

OUTLINE OF PRECONFEDERATION

METIS HISTORY

"Colonizers do not exploit resources; they exploit men"

Sekou Toure, a Great African Anti-Colonial leader

"Our hypothesis is that racial exploitation and race prejudice developed among Europeans with the rise of capitalism, and that because of the worldwide ramifications of capitalism, all racial antagonisms can be traced back to the policies and attitudes of the leading capitalist people, the white people of Europe and North America."*

- Oliver C. Cox.

*taken from "The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa" by Bernard Magubane.

I. The beginning of the Fur Trade: Late 1600's until 1760's.

A. What was really the Fur Trade and why did it occur.

1. Mercantile Capitalism (Fur Trade) - What was this European Economic System in the Fur Trade and elsewhere in the World. Why were the Europeans after the Fur.

2. The Europeans themselves - What were the differences (classes) between the Europeans around the different fur trade posts. Example, Officers(Managers) and Servants (Labourers).

B. Why and how was the Indian population used as a source of labour.

1. What was Indian society like at the beginning of the Fur Trade.- A Classless Society. And how did Indian society change after the beginning of the Fur Trade.

2. The economic conquering of Indian labour by the European. The necessity of the exploitation of Indian labour.

3. What is the class position of Indian labour after economic conquering. Are they now Peasants working the bush in the production of Fur(Trappers). Basic division created between Indian trappers and European labourers. Divisions created within Indian labour - Upland Trappers and Homeguard Indian:

II. The Age of Monopolies - North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company - 1760's to 1821.

A. Competition between the two Fur Trade companies

1. The movement of the Companies into the interior after more Fur. More transportation routes opened.

2. An increased need for European labour within the Companies. Also an increase in labour militancy - strikes against the Companies over working conditions and wages.

3. Class differences between European Officers and Labourers become greater.

4. The need for a source of wage labour or wage labour pool within the Fur Trade territory. This results in the emergence of the Metis or Half breed

B. Indian labour under the two Fur Trade (Mercantile) companies.

1. How and why more Indian labour is exploited to produce fur.

2. How differences between Indian men and women are exploited by the European. How Indian womens labour becomes exploitable under men.

3. Further development of divisions within Indian labour. Homeguard Indians and Upland Trappers (Indian Trappers). The first indications of Metis or Half breed as separate from Indian.
 4. The emergence of the Metis or Half breed when the Fur Trade needs a source of wage labour.- the European needs a source of labour separate from Indian labour.
 5. The creation of Racism against Native (Indian and Halfbreed labour)
- C. The conquering of Scotland and Quebec by the English.
1. The use and exploitation of the Scots and French by the English in the Fur Trade.
 2. Class differences between English, Scot and French in the Fur Trade. The creation of Racism within the European.

III. The Age of British Colonialism, 1821 - 1870.

- A. The merger of North West Company with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. What were the reasons and interests behind this merger.
- B. The formalization of British Colonialism and Imperialism upon the Native population.
1. The Red River (Assiniboia) and Ruperts Land (Fur Trade territory) becomes a formal British Colony under Hudson's Bay Company rule. The Hudson's Bay Company becomes a "State" that rules over and exploits the Native population.
 2. The creation of a "Colonial State Apparatus" under the Hudson's Bay Company that rules over the Native population. The Council of Ruperts Land and Council of Assiniboia - who and which "class" sits on these councils and whose interests are being satisfied. The role of the Church as agent of Colonialism.
- C. The formation of a Class structure within the Red River and Ruperts Land under British Colonialism.
1. 1821 - 1840's - the emergence of a Native (Metis) middle class and working class. The further development of the labour market and labour pool in the Red River which gives rise to the Metis working class and Buffalo Hunters.
- D. Class Struggle and National Liberation
1. 1840's - 1870 - the class formations have become rigid. Indian peasants or fur producers, Metis or Halfbreed worker Buffalo Hunters and a Metis middle class. The struggle of the Metis working class and middle class against exploitation and British colonialism.- Democratic rights and Free Trade versus Hudson's Bay Company rule. The rise of Nationalism out of class struggle. Which class provides the leadership for their interests.
 2. 1869-70 - what were the reasons and interests behind British Colonialism's and the Hudson's Bay Company's plan for the "confederation" of Rupert's Land to Canada. What were the economic, political and class interests behind the "1869-70 Rebellion"? Was it just a "rebellion" or was it a National Liberation struggle? The struggle to establish the "Native State" (Manitoba) as a means towards National liberation. Was Louis Riel a crazy religious man or was he a National Liberator?