

The Suffering of Economic Injustice: A Christian Perspective

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Together we are facing a global *kairos* of humanity because these years are decisive for whether our civilization will irreversibly continue to produce death or whether we find a way out toward a life-enhancing new culture. So let me try to make a humble contribution to our common search for liberation from suffering toward life through justice.

SUFFERING CAUSED BY ECONOMIC INJUSTICE IN THE AXIAL AGE AND IN THE CAPITALIST CIVILIZATION OF MODERNITY

We do not need to spend much time on describing the sufferings caused by economic injustice. They cry to high heaven every day. Jean Ziegler, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, speaks of more than 60 million people dying of hunger and its consequences every year, especially children, although there is more than enough to feed them. That is an annual World War II against the poor. He continues to say: “A child that dies of hunger is murdered.” He calls this a daily crime against humanity.¹ Others call it structural genocide.² All these victims are human beings with a human face, according to biblical tradition created in the image of God. So we are talking about murdering living images of God, about blasphemy.

Also, the blue planet Earth’s suffering is growing dramatically. The extinction of species is accelerating, desertification is expanding, the poisoning of water and soil is increasing, and climate change is producing irreversible effects like lifting the sea level, devouring islands in the Pacific and growing parts of Bangladesh, creating weather disasters everywhere, and possibly increasing temperature in parts of Africa by ten degrees. We all know this, but so far we have not been able to make the necessary changes in global economics and politics to stop or at least slow it.

Often forgotten are the psychological and spiritual sufferings and diseases of a growing number of people. In India an average of more than fifty farmers, driven into debt beyond their means, commit suicide daily out of despair.³ Workers suffer increasing stress and anxiety, and middle-class people fall into depression, projected to be the second most common illness in 2020, according to the World Health Organization. So what are the roots of all of this?

My thesis is that what we are experiencing now started nearly three thousand years ago within what is called the Axial Age, beginning in the eighth century BCE, in the whole of Eurasia from Greece to China. At that time a new economy started to appear in daily life, built on money and private property. It had tremendous social as well as psychological and spiritual effects. To analyze what happened then helps us understand what is happening today. Looking at the responses to this development by the different faiths and philosophies in Israel/Judah, India, China, and Greece may also help us to better understand the tasks and possibilities of engaged Buddhists and liberation theologians in our age.

The philosopher Karl Jaspers coined the term “Axial Age.”⁴ According to him, the experience of violent crises between 800 and 200 BCE might have prompted the parallel efforts of the prophets, the Buddha, Confucius, Daoism, and Greek philosophy to find new foundations for living together. He characterized the new approach as intellectual and spiritual (*geistig*), looking only marginally at the economic and political context. Recently Karen Armstrong and, based on her findings, Jeremy Rifkin took up this theory, looking particularly at war and violence as causes for the responses within the different cultures.⁵ Also José María Vigil, who is present here, has just published a chapter in his book on *Theology of Axiality and Axial Theology*.⁶ As far as the sociohistoric context of the Axial Age is concerned my thesis comes nearest to what David Graeber has worked out in his book *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*,⁷ although he is not very interested in the religious responses. Combining his insights with my own research,⁸ let me summarize how the new economy affects ancient societies.

Money as unit of account was used in the palaces and temples of Mesopotamia as early as around 3000 BCE, but the ordinary economy of people in daily life functioned via a system of mutual credit. This changed when soldiers and mercenaries became professionals and war making was raised to previously unknown levels. They had to be paid. The most important wages were the spoils. Because precious metal could easily be transported, it started circulating in little pieces as a kind of money. Around 600 BCE authorities in Lydia, India, and China started at nearly the same time to coin the metal in order to pay the mercenaries and soldiers. With these practical currencies local markets also developed for daily transactions of the normal people. This means that cash and unified markets are the children of war.

At the same time slaves, usually prisoners of war, now increasingly also debt slaves, were turned into a negotiable commodity. This is why Graeber calls this new system the “military-coinage-slavery-complex.” There was a kind of circle: New professional armies loot precious metals from temple or palace treasuries, jewelry of women, and so on, and slaves. The slaves have to work in the mines to produce more metal for the coinage. The coins are paid to the soldiers and stimulate the local markets, and so on. The whole system functions only as long as it expands through further conquest. So it is no surprise that this system is easily wedded to imperialism. Increasingly empires also request tribute payment in the form of money. This development finds its first climax in the Hellenistic-Roman empires.

On this basis the logic of calculated exchange in markets emerged. Goods for daily

needs were exchanged with money as unit of account. Money became the “one” in the variety of commodities—however, not as a “thing,” detached from the social process, in which people recognize its value, as the Buddhist economist Karl-Heinz Brodbeck points out.⁹ This means that the daily use of money also changed the soul and the thinking of people. Besides communicating by speech—that is, using words (*logos*)—they communicate by calculating in money (*ratio*). In so doing, the individual ego gains precedence over relations in community.

This is furthered by the fact that, in the process of exchange in the market, the money owner has more power than the producer of goods. Money as such offers access to the market while the product has first to be in demand. Coping with this risk is only possible by having as much money as possible. One of the “sages of antiquity,” Pittakos of Mytilene, underlined this, saying: “Profit is insatiable.” He does not say: “The one who makes profit is insatiably greedy.” An economy in which money is made a commodity is inherently greedy. This is why in our new book Franz Hinkelammert and I speak of “greedy money.”¹⁰ There is an “objective” base for greed to accumulate money without limits.

The other implication of this is that money gives the right to private property beyond personal use. Money gives access to the market, cushions the risks, measures the exchange value, and gives access to property rights. Combined with the development of hierarchies and classes in larger societies, money and private property start to determine the economic, social, and political power of people within societies.

In any case, the new economy led to greed and the desire to accumulate limitless money. The institutionalization of this greed was interest. A debtor had to pay back more than he had borrowed, for example, to purchase seed. He also had to put up his own land as security. If he could not pay back his debt plus interest, he lost his land and his family had to work as debt slaves for the creditor. Thus private property and money came into existence at the same time and led to debt slavery and loss of land. On the other hand, the creditors could collect more and more land, money, and debt slaves. This is what scholars have called the emergence of a class society in antiquity.¹¹

Private property and money also reinforced the male domination of patriarchy since only men could own property, which was a way of giving them political power, too. The house father (Gr: *despotes*; L: *dominus*) was seen as the owner of the land, women, children, slaves, and cattle. In Roman law private property even got the status of an absolute. The men were legally allowed to use, misuse, or destroy it.

So the result of introducing money as commodity and private property as an absolute, combined with imperial conquest, was increased division in societies between masters and slaves and between men and women, a more and more precarious situation of small farmers, and in general a dire impoverishment and suffering for the majority of people. This was not just a structural problem, because money also changed people’s souls. Besides communicating through speech and cooperation they start calculating, including calculating each other’s performance in competition. So the problem was not just structural, but also took on a psychological and spiritual dimension.

Before looking at the religions and philosophies resisting these developments in the Axial Age, let us briefly analyze how modern capitalist civilization has built on the early money/private property economy, giving it a new dynamics. In early capitalism from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries CE, the market set out to conquer one sphere of life after the other. The basic step was the privatization of land as commons through enclosures, subjecting agriculture to the mercantile coordination of labor. Another new element was the introduction of compound interest. However, the most decisive new element was the invention of double-entry bookkeeping in the upper Italian trade and banking cities. Here everything was calculated according to debit and credit, costs and return, input and output—with the one goal to gain maximum profit. This was not just a social technique but the decisive characteristic of a new worldview. The world became looked at as a functional mechanism to produce profit for oneself. The calculation of utility followed the means-end rationality, which is the typical way of thinking in European modernity, which meanwhile dominates the whole world. As the economy serves the one purpose of maximizing profits, normal people judge everything according to a single yardstick: “What’s in it for me?”

So structural, cultural, and personal greed starts to be seen as something positive. Finally Jeremy Bentham and Adam Smith define greed and egoism as a virtue and the decisive motor of the economy. The mechanism of continuously reinvesting the profit in new projects in order to gain higher profits created an obsessive accumulation machine. Money that is constantly reinvested for accumulation purposes is called capital. Capital is not simply money but money or assets in monetary terms invested for getting more money. It can also be frozen to capital in the form of machines serving accumulation. So greedy money is the exact description of the nature of capital, of profit, thirsty for more profit. This is why capitalism is the precise term for the economic system and the form of society of Western modernity. “Market economy” is a euphemism used in order to avoid touching the taboo. If you want to use this term in a capitalist context, you need to say “capitalist market economy” because in the past there were and in the future there will be other kinds of market economies. For example, there can be exchange markets without money and also markets with money, however not with money in the form of a commodity geared at accumulation. We shall come back to this.

Industrial capitalism deepened the division of labor and increased the split between the classes. But the key new feature of it is the increased throughput of energy and resources for profit’s sake, aggravated by the fact that consumerism has to be stimulated for the sake of maximum capital accumulation. The result of this shift is visible only now as we face energy and ecological crises. Karl Marx was prophetic when he stated: “Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the laborer.”¹² He also analyzed the obsession for accumulation by the commodity-money mechanisms as fetishism driving people and societies even against reason. This is exactly what we experience today as growth fetishism destroying Earth.

Today this fetishism has taken the form of financial capitalism after it turned out that infinite growth is not possible in a finite world. Within the financial sector the growth obsession has turned to speculation with ballooning financial assets in all kinds of forms. But it is not without a link to the real economy, because when the balloons burst, as we experienced in the years following 2007, neoliberal governments take real money from the working taxpayers and throw it into the voracious jaws of the money owners and their agents, the banks. As this increases the debt of the public budgets, big capital is blackmailing the governments to even pay higher interest rates and curb social benefits. It seems certain that the whole system will one day collapse, thereby increasing the suffering of people even more. Financial capitalism is the ultimate climax of a development starting in the Axial Age.

For me the conclusion is that we are not dealing with this or that crisis, but that this whole civilization is death-bound, not just the economy. It is only because the majority of the people and to some extent all of us are imprisoned in the same kind of logic, spirit, and practice that the system is still able to operate. Are there possibilities of structural and personal transformation to find a new culture of life?

THE RESPONSE OF THE AXIAL AGE FAITHS AND PHILOSOPHIES AND OF TODAY'S LIBERATION THEOLOGIES AND SPIRITUALITIES

My key thesis is that all religions and philosophies of the Axial Age can and must be understood as a response to the emergence of that kind of civilization—including its political economy, psychology, and spirituality—that now, at its climax, is leading humanity and earth not only into increasing suffering but into death. This means that it is of crucial importance to unleash the original power of these faiths and spiritualities in order to inspire and lead us toward a new, all-embracing culture that allows life to flourish on this wonderful planet. This includes the critique of religion that has deviated from its original source in order to assimilate to the dominating civilization. My proposition is that engaged Buddhism and liberation theology are already doing this, but they can be strengthened and united by realizing their common origin in the Axial Age. Let us look at some details.

Historically it seems that the prophet Amos in the second part of the eighth century BCE was the first to react to the upcoming money/private property economy. His central theme was the threat to the small farmers. They were losing their possessions through seizures and being sold into slavery for excessive debts, the women were abused as debt slaves, and so on. Listen, for example, to chapter 2, verses 6–8:

Thus says the Lord:
For three transgressions of Israel
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;
because they sell the righteous for silver,
and the needy for a pair of sandals
they who trample the head of the poor
into the dust of the earth,
and push the afflicted out of the way;

father and son go in to the same girl,
 so that my holy name is profaned;
 they lay themselves down beside every altar
 on garments taken in pledge;
 and in the house of their God
 they drink wine bought with fines they imposed.

Against the destruction of human and social relations through the mechanisms of money and private property Amos puts justice into the center, correcting all power asymmetries (5:24): “Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

The other prophets of Israel and Judah follow the same line: Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah. The latter identifies the knowledge of God with doing justice to the poor when he critically addresses King Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah (22:16):

Did not your father eat and drink
 and do justice and righteousness?
 Then it was well with him.
 He judged the cause of the poor and needy;
 then it was well.
 Is not this to know me?
 says the Lord.
 But your eyes and heart are only on your dishonest gain,
 for shedding innocent blood,
 and for practicing oppression and violence.

The prophets and their followers were a minority in Israel and Judah. It was only King Josiah who made a difference in the second part of the seventh century BCE. It was under his rule that the message of the prophets started to be implemented in the form of legal reforms, which eventually led to the Torah. Central to this process is the Book of Deuteronomy, literally translated meaning “The Second Law.” Here you find the Decalogue, presenting God as the liberator from slavery and therefore demanding and protecting just human relations because only in this way can freedom be secured (5:6–21). It is not by accident that the last of the Ten Commandments is about greed and accumulation:

Neither shall you covet your neighbor’s wife.
 Neither shall you desire your neighbor’s house,
 or field; or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey,
 or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Deuteronomy presupposes an economy using money for exchange (Deut. 14:24–26). At the same time, all its concrete laws aim at correcting, if not avoiding, the destructive forms and consequences of money and private property. A preventive measure is the prohibition of charging interest and pawning as well as the abolition of tribute to be paid for the court and the temple. Tithing now only serves the purpose

of staging an annual people's festival and social benefits for those members of the community who have no land for their subsistence (widows, orphans, and Levites; 14:22–29). Moreover, the harvesters have to leave grain on the fields for the poor to collect (24:19). When somebody falls into debt anyway, the debts have to be forgiven after seven years, in the Sabbath year. Also the debt slaves have to be released after such period—receiving a certain sum of money, equivalent to the seven years' wages of a day laborer, for a new start in freedom. If the people follow God's life-sustaining instructions, there will be no poor among them (Deut. 15:4). Taken together, these amount to the first known social laws in world history.¹³ The prophet Jeremiah, living at the same period, is hoping for a time when God's spirit will write these laws, protecting freedom and creating justice, in the hearts of the people (Jer. 31:31ff.).

The Holiness Code later adds the theological foundation of these laws (Lev. 25:23). The earth belongs to God, and therefore humans must not claim absolute ownership of the land by turning it into a commodity, but they should use it as guests on Earth. In economic terms, this means that property is only legitimate in its use value, not in its exchange value for accumulation. This is the basis for an economy, in which all may have enough for life (cf. Exod. 16).

When the political economy of greed and conquest becomes totalitarian in the Hellenistic empires the Jewish faithful (*chassidim*) react with apocalyptic underground literature characterized by resistance and hope for God's intervention. The classical text for this is the Book of Daniel. In chapter 3 we find the narrative of three Jewish men defying the emperor's demand that everybody should fall down and worship the golden statue. Chapter 7 tells about a vision of Daniel: The empires in the shape of greedy predatory animals are overcome by God's new order coming down from heaven in the shape of a human being. The message is that the human image of God will have the victory over the beastlike, destructive imperial order. That is the hope feeding persistent resistance.

So Ancient Israel and Judah, according to the Hebrew Bible, react to the Axial Age context, characterized by growing economic injustices and suffering, with (1) prophetic critique of the economic mechanisms and encouragement of inner conversion, (2) theopolitical legal reforms, and (3) persistent resistance in the perspective of a new order of humanization.

This is the tradition on which Jesus, his movement, and the early church are building new messianic communities in the context of the Roman Empire. This I understand as a second wave of the Axial Age faiths and philosophies. (I regard Islam as the third wave, building on the biblical traditions, in the context of the Arab merchant society.) Jesus proclaims that God's new domination-free order with a human face, announced by Daniel, is beginning in his presence. It is the suffering, the poor, the outcast who become the first subjects of this new order that turns the imperial hierarchy upside down. The first will be the last and the last will be the first. He creates a spirituality of trust in God's care overcoming the external and internal rule of Mammon, the idol of collecting treasures in the form of the accumulation of money and property. "Strive first for the kingdom of God and God's justice, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33).

It is important to realize that Jesus not only liberates the poor to change their own lives and build communities of solidarity, but he also acts politically in relation to the existing institutions. He does not join the Jewish freedom fighters against Roman occupation, while he does not reject them. He simply looks for a more effective strategy in order to break the cycle of violence and exploitation. One of his key actions in this regard is the confrontation with the Jewish collaborators of the Romans, the priestly elites in the temple (Mark 11:15–19). The temple during that time was the economic center of Judea. It was not only a kind of central bank but also the center of trade and market transactions, built on a whole system of sacrifice exploiting the people. Here the central question is: Which god rules? Is it the gods legitimating exploitation and impoverishment? Or the biblical God protecting and liberating the poor, asking for justice, not for sacrifices? First, Jesus confronts those who harm the poor by the monetary system, the money changers; second, he confronts those who profit from the market system, trading with pigeons, the sacrificial animals for the poor; finally, he stops the whole liturgy of sacrifice.

The key text of God's and Jesus's identification with the people impoverished by and suffering from economic injustice is found in Matthew 25:31ff. Here the victims, the hungry, the thirsty, and so on are portrayed as the yardstick for all people and peoples to be accepted in the final judgment. The judge is the Human One of Daniel 7. This text is crucial for interfaith relations and interfaith solidarity for justice, because those judged are not being judged by the criteria of belonging to this or that religion but by providing for the basic needs of the least ones with whom Jesus identifies.

The early Christian communities followed Jesus on this path. The classical text is Acts 4:32–35. The community voluntarily shares property, especially those having landed property and houses. This balancing of the relations within the community is portrayed as fulfillment of the Deuteronomy Torah by quoting: "There was not a needy person among them" (cf. Deut. 15:4).

The apostle Paul adds two important insights to the Jesus tradition. The first is that reason can be co-opted by greed. In his First Letter to the Corinthians he shows that reason is folly, when it orients itself to a wisdom in the service of the strong, the rich, and the mighty. (Today we know this very well when, for example, scientists work in the service of transnational corporations to smokescreen the ecological dangers of a product that destroys ecosystems.) So wisdom is only true wisdom when it orients itself to the criteria of the weak, vulnerable, and despised in order to be truly inclusive. Second, Paul shows in his letter to the Romans that the law, meant to serve life in community, can also be co-opted by greed (Rom. 6 and 7). In that case it kills. (Today we can see this in the case of debt mechanisms: When the law that debt has to be repaid is made an absolute, it can kill by producing hunger and even death through structural adjustment programs.) Therefore, the overarching criteria for law must be love and solidarity.

Summarizing the core of the Hebrew Bible and the messianic Second Testament in relation to human beings suffering from economic injustice, it is the identification of the God of Israel and Jesus with impoverished people. Therefore, justice in the hearts

of people and justice in community relations and institutions is the key contribution of the biblical traditions toward interfaith solidarity for overcoming suffering.

It seems to me that the Buddha presented his teaching in a similar context. In her book *The Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism in India*¹⁴ the Indian historian Uma Chakravarti concludes that Prince Siddharta Gautama experienced his conversion and enlightenment to become the Buddha in the following context. Between the eighth and sixth centuries BCE a new economy penetrated North India, building on private property and money supported by monarchic power. Consequently, society split into impoverished people and those who enriched themselves on the basis of the new economic mechanisms. It was the pressures of this context—together with his strong inspiration to liberate human beings from suffering—that motivated Prince Siddharta to abandon his privileges in order to find a way for overcoming such suffering in society. He came to understand that the poverty and suffering was caused by greed grounded in the illusion of an ego to be protected by aggressiveness. His solution was to overcome the three poisons—greed, hatred, and illusion—through meditation on the interrelatedness of all beings and to let go all superfluous things.

It is my conclusion that given the similar context in Israel/Judah and in India during the Axial Age, the prophets, the Torah (and later Jesus), and the Buddha present teachings and actions leading us in the same direction—to overcome the suffering, aggravated by the injustice of the money/private property economy and its effects on the human soul and thinking. However, both have a different focus. While also dealing with overcoming personal greed and egocentrism, the biblical traditions at the same time put a strong emphasis on developing legal and institutional provisions against structural, systemic greed to protect the poor and suffering people. Jesus also tries to develop new messianic communities of solidarity to renew Israel to be a light to the world, while Paul widens those communities to include people of all nations in order to subversively spread out these alternatives throughout the Roman empire with the motto “No Jew or Greek, no slave or free, no male or female” (Gal. 3:28). This can be seen as a global cultural revolution.

The Buddha, it seems to me, with his Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path, has his main focus in liberating each human being from the fetters of greed, hatred, and illusion, stimulated by the Axial Age imperial money/private property economy. His institutional contribution to a counterculture is the formation of the sangha, including all castes and eventually also women. He also confronted the despotic kings of his time by propagating the image of the ideal Dharma king. He gave them the responsibility to make sure that all people can satisfy their basic needs. He also taught them to govern without violence. This was to be achieved by constantly teaching him—a similar concept as we also find in Deuteronomy 17.

Because of time constraints we cannot look at the responses of Confucius and Laozi in China and the post-Socratic philosophers to the Axial Age developments in political economy, psychology, and spirituality. They, too, would have specific contributions to make for an interfaith perspective.

What does all this mean for our situation? I think that both engaged Buddhism and Christian liberation theology have a tremendous task here. If it is true that the

imperial money- and property-led civilization, beginning in the Axial Age, is finished, and has to come to an end because it threatens the very survival of humanity and Earth, the spiritual power of all faiths emerging in opposition to this very civilization have to be renewed together. This starts with the critique of the present reality of these faith communities. After all, large parts of them have assimilated themselves to the money culture—be it by individualizing the faith or be it by participating in capitalist practices. Engaged Buddhism and Christian liberation theology direct a kairoitic request to our faith communities to make a clear choice between God and Mammon. This has a solid base in our Scriptures, if we read them contextually in order to see the economic and social implications of the texts. On this basis we can come to a clear rejection of the spirit, logic, and practice of the capitalist civilization by the faith communities. It would bring hope to the suffering world.

Liberation theology and engaged Buddhists can positively contribute to building up alternative human communities and join the struggles of people's movements to develop a new political economy that is geared to satisfying the basic needs of people. If it is true that the creation of suffering in the new Axial Age economy happened through a false use of money and private property, then the crucial task here is to implement the existing designs of a new property order, based on the use value, and a new money order, where money is transformed from a commodity into a public instrument serving the real economy of and for the people. While cooperating in the purification of the economy from greed at the same time a mental change has to happen—away from personal greed and egocentric illusion and violence. The interlinkage of both is crucial, because otherwise greedy thinking will allow the greed economy to continue, and, vice versa, the greed economy will stimulate personal greed.

Combining the strengths of engaged Buddhism and Christian liberation theology to help build up a new transmodern civilization of just relations between human beings as well as the other living beings of Earth would not only reduce suffering created by the present economic injustice, but would also open a new era toward joyful and mindful life of all.

NOTES

1. Jean Ziegler, *Destruction massive: Géopolitique de la faim* (Paris: Seuil, 2011).
2. Garry Leech, *Capitalism: A Structural Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2012).
3. Max Martin and Seema Kakde, *From Debt Trap to Death Trap: Victims of "Free Market": An Enquiry into Farmers' Suicide* (Mumbai: Vikas Adhyayan Kendra, 2006).
4. Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (London: Routledge Revivals, 2010).
5. Karen Armstrong, *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions* (New York: Anchor Books/Random House, 2006); Jeremy Rifkin, *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis* (London: Penguin Books, 2009).
6. José María Vigil, "Theology of Axiality and Axial Theology," *Voices* 35, no. 3–4 (2012): 167–178.
7. David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (New York: Melville House, 2011).
8. Cf. Ulrich Duchrow and Franz J. Hinkelammert, *Property for People, Not for Profit: Alternatives to the Global Tyranny of Capital* (London: Zed Books in association with the Catholic Institute for International Relations and the World Council of Churches, 2004).

9. Karl-Heinz Brodbeck, *Die Herrschaft des Geldes: Geschichte und Systematik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, [2009] 2012).

10. Ulrich Duchrow and Franz Hinkelammert, *Transcending Greedy Money: Interreligious Solidarity for Just Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

11. Hans G. Kippenberg, "Die Typik antiker Entwicklung," in *Seminar: Die Entstehung der antiken Klassengesellschaft*, ed. Hans G. Kippenberg (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), pp. 9–61. Concerning the debt mechanism cf. Graeber, *Debt*.

12. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Capital*, vol. 1. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch15.htm>.

13. Cf. Frank Crüsemann, *Die Tora: Theologie und Sozialgeschichte des alttestamentlichen Gesetzes* (Munich: Kaiser, 1992).

14. Uma Chakravarti, *The Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).

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