – unequal exchange with those goods-producers is thus indispensable. The profit gained is then put to use to buy more labor power or products which will later make even more profit.

Historically, this was achieved especially by expropriating the labor power of people in rural areas, and then disposing the goods in distant urban centers of trade. For example, China in the sixteenth century exhibited such conditions, as the coastal strip increasingly benefited from long-distance trade and some people

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