

Cheap Labour = Child Labour

An academic thesis on child labour

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Abstract

This thesis argues that child labour is an inevitable consequence of cheap labour generally. It further argues that child labour in the East is a continuation of slavery and that child labour was not eradicated in the West but was “exported” to the East instead.¹ The thesis suggests that this exportation came about as a result of the following chain: rise of modern capitalism in the sixteenth century in Britain and Europe; this leading to slave labour, which finances the British Industrial Revolution, which in turn spawns the modern notion of child labour; the next step is colonialism and the first international division of labour; the second such division occurs in the 1970s and 1980s. The thesis finally argues that Western policies on child labour abroad are at best naive, and at worst hypocritical; conversely, that Eastern countries like Pakistan actively collude in the child labour and cannot be relied upon to tackle the problem either. Only a wider awareness by the general public and consumer in the West, combined with self-interest arguments, can help to address this issue.

¹ The terms East/West are imprecise but are used for the sake of convenience to symbolise rich and poor areas of the world, as connoted by the argument of this thesis; in fact, the focus here is on Britain and Pakistan/India.

Preface

The problem of child labour in the East is really just one aspect of the vexed question of how the global imbalance – more precisely the “structural inequality of capital and labour”² – between East and West arose; the other aspects are terrorism, uneven migration, pollution, climate change, financial instability etc. This larger question has been studied by many, including Immanuel Wallerstein, C.A. Bayly, David Landes and Niall Ferguson. But this is such a complex subject that it would be impossible to address in a mini thesis such as this. All of the authors mentioned have written thick volumes on the subject, indeed Wallerstein has written four. This thesis cannot do more than refer in passing at various times to that immense question and to those authors, and it will do so as it goes through the argument.

Part 1 traces the main thread of the thesis, as outlined in the abstract above.

Part 2 is a more detailed look at child labour: a brief history; a comparison of child labour during the Industrial Revolution in Britain and Pakistan today; a comparison between child labour and slave labour. It should be emphasised that these comparisons are not only interesting in their own right but show similarities which themselves form an essential part of the argument of this thesis. The thesis also looks at social norms such as “conception of childhood” and attitude to education, which have been used by some to “justify” child labour in the sense of arguing that the West has no right to impose its cultural values on countries that use child labour.

Part 3 shows the use of force and collusion between East and West, similar to slavery and colonialism, and that there is no serious will to end child labour.

It should be noted that this idea that child labour was “exported” to the East has been mentioned by previous researchers but has not been explored in detail, or at least not in the way described in this thesis.³ Similarly, the contentions that cheap labour or poverty leads to child labour, or even that capitalism leads to child labour, are not entirely new – but then very few things are – but the chain of events, the various comparisons and the specific articulations of these things in this thesis brings together and spells out what other people have mostly only vaguely hinted at.

² I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Anshuman Mondal, for this clarification on terminology.

³ Kaushik Basu, “Child Labor: Cause, Consequence, and Cure,” *Journal of Economic Literature*, XXXVII, September 1999, p.1089. Basu looks at how child labour was eradicated in Britain, i.e. legal acts, compulsory schooling etc., and suggests that it was exported but does not actually explain the mechanism or chain of events of how this might have happened, in the way that this thesis attempts to do.

Part 1: Tracing the exportation of child labour to the East

A brief history of capitalism

What is capitalism and when did it begin? Defining capitalism is not an easy thing to do since it is the overarching socio-economic system of the modern age and pervades every aspect of life. If it means simply using capital to make more capital it can be said to have its origins for thousands of years, since the idea of interest (or usury) is mentioned in the Bible and the Quran. But modern capitalism, in the sense of the *intense* use of capital to make capital can be said to have started in the sixteenth century, and “late capital” from 1945 onwards.⁴

A more precise definition might be as follows: “In capitalism proper the whole economy becomes dependent on the investment of capital and this occurs when it is not just trade that is financed in this way but production as well.”⁵ Wallerstein’s definition is “Capitalism is a system in which the endless accumulation of capital is the *raison d’être*.”⁶

But capitalism is usually taken to mean more than this. It is not just an economic system but has political implications. The two cannot really be separated; for example, Wallerstein says that “economic and political decisions cannot be meaningfully dissociated”.⁷ Rosa Luxemburg goes further: “In reality, political power is nothing but a vehicle for the economic process.”⁸ So it can also be said that capitalism usually implies free enterprise, individual effort, democracy etc., although it should be noted that capitalism can also work in non-democratic states, e.g. China in recent years.

A detailed explanation of when and how exactly capitalism arose is beyond the scope of this thesis but Wallerstein, for example, says that it arose as a result of a “crisis of feudalism” resulting from many causes such as land erosion and climate, which forced the worker to sell his land in return for a subsistence wage.⁹

⁴ James Fulcher, *Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004). (And in recent years countries like Britain almost seem to depend on the banking industry as a major part of their economy, with rather disastrous consequences as witnessed by the current economic crisis [2007 onwards]).

⁵ Fulcher, *Capitalism*, p.14.

⁶ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System, vol. IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789–1914* (California: University of California Press, 2011) p.xvii.

⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century Vol 1* (London: Academic Press, 1976), p.67.

⁸ Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (Oxford: Routledge, 1913), p.433.

⁹ Wallerstein, *World-System Vol 1*, pp.33,37.

One of the main features of capitalism that *is* most pertinent to this thesis is the use of wage-labour or, as it can be phrased for the present purpose, capitalism's overriding need for, and relentless search for, *cheap* labour. It is this quest for cheap labour that has led to slavery and child labour. (Here perhaps a caveat can be added that it is not only capitalism that requires cheap labour: this has been around since the dawn of civilisation, as has slavery and child labour.¹⁰ Perhaps it is not just capitalism that requires cheap labour but the fact that people have always sought to exploit others, although in capitalism it is *integral* to the system because its fundamental motive is to maximise profit.) But what is really different about capitalism is that it is self-perpetuating: there comes a point where the capitalist has enough money to no longer have to do any work himself, and can purely live off the interest and investment of his capital. And if she has enough capital and spends less than the interest she earns, the money literally grows by itself. This is why the accumulation of capital is important and why it is bound to lead to inequality if, on the other side of the equation, the worker receives only subsistence wages and has no means of getting out of that cycle by accumulating capital himself. Not only that, but the excess capital is most often invested in things, critically property – the crucial basis of wealth and power – which leads to the inflation of property, putting this even further beyond the worker's reach.¹¹

So, true capitalism requires an accumulation of capital. Where did this initial capital come from in the modern age? This is known as the problem of “primitive accumulation” to use Marx's phrase or “previous accumulation” to use Adam Smith's phrase; Marx also uses the term “original sin”.¹² Marx discusses this topic in Part VIII of *Capital*, where he says that initial accumulation of capital is accomplished by theft.

This theft can be small scale, e.g. overtime without pay – say an extra half hour at the end of each day – or a “working lunch”¹³ [quotation marks added] to outright violence and appropriation of vast areas of land,¹⁴ for example the “enclosure” movement which coincided with the beginnings of capitalism in the sixteenth century,

¹⁰ Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹¹ Dan Roberts, “Global recession - where did all the money go?” *The Guardian*, January 29, 2009, accessed May 16, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/dan-roberts-on-business-blog/interactive/2009/jan/29/financial-pyramid>

¹² C.J. Arthur, ed., *Marx's Capital: A Student Edition* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1992), chapter 26.

¹³ Arthur, *Marx's Capital*, p.164.

¹⁴ Arthur, *Marx's Capital*, p.505.

when large areas of public land were literally fenced off (enclosed) and put into private hands.¹⁵

But how exactly does this accumulation of capital occur? The essential concept here is Marx's idea of "surplus labour" or "surplus value". According to Marx, surplus value works like this. In the past, people mostly lived subsistence lives: they worked just enough to survive. They might have a piece of land to grow their food and to live on. People who did not grow their own food would have some other skill, making shoes say, which they would sell for food. The fruits of your labour were yours alone. But if someone wants more than this they must employ other people, since an individual can only work so much. But clearly, for the employer to benefit, the fruit of the employee's work can not only go the employee; from an employer's point of view, that would make no sense. Part of the fruit of that labour must come to the employer. *This is surplus value*. So the employer pays the worker as little as possible and keeps the rest. This is the origin of the need for the cheapest possible labour, in order to enhance the surplus value as much as possible, which links back to the point about maximum profit being the overriding motive of capitalism.

According to Rosa Luxemburg, Marx's reasoning on how accumulation of capital works and why capitalism will eventually collapse was flawed. In *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913) she set out to show that it is not possible for a self-contained capitalist society to accumulate capital, and that external or overseas markets are required; and indeed that they must be *non-capitalist*. This is clearly relevant to the present argument about how child labour was exported to the East. It is a well-accepted feature of Marxian analysis that capitalism must constantly expand, and it does this partly by expanding into newer areas, in the present thesis what has been called the East. But clearly, this must have an end because the world is finite. This is the origin of the idea that capitalism will eventually collapse from its own internal contradictions. Conversely, capitalists who crow that Marxists are wrong and that capitalism shows no sign of collapse, the answer may lie in the fact that not only are these Eastern markets not exhausted yet but also in population growth. Rosa Luxemburg says: "Perhaps the answer is that the natural increase of the population creates this growing demand."¹⁶ What she was not aware of in 1913 was the rapid world population growth that was to

¹⁵ Titus Alexander, *Unravelling Global Apartheid* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1996), p.187. & Fulcher, *Capitalism*, p.24.

¹⁶ Luxemburg, *Accumulation of Capital*, pp.105-6.

occur generally, but more specifically the *imbalance* in population growth between East and West from about 1950 onwards,¹⁷ as the divergence between East and West intensified. So it may be that the huge, disproportionate population growth in Eastern countries as a result of the need for child labour, has simultaneously but accidentally solved the problem of capitalism's never-ending need for new markets, thus *masking* this point. Rosa Luxemburg uses the phrase "natural population growth" but there is nothing particularly natural about population growth. The "natural" thing might be for people to have two children to replace themselves and hence result in a stable population.

Returning to the original question of this section: where did the initial accumulation of capital come from? One argument is that it came, at least partly, from the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism. Although Marx mentions slavery and colonialism, it was Luxemburg who emphasised this. People like Wallerstein and Eric Williams would agree with this view; others, like Niall Ferguson and David Landes would be less favourable.

The next few sections attempt to look at the facts and try to evaluate the arguments.

The transatlantic slave trade

Slavery has existed since the dawn of civilisation.¹⁸ Slave labour was almost certainly used to build the Great Pyramids, it was common in Greece and was even justified by Aristotle.¹⁹ It was common in Rome and was legal. It has been condoned by most religions including Christianity and Islam. This section will focus on the transatlantic slave trade in which Britain was the forerunner (because this thesis focuses on Britain and Pakistan) but it should be noted that it was initiated by the Portuguese and Spanish and practiced by most of the major European powers.²⁰

Slavery already existed in Africa, and the Africans colluded in the slave trade: they supplied the slaves who were either existing slaves, prisoners of war or were specifically acquired by kidnapping and war in order to supply the European traders.

¹⁷ See graph at the end of Part 1.

¹⁸ Morgan, *Slavery*, p.1.

¹⁹ C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), p.402.

²⁰ E.g. Morgan, *Slavery*, p.5: "The first African slaves taken to Spanish America arrived on a Portuguese vessel in 1502." & p.21: "The first shipment of blacks to British America arrived in Virginia in 1619."

For example: “They [the English traders] had to establish and maintain good relations with African middlemen, who supplied slaves from the interior ... and they needed the acquiescence of local rulers.²¹ And “[there was already a] flourishing internal market for slaves”.²²

The slaves were transported in chains and in spaces that were not much bigger than a coffin.²³ They were allowed one or two hours of exercise per day but other than that were kept chained. They suffered horribly from disease and malnutrition and many millions are estimated to have died en route or shortly after arrival.²⁴ The crew also suffered although obviously not as much as the slaves. On one occasion one hundred and thirty-seven enchained slaves were thrown overboard because of a water shortage and the trader later tried to claim compensation for the loss of his cargo.²⁵

The British slave trade was abolished in 1807 and slavery itself, in the British Empire, abolished in 1837. This is often presented as a humanitarian act by the British government but was in fact the result of intense campaigning by independent humanitarians, some of whom were indeed British, helped by former slaves and others. Eric Williams has argued that in the end the government only acted because its economic interests coincided with the humanitarian concerns of campaigners.²⁶ The reason why Britain wanted to end slavery, according to him, was that others were now catching up with Britain and so it no longer gave Britain an advantage. Indeed, Britain now wanted to maintain its advantage by using the industrial revolution, for which slavery was a direct competitor.²⁷

²¹ Morgan, *Slavery*, p.69.

²² Morgan, *Slavery*, p.14.

²³ Morgan, *Slavery*, p.35.

²⁴ BBC website, *Quick guide: The slave trade*: “More than a million people are thought to have died while in transit across the so-called 'middle passage' of the Atlantic due to the inhuman conditions aboard the slave ships and brutal suppression of any resistance.”

²⁵ Morgan, *Slavery*, p.131.

See also Amitav Ghosh, *In an Antique Land* (London: Granta Books, 2011). This also shows how human beings were commodified as ‘human capital’ in a very literal sense. This differentiates capitalism from previous slave systems like Islam, for example, where bonds between master and slaver were encouraged. (I am indebted to Dr Anshuman Mondal for this point.)

²⁶ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1944).

²⁷ This is similar to the case of the American Civil War which is often seen partly as a moral crusade against slavery but was in fact, some argue, more to do with integrating the slavery-based South into the wage-based North. (I am indebted to Dr Anshuman Mondal for this point.) See also Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975). E.g.: “This centres on the nature of the slave society of the Southern states and its possible compatibility with the dynamically expanding capitalism of the North.” (p.141) and “Northern industry was certainly more worried about a nation half-free trading and half-protectionist than about one half-slave and half-free.” (p.142).

After the end of slavery, Britain turned to other forms of cheap labour, such as indentured labour, which was almost as cheap as slavery; indentured or bonded labour is basically a form of slavery except that it is for a fixed period of time.

Apart from the detailed arguments adduced by the aforementioned writers, some evidence to show that the ending of slavery was not for humanitarian reasons can be seen from the process of freedom. When the slaves were “freed”, they were initially required to carry on working as “apprentices” for six more years. This meant that they had to work for forty hours per week for free, and only get paid for extra hours on top of this. Children under six were freed immediately, which sounds very humane until we realise that this means that children *over* six were still enslaved. Slave-owners were compensated but the slaves were not. The latter were freed but without any form of compensation, apology or support, which meant that many of them actually had to continue almost as before, with subsistence wages; in fact, they were no longer provided with food, shelter and clothing, so were really not better off, except in their legal status. There was even talk early on that the *slaves* should compensate the slave owners. This after being enchained, transported, and suffering unspeakable punishments such as whippings, cutting off of limbs and castration.²⁸

The route from Africa to the Americas was called the “Middle Passage”, whose horrors are well known and can be understood from the above mentioned facts. The Middle Passage formed one part of the “triangular trade”, which involved (1) Britain taking manufactured goods to Africa; (2) trading these for slaves and transporting them to the Americas; (3) there the slaves were sold for things like sugar and tobacco to be brought back to Britain. Sugar in particular requires intensive labour and there must be no pause between the various stages of the sugar-making process. So to a certain extent the slave-owners were forced to be brutal to maintain the work-flow, and the nature of the work explains the need for cheap, abundant labour.²⁹

But what role did slavery – and, later, colonialism – play in giving Britain the advantage it enjoys to this day? Perhaps surprisingly, there is disagreement as to whether Britain benefitted from the slave trade. David Landes in *Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (1998) has a section on this in his book where he weighs the pros and cons of the argument and his final verdict, although not clear-cut, is that on balance it was

²⁸ Morgan, *Slavery*, p.113.

²⁹ See Bernardine Evaristo, *Blonde Roots* (London: Penguin, 2009) for a recent fictional depiction of this.

advantageous. He writes, referring to slavery: “The effect was to stimulate both agriculture and industry, increase wages and incomes in Britain, promote the division of labour, and encourage the invention of labor-saving devices.”³⁰ Kenneth Morgan is more clear: “The overriding motive ... was economic ... [because it] generated lucrative returns ... Merchants often graduated, with the accumulation of profits, to the status of planters.”³¹

The disagreement is perhaps to do with definition of terms. When people like Landes say that the slave trade was not as advantageous as others contend, what they are usually referring to is just the slave trade part of the triangular trade. This may well be true if one considers all the costs and work involved. But there is virtually no disagreement that the triangular trade, taken as a whole, was hugely profitable. So it is perhaps rather disingenuous to speak of just the slave trade part in isolation from the triangular trade. It can also be said, on a qualitative level and leaving aside profit and loss figures, that slavery would not have been practised, had it not been profitable. One could possibly argue that colonialism and empire (discussed below and about which there is a similar dispute) might be indulged in purely for reasons of adventure, power and grandiosity alone – but not slavery. Even though slavery was legal, it was generally abhorred but looked upon as a necessary economic evil (“that slavery is an evil no man will deny”³²). It would *not* have been indulged in had it not been economically profitable. Also, if a person embarks on a business venture, he may well be willing to sustain losses for a few years in the hope and expectation that profits will eventually come; the British slave trade continued for *two hundred years*. Surely, nobody in their right minds would continue an operation for this length time if it was not profitable, and it is also a fact that many of the banks that exist to this day, or did until recently, including Barclays and Barings, were built on the back of slavery and date from that period.³³ The profits of banking then led to imperialism (see the footnote on chronology in the next section).

It is clear therefore that the overall profits of slavery resulted in a huge accumulation of capital, but what was it used for? The answer, some say, was the

³⁰ David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (London: Abacus, 1998), p.120.

³¹ Morgan, *Slavery*, p.34.

³² Christopher Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p.369; also: “No evil more monstrous has existed upon earth” said Coleridge (p.5). “an extensive evil” said John Atkins (p.41). “It chills one’s blood” said Horace Walpole (p.44).

³³ Williams, *Slavery*, pp.43,101; See also: BBC website, *Slavery and the building of Britain*.

Industrial Revolution, which gave Britain and Europe a huge advantage and head-start over the rest of the world.

The British Industrial Revolution

The British Industrial Revolution (henceforth simply “Industrial Revolution”) was a period between roughly 1750-1850, when Britain industrialised, i.e. moved from a primarily agricultural economy and society to an urban- and factory-based economy and society. This period was accompanied by much human misery both of adults and of children, although some would argue that the misery already existed.

The Industrial Revolution was one of the most significant events in human history. For people living now the world it created is taken for granted but the change was truly revolutionary and its effects are being felt to this day. (Some people think that a similar process is perhaps occurring now with “globalisation” but it is difficult to say whether this is as profound as that, or even perhaps a continuing *effect* of it.³⁴)

There were many factors that led to industrialisation. Scientific and technological innovation, which perhaps derived from the scientific revolution in Europe; entrepreneurial skill and enterprise were required, which arguably came from Britain’s existing seafaring tradition and mercantile acumen. And it required capital which came, at least partly, from the profits of slavery. By this time the colonisation of India had already started and profits were flowing from there also; that will be examined in the next section. (The Industrial Revolution overlaps the transition period from slavery to colonialism so a neat chronology is difficult.³⁵)

The machines used in the Industrial Revolution were not totally automatic. They required some manual intervention, for example reloading a cotton reel. These are extremely simple tasks, requiring no skill, and from an employer’s point of view not meriting too much pay. This initiated the intense use of children as workers as an ideal form of cheap labour. Children have always worked, as Part 2 will show, but the

³⁴ See Hobsbawm, *Age of Capital*, eg: “For the historian the great boom of the 1850s marks the foundation of a global industrial economy and a single world history.” (p.69)

³⁵ Dr Anshuman Mondal says that actually a chronology is probably valid but is difficult to prove and would require much more work. See also Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967) in which she argues that imperialism first appeared as a solution to the problem of excess capital in Europe, e.g.: “expansion appeared first as the outlet for excess capital production and offered a remedy, capital export” (p.147).

Industrial Revolution was the starting point of the *intense*, mechanised, division-of-labor-based use of child labour in the sense that it is understood today.

The above is a summary from *Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (2010) by Jane Humphries and from Arnold Toynbee's *Lectures on The Industrial Revolution in England* (1884); the latter, as well as giving an overview of the Industrial Revolution, also looks at general questions of economics, of wealth distribution, of the benefits of competition versus state regulation. Toynbee also notes that the Industrial Revolution was accompanied by a parallel agrarian revolution. This is probably not coincidental because clearly if people were moving from the countryside to the cities and factories, almost by definition the two had to go hand in hand.

In chapter 8 he outlines the main features of the Industrial Revolution. He notes firstly a rapid increase in population. He continues:

Four great inventions altered the character of the cotton manufacture; the spinning-jenny, patented by Hargreaves in 1770; the waterframe, invented by Arkwright the year before; Crompton's mule introduced in 1779, and the self-acting mule, first invented by Kelly in 1792, but not brought into use till Roberts improved it in 1825. None of these by themselves would have revolutionised the industry. But in 1769-the year in which Napoleon and Wellington were born-James Watt took out his patent for the steam-engine. Sixteen years later it was applied to the cotton manufacture. In 1785 Boulton and Watt made an engine for a cotton-mill at Papplewick in Notts, and in the same year Arkwright's patent expired. These two facts taken together mark the introduction of the factory system.

The following question can now be posed: are there specific examples of how the Industrial Revolution was financed by slavery? According to Eric Williams, one specific example – backed by evidence – is that the profits of slavery directly financed James Watt and the steam engine³⁶ (note that Watt is mentioned in the above extract). Another central figure mentioned in the extract is Richard Arkwright who not only invented many things but is indeed described as “the father of the modern industrial factory system and his inventions were a catalyst for the Industrial Revolution.”³⁷ He was also the first to use Watt's engine. But Arkwright was born into poverty; where did he get his finance from? If he got it from a bank then this would certainly provide the link to slavery; and he did indeed get it from a bank, a large amount in fact:

³⁶ Williams, *Slavery*, p.102.

³⁷ BBC website, *Sir Richard Arkwright (1732 - 1792)*.

... Arkwright sought assistance from Ichabod and John Wright, the Nottingham bankers, who agreed to support him provided that ‘if his plan should succeed, they were to share in its profits’ ... they, ‘finding the amount of their advances swell to a larger sum than they had expected ... ’ turned Arkwright over to Samuel Need, a wealthy Nottingham hosier ...³⁸

Actually, most people acknowledge that slavery was profitable but contend that its contribution was “below 5 per cent of British income in an early year in the Industrial Revolution”.³⁹ Even if this conservative estimate is accepted, Eric William’s argument that the profits of slavery – i.e. the accumulation of capital to use the term of this thesis – financed the Industrial Revolution remains valid: if today’s figures are used, 5% of GDP works out to £100bn. Imagine that amount of money being invested in a given technology; as a comparison, the UK is investing half a billion in green technology: “The government has missed a big opportunity to kick-start a green *industrial revolution* with its £3bn fiscal stimulus.”⁴⁰ The original Industrial Revolution, even according to conservative estimates, had a £100bn “fiscal stimulus”. To be even more conservative, a *BBC History* summary mentions a figure of £8bn in today’s money, still 2.7 times the £3bn figure mentioned in the report.⁴¹

Going to the other side of the equation now, what to do with all these manufactured goods being churned out by the Industrial Revolution? They needed a market. There was continental Europe of course, but by this time another, more effective, market was being shaped – a monopoly market, in fact: India and the rest of the growing British Empire.⁴²

³⁸ R.S. Fitton, *The Arkwrights: Spinners of Fortune* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), p.27.

³⁹ Stanley Engerman, “The Slave Trade and British Capital Formation in the Eighteenth Century,” *Business History Review*, 46.4, 1972.

⁴⁰ Alok Jha, “UK must invest in green technologies,” *The Guardian*, December 16, 2009, accessed May 16, 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/dec/16/uk-green-technologies> [italics added]

⁴¹ BBC website, *Enslavement and Industrialisation*.

⁴² E.g.: Williams, *Slavery*, p.210: “The commercial capitalism of the eighteenth century developed the wealth of Europe by means of slavery and *monopoly*.” [italics added]

Colonialism and Empire

Colonialism and imperialism,⁴³ like slavery, have been around for thousands of years: Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire, the Islamic Empire, the various European empires including Britain's, the current American Empire which may be on the decline as we write. Again, this thesis will focus on Britain, although it should be borne in mind that, like slavery, it was actually the Dutch, the Portuguese and the Spanish who were the initiators in this regard.⁴⁴

The British Empire began as a trading venture with the East India Company in the sixteenth century. Only later did it become military and colonial in nature culminating with the crowning of Queen Victoria as Empress of India in 1876, by which time Britain had embarked on a fully-fledged imperial policy. But the two world wars left Britain severely weakened and it was forced to gradually give up its empire, starting with India (incorporating Pakistan) in 1947.⁴⁵

The Indians colluded in their own subjugation by a combination of weakness, stupidity and venality. Local leaders and the elite colluded in subjugating their own people in return for money, land and power. But when they did not collude they were forced to do so by the military might of the British. For example, "the Raj relied upon the collaboration of the ruled with the rulers just as much as upon military strength"⁴⁶ and "the complexity and diversity of Indian society meant that ... the English could attempt to play off one sect or region against another"⁴⁷

Britain also used protective measures, for example: "British protectionism and productivity had devastated India's traditional hand-produced textile industry."⁴⁸ Rosa Luxemburg has two whole, separate chapters (31&32) in her book, on the use of protectionism and violence in the accumulation of capital:

Militarism fulfils a quite definite function in the history of capital, accompanying as it does every historical phase of accumulation. It plays a decisive part in the first stages of European capitalism, in the period of the so-

⁴³ These are similar but different terms. Perhaps the simplest way to understand the difference is to think of colonialism as merely one form of imperialism. See John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp.7-8.

⁴⁴ Dennis Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Niall Ferguson, *Civilization* (London: Allen Lane, 2011).

⁴⁵ All of this is a summary from Denis Judd's *The Lion and the Tiger*.

⁴⁶ Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger*, p.16.

⁴⁷ Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger*, p.11.

⁴⁸ Ferguson, *Civilization*, p.224.

called ‘primitive accumulation’, as a means of conquering the New World and the spice-producing countries of India. Later, it is employed to subject the modern colonies, to destroy the social organisations of primitive societies so that their means of production may be appropriated, forcibly to introduce commodity trade in countries where the social structure had been unfavourable to it, and to turn the natives into a proletariat by compelling them to work for wages in the colonies. It is responsible for the creation and expansion of spheres of interest for European capital in non-European regions, for extorting railway concessions in backward countries, and for enforcing the claims of European capital as international lender. Finally, militarism is a weapon in the competitive struggle between capitalist countries for areas of non-capitalist civilisation.⁴⁹

But, just to show that the British did not have a monopoly on violence, Hindus and Muslims, former friends and neighbours, during Partition killed each other in an orgy of meaningless slaughter, to the tune of an estimated one million, and many hundreds of thousands more displaced and cut off from their families. To a certain extent the British were responsible for the botched operation, but this was no excuse for the killings.

Why were the British able to subjugate the Indians, indeed why were they in India in the first place, rather than the other way round? It depends on one’s point of view. Historians such as Landes and Ferguson would imply an innate sense of superiority and adventure. People like Bayly emphasise the use of violence (“efficiency at killing other human beings”⁵⁰). In summary, the most likely explanation is that the British had to be there: the logic of capitalism, as described by Luxemburg, requires continuous expansion.⁵¹ Further, if Marx’s view that people are conditioned by their environment – in fact primarily by the economic system and means of production – is correct then a corollary follows: that it was not a case of the Europeans of that time being “evil”; rather, that they were made to do evil things by the economic system that was arising at that time, i.e. capitalism.

⁴⁹ Luxemburg, *Accumulation of Capital*, p.434.

⁵⁰ Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, p.469.

⁵¹ Leaving aside the logic of capitalism, we can also note that the colder climate of Britain is unable to produce the various spices and foods that are required to live a decent life. The word “spice” is an innocuous sounding word but Denis Judd, in *The Lion and the Tiger*, says that pepper alone was worth the trading and later colonising efforts of the British (p.9). Spice not only enhances flavour (which is more important than it sounds) but was required as a preservative for meat and also to cover the odour of bad meat. Every winter the British had to slaughter their entire livestock which was lost without the preserving effect of spices (p.6). And, even today, if one thinks about the cold and misery of the British climate and the longing for warmer climes, it is easy to imagine why the British ventured out, not only for raw materials but also for the hot and exotic nature of the East. This idea of the exoticness of the East is extensively explored by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978).

There is much debate about whether Empire was good or bad, well-intentioned or always exploitation-intended. Attackers of Empire would argue that there is *no* doubt of the ill-intentions and that the debate is merely a post-facto obfuscation by defenders of Empire, a claim that clearly the latter would deny. A full discussion of this question is beyond the scope of this thesis but it can be said that there was no “grand plan”. The main goal was trade, either by cooperation or force. No armada set sail, no vast army went marching. But if, as they say, business is war, than clearly it *was* war, albeit not by weapons to start with. And the willingness to use force for trade perhaps demonstrates the ill-intentions: an analogy might be to tell a mugging victim to hand over their wallet willingly or be beaten first.

Defenders of Empire adduce that the British built roads and railways. But these were mainly to enforce control and to transport goods.⁵² Rosa Luxemburg has a scathing passage on this: “The (East India) Company which ruled India until 1858 did not make a single spring accessible, did not sink a single well, nor build a bridge for the benefit of the Indian.”⁵³ (This in contrast to previous rulers like the Moghuls.) She also says that the roads and railways were built to spread the “commodity economy”.⁵⁴ But the British also abolished *sati* (the Hindu tradition of burning the widow on the funeral pyre of her husband); it is hard to see what they would have gained economically from this; but it can also be said that they *lost* nothing economically from doing so. There are always people with morals campaigning for change, but it usually also requires the additional incentive of the economic benefit – or at the very least no economic *loss* – to energise the governing powers to actually do something about it.

But the overall conclusion must surely be this. Any benefits accruing to subject peoples was wholly incidental and a side-effect, and only if it had no economic impact on the colonisers. The idea that any country would travel halfway across the world on a “civilizing mission”, endure misery and heartache for hundreds of years (the men and women who went out to India, for example, were often very lonely and unhappy⁵⁵), for

⁵² Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger*, p.75.

⁵³ Luxemburg, *Accumulation of Capital*, p.355.

⁵⁴ Luxemburg, *Accumulation of Capital*, p.366. (Scholars also note that there have been no famines in post-independence India. This point is debated by pro- and anti- colonialists, e.g. Niall Ferguson and Amartya Sen. [I am indebted to Dr Anshuman Mondal for this point.]) See also Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). E.g.: “It is certainly true that there has never been a famine in a functioning multiparty democracy.” (p.178) and “Since independence and the installation of multiparty democratic system, there has been no substantial famine [in India].” (p.180).

⁵⁵ Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger*, p.56.

the benefit of the foreign country is a puerile argument. Every single reason, from religion to “civilisation”, was an excuse for domination and exploitation, whilst incidental benefits were used as a mitigating facade.

But nor were the British hell-bent on conquest for its own sake; primarily, what they wanted was trade. For importation they wanted spices and other raw materials, and for export they wanted the huge market of India with its large population; the equation is surely very simple. But in order to trade, force sometimes becomes necessary. Britain first had to fight the Portuguese who were already in India; fortunately for the British, the Indians disliked the Dutch.⁵⁶ After a series of Anglo-Dutch wars the British gained the ascendancy from about 1650 onwards.⁵⁷ Another example of the use of force was during the Opium Wars with China:

The West’s ascendancy was confirmed in June 1842, when Royal Naval gunboats sailed up the Yangzi to the Grand Canal in retaliation for the destruction of opium stocks by a zealous Chinese official. China had to pay indemnity of 21 million silver dollars, open five ports to British trade and cede the island of Hong Kong.⁵⁸

But, having given a brief overview of the history, and pros and cons of the British Empire, the important question for the present purpose is: how did trade with India help Britain with its accumulation of capital and to intensify the international division of labour? There can be no doubt that Britain’s monopolistic trade with India was hugely profitable for Britain, and its later colonial position gave it the power to suppress India’s industrialisation to the advantage of its own. India was forced to be the supplier of raw materials and to be the market for Britain’s manufactured goods. For example, one writer maintains that India was not poor pre-colonialism; it had one quarter of world manufacturing output in 1750 but that “at the end of the colonisation process, India was a very poor country”.⁵⁹ Early theories, in the late nineteenth century, of how colonialism was making India poor were put forward by people like Romesh Chunder Dutt and Dadabhai Naoroji who coined the “Drain Theory” of economic (under)development, i.e. that Britain was draining the wealth of India,⁶⁰ and Titus Alexander has detailed the

⁵⁶ Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger*, p.8.

⁵⁷ Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger*, p.18.

⁵⁸ Ferguson, *Civilization*, p.48; see also Amitav Ghosh, *River of Smoke* (London: John Murray, 2011) for a fictional depiction of this.

⁵⁹ Hugh Hindman, ed., *The World of Child Labour* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 2009), p.778.

⁶⁰ I am indebted to Dr Anshuman Mondal for this point.

protectionist measures enforced by Britain in order to support its textile industry, which destroyed India's own.⁶¹

A point needs to be made about the textile industry. Like the spice trade it sounds quite innocuous. One might think that surely, even if Britain did destroy India's textile industry, just one industry should not make so much difference. But the textile industry is extremely significant: clothes are one of the primary requirements of human beings. Indeed Ferguson notes that "the Industrial Revolution ... had its origins in the manufacture of textiles".⁶² So, the textile industry is of *huge* significance.

How profitable was colonialism? Rather surprisingly perhaps, some people still maintain that colonialism was not advantageous to Britain, for example David Landes; indeed he goes so far as to say that empire actually costs money. But Niall Ferguson in *Civilization* says quite openly and without any hesitation or doubt: "Britain was able to run a current-account surplus in invisible earnings from shipping, insurance and overseas investments, *plus the profits of empire (earnings from the slave trade and from the taxation of Indians by the East India Company)*".⁶³ There is also this from Denis Judd, referring to trade with India: "three or four voyages assured any man a very handsome fortune".⁶⁴

Perhaps the answer to David Landes is that initially this sort of trade is always profitable but later, as empire expands and requires a lot of administrative expenditure, as well as military expenditure to quell opposition, it no longer remains profitable. But there can be no doubt, as the two above quotes show, that the early and middle stages of colonialism resulted in a huge accumulation of capital which allowed further investment in the Industrial Revolution as well as imposing by force the first major turning point in the international division of labour.

The first major stage of the international division of labour

This occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even if it is accepted that slavery and colonialism gave no financial advantage to Britain – and even most defenders of this position do not go quite that far – what cannot be denied is that they

⁶¹ Alexander, *Unravelling Global Apartheid*, p.21.

⁶² Ferguson, *Civilization*, p.198.

⁶³ Ferguson, *Civilization*, p.161. [italics added]

⁶⁴ Judd, *The Lion and the Tiger*, p.37.

both led to the international division of labour existing today, which is the absolute basis of the imbalance between East and West and hence of child labour.

So now division of labour must be discussed in more detail. It is *not* the argument of this thesis that division of labour is a bad thing in and of itself. Up to a point it is almost certainly a *good* thing: most people can only do one or two things well and are usually happy to do those things. But like all things it is good or bad depending on how it is manifested in actual economies. Driven to an extreme it becomes almost an *evil* thing, as human beings become machines. Take for example software. It is one thing to specialise in software, to have a career ladder whereby one can progress from coder, to programmer, to designer, team leader, manager etc. But to be consigned to write code blindly and without thought from a specification for the rest of your life, without hope of advancement, would surely be tantamount to mental torture.

Or take the carpet industry, which is one of the main export industries of Pakistan and which is notorious for using child labour. Again, it is one thing to specialise in the carpet business, perhaps *start off* weaving carpets but then later progress to designing them, becoming a manager etc. But to be consigned to knot carpets for your whole life, starting in childhood, at subsistence wages is surely an evil thing, if one accepts the argument that human beings are not just machines to be used for wealth creation.

Now taking this argument to the international level, it certainly makes sense that various countries, because of their climate, geography, history, traditions, culture etc. would specialise in different things; but to consign the cheapest, lowest-skilled, manual, repetitive work to certain countries, whilst others do all the exciting, high-paid work is surely similarly evil, if one accepts that morality has any part to play in economics. And this connection between economics and morality surely must be accepted otherwise people would not bother even paying lip service to it; there may well be some people who privately do not believe this, but certainly no one says so publicly, which clearly demonstrates that they are at least aware that they are in the minority.

Here the idea of “comparative advantage” must be brought in. This concept derives from David Ricardo (1772-1823) and is related to the concept of division of labour. Ricardo maintains that people and countries should do what they are good at; (actually, Ricardo was referring to internal specialisation within a country but we can

extrapolate his argument globally⁶⁵). No argument with that. The problem is that for the Eastern countries, according to this theory, their main comparative advantage is supposed to be cheap labour, which has been constructed by the global capitalist economy itself as an effect of slavery, colonialism and imperialism. As a result, cheap labour is *not* a comparative advantage; it is the worst *disadvantage* you can possible have and inevitably leads to child labour. But not just to child labour. When cheap labour is your main skill and there is no lower limit to the wage paid, it will inevitably fall to subsistence levels, according to the logic of capitalism and the doctrine of surplus value. In Marx's words, "The average price of wage-labour is the minimum wage, i.e., that quantum of the means of subsistence, which is absolutely requisite in bare existence as a labourer."⁶⁶ But here is another innocuous sounding word: "subsistence". What this means is that a person will work for just enough money to not starve, and they will be forced to have enough children so that the family as a whole does not starve.

This starvation wage, by definition, does not cover education, health care, holidays, life insurance, pension, or any kind of luxury. People in the West are often surprised at how cheap things are in the East; the preceding sentence gives the explanation. Most things the world over cost the same, whether it be commodities, gold, shares etc; the system of international arbitrage ensures that.⁶⁷ The low prices in the East are a result of a subsistence standard of living and also the cause of having many children: children are not only a source of income but also replace pensions; and a large family is a source of security, in that hopefully if one person falls on hard times, another will be able to make up.⁶⁸

Therefore subsistence wages cause not only child labour but also over-population and an increasing world population, in a world fast running out of resources.

⁶⁵ John Gray, *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism* (London: Granta Books, 2009), p.82.

⁶⁶ Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Public Domain Books, 2005), kindle edition, section 2.

⁶⁷ Ha-Joon Chang, *23 Things they don't tell you about capitalism* (London: Penguin, 2011), chapter 10. E.g.: "Such differences exist basically because market exchange rates are largely determined by the supply and demand for internationally traded goods and services ... while what a sum of money can buy in a particular country is determined by the prices of all goods and services, and not just those that are internationally traded." (p.105) Also: "Trade in such services [labour intensive] requires international migration, but that is severely limited by immigration control, so the prices of such labour services end up being hugely different across countries ... When it comes to internationally traded things such as TVs or mobile phones, their prices are basically the same in all countries, rich or poor." (p.106).

⁶⁸ This paragraph is common knowledge but see Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, *Poor Economics* (London: Penguin, 2012), chapter 5 for a detailed discussion.

For example, a recent report warns of food shortages as the world population reaches 9 billion by 2050.⁶⁹

So, colonialism did two things at once: it resulted in a further huge accumulation of capital *and* imposed the initial international division of labour. But perhaps the real turning point as far as child labour (in contrast to the general imbalance) is concerned, happened more recently.

The second major stage of the international division of labour

The next great stage of the international division of labour occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, when manufacturing of cheap goods was shifted to the East, whilst the West concentrated on services such as banking, and high-end manufacturing and technology such as pharmaceuticals and aircraft – all of which require huge accumulations of capital. All of these things can have huge added-values attached to them, enabling much higher wages and standards of living in the West.

If one looks at two graphs, one the decline of manufacturing jobs in Britain, and one showing the rise of carpet weaving income in Pakistan (the carpet industry is looked at in more detail in Part 2, and is notorious for using child labour), one finds an almost mirror symmetry, one showing a decline, the other an increase.⁷⁰ It should also be noted that up until about 1950 population growth rates were similar all over the world⁷¹ but after 1950 rates diverged as the imbalance gathered pace from the post-war boom, as seen in the third graph. This graph is not only part of the present argument but also provides a major general motivation to tackle the global imbalance, because of the resulting pressure on finite global resources.

⁶⁹ John Vidal, “Food shortages could force world into vegetarianism, warn scientists,” *The Guardian*, August 26, 2012, accessed May 16, 2013.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2012/aug/26/food-shortages-world-vegetarianism>

⁷⁰ <http://pclu.ciwce.org.pk/product/child-labour-in-carpet-weaving-industry-in-punjab>
& <http://duncanseconomicblog.wordpress.com/2011/01/06/uk-manufacturing-is-booming-or-is-it/>
(The Pakistan graph is from 1971 onwards; the British one from 1978 onwards.)

⁷¹ http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/beyond/beyondco/beg_03.pdf

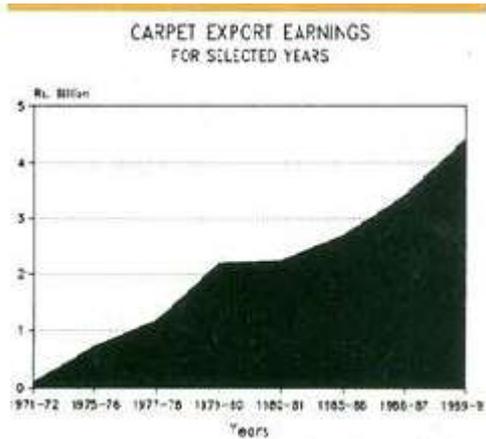
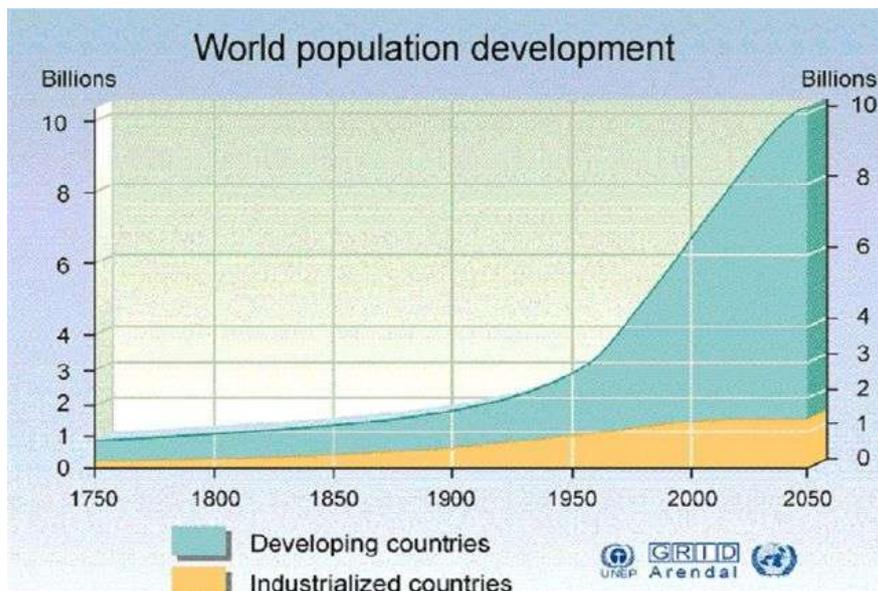
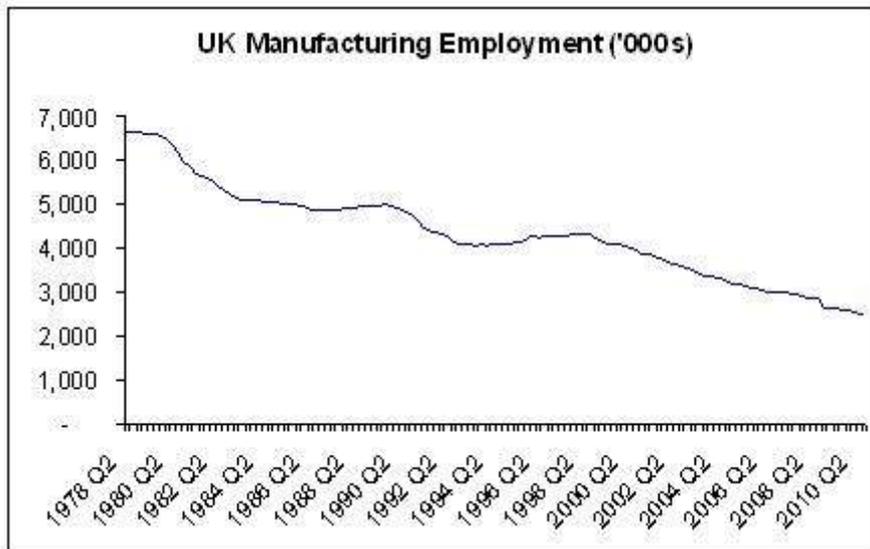


Fig. 1.1 (Source: The News 26 Feb. 1992)



Part 2: Child labour in more detail

A brief history of child labour in Britain

“It seems that children have worked throughout history.”⁷² So says *Child Labour: A World History Companion*. It continues:

However, in earlier times it was so much taken for granted that there are few records of child labour and few comments upon it. It is with the beginnings of the industrial revolution, which started in England in the eighteenth century, that child labour became a matter of public debate.

Discussion of child labour is complicated by many factors: definition of childhood, type of work and cultural norms to name a few. Some people even say that the rosy conception of childhood today was an invention of Romanticism.⁷³ People distinguish between light work, heavy and dangerous work – these last two often termed the “worst forms” of child labour.⁷⁴ People differentiate between child *work* and child *labour*, the former being acceptable, the latter not.⁷⁵ Some people say that child work is ingrained in some cultures and that the West has no right to interfere, this last in relation to child labour in poor countries, which is the main area of concern nowadays and of this thesis.⁷⁶

Firstly, to define some terms, starting with the definition of childhood. The fact that this question of “What is childhood?” arose at the same time as the issue of child labour became prevalent may not be coincidental. Some people say that Romanticism itself was partly a reaction to the dehumanising aspects of the Industrial Revolution, which is interesting because it ties in with the above comment that childhood too was a Romantic invention; Ferber identifies the period of Romanticism as 1760-1860, which certainly ties in with the period of the Industrial Revolution.⁷⁷ It was referred to in poetry, for example the “dark, satanic mills” in Blake’s poem now known as *Jerusalem*.

⁷² Sandy Hobbs *et al*, *Child labour: A World History Companion* (Oxford: ABC-CLIO Ltd, 1999), p.xiii.

⁷³ Hugh Cunningham & Pier Viazzo, *Child Labour in Historical Perspective* (UNICEF, 1996), p.12. http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/hisper_childlabour.pdf

⁷⁴ Hobbs, *Child Labour*, p.xiii.

⁷⁵ Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁷⁶ Hobbs, *Child Labour*.

⁷⁷ Michael Ferber, *Romanticism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.98-101; also Duncan Wu, ed., *Romanticism: An Anthology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p.xxxiv: “It [Romanticism] coincides with the moment at which Britain industrialized itself.”

It would seem that up until the Industrial Revolution it could be said that life was more holistic (which is *not* intended to imply idyllic) but that the lifestyle was mostly agrarian and family-based. In such an environment it would make complete sense for everybody to “pile in”, children included.

But without the mechanisation, increasing division of labour and increasing competition starting from the eighteenth century, children and adults would naturally have borne their share of work according to their abilities. They would not have been sold into bonded labour, or sent away from their families, as happened in the Industrial Revolution and still happens today in Pakistan.⁷⁸

In terms of types of work, the difference between child *work* and child *labour* is as follows. Child work is considered to be light, occasional or limited work that does not interfere with school, is not unduly tiring or physically exhausting. Such work might be a paper-round, some domestic chores etc. Heavy work would include full-time work to the exclusion of school – carpet weaving, brick making etc. Very heavy or dangerous work, or what is termed “worst forms” of child labour, include child prostitution, child soldiers, mining etc.

Perhaps the most surprising thing one learns from researching child labour is that the conception we have of it today had a very specific origin in time and space: The British Industrial Revolution – with child labour peaking around 1790-1830.⁷⁹ One also learns some surprising things about the Industrial Revolution, if one has not studied it in depth previously: that its huge impact was not confined to the economy alone, but may well have been partly responsible (in conjunction with the creation of empire) with the family system in England, especially the notion of the “distant father”: “The division of labour between mothers and fathers also structured relationships within families. Early breadwinning fathers became distant figures away from home for long hours.”⁸⁰ This point is relevant to the present argument because this estrangement also happens in Pakistan; indeed it is often the abandonment by the father – usually for economic reasons rather than heartlessness – or drug-use that results in the children having to work.⁸¹ The Industrial Revolution required huge amounts of labour power, and division of labour also accompanied it; both of these factors contrived to compel children into

⁷⁸ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* & CIWCE, *Child Labour in Carpet Weaving Industry in Punjab* (CIWCE & UNICEF, 1992): <http://pclu.ciwce.org.pk/product/child-labour-in-carpet-weaving-industry-in-punjab>

⁷⁹ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.366.

⁸⁰ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.368.

⁸¹ CIWCE, *Child Labour*, p.7; pp.19-20.

labour. Previously, they would have worked, as mentioned above, but the specific nature, concentration and intensity caused by the Industrial Revolution was on a totally different level compared to what had been the case to that point. For example, “[the] classic era of industrialisation, 1790-1850, saw an upsurge in child labour ... cheap child labour went hand in hand with an expanded division of labour and deskilling ... In Adam Smith’s own example ‘pin making, the division of labour was accompanied by the introduction of child labour.’ ”⁸²

A question that is often asked is, Why did parents send their children to work? Did they not love them, were they heartless and cruel? The theory of child labour has developed its own terminology. There is the “luxury axiom” and the “substitution axiom”. The luxury axiom asserts that households send their children to work only when driven to do so by poverty.⁸³ The substitution axiom is more sinister: it claims that employers deliberately geared processes and machines towards child labour.

Reading Jane Humphries’ book, *Childhood and child labour in the British industrial revolution* (2010), based on working-class autobiographies of former child labourers, leaves no doubt that parents were driven by necessity to send their children to work and that to claim otherwise, then in Britain and now in the East, is hypocrisy and obfuscation on the part of those who want to maintain the status quo. Parents went to extraordinary lengths to support their children; indeed even uncles and aunts often pitched in.⁸⁴

According to Humphries “child labour declined from the mid-nineteenth century”.⁸⁵ How did Britain manage to end child labour? What were the specific measures used to combat it? These were a combination of factory acts and legislation on schooling.⁸⁶ It should be borne in mind however that most of the early legislation was aimed at regulating rather than eliminating child labour.⁸⁷ The first act was in 1802 and was targeted at apprentices in the cotton and woollen mills. The act stipulated that the children must receive some schooling as part of their apprenticeship. The 1833 act established criteria for a normal working day in one industry, textile manufacturing. The 1844 act reduced the working day to six and half hours. Further acts followed and child labour did reduce but critics are divided as to whether it was actually the acts that

⁸² Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.366.

⁸³ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.26.

⁸⁴ E.g. Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, pp.137,139,148,150,157.

⁸⁵ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.310.

⁸⁶ Hobbs, *Child Labour*, p.85.

⁸⁷ Hobbs, *Child Labour*, p.85.

caused the reduction.⁸⁸ Compulsory education was established in the late nineteenth century but “it did not lead to the abolishment of child labour ... children were expected to fit their work around their school attendance”.⁸⁹ A 1933 law allowed children to work during school holidays and for limited periods of time on school days. By the mid twentieth century child labour was no longer a real issue in Britain.

So, schooling helped, and respectability because child labour came to be increasingly seen as reprehensible. Legislation also helped but often this merely shifted child labour to the “unregulated economy”.⁹⁰ Could it be that actually, child labour was not ended but merely shifted, long-term, to the “unregulated economy” of the East, along with manufacturing? Is it a coincidence that the British Empire was peaking at just about this time and Britain was able to export its child labour to the East because it had the money to replace it with higher wages for its own adult labour force? Part 1 has already examined the chain of events that may explain how this happened. The next section but one looks at this on a qualitative level by making some comparisons to show the similarities between the Industrial Revolution then and Pakistan now; but before doing that the important topics of conception of childhood and attitude to education need to be discussed.

Social norms: conception of childhood and attitude to education

One of the arguments that has entered the discourse regarding child labour is that different cultures have varying conceptions of childhood and that the West should not interfere in other cultures if they wish to make their children work. Indeed, there is even a theory that childhood is an invented concept. This theory comes from a book called *Centuries of Childhood* by Philippe Aries, first published in French in 1960.

Aries argues that childhood as a concept was “invented”; this invention had its first stirrings in the thirteenth century, took firmer roots in the sixteenth century, peaked in the seventeenth century, and then in the eighteenth century the idea of the family took centre stage in portraits (Aries bases much of his argument by examining paintings). Aries explains that this does not mean that children were not around, that people did not notice that little people existed. What he means is that children were mostly ignored, the

⁸⁸ Hobbs, *Child Labour*, p.86.

⁸⁹ Hobbs, *Child Labour*, pp.236-7.

⁹⁰ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.370.

reason being that infant mortality being very high, parents did not allow themselves to become too attached to their children since they had no way of knowing if those children would survive or not. Aries suggests that as infant mortality decreased so the conception of childhood took hold, cementing at the point of Jenner's discovery of vaccination in the eighteenth century. But here the argument runs into a problem which Aries himself acknowledges: "conditions were still so unfavourable to it [child mortality] ... this idea should have appeared much later".⁹¹ Aries does not really answer his own objection very clearly but perhaps this section can attempt to answer it for him, partly from inferring from his own book.

At first glance the argument that childhood is an invented concept seems ridiculous. But on further examination perhaps it is not so strange. Most academic discourse nowadays accepts that human beings, minds and identities, are constructed; indeed this is the meaning of Marx's base/superstructure model, that the economic base "constructs" and defines the rest of society. Marx says, "Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?"⁹² In the same way that the concept of the "teenager" was constructed in the twentieth century, it can fairly easily be accepted that the concept of the child may well have been similarly constructed (by "child" Aries mostly means the age from birth to about seven, although this then became extended to the notion of the "long childhood" to the age of perhaps fifteen as education became more important). What about the objection he himself mentions? Although it is true that it was vaccination that led to a huge decrease in infant mortality, it surely must also be the case that from the scientific revolution onwards there must have been a more general improvement in living conditions, hygiene etc., as well as a more general awareness of the world that could also have contributed to the increased awareness of children by adults. Very rarely is it the case that only one thing or even a few things are sufficient to explain something; this is a reductionist and essentialist trap that should be avoided if at all possible; it is sometimes possible to identify various factors but it always remains possible that other factors are simply not available.

But now how does all this apply to the present thesis? Many child labour texts use the idea of childhood in general or Aries' conception of childhood in particular to

⁹¹ Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood* (London: Pimlico, 1996), p.38.

⁹² Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, section 2.

“defend” child labour, in the sense that the West should not impose its view of childhood on others.⁹³ But this may be putting the cart before the horse. Surely, it makes more sense to say that the conception of childhood that Aries describes is a *result* of the very forces that “exported” child labour to the East? In other words, the profits of slavery and colonialism, which enabled the Industrial Revolution and international division of labour, also allowed investment in health and education, leading to a decrease in infant mortality, and resulted in the conception of childhood that he talks about. Aries himself does not really “explain” why this came about, other than referring to things like vaccination and improving living standards but without the economic or historical reasons. He merely traces the fact that it happened.

Aries wrote his book simply as a historian interested in the history of the family; his book has nothing to do with child labour. It would seem therefore that his idea has perhaps been “hijacked” – whether intentionally or not is difficult to say – for a purpose for which it was never intended. The overwhelming evidence is that child labour exists in the East because it serves an economic purpose, just as it did during the Industrial Revolution. If Eastern countries were able to raise their living standards, the conception of childhood would surely arise in those countries also. This is actually very easy to prove: the conception of childhood, as defined by Aries, already exists in the East, in *well-off* families. No well-off families send their children to work in Pakistan, and very few such families have more than two or three children, just like in Britain. Indeed, not only do they educate their children, they often send them to the West for very expensive educations.

Comparing child labour in Britain and Pakistan

This section compares *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (based on working class autobiographies, as mentioned above) by Jane Humphries, and *Child Labour in Carpet Weaving Industry In Punjab*, a 1992 Pakistani research document produced by the CIWCE (Centre for the Improvement of Working Condition and Environment) in association with UNICEF; the two sources are uncanny in their

⁹³ E.g.: Roland Pierick and Mijke Houwerzijl, “Western Policies on Child Labor Abroad,” *Ethics and International Affairs*, 20.2, June 2006; & Cunningham & Viazzo, *Child Labour in Historical Perspective*.

similarities despite being two centuries and two continents apart in their subject matter.⁹⁴

As well as conception of childhood, some people argue that the West should not interfere in other countries because of the claim that families in the East do not value education.⁹⁵ The following comparisons find that these two issues go together and that the evidence would seem to indicate that both of these claims are invalid and therefore may be a distraction. The fact that these children were then, and are still now, regarded as children and that it was/is not social norms that makes parents send them to work instead of school can be clearly seen in these two sources. Among the many examples cited by Humphries, the following illustrate the point: “At nine years of age I was taken from school and put to work in the fields” and “When I was six years ... old I was sent off to work ... Fancy that! I do not think I shall ever forget those long and hungry days in the fields.”⁹⁶ The emotive tone and emphasis on age would seem to indicate that these children saw themselves then and later in life as children. Many quotes allude to being taken out of school.

Now compare this with the CIWCE document:⁹⁷ “Arshad started weaving carpets at the age of six ... Arshad is fascinated by school going children. He says he becomes sad when he sees these children going to school ... in school uniforms, while he has to ... sit on the hard wooden board and do knotting all day.” And this: “Nazir is 11 years old. He works from 6am to 6pm. Nazir used to go to school till he was eight. Then his father got into debt and he was withdrawn from school.”

Note the uncanny similarities in circumstances and tone, mention of school and age. In terms of social norms and school, it would be expected that if this was the norm, why mention it and why would the children be sad? Humphries states clearly, after examining the evidence in a rigorous and statistical way, that “child labour was no anachronism inherited from a more brutal past”.⁹⁸ She says, “the industrial revolution ... may well have both unleashed a boom in children’s work and itself been fed by children’s work”.⁹⁹ She also says of the charge that this was mere social norm that these comments were by:

⁹⁴ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour* & CIWCE, *Child labour*.

⁹⁵ E.g.: Pierick and Houwerzijl, “Western Policies” & Basu, “Child Labor”.

⁹⁶ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.173.

⁹⁷ CIWCE, *Child labour*, pp.19-20.

⁹⁸ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.177.

⁹⁹ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.172.

... middle- and upper-class commentators, many of whom employed children or were sympathetic to employers of children. In projecting these views, they sought to exculpate themselves and their peers by shifting the blame for what was increasingly seen as a reprehensible practice on to avaricious parents.¹⁰⁰

The above could possibly be changed to this in a putative document written in the future:

... Western commentators, many of whom indirectly employed children or were sympathetic to employers of children. In projecting these views, they sought to exculpate themselves and their peers by shifting the blame for what was increasingly seen as a reprehensible practice on to the cultural norms of the East.

There are some points that can be made specifically about school, and the claim by some commentators that Eastern parents do not value education. Regarding the respondents (i.e. the parents of the child workers) in the survey in Pakistan: “all of them said they would like to see their children go to school”¹⁰¹ It is also the case that most of the children started school but were pulled out when financial circumstances declined. All the children long for school. When people talk about social attitudes there is a misleading impression that some parents approve of their children working or that the children do not like school. Both of these arguments are categorically misleading. True, the parents do say that if their children did not work they might become vagrants, and in a very narrow sense one could agree with that; but that does not mean that they specifically want their children to work in preference to school.

The other point often made is that children in Pakistan drop out of school because of the teachers. This is true.¹⁰² Teachers in Pakistan can be very sarcastic, often violent and the learning is rote, perhaps as boring as carpet weaving, but that is surely an argument to look at improving teaching, not an argument to put children to work. Besides, many children in the West do not like school, but they are not put to work in the fields or in carpet weaving.¹⁰³

The following comparisons from the two documents are in terms of schooling and teachers. In the CIWCE document parents often said “education is of no use”¹⁰⁴ but this was usually *after* the children had been withdrawn for economic reasons. They said

¹⁰⁰ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.31.

¹⁰¹ CIWCE, *Child labour*, p.24.

¹⁰² E.g. Zubeida Mustafa, “Teachers who cannot teach,” *Dawn.com* (respected Pakistani newspaper), February 1, 2012, accessed May 16, 2013. <http://dawn.com/2012/02/01/teachers-who-cannot-teach/>

¹⁰³ Banerjee & Duflo, *Poor Economics*, chapter 4 makes similar points to the above regarding education and poverty.

¹⁰⁴ CIWCE, *Child labour*, p.30.

that the children “would have become vagrant”¹⁰⁵ if they didn’t work. The “attitude of teachers ... had diverted many children away from education”¹⁰⁶.

In Humphries’ book: “Historians have almost universally condemned the schools” of that time.¹⁰⁷ “They are depicted as places of rote learning and brutal discipline run by incompetent and often sadistic teachers.” There was violence, large classes and untrained teachers.¹⁰⁸ But note that “boys walked incredible distances to school” (5-6 miles), despite everything.¹⁰⁹

Again, note the uncanny similarities. One final point about education. It is not necessarily the case that education is better than work, *per se*. Many people would contend that the education system too is mostly just another a capitalist tool and that a school is a factory to produce “brain workers” rather than labourers. (Or, in Marx’s words, “And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, by means of schools, etc.?”¹¹⁰) But the point is that school produces workers who are able to earn more, and teaching reading and writing allows people, perhaps unwittingly, to increase their human capital, a beneficial side-effect. So there is no real need to argue over social norms or whether people believe in education. When parents in the East say that they do not see any value in education, what they mean is *financially*. If they knew that by education their children would be able to earn more and hence look after themselves and their parents better, there can be no doubt that they would want their children to go to school, not that there can really be any doubt about this, as seen from the quotes above. Bannerjee and Duflo suggest that “They [parents] had discovered that educating girls had economic value, and were happy to invest,” and that “People invest in education ... to make more money – in the form of increased earnings in the future.”¹¹¹ True, there is actually a problem with under-employment in countries like India of *educated* people, for the same reasons, i.e. the international division of labour, but this is not a reason not to be educated. Education – as a minimum the ability to read – at least does provide an

¹⁰⁵ CIWCE, *Child Labour*, p.37.

¹⁰⁶ CIWCE, *Child Labour*, p.44.

¹⁰⁷ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.307.

¹⁰⁸ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.308.

¹⁰⁹ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour*, p.311.

¹¹⁰ Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, section 2. Also note that Louis Althusser in his seminal essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, says that the education system is a state apparatus. (I am indebted to Dr Anshuman Mondal for this point.)

¹¹¹ Banerjee & Duflo, *Poor Economics*, p.77.

outlet for the mind, even if one is unemployed, and the ability to vote and influence events in other ways to the extent of the ability and inclination of the person concerned.

The next comparison highlights further the charge of hypocrisy and the contention of this thesis that if morality and economic interest do not collide, it can be easier to make social changes.

Comparing child labour with child prostitution

Much of Western policy on child labour in the East is based around eliminating the “worst forms” of child labour, and included in this is child prostitution. But there are those who argue that actually child prostitution is in many ways no worse than child manual labour; for this argument one can compare and contrast *The Dancing Girls of Lahore* (2005) by Louise Brown, a book about the famous *Heera Mandi* red-light area of Lahore, where prostitution is a family business and has come down from Mughal times, and *Modern Babylon* (2001) by Heather Montgomery, which is about Thailand.¹¹² For example, Montgomery argues that child labour can often be back-breaking with little monetary reward.¹¹³ The claim that child prostitution may not be worse than child labour may seem surprising at first glance but if looked at objectively, with emotion removed, there is evidence to support this view. The above two books reveal that there are four ways in which child prostitution is a lesser evil than child labour:

1. Child labour is physically exhausting and can involve long hours.
2. It is financially less rewarding.
3. Quite often the child prostitute (referring to young girls) is prized and valued and even has a certain kudos.
4. The child usually lives with the family, indeed may be instrumental in enabling the family to stay together, whereas in child labour quite often the child has to leave their family, or the father has abandoned the family.

¹¹² This research was actually carried out for the present author’s MA dissertation (Rohail Ahmad, Brunel University, 2009/10, unpublished).

¹¹³ Heather Montgomery, *Modern Babylon: Prostituting children in Thailand* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), p.156.

So if this argument is accepted then, it becomes instructive to compare Western policy attitudes towards child prostitution and child labour. Here are some extracts from a BBC news report about child prostitution.¹¹⁴

A spokeswoman for the Serious Organised Crime Agency (Soca) said officers worked "very closely" with their counterparts in sex tourism hotspots including Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia ... We have a duty to protect every child everywhere and we must take an uncompromising approach to travelling child abusers," she told the BBC News website Britons who travel abroad to abuse children in the belief they can evade justice are a UK problem and we offer support for prosecutions to this end ... In February 2005 British police visited Thailand to train local officers in methods of combating sex offending.

Now compare this with child labour:¹¹⁵

In response to the BBC findings in Gujarat, the British government said businesses were encouraged to remain vigilant about the work conditions for products they buy from overseas.

It should be emphasised that the above selections and the imbalance between them are *not* the result of a deliberate selection policy on the part of the present analysis. This is typical of the difference in attitude towards child prostitution and child labour: i.e. outrage and *concrete action* in the first case, dismissal in the second.¹¹⁶

In 2010 the ECGD (Export Credits Guarantees Department) of the British government changed its ethical policy regarding child labour and other things.¹¹⁷

Under the ECGD's new policy, the Department will not assess some projects for their potential environmental and human rights impacts, including their potential use of child and forced labour. Projects requesting short-term (two years) export credits or projects in which the UK exporters' share is worth less than about £10 million will in future be approved without any screening.

¹¹⁴ Liam Allen, "Time to tackle 'sex tourism'," *BBC*, March 3, 2006, accessed May 16, 2013. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4768562.stm>

¹¹⁵ Humphrey Hawksley, "India's exploited child cotton workers," *BBC*, January 19, 2012, accessed May 16, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16639391>

¹¹⁶ The present author has even noticed this difference in general, polite conversation. People are quite happy to discuss child labour at length, the pros and cons etc., and admittedly are usually against it; but discussion of child prostitution, whilst arousing horror, also has an aura of distaste about it, and the conversation quickly moves on as though the wrongness of it is so obvious as to not merit detailed analysis.

¹¹⁷ The Corner House and Samata, "Court action to stop UK government department lifting ban on child and forced labour," *The Corner House*, April 30, 2010, accessed May 16, 2013. <http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/resource/court-action-stop-uk-government-department-lifting-ban-child-and-forced-labour>

The “ECGD stated in response [to the court action brought against it] that it does not have to consider whether its support contributes to human rights abuse, because it ‘does not owe obligations to persons outside the jurisdiction of the UK’.”¹¹⁸

It can be seen from the above, therefore, that much of the Western policy and lip-service about child labour is hypocritical and a facade. *The Exploited Child* has no illusions on this score. It states quite categorically:

Beneath a humanitarian facade ... lurks a power that is prepared to go to any lengths to thwart the least action threatening to disturb this vast one-way flow of money ... Anyone trying to tackle child labour ... [crosses] a minefield full of danger ... violent assaults and even murders; such is the fate reserved for the activists and organisations committed to fighting for the rights of child workers.¹¹⁹

Comparing child labour with slavery

Part of the argument of the present thesis is that child labour is a continuation of slavery. So the question must be asked: What is slavery? Is it working for no pay? So if a worker is paid a penny a day, is that no longer slavery? Most people would probably agree that it is still slavery. How about 10p a day? Is that slavery? Possibly. A pound a day? This is obviously one of those philosophical conundrums that seem irresolvable, rather like Zeno’s paradoxes or a straw and camel type scenario, but most people would probably agree that one could not get away from the charge of slavery by simply making a tiny, notional payment; there would have to be some *reasonably significant* level of payment that would differentiate slavery from paid labour.

Most child labourers in the East work for about 10-30 pence a day.¹²⁰ Most adults work for about a pound a day. One of the millennium development goals is to raise people above the poverty line of \$1.25 a day.¹²¹ This is a subsistence wage, as discussed in Part 1 – the amount required for a human being to just about avoid starvation. No shelter, no clothes, no leisure, no luxury, no medical treatment, no sick pay, no pension, no education is taken account of within this figure.

Is it possible to be more precise about the definition of slavery? One general definition might be that *a slave-wage is any wage that does not cover all the basic*

¹¹⁸ The judge refused to consider the case, stating that the case was not arguable in law.

¹¹⁹ Schlemmer, ed., *The Exploited Child*, p.188.

¹²⁰ E.g. Hobbs, *Child Labour*, p.184.

¹²¹ 1 Pakistani rupee is worth about 0.5 Indian rupees, and £1 is worth about US\$1 at the time of writing, but the rhetorical “pound a day” will be used for the present purpose.

necessities of life and the full lifecycle of a human being, including health, education and pension. A more specific definition, relating to the present thesis, might be: any wage that requires a person or couple to have children *for the sole purpose of making them work or be the source of their social security and pension.* This would mean that not only child labour but cheap labour with no minimum wage would also count as slavery. In fact, according to the first definition, even the UK minimum wage of £6.31 per hour is a slave-wage – but this is compensated by social security, medical treatment and state pension.

In 1830, Richard Oestler wrote a letter entitled “Yorkshire Slavery”. It deserves to be quoted in full but lack of space permits only a few extracts:

Let truth speak out, appalling as the statement may appear. Thousands of our fellow creatures ... are this very moment existing in a state of slavery, more horrid than are the victims of that hellish system “Colonial Slavery.” These innocent creatures draw out, unpitied, their short but miserable existence ... Thousands of little children, both male and female ... from seven to fourteen years of age, are daily compelled to labour from six o’clock in the morning to seven in the evening ... Poor Infants! Ye are indeed sacrificed at the shrine of avarice, without even the solace of the negro slave ... No, no! Your soft and delicate limbs are tired and fagged, and jaded ... and when your joints can act no longer, your emaciated frames are instantly supplied with other victims, who ... are *hired* – not sold – as slaves and daily forced to hear that they are free.¹²² [italics in the original]

This was written about Yorkshire in the eighteenth century but could easily be a description of child labour in Pakistan in the present day. Note that with the italicised word “*hired*” Oestler almost seems to be making a similar point to the present thesis – that cheap labour only avoids the charge of slavery by a technicality. The comparison with colonial slavery is problematic but the writer may have been using it as a rhetorical device to maximise the force of his argument.

Part of the nature of capitalism is that it is able to morph itself out of ethical dilemmas as they are unearthed, or as Marx puts it, “the constantly recurring experience that capital, so soon as it finds itself subject to legal control at one point, compensates itself all the more recklessly at other points”.¹²³ It finds new ways of hiding its use of cheap labour. One of the ways it has morphed itself, the one most pertinent to this thesis, is to hide away its child labour in the East, and also by avoiding charges of

¹²² Hobbs, *Child Labour*, p.179.

¹²³ Arthur, *Marx’s Capital*, p.291.

exploitation by technicalities, as well as hiding that exploitation behind a facade of humanitarianism. Slavery, in the form of child labour, seems to have been swept away under the carpet of the East; the public slave market has disappeared to be replaced by the very private sweatshop. Ironically, the change from slavery to cheap labour may even have been beneficial to capitalism because it removed the moral or economic obligation on the employer to provide even minimum care for the worker, such as food, clothing, shelter and medicine. Rosa Luxemburg makes a similar point, quoting Rodbertus: “The abolition of slavery or serfdom, moreover, rescinded the master’s legal or moral obligation to feed them and care for their needs.”¹²⁴

Further evidence for the similarity of child labour and slavery can be found in comparing the abolitionist movement of slavery with the attempt to tackle child labour, both in terms of the terminology and the justifications for them. Slavery was justified on economic grounds and also that the slaves were better off than they had been in Africa. In the same way, people say that working children are better off than starving or ending up in even worse situations. The initial attempts at abolition were geared towards “amelioration” just like in child labour people talk about tackling the “worst forms” of it or alleviating conditions, rather than eradicating it. For example, “the first impulses towards reform were ameliorationist rather than abolitionist or emancipationist, that activists often aimed to make slavery more humane or more Christian, not to liberate the enslaved.”¹²⁵ It was argued that slavery was so entrenched, had existed since the dawn of civilisation, was part of the culture (“social norms”) of certain societies and that there was no point in the British trying to abolish it unilaterally. Note the similarity with the discourse on child labour.

A further similarity between the two is the use of violence to enforce the labour. It is surely obvious that when people are being coerced into labour with insufficient or no compensation, violence is bound to be necessary. The most common punishment in slavery was flogging but extreme cases involved cutting off of noses and ears. Child workers in Pakistan are often beaten by hand, including by their own parents.¹²⁶ But there is worse; *The Exploited Child* has this to say:

¹²⁴ Luxemburg, *Accumulation of Capital*, p.219.

¹²⁵ Brown, *Moral Capital*, p.28.

¹²⁶ CIWCE, *Child Labour*, p.13.

When ... we descend into the world of the working child, we are rapidly plunged into an atmosphere of violence ... the child is bombarded with usually screamed orders ... Children are beaten and punished for the slightest error. A bonded child recaptured after running away faces serious battering or mutilation.¹²⁷

Children also suffer from injuries and illnesses because of their small size, lack of attention and the unhealthy working conditions. All of these are also very similar to the descriptions of the Industrial Revolution.

In the end, as Part 1 mentioned, slavery was abolished when economic and moral reasons coincided, which would seem to imply that child labour too will only be eradicated if economic arguments can be adduced to support those who are genuinely horrified by it, rather than those who simply pay lip-service to it.

¹²⁷ Schlemmer, *The Exploited Child*, p.188.

Part 3: Force and collusion: Why there is no will to end child labour

Introduction

This thesis would contend that it is not possible for one country to dominate another without collusion. This was true of slavery and colonialism, and Part 3 attempts to show that that it is also true of child labour, although in the present age force has been replaced with unfair and rigged world-trade policies, such as free flow of capital and goods but *not* of labour, and the unfair international division of labour. Free flow of labour may seem like a pipedream but it was exactly what we had until about 1980. But first, another technique often used to obfuscate issues – in this case that cheap labour is the basic problem – is the argument of complexity; this was used for slavery, and of apartheid in South Africa,¹²⁸ and is also used in the discourse of child labour.

Is child labour a complex problem?

Most of the research on child labour, including the latest PhD theses and articles by both Western and Eastern researchers, seem to agree that child labour is a complex problem and does not have simple solutions. For example, “tackling child labour requires different solutions in each country and in each sector”¹²⁹ says the ILO (International Labour Organisation), whilst the authors of *Western Policies on Child Labor Abroad* say “There is little doubt as to the need for reducing child labor, but it is a huge, heterogeneous, and complex problem that cannot be solved overnight. Moreover, there is no single, simple policy measure that can end all child labor.”¹³⁰ A recent Pakistani study says “Since this is a global dilemma and a complex problem with various aspects and eradicating it needs proper forum, broader strategies, methods and those could not be identified and opted without examining and knowing the scale, nature and root causes of the problem. [*sic*]”¹³¹

¹²⁸ FW de Klerk, “De Klerk hails Thatcher as visionary,” *Mail & Guardian*, April 16, 2013, accessed May 16, 2013: “She had a much better grasp of the complexities and geo-strategic realities of South Africa than many of her contemporaries.” <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-04-16-de-klerk-hails-thatcher-as-visionary>

¹²⁹ ILO, *Towards a world without child labour* (conference report) (Hague: ILO, May 2010), p.2.

¹³⁰ Pierick and Houwerzijl, “Western Policies,” p.217.

¹³¹ Farkhanda Zia, “The effectiveness of trade sanctions and ILO Convention 182 on the eradication of the worst forms of child labour in the United Kingdom and Pakistan” (PhD diss., Hull University, 2006), p.9. (This is a Pakistani PhD thesis.)

It is the contention of the present thesis that child labour is *not* a complex problem.¹³² That it is, in fact, a simple problem, the primary cause of which is poverty – itself stemming from cheap labour – and the international divisions of labour, as the following shows: “There is a general conviction that poverty is the major cause of the child labour problem – the poverty of governments, combined with the destitution of individual families.”¹³³ and “they [the authors of an article entitled *Trade Openness, Foreign Direct Investment and Child Labor*] conclude that trade openness might lower child labor, *but only via its positive effect on per capita income.*”¹³⁴ Or, as the report *Western Policies on Child Labor Abroad* puts it:

The most important reason for the existence of child labor in developing countries is poverty. Even (most) poor parents do not send their children to work if they can prevent it. Indeed, Kaushik Basu argues that in the situations in which child labor occurs as a mass phenomenon, the alternative to child labor is usually very harsh—acute hunger or even starvation.¹³⁵

What is *not* simple is the fact that the whole of the world economy is based on child labour, which means that it is highly entangled in networks of power and interest on a global scale, and this props up the current structure of dominance and subordination. As a result, Western governments do not truly want to end it.

Naivety or hypocrisy?

It is difficult to work out how much of current policy is based on the genuine belief that child labour is a complex problem and how much is based on hypocrisy. But there is evidence to back the hypocrisy argument. For example, Pierik and Houwerzijl suggest that: “Thus, an important reason behind the slow progression in this policy field was the lack of political commitment of the “ruling classes” in Western Europe.”¹³⁶ and the report *Trade Openness, Foreign Direct Investment and Child Labor* notes that “Critics

¹³² In the wake of the USA school shootings of 14th December 2012, gun control law was described as a complex problem. But surely it is not complex, simply the fact that many people do not want it?

¹³³ Zia, “The effectiveness of trade sanctions”, p.12.

¹³⁴ Eric Neumayer and Indra de Soysa, “Trade Openness, Foreign Direct Investment and Child Labor,” *LSE Research Online* (London: LSE, 2004), Section 4. [italics added] (The article does not have page numbers but has section numbers which will be given as references instead.)

¹³⁵ Pierick and Houwerzijl, “Western Policies,” p.207.

¹³⁶ Pierick and Houwerzijl, “Western Policies,” p.206.

also argue that foreign investors not only seek countries with child labor incidence, but actively promote child labor.”¹³⁷ Pierik and Houwerzijl also add:

Pogge argues that the foreign policy of Western societies, and especially their policies that shaped international institutions like the WTO, generates poverty in developing countries ... Formulated in less diplomatic language: it is gratuitous for Western governments to want to fight child labor without accepting their own responsibilities to reduce poverty. If they are truly committed to curbing child labor they ought to support collaborative measures financially. There are many policies available for Western countries to fight global poverty: opening their borders to products that are now shielded off from their markets by protectionist policies, lifting the debt burdens that disable developing countries from providing basic education for children, supporting measures aimed at raising the income of parents so that their children do not have to work, or supporting developing countries to improve governance and providing economic and political stability.¹³⁸

In 2010 there was a global conference at The Hague to eliminate the *worst forms* of child labour by 2016, which issued a roadmap.¹³⁹ How does this document support the charge that Western policies are at best naive, and at worst hypocritical?

Firstly, the goal of 2016, even in 2010, could surely be seen to be totally unrealistic, especially given that the world was then, and still is, in the midst of the worst recession since the 1930s. Secondly, note the phrase “worst forms” which occurs repeatedly throughout the document. This refers to things like slavery, bondage, prostitution and armed conflict. Part 2 has already discussed slavery and prostitution, so the main point to emphasise here is that the repetition of this phrase shows that there is not a serious intention to eradicate “normal” child labour.

The document is full of high-sounding phrases disguised as “practical” measures but all these are aimed at impoverished governments who simply do not have the resources to implement them: measures such as social nets, education programs etc., measures which even Pakistan would implement if it had the resources but simply does not. But there is no mention of measures that really would help, and in particular no sanctions against Western companies who are complicit in using child labour even though the document does mention “supply chains”, as well as no mention of possible awareness-raising measures for Western consumers, such as ethical labelling of products.

¹³⁷ Neumayer & de Soysa, “Trade Openness,” Section 5.

¹³⁸ Pierick and Houwerzijl, “Western Policies,” p.212.

¹³⁹ ILO, “Towards a world”. [italics added]

Some countries pledged money.¹⁴⁰ Holland offered \$6.8m for education and \$160K for sustainable trade, Germany 1.2m Euros. These are clearly ineffectual sums. Hilary Clinton sent a video message.¹⁴¹ The US representative said that the USA had invested \$680m since 1995.¹⁴² This sounds like a lot but works out to \$45m per year which is 0.00032% per year of its GDP. Compare this with the 800 billion dollars spent to rescue the banks, and the trillion spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to perpetuate the imbalance through force.¹⁴³

The Millennium Development Goals (henceforth MDG) are further evidence of hypocrisy. One of the MDGs is to halve the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day. This is a subsistence wage which can never improve the situation, as shown in Part 2. The goals are full of high-sounding, laudable aims like reducing poverty, improving education and equality etc. but there is no mention of the real problems, which are cheap labour, selective migration, and the international division of labour. There is a mention of more generous development aid but the general consensus seems to be turning against aid as a means of improvement.¹⁴⁴ The document also mentions further development of “an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system”¹⁴⁵ which sounds good but does not include specific measures.

The MDG website has a section entitled “Get Involved”, which includes the following (the exclamation marks are in the original):¹⁴⁶

Join the Millennium Campaign!
“Girl Up!”
Submit a song against poverty!
Listen to the MDG song!
Sign the Petition against Hunger!
Education for All!
United against Malaria!
Support the Swim across the Continents!
Join the Global Call to Action against Poverty!
Play “Free Rice”!

¹⁴⁰ ILO, “Towards a world,” p.25.

¹⁴¹ ILO, “Towards a world,” p.27.

¹⁴² ILO, “Towards a world,” p.28.

¹⁴³ Joseph Stiglitz & Linda Bilmes, “The Economic Costs of the Iraq War,” *National Bureau of Economic Research*, February 2006, abstract.

¹⁴⁴ E.g. Dambisa Moya, *Dead Aid* (London: Penguin, 2010); Jonathon Glennie, *The Trouble with Aid* (London: Zed Books, 2008); and Imran Khan (Pakistani cricketer turned politician; LSE lecture, “Pakistan: A Personal History”).

¹⁴⁵ (Goal 8a)

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/getinvolved.shtml>

It should be clear to anyone that these are ineffectual slogans which will achieve nothing without the tackling the real causes of the problem. They merely give the *impression* of action.

All of the above clearly shows the combination of naivety and hypocrisy of policies regarding child labour. Here is more from the LSE article mentioned earlier:

Busse ... provides evidence that countries with higher incidence of child labor have a comparative advantage in the export of unskilled labor-intensive manufactured products. Critics also argue that foreign investors not only seek countries with child labor incidence, but actively promote child labor.¹⁴⁷

There are two points to be made here about the above two sentences. The first sentence is surely *a complete internal contradiction*, and indeed supports the arguments of this thesis that cheap labour and child labour are inextricably linked; and that cheap labour is *not* a comparative advantage, at least not if one wants to eliminate child labour. The second sentence supports the accusation of hypocrisy. It continues: “Higher per capita income levels and a higher urbanization rate are associated with lower child labor incidence as expected.”¹⁴⁸ This sentence is thrown in almost as an afterthought but surely this is the crux of it?

Neumayer and de Soysa also discuss globalisation and purport to prove that globalisation [of trade and capital] has resulted in *less* child labour, thus opposing most people’s view including, at first glance, that of this section. It is highly technical, analysing extensive data, and begins thus:

The sceptics of globalization argue that increased trade openness and foreign direct investment induce developing countries to keep labor costs low, for example, by letting children work. This article argues that there are good theoretical reasons why globalization might actually have the opposite effect ... We test this ... [and show that] Globalization is associated with less, not more, child labor.¹⁴⁹

It concludes: “Globalization is likely to represent a promise, not a threat, for the eradication of child labor across the globe.”

However, a closer reading reveals a different picture. The article begins: “We will argue that theoretically globalization, defined as increased trade openness and penetration by foreign direct investment, *can have both positive and negative effects* on

¹⁴⁷ Neumayer & de Soysa, “Trade Openness,” Section 5.

¹⁴⁸ Neumayer & de Soysa, “Trade Openness,” Section 6.

¹⁴⁹ Neumayer & de Soysa, “Trade Openness,” abstract.

the incidence of child labor in developing countries.”¹⁵⁰ Note that this is much less categorical than the summary and the conclusion. Also: “Furthermore, as Cigno *et al.* ... observe, this measure of child labor suffers from the fact that in excluding children younger than 10 years old [from the data] ‘it leaves out a large, arguably the most worrisome, part of the phenomenon in question.’”¹⁵¹ Similarly: “Our analysis provides *some evidence* that countries that are more open to trade and are more penetrated by FDI [foreign direct investment] display a lower incidence of child labor.”¹⁵² All of this shows that the “headline” claims mask the reality of the finer detail.

How does Pakistan collude with child labour?

As with violence, the West does not have a monopoly on hypocrisy. How does Pakistan collude with child labour and why can it not be relied upon to tackle the problem? The answer to the second part of the question is common knowledge for those who have any personal experience of Pakistan but here is the academic evidence from the *World of Child Labour*.¹⁵³ Officially there are 3.3 million child labourers in Pakistan but the book says that this is likely to be a huge underestimate and the more likely figure is 8-10 million. The survey on which the official figure is based “is now ten years out of date” and “there has been no follow up survey”. There is no study of the “impact of the interventions taken”. 67% of the child labour is in the unregulated agricultural sector. Pakistan is a “low income” / “large family size” country with an average of eight children per family. Much of the labour is bonded where the debt is never paid off because of the exorbitant interest rates and low wages. The child labour is due to the “widespread poverty and the country’s weak educational system”. The country spends just 2% on education, compared to 10% for the UK. 60% of its GDP goes on defence and debt servicing. There is poor “management”, “inefficiency” and “corruption”.

Pakistan is signatory to all the international laws on child labour and has its own laws as well but these “laws [are] not enforced”. The book recommends that the country should provide free primary education but “this is not foreseeable in the near future”. The education system is divided between rich and poor. “Child labour has widespread social acceptance in Pakistan”. There is a “feudal culture”. The “legislative framework

¹⁵⁰ Neumayer & de Soysa, “Trade Openness,” Section 1. [italics added]

¹⁵¹ Neumayer & de Soysa, “Trade Openness,” Section 1.

¹⁵² Neumayer & de Soysa, “Trade Openness,” Section 7. [italics added]

¹⁵³ Hindman, ed., *The World of Child Labour*, pp.834-838.

... is more regulatory than prohibitive, lacks substance and scale, and is poorly enforced". There are many exemptions including family, agriculture, self-employed children, domestic etc. The "inspection system [is] almost non-existent", "no specialised inspectors [have been] appointed in [the] past sixteen years". "Trends in recent years show an alarming decrease in labour inspections ... In Sindh ... [there has been] not a single inspection since 2004". There is no recent data. In 2003 the inspections stopped and a "self-declaration" system came into effect. A US labour program targeted 11,800 children, out of 10 million.

The chapter continues in much the same vein but the point has surely been made: this is not a country that can be relied upon to solve the problem of child labour on its own. All of this clearly shows that Western governments must know that Pakistan cannot solve this issue. No amount of conventions, of moralising, of marching against child labour, and "child labour days" are going to make any difference.

What evidence is there to show that Pakistan colludes in the child labour? The following extracts are from an article in Atlantic magazine,¹⁵⁴ and shows how the Pakistani authorities pay lip service but do nothing, indeed proactively look the other way:

Early in this decade the Pakistan National Assembly enacted two labor laws meant to curb such practices ... As progressive as these laws were, the government failed to provide for their implementation and enforcement. It also neglected to inform the millions of working children and indentured servants that they were free and released from their debts. "We prefer to leave enforcement to the discretion of the police," says a Ministry of Labor official. "They understand best the needs of their community. Law is not an absolute. We must expect a certain flexibility on the part of those who enforce it. Could this sometimes mean looking the other way? Absolutely."¹⁵⁵

The following quote is clear evidence of the active collusion between East and West:

"If employers would apply as much ingenuity to their manufacturing processes as they do to evading labor laws, we'd have no child-labor problem," says Najanuddin Najmi, the director general of the Workers Education Program, a government agency. "There's little doubt that inexpensive child labor has fuelled Pakistan's economic growth. Entire industries have relocated to Pakistan because of the abundance of cheap child labor and our lax labor laws. At the same time, child labor has hindered our industrial development, especially in the use of advanced technologies. Why should a manufacturer invest in labor-saving technology when labor-intensive mechanisms are

¹⁵⁴ Jonathan Silvers, "Child Labor in Pakistan," *Atlantic Magazine*, February 1996.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1996/02/child-labor-in-pakistan/304660/>

¹⁵⁵ Section: "An Inexhaustible Labor Pool". (All of the next few quotes are from the same source, *Atlantic Magazine*, and will give the section title as the reference since there are no pages numbers.)

so much cheaper? We are discovering more and more factories that have been redesigned and retooled so that only children can work there.¹⁵⁶

Note the similarity to the comment about the British Industrial Revolution and how employers geared their machines and practices to suit children. Note also that this refutes the idea put forward by some that countries such as Pakistan may be going through their own industrial revolution and will eventually emerge stronger; this would only happen if technology was being invested in, which it is not.

Here is a quote about the late Benazir Bhutto, regarded by many as a moderate, Westernised Pakistani leader. As a Pakistani woman and as a mother herself she might have been expected to understand the position of minorities and of child workers, but unfortunately not:

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto seems more interested in outfitting her army than in reforming Pakistani society; her government has embarked on an ambitious military buildup that has already imperilled the region. Its first victims have been Pakistan's lower castes, the working poor who are accustomed to receiving little in the way of social services and must now make do with less. In 1994 military spending was 240 percent as high as spending on health and education combined; the disparity is expected to widen in years to come. Spending on education remains among the world's lowest. Only 37 percent of Pakistan's 25 million school-age children complete primary school—as compared with a world average of 79 percent and a South Asian average of approximately 50 percent. By the year 2000 less than a third of Pakistani children will attend school. The rest will enter the work force or become beggars.¹⁵⁷

Of course the above is slightly out of date, but not by much: Mrs Bhutto's husband is now in charge and is likely to do even less than his wife, as evidenced by the fact that when Pakistan was facing one of its worst crises, the 2010 floods, he refused to return from his tour of Europe to deal with the emergency.¹⁵⁸

Moreover, the authorities' awareness of and connivance in child labour is evident here:

Behind these statistics lurks an unpleasant truth: despite its modern views on warfare and industrialization, Pakistan remains a feudal society, committed to maintaining traditions that over the centuries have served its upper castes well. The lords—factory

¹⁵⁶ Section: "A Mixed Curse".

¹⁵⁷ Section: "A Mixed Curse".

¹⁵⁸ E.g.: Saeed Shah, "Pakistan floods: army steps into breach as anger grows at Zardari," *The Guardian*, August 8, 2010, accessed May 16, 2013.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/aug/08/pakistan-floods-army-popular-zardari-anger>

owners, exporters, financiers—reflexively oppose any reforms that might weaken their authority, lower their profit margins, or enfranchise the workers. “There is room for improvement in any society,” the industrialist Imram Malik says. “But we feel that the present situation is acceptable the way it is. The National Assembly must not rush through reforms without first evaluating their impact on productivity and sales. Our position is that the government must avoid so-called humanitarian measures that harm our competitive advantages.” On those rare occasions when a reform does squeak through, the backlash is fierce. For example, when the legislature last year approved a modest tax on bricks to fund an education program, brick-kiln owners staged a ten-day nationwide protest and threatened to suspend production, crippling construction, until the tax was repealed. Trade associations have used similar strong-arm tactics to fight minimum-wage legislation, occupational-safety regulations, and trade-union activity. With a government that is at best ambivalent about social issues and an industrial sector resistant to workplace reform, the task of abolishing child labor has fallen to the human-rights community. But in a country where corruption is pervasive and education scarce, social activists are everyone’s natural enemy. The ruling class despises them for assaulting its profitable traditions. The lower castes suspect them of ulterior motives. (Laborers are forever asking activists, “Why would an educated man trouble himself with the poor?”) Consequently, activists are frequent targets of slander, police harassment, and lawsuits. They are beaten just as frequently, and on occasion they are killed.¹⁵⁹

The following quote shows the awareness of collusion:

The FIA [Federal Investigation Agency] is a secret police force, and one of its best-kept secrets is whom it works for. Nominally an organ of the state, it is not above accepting freelance assignments from prominent individuals and commercial groups. The extent of its extralegal activities is anyone’s guess, but a highly respected human-rights investigator believes that “there is close cooperation between carpet interests, feudal lords, segments of the police force, and the administration—district commissioners, the courts, and government officials. Financially resourceful drug barons are also a part of the scene.” Whoever the client, the FIA provides an assortment of services straight out of the KGB handbook: wiretaps, tails, searches, arrests, harassment, and varying degrees of corporal punishment.

These services were very much in evidence on a Thursday afternoon in late June, when the FIA raided the BLLF’s [Bonded Labour Liberation Front] Lahore headquarters. The detail consisted of ten men, all in plain clothes, who scrambled up four flights of stairs to the tiny office in no time flat. These were not ordinary policemen; this was not the usual surprise “inspection” (read “intimidation”) to which all nongovernment organizations are periodically subjected. These were professional agents, lithe and expert, commanded by a severe officer in a freshly pressed safari suit. After lining the BLLF workers up against a wall, he ordered his troops to “confiscate anything that may incriminate them.” The agents took a liberal view of “incriminate,” and packed up computers, filing cabinets, fax machines, photocopiers, telephones, stationery, posters, bicycles—and the cashbox containing the monthly payroll. Their

¹⁵⁹ Section: “A Mixed Curse”.

depredations were supervised by a small man who was distinctly not a policeman. He represented, it turned out, the Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association. His purpose, he said, was “to protect the interests of legitimate businessmen.” Every so often he consulted with the commander.¹⁶⁰

The “Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association” mentioned in the above quote is colloquially known as the “Carpet Mafia” who killed the child activist and carpet weaver, Iqbal Masih, at the age of twelve as he was riding his bicycle.¹⁶¹

But perhaps the real evidence of collusion is the lack of evidence. The author of the present thesis has tried extremely hard to find out what the Pakistani government is doing about child labour and has not been able to find very much. This is echoed in the *Atlantic Magazine* article:

“Inaction speaks louder than words,” says I. A. Rehman, the director of the HRCP [Human Rights Commission of Pakistan]. “This government is in continuous violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and has consistently refused to enforce those very laws it enacted to protect its most vulnerable citizens. We have far more in the way of resources and legal remedies than China, India, and Indonesia, and we do far less for our young than they. The problem is lack of political will. The problem is greed.”¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Section: “The Death of Iqbal Masih”.

¹⁶¹ Hobbs, *Child Labour*, p.154 & Hindman, ed., *The World of Child Labour*, p.508.

¹⁶² Section: “An Inexhaustible Labor Pool”.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to prove that child labour is an inevitable consequence of cheap labour, that it is essentially a continuation of slavery, and that it was exported to the East, rather than coming to a natural end in the West. It further argues that Western policies on child labour abroad are at best naive, and at worst hypocritical; conversely, Eastern countries like Pakistan actively collude in the child labour and cannot be relied upon to tackle the problem either.

The wider research done for this thesis shows that child labour is being perpetuated, rather than reduced, due to unfair and rigged policies such as free flow of capital and good, but *not* labour – worse still, *selective* migration; and the totally irrational international division of labour which is not at all based on geography or genuine skills. A recent report from the IPPR (Institute for Public Policy Research), entitled *The Third Wave of Globalisation* purports to “be for all countries”¹⁶³ and mentions the need to redress the global imbalance, but careful analysis shows that all of the policies mentioned would exacerbate the problem instead. It discusses the benefits of cheap labour, but these seem mostly one way – beneficial to the West.¹⁶⁴ Although it acknowledges the lack of free flow of labour,¹⁶⁵ it still advocates more selective migration.¹⁶⁶ It does, however, acknowledge some of the problems of the global imbalance, for example: “Increased international trade in goods can also contribute to climate change through increases in shipping and aviation.”¹⁶⁷ and “By contributing to rising global growth, globalisation is contributing to climate change, increasing demand for commodities and *exacerbating resource constraints*”.¹⁶⁸

The alternative to free flow of labour would be a minimum wage that is not a slave-wage as defined in this thesis, but which would have to be *enforced on Western companies by Western laws* to be effective. In fact the LSE article even has data to show what a non slave-wage might be. It notes that child labour decreases sharply when family income reaches \$2600 per year,¹⁶⁹ thus allowing a quick calculation: 2660 / 50 weeks / 40 hours per week = \$1.33. So a minimum wage of roughly £1 per *hour*, rather

¹⁶³ Will Straw and Alex Glennie, *The Third Wave of Globalisation* (London: IPPR, 2012), p.7.

¹⁶⁴ Straw and Glennie, *The Third Wave*, pp.9-11,45.

¹⁶⁵ Straw and Glennie, *The Third Wave*, p.21.

¹⁶⁶ Straw and Glennie, *The Third Wave*, p.7.

¹⁶⁷ Straw and Glennie, *The Third Wave*, p.4.

¹⁶⁸ Straw and Glennie, *The Third Wave*, p.54. [italics added]

¹⁶⁹ Neumayer & de Soysa, “Trade Openness,” Section 6.

than £1 per *day* as is the current norm, would start to solve the problem.¹⁷⁰ Similar figures (\$6 – \$10) per day are found by *Poor Economics*,¹⁷¹ which also notes on the same page that the number of children per family “goes down sharply with income”, which backs the points made in this thesis about population growth. Sadly, even though £1 an hour is surely not too much to ask for, it is unlikely to happen any time soon, since it represents an eightfold increase. However, another possibility – ethical labelling of all imported goods to show how much was paid for the labour – is very practical and realistic and could easily be done: labels are already printed, the information surely already exists in spreadsheets and could easily be added to the label; this not with a view to boycotting child-produced products, since all the evidence shows that boycotting is counter-productive,¹⁷² but just as an awareness-raising exercise. Muhammad Yunus, Bangladeshi Nobel prize-winning economist, has recently outlined similar ideas: his figure for wages is 50 cents per hour, and he also mentions ethical labelling.¹⁷³

Unfortunately, a detailed exposition of the above is beyond the scope of this thesis, since it would require a full critique of capitalist globalization, which reinforces child labour by perpetuating cheap labour and the international division of labour. People like Aex Callinicos in *The Anti-Capitalist Manifesto* and Joseph Stiglitz in *The Price of Inequality* have started to make such critiques. The present author would tend to agree with the philosophy of Stiglitz rather than Callinicos. Capitalism and globalisation, like everything else, are neither good nor bad – it all depends on how you use them. Capitalism, in its energy and association with freedom, is an astonishing thing; the main problem with it is gross inequality and the accumulation of capital. Globalisation too can be wonderful thing, but only if is genuinely free and fair. Some of the ideas mentioned in this conclusion could form the basis of future work.

Based on some of the ideas above, the final contention of this thesis is that child labour *can* be eradicated, but only if the genuine desire and will exists.

¹⁷⁰ If this was applied globally – a sort of international minimum wage – it might also stop the destabilising effect of companies constantly moving around the world in search of cheaper labour. Countries in their turn would then have to compete on quality of labour, rather than just cost of it, hopefully resulting in investment in people and infrastructure.

¹⁷¹ Banerjee & Duflo, *Poor Economics*, p.8.

¹⁷² E.g. The Senator Tom Harkin Bill in the USA which resulted in Bangladeshi child-workers being sacked and ending up in worse situations.

¹⁷³ Jason Burke, “Muhammad Yunus appeals to west to help Bangladesh's garment industry,” *The Guardian*, May 12, 2013, accessed May 16, 2013.
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